

2018 NDP ELECTION PLATFORM

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The NDP's 97-page platform, "Change for the Better," contains ambitious promises like universal pharmacare, free student loans, and means-tested childcare. These promises would be paid for by tax increases on high income earners and corporations
- In 2014, the NDP wagered that their path to power would be built by demonstrating that they were a responsible, centrist alternative to the governing Liberal party. Meanwhile, the Liberal party campaigned on a progressive platform full of promises that were traditionally within the NDP's domain and won a majority government
- In 2018 the NDP's platform is designed to appeal to its progressive working-class voters, as well as voters in northern and south-western Ontario, urban centres and disaffected supporters of the Liberal and Conservative parties

BACKGROUND

On Monday April 16th NDP Leader Andrea Horwath released the NDP's platform for the 2018 provincial election. Titled, "Change for the Better," the party's 97-page election plan contains ambitious promises like universal pharmacare, free student loans, and means-tested childcare. These promises would be paid for by tax increases on high income earners and corporations. The platform, which according to Horwath "puts people at the heart of government" is structured around five pillars (referred to by the NDP as "changes for the better"):

1. Drug and dental care
2. Healthcare
3. Affordability
4. Education
5. Protections for the middle class

In addition to these five pillars the platform contains dozens of proposals that would impact all areas of provincial jurisdiction.

CONTEXT

In 2014, the NDP wagered that their path to power would be built on demonstrating that they were a responsible alternative to the governing Liberal party. They committed to balancing the budget and put forth centrist policy proposals. Their platform was carefully designed to demonstrate their seriousness as a government in waiting and chip away at the notion that they were a risky alternative. Meanwhile, the Liberal party campaigned on a progressive platform full of promises that were traditionally within the NDP's domain and won a majority government with support from many NDP voters.

Now, in 2018, with the governing Liberals signalling their intention to campaign on the left, the NDP has a platform that appeals to its progressive working-class voter base, as well as voters in northern and south-western Ontario, urban centres and disaffected supporters of the Liberal and Conservative parties.

Key promises from the platform include:

- Universal pharmacare and dental care (for anyone with a workplace plan or health card)
- 65,000 new affordable housing units
- Providing free child care for households earning less than \$40,000 and at an average cost of \$12/day for everyone else
- Eliminating interest on provincial student loans
- 5.3% increase to hospital funding and \$19 billion over 10 years for hospital capital expansion
- \$16 billion to repair schools
- Creating 15,000 new long-term care beds over the next five years and 30,000 new supportive housing units
- Hiring another 2,200 mental health care workers (and creating a new mental health ministry)
- Cutting hydro bills by 30%

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PERSPECTIVE

While the majority of the NDP's proposals fall outside of the scope of local government, the platform has numerous implications for municipalities, including:

The Voters' List & Municipal Voting:

- Directing Elections Ontario to conduct a full in-person enumeration. While this proposal is designed to fix problems with the provincial voters' list, it would likely also have an impact on the municipal voters' list, and signals, at minimum, an awareness of the problem.

- The platform also states that the NDP would allow “municipal governments to experiment with reforms such as permanent-resident voting and alternative voting, to encourage greater participation in civic life.” There are few details on this proposal, and it’s not entirely clear what it would mean for municipalities.

OMPF Funding:

- Increasing funding to the Ontario Municipal Partnership Fund (OMPF) to \$550 million per year.

Infrastructure:

- Investing \$180 billion in infrastructure over the next ten years, focusing on public projects and bringing an end to P3s.
- Expanding Community Benefit Agreements and making them “integral” to all infrastructure projects.
- Creating a 10-year \$1 billion dollar fund for bring broadband service to rural and northern Ontario, and lobbying the federal government to match the funding.
- Making it a priority to invest in infrastructure in northern Ontario and rural areas.

Inclusionary Zoning:

- An NDP government would amend the government’s inclusionary zoning regulation by increasing the percentage of affordable units required and including rental properties within the scope of the regulation.

Housing:

- The NDP would encourage an “array of options” for housing including minimum density in developments along new transit lines, letting municipalities opt out of some minimum parking requirements, and requiring coordinated planning of retail and housing in medium-density developments.
- Working with municipalities, the NDP would also create a *Residents’ Rights Act* so that homeowners can add legal apartments, laneway houses and ‘granny flats’ to their properties.

Seniors Property Taxes:

- Allowing seniors who own their home to defer property taxes until their house is sold, so that they aren’t forced to sell their homes following a significant increase in its assessed value. This property tax deferral would be financed by the province, so that municipalities wouldn’t see their tax bases reduced.

Policing:

- The NDP would “release laws passed by the Liberals and Conservatives that allow the privatization of policing.” The platform does not specify exactly which laws, or aspects of existing laws, an NDP government would look to amend or repeal.

PROPOSED NEW SPENDING WITH MUNICIPAL IMPLICATIONS (\$ MILLIONS)

PROPOSAL	FY 18-19	FY19-20	FY20-21	FY 21-22	FY 22-23
15,000 Additional Long-term Care Beds	\$164	\$213	\$296	\$462	\$923
50% of Net Transit Operating Costs	\$809	\$825	\$842	\$859	\$876
Northern Rail Strategy	\$25	\$25	\$25	\$25	\$25
1/3 Social Housing Repair Backlog	\$434	\$434	-	-	-
Operational Funding for Supportive Housing	\$50	\$100	\$150	\$200	\$250
Affordable Childcare	\$375	\$1,141	\$2,790	\$3,259	\$3,791
OMPF	\$45	\$46	\$47	\$48	\$49
Expanding Rural and Northern Broadband	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100

*based on government assumptions in the 2018 Ontario budget and the NDP 2018 Election Platform

*chart shows additional spending above and beyond the current government's proposed allocations

Climate Change:

- Respecting local decision-making when it comes to renewable energy projects. Though it is not made explicit in the platform, this is likely in reference to wind turbines and the *Green Energy Act*, which have been a source of controversy in some municipalities.

Development Charges:

- The NDP would “fix the rules” around the education portion of development charges, so that DCs can be used to fund new schools.

Transit:

- Funding 50% of net transit and paratransit operating costs across Ontario. This would amount to an investment of \$330 million in Toronto and \$800 million across the province.
- Implementing a Northern Rail Strategy.
- Updating Ontario’s Cycling Strategy, setting a specific goal for the number of trips by bicycle and setting investment targets to improve cycling infrastructure across Ontario.
- The NDP would also work to ensure that all municipalities have active transportation plans that promote walking, cycling and other human propelled transportation, by 2021.

Long-term Care:

- Building and funding 15,000 more long-term care beds over the next five years, and 40,000 new beds by 2028.
- The NDP plan would focus on expanding the not-for-profit and municipal long-term care sectors.

- In addition to new investments in long-term care, the NDP would also restore a legislated minimum standard of care, including a minimum of four hours of hands-on care every day.
- Updating Ontario's *Long-Term Care Residents Bill of Rights* to include the right of spouses not to be separated against their will.

Paid Leave & the Minimum Wage:

- Requiring employers to provide at least three weeks of paid vacation to every full-time employee.
- The NDP would also increase the minimum wage to \$15 per hour, ban exemptions, and index it to inflation.

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