

Cailen Pygott

Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River – NDP Candidate

EDITOR'S NOTE: All candidates in Truro-Millbrook-Bible Hill-Salmon River were asked to complete a questionnaire unique to the constituency. This reply is from Cailen Pygott, NDP Candidate.



Cailen Pygott

1. What topic is raised most frequently while campaigning "door to door"?

We frequently hear concerns about access to health care, housing, and affordability.

2. The electorate is demanding a higher rate of accountability to their concerns. Nation-wide there is a significant increase of complaints that elected officials /staff do not return calls promptly. Will you change your office policy to increase accountability? Do you promise "you personally" or "a senior member of your staff" will return a call to constituents within 24 hours?

New Democrats know that people are more engaged than ever in politics – whether that be writing their MLAs, signing petitions, or organizing and attending protests. We value input from everyone, and are committed to responding to constituents in all the ridings we represent.

3. The lack of suitable affordable housing has become a major problem. Remote rural areas face even great challenges with lack of infrastructure such as: conditions of roads, cellphone, acceptable internet and government service. Being in a quasi-urban constituency you face different types of challenges. What will you do to ensure infrastructure in your constituency is equal to larger urban areas in order to retain current populations or to attract new families to the area? Under consecutive Progressive Conservative and Liberal governments, rural communities have been neglected. The NDP is committed to reversing that. We will prioritize the rapid build of affordable housing across the province, including in Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River, and open a pathway to homeownership with our rent-to-own starter home program. This will help families build a life in our community without sacrificing the opportunities that are too often available in larger urban areas.

4. What is the most promising asset / resource to achieve economic growth or population growth for Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River?

This area has a lot of potential for growth. Its strong agricultural roots, combined with opportunities in renewable energy like wind and solar, have huge potential to drive the economy while creating energy close to home. The region's natural beauty makes it great for tourism, and there's also room to grow Indigenous-led businesses and innovation.

5. With changes in the labour supply market, there is a visible increase in service sector employees from other countries. How extensive is "racism and bigotry" a basic and systemic problem in Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River? How will you help change it?

No one across our province should have to experience racism or bigotry, regardless of where they come from or where they work. Nova Scotia has many kind, accepting people, but we also know that racism and bigotry is a persistent problem across the province. The best way to combat this issue is to learn from each other and promote better understanding and education around all cultures.

6. What steps should be taken and how will you assist in making Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River among the "least racist" and "most welcoming" constituency in Nova Scotia?

New Democrats across Nova Scotia know that we all have a lot of work to do to make our communities safer for everyone to live and work in. To build a welcoming community that accepts everyone for who they are, we would focus on education about diversity and inclusion, foster open community dialogues, and support Indigenous reconciliation.

7. In which sectors in Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River should government prioritize its efforts of leadership and funding assistance to achieve a high rate of economic and population growth?

To drive economic and population growth in Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River, an NDP government would focus on sectors like agriculture and agri-tech, tourism, and Indigenous economic development. Investing in health care and wellness, education, and improved infrastructure will also help attract new residents and businesses.

8. ScotiaPort projects 4,600 jobs within a 20-year development period. Proponents of the project insist a new Highway 104 /102 interchange, costing upwards of \$50-million, is essential. How hard will you work to ensure the new interchange is built as soon as possible? How soon might you be able to announce progress on the interchange?

New Democrats know that road infrastructure is lacking across the province. Safe and accessible roads help communities attract investment, make it easier for folks to travel, and can help lower the costs of goods and services. An NDP government would work with the community and the industry to better understand how the interchange will help the community.

\$1.3-Million Application to be Submitted

By Maurice Rees

The replacement of 833 metres of pipe in Tatamagouche trunk sewer work, which is included in the five-year budget and scheduled to be completed over three years at a total cost of \$1.3M, could be completed in one year, if an application to Growth and Renewal for Infrastructure Development Program (GRID) is successful.

Approval to submit an application to seek Council's support for an application was main thrust of the Growth and Renewal for Infrastructure Development (GRID) report presented by Michelle Boudreau, Director of Public Works, to Council's committee meeting on November 14th.

Funding priority will be given to shovel-ready projects

that help communities address critical capacity issues, health and safety, expand services, build more accessible and adaptable communities, and projects that enable and/or preserve housing.

Eligible projects may be granted up to 50% funding, though the actual cost-sharing percentage could vary based on project specifics or budget availability. Eligible projects include: Construction, renewal or expansion of water, wastewater and stormwater infrastructure; Capital projects that have been identified under a climate adaptation plan; Projects required to comply with the accessibility act, or to improve accessibility to municipal infrastructure such as sidewalks

Municipalities may submit two applications but a maxi-

mum of one will be approved under the current intake, which closes on December 13, 2024. All applications must include a resolution of Council, and successfully funded projects must be completed by March 31, 2026. Another intake is expected in August of 2025, however no new projects will be awarded funding, if an existing GRID funded project remains incomplete.

In 2023, Council commissioned a water and sewer capacity study for the communities of Brookfield, Tatamagouche, Debert, Valley and Bible Hill. The study was completed in the Spring of 2024, and the report highlighted several infrastructure upgrades which are required to build capacity for additional growth in these communities. Council's approved five-year capital budget includes several projects which address the findings of the capacity study including major repairs to the Tatamagouche trunk sewer.

The trunk sewer is the main backbone to the sewage collection system and connects the entire community to the sewage treatment plant. Old leaky sections of clay tile pipe will be replaced with larger plastic pipe, which will allow for growth and keep groundwater out of the system. The capital budget shows the Tatamagouche trunk sewer work spread over three

years, at a total cost of \$1.3M. This work will include the replacement of 833 metres of pipe and the scope and nature of this work match the criteria of the GRID program.

Where municipalities are required to apply for shovel ready projects and applications are due by December 13th, it is advantageous to submit projects which have already been included in Council's five-year capital budget. While the trunk sewer work is currently spread over three years in the capital budget, a successful funding submission would allow for compression of the project into a single year and expedite efforts to create capacity in the system.

Committee recommended Council support Colchester's application to Growth and Renewal for Infrastructure Development Program, with the Tatamagouche Trunk Sewer Replacement as the selected project.

Where Council's approved five-year capital budget already includes funding sources for the above noted project (for example gas tax, sewer capital and reserves), a successful funding application could allow these funds to be re allocated to other projects.

(The above article was compiled from an Information Item from the November 14th committee meeting media package.)

9. How can you assist all three levels of government to ensure the best decisions will be made regarding expanding the "green energy" footprint and possible production of hydrogen from "wind and emptying landfills sites"?

We will work collaboratively with governments at municipal and federal levels, as well as in consultation with the community, in making any decisions that affect the people of Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River.

10. What existing provincial government program or planned policy is least beneficial to businesses and general population in Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River? Should more scheduled public transportation service be a priority?

Tim Houston and Dave Ritcey have failed to keep up with demands on our provincial housing stock and infrastructure. As a result, more people are living in poverty, cannot find an affordable place to live, and cannot access the services they need.

11. Many people are of the opinion the provincial government is directing too much attention to HRM and larger urban areas. What would you do to change the pendulum to place more emphasis on rural and quasi-urban Nova Scotia?

When we're knocking on doors across Nova Scotia, we hear the same issues in downtown Halifax as we do in Colchester County: there's a lack of affordable housing and access to health care, and the cost of living is too high. We are committed to improving living conditions for all Nova Scotians, regardless of where they live, and developing region-specific plans for different areas.

12. Normally MLAs are expected to "toe" the party line. If you are elected on November 26th do you promise to place a higher priority on "constituents wishes / needs" ahead of "party policy" except in "non-confidence" situations?

New Democrats across the province are campaigning on a platform that will build more homes, lower rent, reduce grocery prices, and make healthcare more accessible to everyone. Our priorities are Nova Scotia's priorities. As new issues arise, as they always do, elected New Democrats have robust caucus discussions about where we stand.

13. If you are elected on November 26th what actions will you immediately undertake to maximize economic growth and lifestyle enhancements for the constituency of Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River?

New Democrats will be ready to work on Day 1 after the election. Nova Scotians are struggling, and we can't afford to wait to take actions that will help folks. We will make deep investments in affordable housing and doctor clinics. In the immediate term, our policies to remove HST from essentials like all groceries, phone, internet, and heat pumps, as well as our Affordable Homes Rebate, will offer relief to residents who are strained by the rising cost of living.

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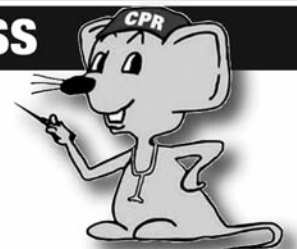
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