



YORK REGION 2018 MUNICIPAL ELECTION PROGRAM

Labour Council's election program for York Region's nine municipalities combines the key issues that matter to working people for their municipal governments, Regional Council, and school boards. This growing and diverse region can only prosper if there is a strong foundation of public services, a recognition that growing economic disparities need to be tackled, and a strong commitment to equity. Elected representatives at Regional Council or School Boards should be willing to champion:

PUBLIC SERVICES

- Our elected representatives must defend public assets and services, oppose privatization, and end P3 utilization. They should work to expand accessibility of childcare, libraries, recreational services, sanitation and water services, and care for the elderly while at the same time ensure that workers are paid a fair wage for their labour in making York Region a great place to live and work. Politicians must push against the downloading of costs to municipalities, which leads to increased levies or overburdened public services, and causes disproportionate financial strain on renters and household budgets. This would also require that businesses are paying a fair share of taxation to alleviate the growing economic disparities in York Region.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

- Too much of York Region's growth has resulted in urban sprawl that creates huge pressure on services, long commute times and inadequate social interaction at the neighbourhood level. York Region's *Energy Conservation and Demand Management Plan* has made some gains in reducing the Region's carbon footprint, but there is a huge opportunity to lower the Region's carbon footprint while creating good jobs – in everything from transit to building retrofits, eco-schools to more compact communities. Labour's *Greenprint for a Greater Toronto* points the way to transforming every workplace. Zoning decisions that protect farmland, forests, and rural spaces within the Greenbelt from development are important in ensuring clean spaces, food security, and clean air for future generations.

INVESTMENT IN EDUCATION

- The foundation of a healthy society is an education system that leads students to succeed. The province needs to fix the currently flawed funding formula and fix our schools. A major retrofit program of schools is long overdue, and will save money, lower carbon emissions, and create good jobs. School boards need to embrace programs and policies that serve students of all backgrounds regardless of race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status, and provide respectful working conditions for education workers. Evidence-based decision-making should be used to best utilize education support staff in addressing the complex needs of our children and youth. Local schools should be true community hubs, offering programs and welcoming spaces for local residents and community groups.

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

- Poverty is hidden in York Region with more and more households housing multiple low-income families. All levels of government must deliver the money needed to build new social housing units and keep existing social housing units in good repair. As the fastest growing municipal jurisdiction in Canada, York Region must also spearhead new initiatives like co-operative and

non-profit housing to reduce the impact of speculative pressures on housing stock. Supports must be put in place to allow residents to succeed in securing sustainable housing after entering into shelters.

PUBLIC TRANSIT FOR ALL

- Affordable, accessible transit is crucial for the health of this region. Freezing fares and returning operations of transit lines back into the public's hands would ensure accountability and lower the cost of operations. Any new transit investment must ensure that the public owns and operates that infrastructure. Planning of commercial, industrial and residential zones should focus on complete communities that allow for work, home, and recreation all to be accessible via public transit and/or bicycle.

COMMUNITY BENEFITS

- Major infrastructure projects should provide good unionized jobs for local residents, access to careers in the trades and professions for marginalized communities, and high environmental standards. The Region should play a leadership role in embedding community benefits into any new infrastructure projects.

A REGION OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

- Accessible public services and democratic practice are crucial for social justice. The shameful act of stripping public holidays from 64,000 retail workers with no public consultation should never have happened and needs to be repealed. York Region Council must embrace robust democratic practices and become truly accountable to residents.
- While the Inclusion Charter for York Region is a good first visionary step, ensuring that a gender and equity lens are applied to all budgets and programs will make that vision a reality. At the same time, there needs to be a commitment to challenge systemic racism - one that involves the consultation of First Nations communities living in York Region.