

Voter's Contract

2010 Municipal Election

I _____ (print name), agree that if elected to council, before simply voting to hike property taxes or create new taxes, I agree to lead the following initiatives: *(initial all that you support)*

- 1) _____ **Contract out services to reduce costs & improve results** – *By contracting out services to the private sector and non-profit organizations, governments across Canada have saved taxpayers millions. I will explore partnerships with the private sector before raising taxes.*
- 2) _____ **Pursue P3s for capital projects** – *Private public partnerships can help governments reduce costs for infrastructure projects. Before simply raising taxes, I will explore P3s for capital projects.*
- 3) _____ **Referendums for large capital projects** – *Referendums not only ensure that those who pay the bills for government projects – taxpayers - have a say in expensive municipal decisions, they can help reduce costs as less 'political legacy' projects are approved.*
- 4) _____ **Sell unused and unneeded land and assets** – *Some municipalities own land and assets that aren't needed. Before simply raising taxes, municipalities should conduct a land and asset review and sell-off surplus items.*
- 5) _____ **High staff salaries & benefits** – *Public sector salaries and benefits are often higher than in the private sector. I will review salaries and benefits paid to municipal employees and ensure they are competitive with private sector levels before simply raising taxes*

Candidate's Signature

Voter's Signature

Date

Backgrounder – Voter’s Contract

- 1) Contracting out** – Before simply hiking property taxes, municipalities should examine areas where it could save costs by contracting out services to the private sector and non-profit organizations.

For example, when the City of Winnipeg contracted out garbage collection to the private sector in 2005, [costs dropped by 36%](#), but so did complaints – by 20-25% annually. In other words, taxpayers received a better service at a lower cost. A similar result occurred in Indianapolis. They found that once their pothole repair teams were subject to competition, city employees were suddenly able to reduce costs by 28% and improve productivity by 68%. Go figure!

- 2) Pursue P3s for capital projects** – Municipalities of all sizes have recognized the benefits of private public partnerships for infrastructure projects. By partnering with the private sector, municipalities can reduce construction costs, the risk of cost overruns and operating losses. For example, Chilliwack B.C. expects to save over [\\$3 million](#) through its arena partnership.

- 3) Referendums for large capital projects** – taxpayers are often saddled with the bills for politicians’ legacy projects and the pet projects of special interest groups. Conducting referendums can help ensure that those responsible for paying the bills – taxpayers – have a say in what’s being decided.

- 4) Sell off unused and unneeded land and assets** – Many municipalities own land and assets which aren’t in use and could be sold off. Municipalities should sell them off before simply raising property taxes or creating new taxes.

- 5) Salaries and benefits** – Many studies have shown that government employees’ salaries and benefits packages are often higher than similar positions in the private sector.

For example, a report by the [Canadian Federation of Independent Business](#) (page 20) found the salaries and benefits of municipal positions in Manitoba were 35% higher than similar positions in the private sector.

Before simply hiking your property tax bill, municipal politicians should ensure such large wage gaps do not exist.