

Jon Morgan responses

Candidate for Edmonton City Council Ward ipihkoohtanipiahtsi

1. Will you oppose privatization of municipal services and infrastructure, including Public-Private-Partnerships aka P3s? Will you support bringing previously privatized services in-house?

A: I will be relentless in my opposition to privatization of our essential services and infrastructure. I've been a public servant for 14 years with the City of Edmonton and have watched the slow picking away at our public service in the name of cost-savings. I've never seen any cost-savings in downloading responsibility for the services the government should be responsible for and in fact have seen instead problems in accountability, the ability to control costs, lower wages and benefits, and increased bureaucracy. We need to commit to our frontline and the valuable deliverables they offer and as the for-profit model of delivery already in place in certain areas of the city (transit, waste, etc), bring those back under the delivery and control of the City of Edmonton.

2. Will you support your employees and your community by ensuring the municipality employs staff with living wages, full-time hours where desired, job security, and collective bargaining rights?

A: An adamant yes. We already know investing in our employees with living wages lifts up all by injecting more money into local economies. I commit to all of the above as well ensuring we focus on hiring local and remember to focus on promoting from within and giving opportunities for employee growth and education. The City of Edmonton can be a leader in industry by returning our focus to our employees - especially those on the frontlines involved in the direct, ground-level delivery of our essential services.

3. Will you oppose attempts from the provincial government to legislate against municipal staff including cuts to the Local Authorities Pension Plan, or restrictions on their right to strike?

A: Again an adamant yes. Time to stand up for our workers and lead the way in our support of workers' rights including the right to strike and protections of their pensions. Every worker deserves to be heard. Every worker deserves job security. Every worker deserves security in retirement and to know that they'll be protected in their later years.

4. How do you propose your municipality deal with funding shortfalls, cuts, and downloading of responsibilities from federal and provincial governments? Do you favour spending cuts over tax increases?

A: I am not in favour of spending cuts that impact workers negatively or the services they provide and our citizens rely on. There are ways of saving money that don't include cuts to our essential services. Some of that is investing in proper response to our common challenges. While working in the field as an LRT Inspector during this pandemic I saw a lot of trauma to not only our houseless population - a population that grew during this pandemic with increases in addictions, mental health issues, and job loss - but also to those inappropriately tasked with responding to it. I watched as our houseless community found their way onto our transit system with no other place to go and our operators stressed for their safety, the safety of the passengers, and the safety of those at risk. With little to no other options in place our first responders like police, peace officers, fire, and EMS are tasked with responding to problems that are better served by more proactive solutions like

housing first, harm reduction services, and mental health support. This saves us money on lost time, damage to property, and mental health supports provided to workers that would otherwise not be needed. To a larger extent I believe a conversation should be had in regards to our reliance on outside consultants that are oftentimes making decisions that could be made in house. These are some of the cost savings that we can find without cutting our workforce or the services that they provide.

5. Do you support measures such as mask mandates, vaccine “passports”, and vaccine mandates for staff to limit and reduce the spread of COVID-19 in your municipality?

A: With leadership lacking from other levels of government it behooves Edmonton and other municipalities to step in. It is unfortunate we are currently forced into a patchwork of responses from municipalities absent of a clear and cohesive approach province-wide. With numbers spiking in the 4th wave to protect our citizens, employees, and the services they deliver and rely on mask mandates, vaccine passports and mandates are the only way forward for the best interests of all.

6. Do you support measures to reduce municipal reliance on services fees and fares, such as eliminating transit fares?

A: Yes. Our essential services like transit and recreation are equity makers that lift many out of poverty and let everyone contribute to the success of our communities. Reducing those barriers to those that can't necessarily afford access should be a priority of all levels of government and all municipalities for the good health of our nation.