

Voter's Contract

City of Winnipeg 2010 Civic Election

I _____ (print name), agree that there are many ways City Hall could improve how it spends the money it currently receives from taxpayers. 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) _____ **Control skyrocketing city salaries & benefits** – *City data shows salaries and benefits for its employees are increasing at a rate far faster than the average Manitoban's. Salaries need to be brought in-line with what's happening in the private sector.*
- 2) _____ **Contract out services to reduce costs & improve results** – *By contracting out garbage collection, costs went down by 36% and complaints dropped 20-25% annually. Further contracting out should occur prior to simply hiking taxes.*
- 3) _____ **Sell unused and unneeded land and assets** – *The city owns \$1 million worth of riverfront land in West St. Paul (outside of Winnipeg) that has sat idle for years. Instead of simply raising property taxes, unused and unneeded land and assets like this should be sold.*
- 4) _____ **Sell one or more golf courses** – *By selling one or more of the city's 12 golf courses, the funds could be used to support core services - road repair, policing, park maintenance, etc - ultimately helping to avoid a property tax hike.*
- 5) _____ **Rapid Transit "Light"** – *Instead of spending hundreds of millions on new rapid transit corridors, the city could use low-cost transponder technology to reduce the amount of time busses wait at red lights. Minneapolis, Portland, Toronto & LA currently use the technology.*

Candidate's Signature

Voter's Signature

Date

Backgrounder – Voter’s Contract

- 1) Salaries and benefits** – On page 20 of the City of Winnipeg’s [Economic Opportunity Commission report](#), it notes City of Winnipeg life guards make approximately double the amount earned by YMCA lifeguards - \$17.50 to \$22.24 (city lifeguards) versus \$9 to \$10 (YMCA lifeguards).

Before simply hiking your property tax bill, the city should close wage gaps such as this and ensure salaries cease from skyrocketing well above the average Winnipegger’s.

If you think the example is an isolated case, consider a report by the [Canadian Federation of Independent Business](#) (page 20) that found the salaries and benefits of City of Winnipeg positions were 39% higher than similar positions in the private sector.

Don’t believe it? Take a look at this blog post ([click here](#)) and you see annual City of Winnipeg reports that list the names and amounts earned for city employees earning over \$50,000 per year. An investigation into 50 random city employees (same position in both years, no indication of severance payments) between 2007 and 2009 showed a 13.5% increase in take home pay. However, [Statistics Canada data](#) showed the average Manitoban only saw a 5.5% increase over the same period.

- 2) Contracting out** – 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.

Similarly, the City of Indianapolis found that once its pothole repair teams were subject to competition, its employees were able to reduce costs by 28% and improve productivity by 68%! Before simply hiking property taxes, the City of Winnipeg should examine other areas where it could save costs by contracting out services to the private sector and non-profit organizations.

- 3) Sell off one or more golf courses** – The City of Winnipeg owns [12 golf courses](#); one of which (John Blumberg) isn’t even located in Winnipeg. Before asking taxpayers to pay higher property taxes, the City should look at the sale of one or more of its money-losing golf courses and use the funds to support core services – eg. policing, street repair, park maintenance, etc.
- 4) Sell off unused and unneeded land and assets** – at the Northeast corner of Main St. and the Perimeter (outside of Winnipeg), sits [43.9 acres of prime riverfront land](#) that is owned by the City of Winnipeg. Although the land is valued at approximately \$1 million, the City has been sitting on it for years. Instead of sitting on valuable, unused land and assets, the City should sell them off before simply raising your property tax bill.
- 5) Rapid Transit “Light”** – Toronto, Minneapolis, [Los Angeles](#) and many other cities use transit signal priority technology to reduce travel times for their busses. The technology communicates with upcoming traffic lights and tells them to stay green a little bit longer or turn green a little bit sooner. Studies show the technology doesn’t have a negative impact on motorists and it helps cities avoid building new, expensive dedicated bus ways.