

Alberta Union of Provincial Employees (AUPE)

Guiscela Perez Arellano responses

Privatization, including P3s:

AUPE members know very well that privatization regularly fails to find “efficiencies” and any cost savings are often off the backs of workers who become de unionized, with lower pay and benefits.

They also work on the front lines of service delivery and see the problems caused by high-turnover low wage private providers, and the bureaucratic burden caused by having to deal with a third party instead of an in-house provider.

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?
GPAG- Private-public partnerships can be good or bad. I believe that opportunities for public-private partnerships need to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. No matter what, in reviewing and deciding on any of these types of initiatives, I will put **all** Edmontonians first, with a focus on Ward Pihêsiwin, while I advocate for and support policies and services to increase our City’s economic, social, environmental, and cultural resilience.

Municipalities as employers:

As our economies recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, good jobs are an important factor. Public sector workers spend in their communities, and many households impacted by private sector recessions have been able to keep the bills paid thanks to a stable public sector job.

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? **GPAG-** Yes and a living wage should not only be for city staff, it should be parts of our society.

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?
GPAG- Yes. I believe municipal staff should have the right to collectively protest legislation or restrictions that impact their workplace, families, and quality of life.

Funding:

For decades the trend on public services has been cut and defunding, with fees downloaded onto workers, and the tax burden shifted away from the wealthy and corporations to the working class. At the same time, workers in the public sector know that tax freezes and cuts

mean cuts to services and jobs. Any promise political candidates make can only be realized through proper revenues.

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?

GPAG- I don't understand why spending cuts or tax increases have to be the only two options. I believe the City should be looking at ways to innovate and diversify revenue sources.

COVID-19 Safety:

With the negligent provincial response to now three preventable waves of COVID-19, municipalities have been put in an awkward position of needing to take measures to protect their citizens throughout the pandemic. Many are introducing measures of their own, but not all have.

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?

GPAG- Can face masks help slow the spread of the coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) that causes COVID-19?

Yes. Face masks combined with other preventive measures, such as getting vaccinated, frequent hand-washing and physical distancing can help slow the spread of the virus.

We need to work together for the protection of the collective whole. While many of us are already fully vaccinated, we still need to protect those who can't get vaccinated for medical reasons. We want to avoid another lockdown as businesses can't to sustain it; hospitality, retail, and many other businesses have been shut down during the past three lockdowns and another will impact them, employees, their families, and our economy.

I understand we are exhausted from the last 18 months. We all want to get back to a sense of normality but the reality is that this virus is here to stay and what we knew as normal might never come back. The most important thing is that we are in this together and we have to take care of each other.

Be kind to each other!

Albertans are strong and we have won many battles when we stand together. This is just another battle that we will win; stand strong, stay strong, together we will beat this.

Affordability:

With workers squeezed by increasing costs, municipal fees add to the burden. Service fees are a form of a flat tax that requires the same payment from a CEO as a low-income worker.

Transit affordability is an important piece of working-class equity. Fees add an extra burden for many people who can not afford the costs of private transportation in the first place. The reduced emissions on increasing transit ridership can also be a part of how cities take positive action on climate change.

6. Do you support measures to reduce municipal reliance on services fees and fares, such as eliminating transit fares? **GPAG-** Yes and as I mentioned above, to balance this out, we need to look for more innovative and diversified income sources for the City.