



WITH THE FEDERAL ELECTION TOO CLOSE TO PREDICT – WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS FOR ALBERTA?

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With less than two weeks until E-Day (October 21), it is still too close to predict which Party will form government. According to the vast majority of published polling numbers, it seems to be a two-party race between the Liberal Party and Conservative Party. However, a regional divide in support has emerged with the Liberals performing very strong in Quebec, Ontario and Atlantic Canada while the Conservatives soaring in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. What might come as a surprise to some is the Conservatives polling much better than expected in BC. While in contrast, any hope of the Conservatives performing much better in Quebec compared to 2015 has been dissipating with the recent surge of the Bloc Québécois (mostly at the expense of the Conservatives).

The most recent polling predictions (according to 338 Canada) indicate a seat projection of: Liberals – 162, Conservatives – 132, BQ – 21, NDP – 18, Green – 3). While this might seem fairly decent for the Liberals at first glance, it is important to note that within these predictions 58 seats are described as 'toss-up' ridings. With so many variables in play including vote splitting between the right and left parties, individual constituency candidate strength, as well as knack for provincial politics to creep into the federal realm (for example the polarization of Ontario Premier Doug Ford); this is expected to be a photo-finish of an election.

At home in Alberta, if the poll numbers hold up, we could see a sweep of every seat by the Conservative Party of Canada. This momentum seems to be fuelled by an anti-Trudeau sentiment that is rampant throughout the Province which has led to a collapse in Liberal support (current polling numbers indicate at 16%). The other major parties (NDP and Green) campaign stance and rhetoric with regards to pipelines and our oil and gas sector have resulted in their average polling numbers a distant third and fourth respectively. (According to 338 Canada: NDP at 9% / Green Party at 5%).

According to recently released polling and news reports, only two ridings appear to be 'battle ground'. The Liberals still have a chance to secure a seat in Edmonton – Millwoods, if Amarjeet Sohi is able to hold-off CPC candidate Tim Uppal in a rehash of the past election. It is important to note that Sohi only won the riding by 92 votes in 2015; however this time around polling indicates CPC at 48.6% and Liberals at 31.4%. This could be a much closer race than polling suggests as both have great name recognition and are well respected within the constituency. Both have held

important portfolios within their respective party: Sohi as Minister of Infrastructure and Communities (2015-2018) and later appointed Minister of Natural Resources in July 2018; Uppal, who served as the MP for Edmonton—Sherwood Park from 2008 to 2015; was appointed Minister of State (Democratic Reform) in 2011 and subsequently appointed Minister of State (Multiculturalism) in 2013.

The only chance for the NDP appeared to be Edmonton Strathcona prior to the official campaign period. However, NDP MP Linda Duncan who was first elected in the 2008 and subsequently re-elected in 2011 and the 2015 federal elections, decided not to seek a fourth term. With Heather McPherson now carrying the banner for the NDP, recent published polling numbers now indicate CPC candidate Sam Lilly with an edge and good chance of delivering for the Conservatives. While the numbers state the CPC – 42%, Liberals – 26%, NDP – 24% and Greens – 5.6%; political insiders have speculated that the

(Interpolated October 7, 2019)

	Safe Likely Leaning			Toss up	Projected ahead	Projection average
	53	52	32	23	160	162.4
	55	36	24	20	135	132.5
	3	9	3	6	21	20.8
	1	3	6	6	18	17.9
	1	1	1	0	3	3.4
	0	0	0	1	1	0.7
	0	0	0	0	0	0.3



RUVEN RAJOO
 Director of Media & Communications

Ruven's career in journalism spans two decades, most recently as publisher and owner for a community newspaper for fifteen years. He currently is serving his second term on the Board of Trustees for St Paul Education School Division, one of the most diverse school divisions in Alberta

Ruven's love for journalism is only rivalled by his passion for politics.



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numbers are much closer.

Some factors to consider is Edmonton – Strathcona is former Premier Rachel Notley's home federal riding. Recent media reports have stated that Notley has yet to decide whether to support her federal counterpart in Leader Jagmeet Singh. The federal NDP has spoken out against the expansion of Trans Mountain pipeline, a project Notley even as provincial Opposition Leader has continued to support.

It is quoted that Notley 'believes the federal (NDP) party is failing to stand up for workers in Alberta and elsewhere who would benefit from the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion and other resource projects.' The Provincial NDP went to great lengths to distance themselves from the federal NDP party during this past provincial election. It will be interesting to see if that continues up until Oct. 21. See my colleague Zack Ziolkowski's article profiling this riding on page 6.

Meanwhile, regardless which party prevails and forms

government, one of the biggest challenges awaiting would be repairing the current fractured relationship between Albertans and the decisions makers in Ottawa. There is no doubt a rift which has widened over the past few years and has led to frustration, anger and now rage within a substantial percentage of Albertans. A common narrative appears to be 'The rest of Canada is happy to take equalization from Alberta. They are happy to benefit from the prosperity that Alberta has. But then at the same time, they're going to turn around and try and block Alberta's key industry'.

Averages of seat totals per region according to the latest 338 Canada electoral projection (October 7, 2019)

	ATL	QC	ON	MB/SK	AB	BC	TR	Projection average
	27.2	42.7	72.5	5.1	0.0	13.2	1.6	162.4
	4.1	11.8	42.1	21.6	34.0	17.9	1.0	132.5
	0.0	20.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	20.8
	0.3	2.0	6.4	1.3	0.0	7.5	0.4	17.9
	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.1	0.0	3.4
	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.7
	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.3
Total	32	78	121	28	34	42	3	338

Some have publicly declared that this election is critical for the 'sovereignty of our federation'.

"There are many proud Canadians, however, if Justin Trudeau is re-elected on Oct. 21, they will be joining the separatist movement on Oct. 22 — watch the movement explode," said Peter Downing – Wexit Alberta Leader.

Premier Jason Kenney has often cited some of the sentiment he is encountering while travelling the Province.

"Albertans have been rightfully frustrated by the unfair deal we are getting in the Federation going as far as to even express support for separation. I don't want to let @JustinTrudeau push us out of our country. I'd rather focus on separating him from the Prime Minister's office" stated Premier Kenney on social media.

Preston Manning, the founding leader of the Reform Party, also recently offered a warning on the recent rise of anger and disillusionment.

"The challenge, I think, is to try to channel that energy and that anger and disillusionment into some constructive change, rather than just tearing things apart. And that's going to be a challenge for the next Parliament, no matter who ends up winning the next election," said Manning.

With less than two weeks to go, political insiders and enthusiasts are bound to be watching and listening to any source of intel that might shed some light on voter intentions. With the numbers this close, this election is going to be won or lost in the next 12 days! Albertans will just have to wait for the final result, before we contemplate our next move...



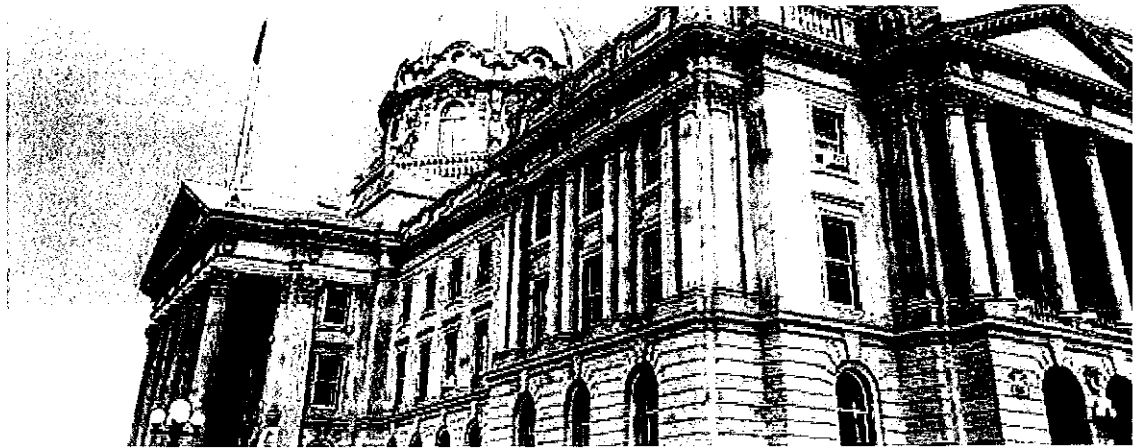
BRONTE VALK

Senior Associate

After graduating from the University of Alberta with a Political Science degree, Bronte pursued her passion for politics by working on the campaigns of numerous progressive political candidates. This experience combined with her in-depth knowledge of Alberta's political affairs, drew her into advocacy work. Bronte has worked as a case worker in the Honourable Sarah Hoffman's constituency office as well as the MLA for Edmonton-Ellerslie's. Her connections with government caucus and strong advocacy skills make her a great asset to our team.



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THE FUTURE OF THE ALBERTA PARTY

Bronte Valk

During the last provincial election, the Alberta Party suffered a considerable loss. While there are multiple reasons for the party's failures, former Leader Stephen Mandel has been quoted in saying it was hyper partnership that eventually defeated the party. The fear disseminated by both parties in the previous election led many to vote strategically. Fearful of a government that would slash funding for healthcare and education, 30 % of voters supported the New Democrats. But it was fear of the increasing debt and unemployment that led 55% of voters to elect the United Conservative Party. The Alberta Party walked out of the last provincial election with only 10% of the vote.

Now with limited fundraising capacities, no strong leader prospects, and no representation in the legislature, keeping the Alberta Party membership engaged looks like an impossible task. However, a look at the Alberta Party's history of ups and downs makes it unlikely that these challenges will completely dismantle the party.

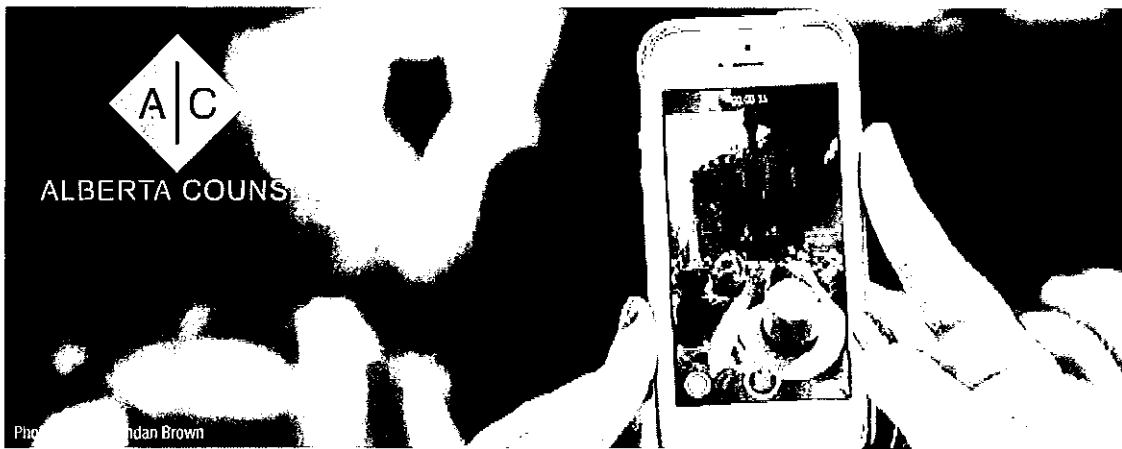
Many Albertans are unaware that the Alberta Party, predates Greg Clark and began in the early 1980s as an alliance of small separatist political parties and eventually in 1990 as a new political party. While the party was able to field candidates in the next few elections, it wasn't until 2011 that the party had its first MLA. This means that the party went twenty-one years of not having an MLA. Twenty-one years of existence with no party representative in the house makes it extremely unlikely that the party will dissolve now.

There was also a significant win for the Alberta Party in the last election with regards to growth in vote share. Their increase in vote share was more significant than any other party, at 300%. But failing to win a seat in the legislature had not surprisingly raised questions about the future of the party. Shortly after their loss, Stephen Mandel stepped down as leader of the party, and since then, no interim leader has been announced, and no AGM planned.

Another issue facing the Alberta Party is Stephen Mandel's appointment to the AHS board by Jason Kenney's cabinet. Though the Alberta Party has prided itself on remaining above partisan politics, there is a chance that his appointment by the Kenney government may have left a bad taste in the mouths of membership.

An early member of the Alberta Party spoke with Alberta Counsel and was asked for his reaction to a recent email he received from the Alberta Party on Mandel's appointment to the Alberta Health Services Board. The Alberta Party President communicated to its members in the email, "I think it is important that between elections, our members, board members, and former candidates work with any government to encourage pragmatic approaches that will benefit all Albertans. This is a great example of other parties recognizing the value of what the Alberta Party people and our approach brings to the table." The former Alberta Party member said he sees no sign of action or direction from the party, which means something in its absence.

Despite all this, there are still Albertans that identify as "centrist Albertans," who see the United Conservative Party as socially regressive and the Alberta New Democrats as fiscally irresponsible. Whether the party will be able to attract more support in the future is dependent on who their next leader is and the political direction of both the United Conservatives and the New Democrats. The more centrist these parties become, the less need there will be for an Alberta Party. Still, it is unlikely at this point we will see a complete dissolution of the party in the near future.



MICHELLE COLLINS
Associate

A dynamic and experienced executive level team leader. Skilled in non-profit organizations with a Certified Association Executive designation. Michelle previously worked with the Association of Alberta Registry Agents for over 10 years providing her with an in-depth understanding of all levels of provincial government across several ministries. Currently Michelle is the VP of fundraising for the UCP's provincial board.

POLITICAL EVENTS

UCP – Budget Breakfast

Friday Oct. 25th @ 6:30am

Location: Sutton Place Hotel, Edmonton

- Minister of Finance Travis Toews will be sharing his impressions of the provincial budget
- Tix: \$125 (www.unitedconservative.ca/events)

UCP – Vermillion Lloydminster Wainwright AGM

Friday Oct. 25th @ 7pm

Location: The Legacy Centre, Lloydminster

- All are welcome but only members are allowed to vote
- Tix: Free

NDP – An Evening with Rachel Notley

Friday, Nov. 1st @ 6:30pm

Location: Falconridge/Castleridge Community Association

- Join Alberta NDP Leader Rachel Notley, Calgary McCall MLA Irfan Sabir and candidates Parmeet Singh and Gurbachan Brar
- Tix: \$125 (www.albertandp.ca/events)

NDP – Leader's Reception

Saturday Nov. 16th @ 6:30pm

Location: Production and Innovation Centre, NAIT

- Join Alberta NDP Leader Rachel Notley for a cocktails and canapes reception on the evening of November 16th.
- Tix: \$150+ (www.albertandp.ca/events)

UCP – Annual General Meeting

Nov. 28 – Dec. 1st

Location: Westin Airport, Calgary

- Join party members to discuss policy and vote on executive positions
- Tix: tba

UCP – Jackie Armstrong-Homeniuk MLA Dinner

Friday Dec. 6th @ 7pm

Location: Dow Centennial Centre, 8700 84 Street, Fort Saskatchewan

- Listen to Keynote Speaker author Chris Robertson (To the Top Canada) who was voted 'best keynote speaker of the year' by the Professional Speaking Industry
- Tix: \$100 (www.unitedconservative.ca/events)



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Source Photo: Facebook

KEY INFLUENCER PROFILE

NICOLE WILLIAMS

Chief of Staff to the Minister of Education

Zack Ziolkowski

Nicole Williams is no stranger to the Legislature Building having worked in various capacities prior to her current role as Chief of Staff to the Honourable Adrianna LaGrange, Minister of Education. She previously worked under a Progressive Conservative government as a Legislative Assistant, Administrative Assistant, and as a Special Advisor to the Minister of Finance. After her public service, Nicole moved into the private sector with Canadian Strategy Group, a lobby firm based in Alberta.

This past election Nicole ran as the United Conservative Candidate in Edmonton West Henday against NDP Jon Carson who won by only 518 votes. This was Nicole's first time running as a candidate. For a first election effort Nicole had a remarkable showing in notoriously left wing Edmonton and it will be interesting to see if she chooses to run in the next election.

Nicole has a wealth of knowledge regarding politics in Alberta and is one of only a few staffers who have previous experience in the Alberta government. This skill set lends itself well to her current role, as well as being an asset to the rookie Minister she works for.



PASCAL RYFFEL
Director of Government Relations

After completing his MA in Media and International Development, Pascal spent four years with the Alberta NDP Caucus. Pascal has been directly involved in Alberta politics for almost two decades, including as a candidate in 2008, and has a deep and current knowledge of Alberta politics. Pascal has been with Alberta Counsel since 2015.



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AT A GLANCE

In the Media

Minister-led rural crime tour extended for another month: A rural crime tour that's seen provincial officials visiting small communities around Alberta is going to keep rolling. Justice Minister Doug Schweitzer, who embarked on the tour Sept. 5 to speak with residents, business owners, community partners, and elected officials in rural Alberta, called the trip an eye-opening experience. Schweitzer's tour will extend through the month of October with dates in Okotoks on Oct. 1, Camrose on Oct. 9, and Rocky Mountain House on Oct. 25.

Stephen Mandel joins AHS board: Mandel's appointment was approved by the Kenney cabinet. Also appointed was Heidi Overguard, a rural businesswoman and community leader. Mandel is a former three-term Edmonton mayor. Later he was provincial health minister until the PCs were defeated in 2015. Then he led the Alberta Party through this year's provincial election. The UCP hopes this will be seen as a symbol of cross-party co-operation during the health-care upheaval to come.

Indigenous Opportunities Corporation moves ahead: The province has taken the first steps to establish the Alberta Indigenous Opportunities Corporation (AIOC). Premier Jason Kenney promised during the provincial election campaign. The province has committed \$24 million over four years to set up the AIOC and provide services to Indigenous stakeholders. It has earmarked another \$1 billion to backstop Indigenous investment in natural resource projects and infrastructure, including pipelines.

The government says cash for the operation will come from cancelling the NDP's planned \$3.7-billion rail lease.

When he announced the corporation in April, Kenney said it would provide legal and economic backing to pro-development First Nations "who want to move toward being long-term strategic partners with industry and the Alberta government."

Government task force to expand apprenticeships, skilled trades: The Alberta government wants to expand apprenticeship programs in areas like computer coding and green technology, and has appointed a task force to figure out the best approach.

Advanced Education Minister Demetrios Nicolaidis announced the initiative Wednesday in Edmonton. He said the task force has been charged with four key tasks to better streamline skills training and credentials.

UCP considering lifting cannabis grower tax exemption: The provincial government is considering removing the tax exemption on commercial cannabis growing facilities and introducing longer-term capital contribution plans for cities, Municipal Affairs Minister

Kaycee Madu said Thursday. The part of a producer's facility dedicated to growing cannabis is currently taxed at a rate for agriculture land, which is zero in rural municipalities or counties or 20 per cent of the going rate in urban municipalities.

Alberta to review smoking legislation with aim of regulating vaping: A provincial review of Alberta's tobacco and smoking legislation could result in regulations for vaping by next spring.

Calgary-Klein MLA Jeremy Nixon will lead the review and will work with Alberta Health to examine the evidence and consult with Albertans and stakeholders, Health Minister Tyler Shandro said Wednesday.

Jason Kenney headed to Ontario to campaign for Andrew Scheer in crucial Toronto-area ridings: Jason Kenney, who has long promised he would campaign on behalf of Andrew Scheer's Conservatives against Justin Trudeau's Liberals, will make good on that vow this weekend, with more than a dozen appearances in his old stomping grounds around Toronto.

Alberta finance minister held two telephone town halls on budget: Alberta's finance minister hosted two telephone town halls to take questions and advice from the public on his upcoming budget. The provincial budget will be delivered Oct. 24.

Alberta hikes trespassing fines to ward off 'anti-farming' animal activists: The Alberta government will hike trespassing fines in response to last month's protest by a group of what Premier Jason Kenney is calling "anti-farming militants." Kenney made the announcement Thursday at the Jumbo Valley Hutterite Colony near Lethbridge, the same colony that saw its turkey farming operation targeted by animal welfare activists. In response to concerns raised by farmers and rural Albertans, he said the government will amend the province's Petty Trespass Act to specifically address trespassing on agricultural land, and increase penalties under the act to up to \$10,000 for a first offence and \$25,000 for a second offence. Repeat offenders could face up to six months in jail.

UCP announces digitization of seniors' benefits: Seniors will now be able to apply for and manage their provincial financial benefits online, the province announced Tuesday.

Those who wish can still mail, fax or drop off their documents in person, but having a digital option will help more than 200,000 seniors.

One of associate minister of red tape reduction Grant Hunter's initiatives, the program aims to save seniors time, energy and money by increasing their options for submitting receipts and other documentation for their financial benefit claims.

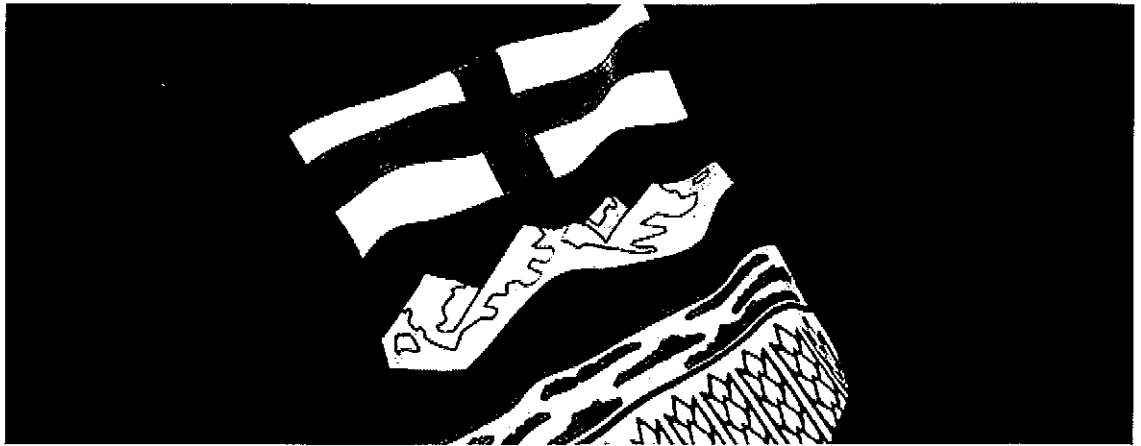


**ZACK
ZIOLKOWSKI**
Associate

After graduating from MacEwan University, Zack started working for the former PC government as a political staffer and moving into a role as the Director of Research and Communications for Government Members prior to the 2015 election. He also has an extensive policy background including work surrounding the Municipal Government Act on behalf of the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association.

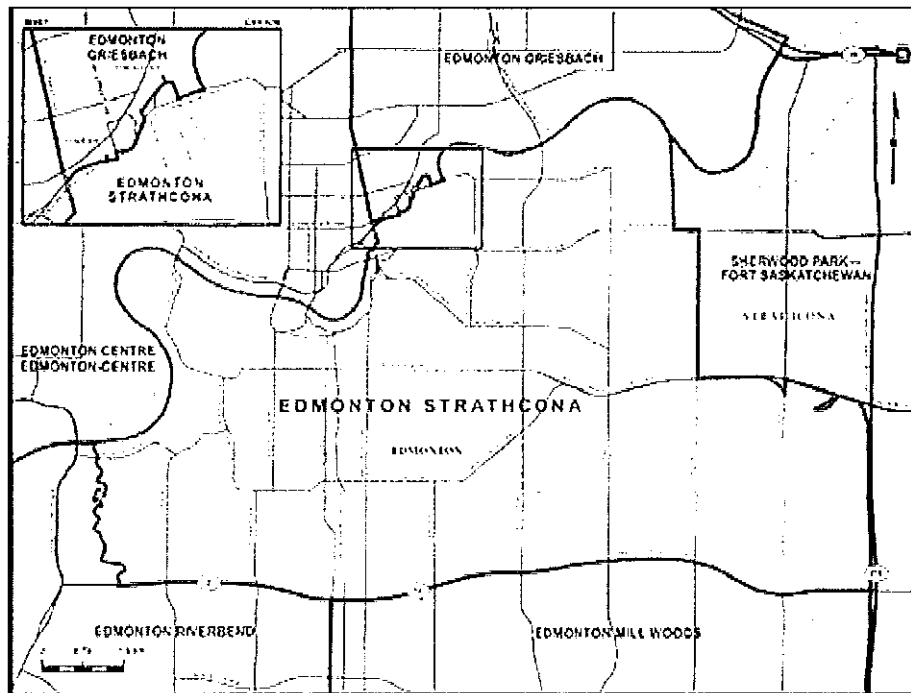


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FEDERAL ELECTION 2019 – RIDING PROFILE EDMONTON STRATHCONA

Zack Ziolkowski



Edmonton Strathcona is a hotly contested riding in the upcoming Federal election scheduled for October 21st. Currently held by NDP Linda Duncan, who is retiring, the Liberals hope that it is left-leaning enough that they can pick it up. The Green party is hoping the same, while the Conservatives are anticipating the continuous frustration with Justin Trudeau to flip the voters to the right. The NDP are just trying to hold on.

In total there are eight candidates vying for the seat: Conservative Sam Lilly, Liberal Eleanor Olszewski, NDP Heather McPherson, PPC Ian Cameron, Green Michael Kalmanovitch, Communist Naomi Rankin, Rhinoceros Lucas Kowalik, and Marxist-Leninist Dougal MacDonald.

Between 2008-2015 Edmonton Strathcona was the only non-Conservative seat in the entire province. Prior to 2008 however, this seat was held by some brand of conservative since 1957. It could be now argued that this area of Edmonton is one of the most left-leaning areas of the province given that it is also Leader of the Provincial NDP Rachel Notley's neighborhood. In 2008 Linda Duncan won by only 463 votes, however in 2015 she won by more than 7,000. This would seem to indicate that the riding was pleased with their representation in the House of Commons and may be more willing to give a progressive candidate a chance at succeeding Duncan.

The Liberals are hoping to capitalize on that. To date, Justin Trudeau has made Edmonton Strathcona his only stop in Alberta. The polls show that it didn't really help his candidate though. Current numbers show Conservative candidate polling at 38.1% followed by NDP with 27.7% and the Liberals in third place with 25.7%.

The Conservatives will be counting on those numbers, and the eventual split on the left between the NDP and the Liberals (and even the Greens) for Sam Lilly to squeeze up the middle and win the seat. If that turns out to be the case it could very well signal a complete blue sweep in the province.