

May 24, 2018

Linda Jeffrey
Mayor
City of Brampton

Dear Mayor Jeffrey,

Thank you for reaching out on behalf of the City of Brampton and the people of Brampton.

Andrea Horwath and the NDP understand and respect local government, which is the closest to the people and provides services and infrastructure that people depend on every day.

The reality is that the Conservatives devastated municipalities two decades ago when they downloaded provincial responsibilities onto cities and towns with no way to pay for them. We cannot afford more cuts to, and the privatization of, our public services.

An NDP government will deliver change for the better.

We will undo the damage caused by decades of disrespect and downloading by Conservative governments.

Transit

People should be able to count on transit in their communities. Affordable, reliable, and fast public transit benefits everyone. It takes cars off the road, thinning traffic and letting commerce move. It creates a greener Ontario and gets people where they want to go in an affordable manner with less stress for everyone. Further, it connects people with opportunity, whether it's a dream job or a quality education.

Ontario used to fund 50 per cent of municipal transit operations, a successful funding formula that helped make Ontario's municipal transit agencies the envy of the world. But in 1997-1998, the Conservatives cancelled funding for transit operations.

New Democrats will invest in the transit infrastructure and transit operations that Brampton residents count on.

The NDP will restore the province's traditional 50 per cent funding for municipal transit and paratransit operations to ensure immediate improvements to transit and paratransit service as well as higher ridership throughout the province. That means spending more than \$800 million to improve transit and paratransit service across the province.

An NDP government will make progress towards a freight bypass to allow a dedicated Kitchener-Toronto rail corridor, allowing for frequent all-day, two-way GO rail service to Kitchener, Guelph, and Brampton.

Environment and Infrastructure

The NDP has long been a strong voice for both environmental sustainability and fairness.

The Environmental Commissioner has raised serious doubts about the current government's ability to meet its 2020 and 2030 greenhouse gas reduction targets. These doubts were reiterated by the federal and provincial auditors-general in their 2018 assessment of the Canadian climate change initiative.

We must do better.

We will make Ontario's cap-and-trade system more fair, effective, and transparent so that it earns the public's trust and support over the long term. We will also implement a Climate Change Adaptation Strategy to help economic sectors and communities respond resiliently to the impacts of climate change. Further, we will restore funding to the Ontario Municipal Partnership Fund, increasing it to \$550 million. This will allow local governments to make long-term plans.

Post-Secondary Education

Andrea Horwath and the NDP believe that Ontario colleges and universities are research hubs and future builders. Unfortunately, years of cuts and budget freezes have chipped away at quality and access to post-secondary education. Cancelled courses and deteriorating facilities are the most visible results. Ontario has the lowest per-student funding of any province in Canada – that means campuses are crumbling, students have fewer resources, and faculties rely on temporary sessional instructors rather than full-time, permanent professors that can be there when students need them. Also, successive governments have shifted the burden for funding universities and colleges to students. Ontario has the highest undergraduate and graduate tuition fees in Canada, making post-secondary education and training out of reach for too many Ontarians.

An NDP government will ensure that a post-secondary education is an attainable dream for every Ontarian. Every student who qualifies for the Ontario Student Assistance Program will get a non-repayable grant, instead of a loan, and graduate free of debt to the province.

Our commitment to students will not stop at graduation. Through the Jobs and Prosperity Fund, we will double Ontario's Career Kick-Start program so Ontario's colleges and universities can create new work-integrated learning opportunities. We will also offer a better way to start a career with new ways to learn on-the-job for students and apprentices.

Further, Andrea Horwath and the NDP will launch a faculty renewal strategy to allow contract educators to become full-time professors and instructors, and we will invest in more tenure-track faculty positions. This will help ensure students can learn from professors and educators who are there for the long term — who they can seek out to take more classes or reach for letters of recommendation. It will also help Ontario attract the best academic talent the world has to offer.

Health care

Years of cuts and funding freezes have pushed hospitals across Ontario into a dangerous overcrowding crisis. This is apparent in Brampton – where long waits have gotten worse and worse, while the number of patients left on gurneys in hallways has grown. New Democrats have long called on the Liberal government to fix overcrowding in Ontario hospitals, particularly in growing communities like Brampton.

Andrea Horwath and the NDP are committed to working with the City of Brampton to expedite funding, planning, and building of both Phase 2 of the Peel Memorial Centre and the new, third hospital that Brampton needs. With three hospitals in Brampton, the NDP will end hallway medicine in a city that has seen thousands of patients each year treated in the hallways of its overcrowded and only hospital. We will restore hospital funding and ensure it keeps pace every year with inflation, population growth, aging, and the unique needs of communities. Funding will increase immediately by 5.3 per cent. Further, we will put a moratorium on layoffs for front-line health care workers, and we will work with partners and stakeholders to set the right staffing levels for hospitals, so they can deliver quality care to every patient.

Together, we will end hallway medicine in Brampton and across Ontario.

New Democrats believe that we can do more to deliver better health care and help everyone lead a healthier life — wherever they are. That's why an NDP government will be making other historic investments in health care. While the Liberal government's OHIP+ program has left millions of people without prescription drug coverage, an NDP government will make Ontario the first province with universal pharmacare by 2020 — so every Ontarian can get the medication they need. Unlike the Liberal government's plan, nobody will be excluded. Pharmacare will begin with universal coverage for approximately 125 essential medicines – chosen through an independent process led by the Committee to Evaluate Drugs – and it will expand to reach comprehensive coverage.

In addition, with our Ontario Benefits dental care plan, every worker will have workplace benefits for themselves and their family. That includes people in part-time or casual jobs, in a plan that follows you, job to job. We will begin by setting a minimum standard of dental coverage, ensuring people have access to essential care. We will also require every employer to provide dental benefits to workers and their families that meet a minimum standard of coverage. Furthermore, Andrea Horwath and the NDP will extend public dental coverage to every senior without retiree benefits and to every person on social assistance, ensuring that over 2 million more Ontarians are eligible for public dental coverage.

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New Democrats recognize that we must repair the provincial government's relationship with municipal governments. Previous governments have downloaded their responsibility to local governments while interfering in municipal affairs. It's time for a new partnership – built on respect and mutual support, where every decision is in the best interest of Ontarians.

Andrea Horwath and the NDP will work closely with the City of Brampton to forge a strong partnership. Together, we will deliver better health care, schools, and transit while making life more affordable for Brampton families.

New Democrats are ready to offer change for the better.

Best,

Ontario's New Democrats