

September 2011

All-Party Pre-Election Survey

What the Provincial Parties
Replied to our Condo
Questions





AS PART of the ongoing effort of the joint ACMO/CCI-Toronto Government Relations Committee to raise the awareness of condominium issues to all levels of Government, the Committee recently circulated a “condosurvey” to all Provincial candidates (Liberal, Conservative, and NDP) in all 107 Ontario Ridings. The goal of this survey was to educate political candidates on subjects of prime importance to our respective members, and to get a sense of party positions on these key issues.

IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SURVEY, THE COMMITTEE IDENTIFIED THE FOLLOWING THREE KEY CONDOMINIUM ISSUES ON WHICH TO FOCUS ATTENTION:

- 1) **The Re-Opening of the *Condominium Act*** – as identified in the recently released Legislative Brief and Executive Summary, the Act needs to be reopened and modernized to reflect ongoing current legislative concerns. The survey asks if Candidates will support re-opening the *Condominium Act, 1998*.
- 2) **The Licencing of Property Managers** – other Canadian provinces have already taken the important step of requiring property managers to be licenced. Given that condominium boards often turn to managers to manage budgets that often run in the millions of dollars, the survey asks if Candidates would support the licencing of managers through a program similar to the Association of Condominium Managers Registered Condominium Manager (RCM) course.
- 3) **The Development of a Separate Tax Classification for Condominiums** – Condominiums are an excellent mechanism to achieve urban intensification as required by the *Places to Grow Act* of Ontario and are more efficient in their use of public services and utilities including water-waste services. Yet, many condo corporations pay to maintain their own sewers, street lights and garbage pick-up. This is inherently unfair so the survey asks Candidates if they will support the creation of separate property tax classifications for condominiums?

Given that there are currently approximately 1.3 million Ontarians living in the province’s approximately 504,000 condominium units, ACMO and CCI-T firmly believe that condominium issues need to play an important role in the development of party platforms and in the upcoming Provincial elections. Individuals living in condominiums and working in the condominium industry need to get involved to help ensure that elected officials understand, and are willing to respond to issues important to condominiums.

In this release, our government relations consultant, Rod Elliot comments on the process as well as the responses received from each political party. Overall, we are thrilled to report that this has been a very successful undertaking.

Whereas our survey requested and anticipated a response from the individual candidates, the actual outcome was a response from the Party Headquarters. Is this good or bad? We firmly believe it is good. As you will see the responses are either definitively or in principle supportive of our desire to see “The Act” re-opened... the regulation or licencing of Condominium Property Managers...and the creation of separate property tax classifications for condominiums. Therefore, what this has done is set the stage for a positive and, we hope, early consultative process with

whichever Party assumes the leadership of our Province following the October elections.

Through these Government Relations efforts, ACMO and CCI-T have raised important issues with the Liberal, Conservative and NDP parties. We need to take it one step further though. Therefore, we encourage all members to keep these issues front and center with Candidates when you are speaking with them at your doorstep, rallies or town-hall meetings. Politicians need to be aware that condominium dwellers make up a significant portion of the voting public and that the time has come when our voices will be heard.

We will, of course, continue to keep our members fully informed of our ongoing efforts. ACMO and CCI Toronto & Area Chapter will continue to work together to ensure that Ontario is recognized as setting a standard of excellence in the representation, regulation and professional management of residential condominiums.

*Dean McCabe, RCM, ACCI, AIHM
President, Association of Condominium Managers of Ontario*

*Bill Thompson, RCM, ACCI, FCCI
President, Canadian Condominium Institute – Toronto and Area Chapter*

Getting Results: 2011 Condo Survey of Provincial Candidates

Analysis by Rod Elliot, Director Government Relations, Global Public Affairs

With 107 provincial ridings and 321 Liberal, Progressive Conservative and NDP candidates the 2011 Condo Survey of Provincial Candidates is the largest and most comprehensive outreach effort ever conducted by CCI-ACMO during a provincial election.

THE SURVEY WAS DESIGNED TO ACCOMPLISH TWO GOALS:

- 1) Make our collective voice heard at Queen’s Park on behalf of the 1.3 million Ontarians who live in approximately 504,000 condominium units.
- 2) Engaging candidates and political parties on issues of importance to our industry and our condominium communities which we represent.

Results:




Through our direct outreach we were able to receive a response not just from the candidates but directly from each of the major political parties.

Next steps:

With our survey results in hand we believe CCI-ACMO is well positioned to begin dialogue with all political parties after the election and achieve our objective of vibrant and thriving condominium communities in Ontario. The 2011 Condo Survey of Provincial Candidates has set the stage for a positive and, we hope, early consultative process with whichever Party forms government after the October 6 election.




QUESTION 1:

In recent years, condominium development has eclipsed other developments as a share of Ontario’s residential home market, and significant changes have impacted the condo industry since the Condo Act was last examined. If elected would you support re-opening the Condo Act for consultation and revision during your term in government?

PARTY	ADDITIONAL COMMENTS
	<p>Ontario Liberals support modernizing the <i>Condominium Act</i>. It has been over 10 years since the <i>Condominium Act</i> was last opened and, during that time, the number of condominiums has grown tremendously in Ontario. We agree that it is time to re-open this legislation to better reflect the growth of condominium housing and the lessons learned over the last decade. We will build on our recent survey of condominium owners to make meaningful changes to the Act.</p> <p>Throughout this process, we will collaborate and consult with owners, builders, managers and associations to develop a cooperative solution for modernizing the laws and regulations affecting condominium housing in Ontario.</p>
	<p>Thank you for sharing your survey with us. We appreciate you bringing these issues to our attention. These are important issues, which we look forward to working with you on, after October 6th.</p> <p>Between now and then, the Ontario PC Party is focused on sharing its vision of change with Ontario families. <i>Changebook</i> is our commitment to these hardworking families, and we greatly appreciate your help in sharing our vision with them.</p>
	<p>The Ontario NDP recognizes the outdated Condo Act needs to be revised, and supports CCI-ACMO in their attempts to change it. Although neither CCI-ACMO supported Bill 79 (the <i>Condominium Owner’s Protection Act, 2010</i>) last year, we look forward to their support when we renew our call for an updated Condo Act — one that better serves the interests of condo dwellers in Ontario.</p>




QUESTION 2:

Condominium Corporations are run by volunteer boards elected by unit owners. These boards turn to condominium managers to manage a budget that could be in the millions of dollars. Do you and your party support the regulating or licencing of condominium managers provided through a program similar to the Association of Condominium Managers of Ontario's Residential Condominium Manager's course?

PARTY	ADDITIONAL COMMENTS
	<p>Ontario Liberals support the licensing/regulation of condominium managers. Condominium managers play an important role in managing the budgets of the buildings that are home to many hardworking Ontario families. Condominium residents should be assured that the management of their residence is in capable, professional hands. We want to ensure that individuals entrusted with this responsibility meet the highest standards, and we will work with the applicable organizations as well as condominium owners to find a solution.</p>
	<p>Thank you for sharing your survey with us. We appreciate you bringing these issues to our attention. These are important issues, which we look forward to working with you on, after October 6th.</p> <p>Between now and then, the Ontario PC Party is focused on sharing its vision of change with Ontario families. <i>Changebook</i> is our commitment to these hardworking families, and we greatly appreciate your help in sharing our vision with them.</p>
	<p>The NDP is open to any suggestions that will improve the ability of volunteer boards to manage the funds entrusted to them by the building's owners. We look forward to working with all stakeholders, including CCI and ACOMO, to find ways to make it easier for condo boards to perform their duties more efficiently.</p>

QUESTION 3:

Condominiums are more efficient in their use of public services and utilities including water-waste services. Many condo corporations pay to maintain their own sewers, street lights and garbage pick-up. Condominiums are an excellent mechanism to achieve urban intensification as required by the *Places to Grow Act* of Ontario, however, condominiums are taxed at the same rate as single family homes. Do you and your party support the creation of separate property tax classifications for condominiums?

PARTY	ADDITIONAL COMMENTS
	<p>Ontario Liberals are supportive of providing municipalities with the flexibility to create a separate property tax classification for condominiums. Since we were elected in 2003, Ontario Liberals have a strong record of working cooperatively with our municipal partners to better serve property taxpayers across the province. In keeping with our record, Ontario Liberals will introduce regulatory changes that would provide municipalities with the option to create a separate property tax classification for condominiums. Under this change, municipalities would have the ability to set a different property tax rate for condominiums in recognition of some of their unique characteristics.</p>
	<p>Thank you for sharing your survey with us. We appreciate you bringing these issues to our attention. These are important issues, which we look forward to working with you on, after October 6th.</p> <p>Between now and then, the Ontario PC Party is focused on sharing its vision of change with Ontario families. <i>Changebook</i> is our commitment to these hardworking families, and we greatly appreciate your help in sharing our vision with them.</p>
	<p>The Ontario NDP recognizes that there are inequities in the property tax system. For example, given the efficiency with which condominiums handle public services and utilities, the Ontario NDP would like to see a tax system that better reflects the differences between a single family home and a multi-unit building. If elected, we would review how the property tax system relates to condos. Condo owners are also unfairly treated when it comes to receiving government support for green tax credits in common areas. The NDP would also review the eligibility requirements of provincial green programs and credits to ensure that condominiums can participate in these initiatives. We will work to make life more affordable for condo dwellers in Ontario.</p>