



Summary of Responses

Questions for Candidates in Elmwood By-Elections

March 24, 2009 Provincial By-elections

Candidate Responses – Summary

Following is our summary and evaluation of the candidates' responses to our questions. Answers to the first general have been incorporated into the summaries for other questions. Our overall comparison and evaluation appears at the end of this summary.

Question #2: Provincial Spending on Cycling Infrastructure

In 2008 Bike to the Future calculated that funding for cycling-related infrastructure by the province of Manitoba and the city of Winnipeg combined was less than 0.5% of the province's total highways and transportation budget. We have proposed increasing this to 5% of the highways and transportation budget. We have also suggested a 50-50 cost-sharing program with municipalities as a way of increasing the commitment to bicycle infrastructure. Do you agree that provincial funding for bicycle infrastructure needs to be increased in order to encourage more use of bicycles as transportation?

- Schulz (Conservative) says nothing about increasing the commitment to cycling infrastructure in general.
- Blaikie (NDP) mentions that the city's AT funding is coming in large part from the province. He also mentions that the government has been working with volunteer trail organizations. However he doesn't express any of the dollar amounts in terms of percentages and doesn't mention increasing funding at all.
- Wolfrom (Liberal) seems to take into account the interplay between the roles of the city and province. He feels the city is doing a commendable job in increasing investment in AT, and feels the province could then play more of a role in other transportation alternatives such as rapid transit, improvements in service for those with accessibility issues, and transit in general. However he thinks that the province should provide help with AT when necessary, such as increasing funding for Disraeli to allow for dedicated and separated AT lanes on both sides of the bridge.
- Beddome (Green) gives specifics as to funding increases for AT and is most critical of the status quo. He questions why the Doer Government is not using a portion of its 5 year \$2 billion road renewal plan for development of AT infrastructure. According to him, the \$49 million increase to the road renewal budget recently announced by the provincial government should be used to develop an AT network across Winnipeg. Beddome claims a Green Government would invest more than our recommended 5% of the highways and transportation budget in AT. He would also like to divert a penny of the 8 cent/litre gas tax into spending on improvements for AT, arguing that it would reduce our dependence on fossil fuels at the same time.

Question #3: Provincial Role in Cyclist and Motorist Education

The Highway Traffic Act defines bicycles as vehicles and expects cyclists to ride in the streets. However, there is no educational program in place in Manitoba to help cyclists learn how to ride safely in traffic while following the rules of the road, and there is little in the motorists' driver education program that clarifies the rights and responsibilities of cyclists and motorists in relation to each other. We also understand that Manitoba Public Insurance Corp. does not consider the education of cyclists to fall within its mandate. What action do you think the province should take to improve cyclist and motorist education?

- Schulz agrees cyclist and motorist education should be dealt with, but does not give specifics.
- Blaikie mentions the provincial helmet program and the planned provincial advisory committee, but doesn't answer the question about education.
- Wolfrom believes in adding information about all types of alternative transportation in the motorist's education program. He believes that voluntary educational workshops for AT road and trail users should take place (although he doesn't say who should provide these or how they would be funded).
- Beddome is specific about adding to MPI's role: They need to incorporate specifics about cyclist rights in the driver education program, and the province and/or MPI should utilize radio, TV, and print media to get the message out that cyclists are entitled to a lane. He also believes in educating cyclists, with training subsidized by the provincial government (he argues this training will pay for itself in terms of reduced health care costs and road maintenance costs). Beddome also comments on the Highway Traffic Act itself, although this wasn't specifically asked for in the question. He says that "The Highway Traffic Act presently has more provisions for horse and carriage traffic than it does cyclist traffic." He wants the law clarified with regards to cyclists.

Question #4: Provincial Policies Affecting Active Transportation

A number of provinces within Canada have policies specifically related to active transportation generally, and to cycling specifically. In the United States, many states have adopted variations of the "Complete Streets" concept as policies government their transportation development, and the U.S. Department of Transportation has issued a policy statement on "Accommodating Bicycle and Pedestrian Travel: A Recommended Approach." Bike to the Future has been urging the province of Manitoba to adopt policies that would ensure that active transportation needs are an integral part of planning any highway construction project. Would you support this approach?

- Schulz simply agrees with the Bike to the Future approach.

- Blaikie mentions that the province is committed to establishing an active transportation committee to ensure that provinces and municipalities work together on AT, and says that he will take the committee's advice seriously. He mentions the current provincial policy to provide pedestrian access on all new bridges, and he supports building AT into highway and bridge project planning "as resources allow".

- Wolfrom also agrees with the Bike to the Future approach, and is keen on identifying priority areas for AT infrastructure improvements in consultation with all stakeholders. He would like to see AT enshrined in the new Plan Winnipeg to the extent that all new developments will require AT access.

- Beddome also agrees with the Bike to the Future approach, and he bemoans the discontinuous AT infrastructure that has taken shape up till now. As he puts it, "Can you imagine if our paved roads suddenly ended and motor vehicles were forced to cross mud paths to get to the next paved road? This is the situation that cyclists currently face."

Question #5: Active Transportation Needs within your Riding

As you know the Disraeli Bridge and overpass are to be rehabilitated and provisions for cyclists and pedestrians are a required part of the plans. There are other specific active transportation issues and needs within the riding, such as the need to develop better bike routes and facilities within the Elmwood neighbourhood and along the Henderson Highway corridor. While these issues fall within the jurisdiction of the City of Winnipeg, do you see any role that you, as a provincial MLA, could play to help promote a successful outcome to some of these active transportation needs and developments?

- Schulz again mentions the need to address Disraeli again, but does not provide specifics of what he thinks is needed.

- Blaikie is short on specifics here, but says he will listen to the Elmwood residents and other elected representatives. He realizes that the Disraeli is a city project.

- Wolfrom has a very large-scale view and doesn't mention much specific to Elmwood. He speaks of the province getting involved in long-term strategic planning in the Capital Region, and envisions a joined network of AT routes linking all neighbourhoods of Winnipeg not only downtown but with outlying (bedroom) communities in the Capital Region. He mentions two bridge links in his responses that would affect an AT route running from downtown to Birds Hill Park, the Hwy 59 bridge over the floodway, and the Louise Bridge, which he would like to see converted to AT once its re-sited replacement is completed.

- Beddome shows an awareness of the interplay between the roles of city and province, (as Wolfrom did in his response to Question 2) that the province can offer funding support for city projects. He would like the province to fund things such as:

- Traffic calming on Brazier and Roch to slow down the speeding traffic that's avoiding Henderson.
- Incentives for people to utilize AT options during the Disraeli rehabilitation.
- Plains-clothed bicycle mounted police officers.
- A Bike Share program to ensure equal access to AT options for children and families.
- Incentives to employers to make their workplaces more cycle-friendly, with secure lock-up facilities for bikes, showers, and change facilities.
- Funding for public washrooms and water re-fill stations.

Overall Evaluation of Candidates

Schulz's responses show little specific knowledge of cycling and active transportation issues.

Blaikie's responses are more knowledgeable about provincial government policies and indicate a willingness to consult with stakeholders such as cyclists' organizations, but he is cautious in the extent of support shown for development of cycling.

Wolfrom shows substantial awareness of cycling and active transportation issues generally, including issues specific to the Elmwood area and the Winnipeg region. He would balance the transportation needs of cyclists with those of others. He feels the province should provide some support for active transportation, but is not specific about the extent of this support.

Beddome shows the greatest knowledge of cycling issues and has many ideas about how cycling should be supported and improved. He would commit much more substantial resources to cycling development than any of the other candidates.