

Fredericton

M O N C T O N

SAINT JOHN



Cities of New Brunswick Association
Association des Cités du Nouveau-Brunswick

STRONG CITIES STRONG PROVINCE

To grow our cities and our province and to ensure continued prosperity for all New Brunswickers, the 8 cities are calling on the Provincial government to acknowledge the important role the cities have and consider making some changes to policies and legislation that will allow cities the opportunity to participate in decision-making that directly affects their residents. These include:

1) The implementation of a fair property tax system

- The 8 Cities are recommending that the Province implement fair and equitable property tax reforms in NB that will ensure greater equity, fewer tax breaks for big business and spur economic development and more reasonable rental rates. Ultimately, we believe the Province of NB should follow other Canadian provinces and leave property tax as an economic tool for municipalities across the Province.

2) A change to provincial arbitration legislation to consider affordability

- The 8 Cities are recommending that the Province of New Brunswick work with the Cities of New Brunswick Association to explore options to address this key affordability challenge associated with the legislated interest arbitration. Specifically, we're asking the province to explore; Final Offer Selection, Government Employed Arbitrators, and Right to Strike with Essential Worker Designation.

3) The ability of our cities to generate non-tax derived revenue

- The 8 Cities are recommending the Province can support each city's desire to provide enhanced services for its citizens by removing the "for profit" restrictions with the new Local Governance Act and allow cities the ability to generate new types of revenue that are not tax-payer dependent.

4) The ability for cities to implement a hotel levy

- The 8 Cities are recommending the Province remove the barrier that prevents cities from implementing hotel levies. This would be another example of being able to generate needed revenue without forcing our residents to pay more. The decision could be made at the local level if a municipality wishes to have a levy or not. This levy would be paid by visitors and would be used to continue to develop tourism opportunities within our cities.

5) Municipal sharing of cannabis revenue

- The 8 Cities are recommending that 44% of the excise tax revenues transferred to the Province from the Federal Government be redistributed unconditionally to all municipalities in New Brunswick (This amount equals 1/3 of the overall total revenue). As well, the 8 cities are recommending that this agreement be reviewed after the first and second year in order to make any required adjustments in light of actual costs.

6) The importance of immigration for municipalities (added at the annual conference, Oct. 27th, 2018)

- The 8 Cities are recommending that all levels of government support the cities in the opportunity for an immigration pilot program in NB. By adding immigration as a priority initiative we want to send a clear message that the cities view this as an essential part of the population equation and future success of the province.

Progress (update)

- During the election campaign, the PC government committed to the following:
 - **Overhaul** the *Local Governance Act* to give municipalities greater control over their own affairs – including greater powers over taxation and property assessment.
 - **Conduct** an audit of all regulations that should be controlled by municipal governments.
 - **Support** regionalization and partnerships
 - **Remove** the « for profit » restrictions on city-owned utilities
 - **Foster** community-driven economic growth initiatives.
- A proposal on « A fair and equitable sharing of cannabis excise tax revenues for NB municipalities » was prepared and signed by all three municipal associations. The department of Finance and ELG committed to share this proposal in May 2018 to the Executive council of the Provincial Government. (pending)
- As of November 27, 2019 the Ontario government is taking action to protect communities and to address critical issues in Ontario's firefighting sector which included the efficiency of the interest arbitration system.
- Letter requesting a meeting with Premier Higgs with the 8 city mayors was sent on December 4th, 2018 to further discuss the highlighted key priorities.

“What our cities are really asking for now is the ability to make local decisions and the ability to have a seat at the table for issues that impact / affect them.”