

Rashpal Sehmbly responses
Candidate for Edmonton City Council Ward Sspomitapi

1. Yes, I will oppose the privatization of municipal services and infrastructures including Public-Private-Partnerships. Any previously privatized services must be brought back in-house and should not remain in private hands. Public jobs means decent wages/benefits and in turn better job security which in turns helps drive our local economies as well.

2. I will fully support our employees and community in ensuring a living wage along with more full time work with job security and collective bargaining rights. As good public jobs come with decent wages and an income/benefits/pension which then translates into employees spending money in local economies to help local businesses thrive as well.

3. Yes, I will strongly advocate against any attempts from the provincial government to cut municipal staff pension plans. Our right to strike as unionized workers is a fundamental right for which I will always uphold.

4. The one thing I have heard about from the constituents in Ward Sspomitapi is the high cost the city spends on consultations and what they see as wasted money on temporary fixes. For example, people tell me of how sidewalks which are cracked and reported to the city are then temporarily fixed by the use of a thin layer of concrete, which deteriorates quickly and is not a permanent solution. Constituents don't want time/money wasted on temporary fixes and would rather see city workers out redoing the sidewalks for people to use safely. There needs to be a willingness to work with other levels of government to help our municipality out on projects thus lessening the need to increase taxes. I do not favour spending cuts over tax increases. As our city continues to grow we need to take into account that city budgets need to be better balanced in order to not have to have the burden of tax increases placed onto the citizens of Edmonton.

5. As we are currently in the fourth wave of a world pandemic in Alberta. City council needs to follow the advice of experts when it comes to Covid-19 restrictions and precautions. With the current count of well over 1000 people in hospitals due to Covid-19, I can't imagine the stress caused to the brave public health care workers during such a time. I think the majority of people have trust in measures that are based on the advice of medical professionals. I have met a few people who are strongly against the vaccine and masks which are small compared to those that feel we need to ensure more people get vaccinated to ensure the safety of all. That said, we are seeing that a lot of people's trust in their provincial government has been shaken over the past year as we've seen mixed messages from them. I do support measures such as mask mandates, vaccine "passports" and vaccine mandates for staff to limit and reduce the spread of Covid-19 in our municipality. Whatever we can do to reduce the case counts of Covid -19 and prevent needless deaths, I will support the safety of our citizens.

6. Families have spoken to me about the cost of the bus system and currently do not feel the value for what they pay with recent changes on routes. As our city continues to grow, our public bus system is designed for the movement of people of all age groups to attend appointments, get to work, visit family and friends and even get to the airport. The movement of people on the bus system ensures our economy continues to grow by adding a valuable service to our citizens.

When people are moving they are also spending money at local stores and restaurants which in turn help drive our economy. If the city budget can be overhauled to lessen or eliminate transit fares with no impact to the public bus jobs and wages, I will support such a move.