



**FREDERICTON
CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE**
— The Voice of Business —

364 York Street, Suite 200
Fredericton, NB
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Fredericton Chamber of Commerce Questions:

1. What are your top three priorities that you will make happen during your term if elected?

Grow the Economy, Improved Mental Health Services, and Improved Senior Care.

Grow the Economy

The healthy economy means jobs, more revenues that we can invest into expanded or needed programs and most importantly, sustainability. This is not only one of my top priorities, but it is also one of the cornerstones of our Liberal platform: Grow the Population and Economy. A short-term approach to move the economy forward makes cuts to balance budgets. There is no question we need to balance the books and get our fiscal house in order, but equally, we cannot cut our way to prosperity. This approach is a short-term solution that will eventually cripple this province. The current provincial government has been complimenting itself on its “economic recovery,” but the fact remains that 16,000 fewer New Brunswickers were working in full-time jobs in August than in January. This is not the time to tout one’s record and celebrate; it is time to take on these difficult numbers with a plan. So, I believe we need to look at the long-term approach and focus on population growth. We can do this by attracting people and organizations to our province. Organizations that specialize in specific areas based on our top priorities. We need to be laser-focused on 3 priority areas to grow our economy, to be Number 1 in the world. We must think big, really big. Our province is small, and I see this as a huge advantage—we can be nimble and responsive in getting the infrastructure, education and training, and talent pool in place to support our chosen priorities— through which actions we will grow our economy. I believe that cybersecurity /IT sectors are the key components in growing our economy: as identified in the Liberal platform. We already have an excellent reputation in this area; we can accelerate and build a world-class, provincial powerhouse.



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Mental Health

This is such a crucial area, unless our citizens are healthy, they cannot be well adjusted, contributing members of our society. We have heard a lot of talk about improving our mental health supports, but I want to act. No more talk—just get to work and make the changes needed. Most of us have family or friends that have struggles with some form of mental health issues. What many people do not know is that if you try to get an appointment with a professional to identify the problem and get help, it can take up to a year. People are suffering in silence. Our young people deserve better. We all deserve better. The Liberal platform commits to a 10-year action plan to address our mental health issues with systemic changes within government and community services to provide easy, integrated access and support for mental health services. This means there will be results.

If I am elected, I will be doing everything I can to have the province open a walk-in youth mental health clinic in the greater Fredericton area, for ages 12-25. The clinic would allow a young person to come and get help without an appointment. This is no different than physical health; this center will save lives. We cannot grow our economy and make NB the best place to be unless we help the “whole” person to be healthy and armed with the educational skills to be successful.

Seniors

I will advocate for improved senior care. This is also a platform commitment.

COVID shone a light on senior care in New Brunswick and across the country, and what we saw was shocking. This pandemic has taught us that the status quo for senior care is completely unacceptable. We need to take better care of our elders, and the people who care for them. Our long-term care facilities need higher standards, better and increased monitoring by the health authorities—and even higher pay for these front-line workers, who are putting themselves at risk every day, just going to work. Our seniors are the ones that took care of us—they deserve the right to be taken care of now.



I also know that seniors want to stay in their homes as long as they can, and their loved ones want this also. Shifting more primary and senior care services to the homes is crucial and makes sense. I will work to make this happen.

2. What opportunities do you see arising for the Fredericton Region as a result of the pandemic? How can we capitalize on these opportunities?

There is no question that every crisis also presents an opportunity, to learn and make changes. While we all certainly wish that COVID had never happened, it has taught us some important lessons. In the area of health care, we see that the sudden necessity of implementing virtual visits has shown just how effective technology can be for getting medical consultation more quickly, and more cheaply, to those who need it. We can take advantage of this situation to streamline operations. Through this action, we will realize many more opportunities to help our front-line health workers, using technology to provide better and more convenient healthcare.

Our health care workers continue to show us their commitment, compassion, and resilience during this pandemic. We need to step up and give them the support they need to carry on. We need to increase numbers so these workers have back up, and do not have to work long or extra shifts to fill the staffing shortages. Our platform sets out a number of initiatives in this regard and Fredericton area health care workers will benefit from these actions.

3. The private sector, especially small business which is the engine of the economy was severely impacted by the pandemic, how will your government support the recovery of our economy?

While the provincial government, through the All Party COVID Committee, did a good job closing the borders, shutting down non-essential businesses and enforcing



public social distancing, one area where the government's response has been greatly lacking is in their approach to economic recovery—especially with small business. Our small businesses are hurting. In a time of downturn, the basic economic strategy (on the widely accepted Keynesian model) is to employ stimulus spending to combat an economic crisis, in our case, in the tourism and hospitality sectors. Our government will work with small businesses to deliver a hand up, rather than a handout. Another shutdown for many small businesses would mean closing their doors for good, so we need to provide emergency provincial stimulus programs to bridge the gap. A focused Liberal economic task force will identify key priorities, develop policy for recovery and implement programming to help small and medium businesses get back on track.

4. Prior to the pandemic, an aging and declining labour force was a top concern of businesses in our region. Immigration will be more challenging in the short-term – how can government help labour force participation in the province?

I have had several discussions on immigration with many different groups. In my opinion, our path to success as a province is centered on population growth. One of the major pieces of population growth is immigration. One of most difficult issues around immigration is retention of immigrants. I believe the key to retention is inclusion. When a family feels like they are at home, they have safety where they live, their children have friends, the parents can find employment—then you see families settling for the long term. Our multicultural association does a wonderful job. We are extremely fortunate to have people from many different cultures living here in our area. As a province we need to work with the federal government to increase our level of immigration. The future of our Province will depend on how well we can handle immigration. One issue is that far too many examples exist where skilled professionals come to our country but cannot find jobs in their field. Other provinces have proven there are better ways to integrate professionals and skilled workers. They should be fast-tracked. There is no reason why we should have engineers, dentists, and doctors doing minimum wage jobs when we need these skills in our communities.



5. What natural resource development opportunities are most important to growing the New Brunswick economy? How can government help move these industries forward?

Forestry and farming are crucial to the New Brunswick economy. We need to market these and other natural products (such as maple syrup and blueberries) more widely and more effectively, and build trade relationships with markets all over the world. In these industries and in general, where appropriate, we need to be taking greater advantage of free trade agreements. Expanding our markets will be a key part of our economic recovery plan. We will sit down with exporters and business leaders; we will consult extensively with industry on an aggressive world-wide trade strategy.

A Liberal government will provide the forestry industry with predictable long term-funding for silviculture, which ensures quality control of forest development. The forestry industry can also take greater advantage of a worldwide trend of using building materials that come from renewable resources. Engineered wood products, such as panels and beams, offer strength and safety properties on par with traditional materials. Wood products use less energy and emit fewer greenhouse gases over their life cycle than traditional construction materials. Wood can help reduce the carbon footprint of most buildings and lower GHG emissions.

90% of our produce in New Brunswick is imported. We can do much better than this. We have seen a greater emphasis since the pandemic on buying local foods. We will introduce new programs to support farmers: buying local encourages us to boost our economy. We will support and promote local food and mandate our public institutions to source local food.

Equally, we need to balance support for our industries with protection of our environment. In this light, the Liberal platform vows to ban glyphosate spraying. The jury is out on glyphosate. It has been banned widely in the US, and in Europe,



Vietnam, Thailand, Saudi Arabia, parts of Australia and soon Mexico, to name a few—we are late to the game. This chemical, while effective for forestry and farming, has been found in food such as bread and has been described as a probable human carcinogen by the WHO.

Moving beyond glyphosate will ensure we can maintain access to the increasing number of world markets which have instituted a ban.

6. The Fredericton Region has been building expertise and capacity in cyber security over the course of several decades. What role can government play in ensuring we remain a global leader in this sector?

As I have mentioned throughout my campaign, cyber security is my passion. I believe it is one of the three areas we need to focus on for economic growth. We can focus on attracting these companies from around the world to our province because of the tremendous echo system that we have established. We have a 30 million dollar building in Knowledge Park ready to go: However, our government has put this on hold since the last election. We need to find a global anchor tenant for the Cyber Centre—this will attract others to this province. It does not stop there: we need to work with universities to ensure the right talent pool is being developed annually to support cybersecurity and IT sector growth. This initiative will drive population growth by bringing skilled workers to New Brunswick. Population growth, as I mentioned earlier, is the key to our Province's economic recovery and future success.

7. How should New Brunswick handle a second wave of COVID-19 in New Brunswick? What are the appropriate metrics to trigger another public health shutdown?

This question is best answered by our Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Jennifer Russell. Politicians should stay out of this arena and leave the strategy and the answers to the professionals in charge of the file. When politicians start trying to expand their



reach and authority into the areas of expertise of others, areas that are already structured with their own chain of command, this political intrusion undermines both our civil service's authority, and the government's relationship with the civil service. They should stay separate.

8. What are your views on the New Brunswick's 10-year education plan and Green Paper? How do you intend to ensure consistency in the province's education plans?

The Ten-Year Plan was a model of participation. It was created as a collective and provided New Brunswick with the participatory model for the COVID committee. It was created by the NBTA, the AEFNB, and government. Significantly, the Ten-Year Plan had participation of *all* parties and was popular. Citizens embraced the concept; they deserve having political forces working together for a change, with the goal of trying to make a sensible plan for education that would outlast the election cycle.

The Green Paper, on the other hand, came from within Government and not the experts. Introducing this paper as somehow being a "one-perspective substitute" for years of consultation with people working in the field was a heavy-handed, ill-advised move, in my opinion. The provincial government dismissed the hard, multi-partisan work of many experts and of skilled and experienced workers, working in concert for over three years. We should go back to the Ten-Year Plan, and, as we saw with the COVID committee, we should listen to all voices at the table. Following the advice of only those that you agree with is not the way forward. Leadership means listening, really listening, to all voices and taking the best decision possible for all. A strong and confident leader reaches out to understand opinions and advice from all directions. That is my style. Working from a fully-informed position builds a highly productive team and leads to the best results. This is how I work, what I have done, as my track record shows, and what I will continue to do. I am ready to work hard for our city, for my riding and our province.



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*Responses can be returned to Morgan Peters at advocacy@frederictonchamber.ca. As noted in my email, we plan to have all of the responses posted by 8 September 2020, which will give about a week before the election. We may send out a short press release on this date as we will be starting our Leaders' Series that day as well.