



Manitoba has extraordinary potential for growth. We have talent, research and innovation, and some of the most abundant natural resources in the world, and Manitoba Liberals are offering a real choice for real change.

As Manitoba Liberals see it, we need to grow the private sector in Manitoba. Capitalism requires capital, and there has been a capital drought in Manitoba for entrepreneurs for decades, and a refusal to invest in the basic infrastructure that benefits everyone.

The best way to grow and build both personal and community wealth in this province, so we can all be more self-reliant, is to invest in starting and growing more independent, Manitoba-owned businesses.

It is sometimes argued that the reason Manitoba faces economic challenges is that Manitoba's public sector is too large compared to its private sector.

The top-down solution is to shrink the public sector – through attrition, cuts, freezes and layoffs. This doesn't translate into new businesses or a richer private sector – it shrinks the whole economy, because Manitobans and businesses alike don't have services they need.

Instead of investing local business and infrastructure, NDP and PC governments have routinely committed hundreds of millions of dollars in public subsidies, grants and one-off tax arrangements to subsidize companies from outside of Manitoba. The PCs offered \$1.7-billion to Amazon to locate here.

The Manitoba Liberal vision to increasing prosperity and building wealth is about growing a stronger Manitoba economy from the grassroots up, instead of from the top down: growing independent Manitoba businesses across the province will make us stronger and more self-reliant, while our infrastructure investments should aim for minimal environmental impact.

Our solution to access to capital is to create a politically-independent Manitoba Business Development Bank, with an \$100-million/yr in funds. It would be equity, not debt-based and provide access to entrepreneurs to start up and scale up.

We will provide Manitoba businesses and farms with new tools for debt relief, including a new Manitoba Debt Compromise Board (MDCB) which would help borrowers unload burdensome debt to set the stage for future growth. We want to keep farmers on the farm and owners in the business.

We are also proposing immediate investments to rebuild our services and infrastructure – to generate growth and future revenues.

We will invest in strategic trade infrastructure and corridors that increase the efficiency and movement of goods through Manitoba, with Centreport, Churchill, and Emerson being three critical ports. With inflation and rising costs, there is real urgency in getting these projects done, and we will ensure MTI plays a long-term strategic planning role.

Trade goes both ways. Manitoba must be making, adding value to, and exporting our own goods as well as moving others. That means focusing on value-added production, and a commitment to food, medical and energy security.

We have committed to Indigenous engagement through the creation of an Indigenous Secretariat so that policies are developed with Indigenous consultation, input and partnership.

We are also committed to improving funding to Municipalities – and one example is our proposed \$300-million annual Green Fund, which would fund environmental projects that fight climate change. Municipalities would be eligible for grants for infrastructure upgrades, energy retrofits, as well as rewilding, tree planting and conservation.

We are the only party offering a real choice for real change on Manitoba's economy.

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With that context, the MHCA respectfully requests replies from each of the party leaders to the following questions:

- 1. Should you be Premier after October 3, will you embrace as general guidelines the Seven Pillars set out by the six leading business organizations to support economic growth:**
 - a. Fiscal Competitiveness
 - b. Venture Capital
 - c. Global Trade
 - d. Infrastructure Investment
 - e. Indigenous Engagement
 - f. Skilled Workforce
 - g. New Fiscal Deal for Municipalities

Yes. We are supportive of the each of the Seven Pillars to support Manitoba's economic growth.

- 2. Investment in Manitoba's transportation system is critical to sustaining existing and supporting new economic growth.**
 - a. Do you commit to building upon the current level of forecasted investment in the highways (five-year investment plan of a minimum of \$500 million annually) based upon a public assessment of the system's current condition and projected future needs?**

Yes, we commit to building upon the current level of forecasted investment in highways.

- 3. Trade accounts for 53% of Manitoba's GDP. But *if you can't move it, you can't sell it.* a. Do you agree strategic transportation infrastructure investment is central to economic growth, as it is intrinsically links to trade?**

Our municipalities are the economic engines of the province. For them to succeed, they need long-term funding to ensure predictable budgeting and planning for their own development.

Manitoba Liberals recognize the vital role that strategic infrastructure investments play in the movement of goods and economic development in municipalities. Investments in strategic infrastructure is vital to the growth of our municipalities, and the funding of our public services in the form of valuable trade revenue that it will facilitate. We will prioritize specific, shovel-worthy projects which focus on repairing highways, bridges, intersections, and support for Centreport, that are in immediate repair and upgrades as determined in consultation with the Association of Manitoba Municipalities and MHCA.

We will further enhance the role of Manitoba Transportation and Infrastructure in long-term strategic planning for the province.

4. The proposed Canada Trade Infrastructure Plan (see attached) asks the federal government to work with the provinces and private sector to create a long-term trade corridor investment strategy, anchored by set criteria for prioritizing projects with the highest return to GDP, to elevate Canada's trade productivity and global profile

a. Do you commit to continue Manitoba's support for CTIP?

Yes, we will continue to work on CTIP, with modifications. Our focus on building wealth in Manitoba means building Manitoba ownership and Manitoba investments, not on making foreign investment easier.

5. CentrePort Canada, North America's largest inland FTZ port, has already attracted more than \$1 billion in private investment, is in the process of developing its Rail Park and CentrePort South footprint.

a. Given CentrePort Canada's demonstrated importance to Manitoba's domestic and global trade profile, **do you commit to continuing to support the full buildout of CentrePort Canada?**

Yes, we recognize that developers want servicing to be available and we have made a commitment in our platform to enhance water services and wastewater treatment and energy services to support the growth of Centreport Canada as a key intermodal trade hub.

Furthermore, we will support Centreport in its objectives to diversify its revenue streams.

6. Manitoba Transportation and Infrastructure plays a key role in the province's economic growth strategy, moving goods to market and people to jobs.

Do you commit to upgrading Manitoba Transportation and Infrastructure's mandate to be central to the province's economic growth strategy, aligning investment plans to trade corridors and gateways?

Yes, we will modernize MTI's mandate to ensure it has a strategic component and that we are prioritizing projects.

7. Benjamin Franklin was quoted to say that "if you fail to plan, you are planning for failure." For the greatest return to the GDP, investment in the transportation network must be planned, multi-year and strategic, allowing industry(s) to plan necessary HR, supplies and capital acquisition, for competitive bidding, which elicits highest value to the highways capital program budget.

a. Do you commit to moving MTI's highways capital budget to a planned annual and five-year program?

We are currently planning to move to three-year rolling budgets for the province, and would move MTI's budget to a planned annual and five-year program.

8. Municipalities struggle to raise revenues sufficient to meet the increased demand for expanded core services and for new services. They receive 10 cents of every tax dollar raised, yet are burdened with a disproportionate funding responsibility for those services – including infrastructure – that most immediately touch upon the standard and quality of life in communities. **Would your government commit to negotiate a 'new funding deal' that**

a. contemplates greater sharing of growth taxes

b. contemplates new sources of revenue raising for municipalities

c. most importantly, undertakes to reposition municipalities with fiscal power and flexibility to deliver quality services?

Yes – a Manitoba Liberal Commitment is to develop budgets that provide multi-year guidance. Especially for our municipalities, they need long-term funding to ensure predictable budgeting and planning for the success of their own economic growth and development.

The PC government's 6-year funding freeze caused a lot of setbacks to municipalities, having to absorb inflationary pressures and being unable to budget for subsequent years.

Our platform already commits to new sources of project-based revenue for municipalities: our \$300-million annual Green Fund, increased funding for the water services board, and more.