

STRATEGIC VOTING COULD SHAKE UP ELECTION

Plan requires lots of resources and co-ordination



JOHN DEMONT

The snap election called by Mark Carney is expected to be a highly contested sprint to the finish. Key characteristics of modern Canadian national campaigns are on display: the focus on party leaders; the emphasis on pressing national issues; the aggressive campaigning, both digitally and on the doorstep. Carney's Liberals say they're best able to fight off U.S. President Donald Trump's tariffs, Pierre Poilievre's Conservatives say it's time to send them packing after a lost Liberal decade and the NDP, under Jagmeet Singh, argues neither of them care for average Canadians. With high inflation, a home-grown housing crisis and a trade war looming, the stakes are high, and some Canadians are wondering how best to make their votes count. One way, and you've likely heard the phrase, is strategic voting. Jim Bickerton, a political science professor at St. Francis Xavier University, says it's in fashion once again. "I expect this election will see more strategic voting than ever before," he said this week. Here's a guide.

WHAT IS STRATEGIC VOTING? Usually, voters cast ballots for their preferred candidate. Sometimes, though, they abandon their first choice for strategic reasons. Instead of marking an X beside the name of the person they like best, they pick the one they think is best positioned to defeat the candidate they really don't want to win. Here is an example: You like candidate X. The problem is that you fear that not enough other people do, which means that X is unlikely to win. So, you cast your vote for your next-preferred choice, candidate Y, because they are doing better in the public opinion polls than X. And because by throwing your support behind Y you may be able to ensure that candidate Z — your least-preferred candidate — loses the riding.

IS STRATEGIC VOTING COMMON IN CANADIAN ELECTORAL CAMPAIGNS? Polls suggest that more than a third of Canadians voted strategically in the 2019 federal election. In fact, experts say strategic voting is always in play in Canada because of our first-past-the-post electoral system. In Canada's plurality-based voting system — which is similar to those used in the United States and United Kingdom — the candidate with the most votes wins, even if they don't have a majority. Voters therefore often decide to vote with their head and not their heart. The thinking, in a nutshell, is that if they cannot ensure their preferred candidate wins, perhaps the next best thing is the next best thing. Other factors are behind strategic voting's popularity in Canada. The domination of federal politics by the Liberal and Conservative parties means supporters of smaller parties sometimes see their vote as wasted. At the same time, the profusion of parties on the left side of the ideological spectrum — Liberals, NDP, Greens — can split the progressive vote, benefiting Conservatives. This happened in the 2011 federal election when Stephen Harper's Conservatives formed a majority government with 39.6 per cent of the popular vote, compared to over 50 per cent for the Liberals, NDP and Greens. However, most of the strategic voting in this country has traditionally been done by NDP supporters, who generally share more common ground with Liberals than Conservatives. In the 2015 federal election, for instance, a late-campaign shift by NDP voters, fearing another Harper government, helped push the Liberals into power.

DOES IT WORK? The practice is clearly gaining traction. Across the country, organizations and websites have sprung up telling people how to use strategic voting to political advantage. Votewell, a website run by Kieran Higgins, a software developer in Victoria, tells anyone who logs on whether there is a chance of the federal vote being split in their riding and which candidate is the preferred choice if they choose to vote strategically. This, in a way, mirrors a short-lived trend during the 2008 federal election: online sites where, on the honour system, Liberal and NDP voters agreed to swap support for candidates in different ridings in the hope of



Federal NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh talks to reporters during a campaign stop in Windsor, Ont., on Thursday. Most strategic voting in Canada has traditionally been done by NDP supporters. TREVOR WILHELM/WINDSOR STAR

stopping Harper's Conservatives from returning to power. Bickerton thinks strategic voting works in that it helps negate the fragmentation of the political system. "It is a man on the street's way of dealing with the distortions of the political system and the false majorities they create," he said. On the other hand, Larry Savage, a professor of labour studies at Brock University, thinks the impact of strategic voting is overrated. "In theory it does work and there have definitely been campaigns where it has made a difference," he said. "The issue is that getting all of those thousands of people to vote together requires lots of co-ordination and loads of resources." Traditionally, labour unions are one group that has managed to pull that off. But even they can struggle to act in concert. Savage points to the candidacy of anti-poverty advocate Christine Saulnier, the NDP candidate in the Halifax riding in the 2019 federal election, who enjoyed the support of many local unions but not Unifor, which supported the eventual winner, Liberal Andy Fillmore.

WHAT IS THE DOWNSIDE TO STRATEGIC VOTING? By definition, the practice narrows the range of choices for voters and results in a Parliament that doesn't reflect people's first-choice preferences. As well, good local candidates may suffer because of bigger trends. So might voter participation if supporters of one of the smaller parties see little chance of their preferred candidate being elected.

WILL WE SEE MUCH STRATEGIC VOTING IN THIS CAMPAIGN? An anybody-but-Poilievre movement seems to be gaining steam. At the same time, NDP popularity has plummeted,

making the party's candidates less viable. If the polls continue to reflect a two-party race, Savage said that may well lead to a dynamic where NDP support wanes as voters jump ship for the Liberals. At the very least, he said, expect to see Liberals argue they are the best viable progressive option in the hope of spurring strategic picking and choosing. "They know a good chunk of voters are more motivated by blocking Conservatives rather than elect a Liberal," Savage said. The counter-argument for someone like NDP candidate Lisa Roberts, who is running in the federal riding of Halifax, is that strategic voting isn't necessary in a riding that hasn't gone Conservative since 1984. As she said during a recent interview, "Mark Carney isn't on the ballot" in her riding. Although at this stage in the election, for some NDP and Conservative candidates it may seem like he is.



NOVA SCOTIA UTILITY AND REVIEW BOARD NOTICE OF PAPER HEARING

IN THE MATTER OF an investigation pursuant to s.19 of the *Public Utilities Act* into certain matters arising from a **Joint Use Agreement** between **NOVA SCOTIA POWER INCORPORATED** and **BELL ALIANT**

The Board will investigate the following two issues:

- 1) Whether the Joint Use Agreement is unreasonable, insufficient, or unjustly discriminatory because there are different rebate schemes depending on whether an area is serviced by joint-use poles owned by NS Power or Bell Aliant.
- 2) Whether the provision of electric service connections and the disconnection and removal of service connections are being delayed or impacted by the processes used under the Joint Use Agreement.

Full details of the application and any timetable applying to this matter can be found on the Board's website <http://nsuarb.novascotia.ca>, by clicking on "Matters & Evidence", and in the "Go To Files and Documents" search box, enter Matter No. **M12149**.

The Board will consider this matter in a paper hearing process.

This is a public process, and you may participate as follows:

- You may make written comments by sending a letter to the Clerk of the Board at P.O. Box 1692, Unit "M", Halifax, NS B3J 3S3, or by email at: board@novascotia.ca, or by fax at (902) 424-3919 by **Wednesday, October 22, 2025**.
- You may request formal standing as an Intervenor, subject to Board approval. This will allow formal Intervenors to present evidence. Your request must be received by the Board by **Thursday, April 10, 2025**, and a copy of your written evidence by **Tuesday, September 2, 2025**.

To assist the Board in using correct forms of address and pronouns in our hearings and decisions, we invite all parties, lawyers, and all other participants to share their pronouns and titles with the Board and each other if they are comfortable doing so. There is no requirement to provide this information.



Apprenticeship Training Opportunities September 2025

Memorial Composite High School is accepting registrations for September, **2025**. Students entering Grade 11, recent graduates, or mature students, have an opportunity to register for **Pre-Apprenticeship and Technical/Workforce Entry** programs. The training is **FREE** for students presently in high school, or under the age of 21

There are limited openings in:

- **Carpentry**
- **Cooking**
- **Electrical**
- **Heavy Duty Equipment Repair**
- **Motor Vehicle Repair**
- **Plumbing-Steamfitter/Pipefitter**
- **Welding/Metal Fabricator (Fitter)**
- **Graphic Design-Print Media**

For more information contact:
Milton Bonnar-Apprenticeship Dept. Head
Memorial High School,
PO.Box 300 Memorial Drive
Sydney Mines, B1V 2Y5
Phone 902-736-6233 or Fax 902-736-3895
Email miltonb@gnsps.ca



Cape Breton-Victoria
Regional Centre for Education

FROM A8

“We need attractive and viable alternatives to personal vehicles. Failing to build a viable alternative to cars forces people to be car dependent.”

The bus rapid transit (BRT) system will prioritize downtown lines, with a high-frequency downtown connector loop.

Robin Gerus, who became executive director of Halifax Transit in January and has 43 years of transit experience, said a reliable system “starts in the downtown core.”

“We need to bring back the customers that have lost faith in our transit, ones that have had negative experiences in the past,” said Gerus, who spent 35 years with the Toronto Transit Commission – starting as a streetcar driver in Toronto in the 1980s – and the last eight in Guelph, Ont., before moving East.

He lives in downtown Halifax and uses the bus as his daily mode of transportation.

The downtown renaissance has placed pressure on infrastructure and services.

Sullivan gets existential when asked about public transit in the downtown core.

“Do we have a traffic problem? Or do we have a transit problem? is kind of the question.”

While the revitalization efforts have attracted more people and retailers to the downtown core, issues with parking and infrastructure have risen. The focus on adding bus lanes – and bike lanes – causes challenges for drivers and retailers who rely on easy parking access.

“Parking is outrageous,” said Laura MacNutt, owner of KingsPIER.

“I’ve had four parking tickets this year. They’re only \$25 but I go to court each time because they were when I was unloading stock.”

MacNutt has a solution.

“What downtown Halifax needs to do is issue a permit for small businesses because I don’t drive a great big delivery truck.”

KingsPIER is a luxury vintage clothing and accessories shop located in Historic Properties and on Barrington Street. She started her business in an Annapolis Valley barn a dozen years ago, moving to Dartmouth in 2016, then Historic Properties in 2021.

MacNutt opened a second location nearly two years ago but says small-business owners like her need more support and fewer obstacles.

“I’m not a CEO of a bank or CEO of a development company. I don’t have the cred or the dollar power to influence, so we are just left in the dust,” said MacNutt, who has four employees, six during the summer.

“I pay taxes. I pay significant rent. But downtown Halifax does not recognize how they can actually help.”

MacKinnon said the municipality and the province could do more to help businesses like MacNutt’s.

“With the evolution of downtown, when you see more development and things get more expensive, what gets squeezed out first are the kind of interesting niche shops,” MacKinnon said.

“Unfortunately, they get caught up in rising assessments that come along with construction.”

Take restaurants. Whether it’s

the economy or a hit to foot traffic because of construction downtown, they “always get hit first,” MacKinnon said.

“Ideally what we want is lots of growth, lots of development, but those businesses being able to stay where they are and that business presence remains downtown. That probably can only be done with much more creative solutions and special tax incentives, for instance. Businesses could be grandfathered in with tax rates, that type of thing. Neither the province nor the city has been too creative around that. They could do a much better job of that.”

MacNutt said her stores, particularly the Barrington Street location, have also been a target for thieves.

“It’s an overwhelming amount of theft,” she claimed. “Our Barrington Street store is very high profile, kind of great location with lots of foot traffic, lots of tourism.

“But it’s been guerrilla preservation. I’ve recovered 85 per cent of goods stolen. The police are taking it seriously. But if we don’t pursue these culprits, it will continue to escalate and it becomes dangerous.”

The increase in crime notwithstanding, MacNutt has no regrets about moving to the downtown core.

The DHBC said 10.22 million people visited downtown Halifax from June through December last year, which was just 46,000 short of pre-pandemic levels in 2019.

A vibrant central core comes at a cost, and affordability has been a major issue for business owners and residents.

“Land is extremely expensive,” MacKinnon said. “What we’re building downtown right now is full market. Residential is high-end because land is so expensive and construction is expensive.

“What we need to have is non-market housing, which is housing that’s subsidized to some level to help bring the costs down, and social housing, which is completely government-subsidized housing. We need to have all three in any sort of vibrant neighbourhood.”

Sullivan suggested government, whether it’s municipal, provincial or both, should incentivize developers to turn unused office space into residential units.

There’s a steep price tag for that, said MacKinnon.

“It’s very expensive and very difficult to do those kind of conversions. It’s not as easy as knocking down a couple walls and throwing in some bathrooms ... Having said that, there is a fair amount of underutilized office space downtown.”

The original designs of the Cogswell district didn’t have any housing affordability measures in it. Regional council has directed staff to come back with a housing affordability plan.

“There will be affordable housing in the Cogswell district. That’s a big step,” Sullivan said.

“If you’re going to do affordable housing, downtown is the best place to do it because the services are already here.”

Over the past five weeks, we’ve chronicled our community’s place in the country, the promise of greater prosperity, and the blueprint to get there. If you have ideas on how to help make Halifax a better, happier, more prosperous place to live, email chnewsroom@postmedia.com.



The Cunard development on the Halifax waterfront in April 2024. *RYAN TAPLIN/THE CHRONICLE HERALD*



NOVA SCOTIA UTILITY AND REVIEW BOARD NOTICE OF PAPER HEARING

IN THE MATTER OF an investigation pursuant to s.19 of the *Public Utilities Act* into certain matters arising from a **Joint Use Agreement** between **NOVA SCOTIA POWER INCORPORATED** and **BELL ALIANT**

The Board will investigate the following two issues:

- 1) Whether the Joint Use Agreement is unreasonable, insufficient, or unjustly discriminatory because there are different rebate schemes depending on whether an area is serviced by joint-use poles owned by NS Power or Bell Aliant.
- 2) Whether the provision of electric service connections and the disconnection and removal of service connections are being delayed or impacted by the processes used under the Joint Use Agreement.

Full details of the application and any timetable applying to this matter can be found on the Board’s website <http://nsuarb.novascotia.ca>, by clicking on “Matters & Evidence”, and in the “Go To Files and Documents” search box, enter Matter No. **M12149**.

The Board will consider this matter in a paper hearing process.

This is a public process, and you may participate as follows:

- You may make written comments by sending a letter to the Clerk of the Board at P.O. Box 1692, Unit “M”, Halifax, NS B3J 3S3, or by email at: board@novascotia.ca, or by fax at (902) 424-3919 by **Wednesday, October 22, 2025**.
- You may request formal standing as an Intervenor, subject to Board approval. This will allow formal Intervenors to present evidence. Your request must be received by the Board by **Thursday, April 10, 2025**, and a copy of your written evidence by **Tuesday, September 2, 2025**.

To assist the Board in using correct forms of address and pronouns in our hearings and decisions, we invite all parties, lawyers, and all other participants to share their pronouns and titles with the Board and each other if they are comfortable doing so. There is no requirement to provide this information.

By Jim Barnard

Whizword

“THE INVESTMENT JUNGLE”
Solution: 10 Letters
(3 Words)
THEME WORDS

A Advisor
Aggressive
Analysis
Annual

B Bear
Bonds
Brief
Brokerage
Bull
Business

C Capital
Class
Credit
Cycle

D Deals
Defer
Dividend

E Economy
Exchange

F Finance
Fixed
Foreign

G Gains
Generate
GICs
Goals
Grade
Gross
Growth

I Income
Index
Industry
Interest
International
Invest
Investments
Investor
Issue

J Joint

L Leads
Limit
Loan
Long-in
Long-term

M Margin
Market
Maturity
Maximum
Minimum
Mix
Money
Monitor

N Negative

P Pension
Plans
Positive
Posted
Preferred
Premium
Prime
Profit

R Rates
Recession
Registered
RRSP

S S and P
Safe
Saved
Saving
Security
Short-term
Supplement

T T-bill

U Units

V Volatile

Y Yield

DIRECTIONS: All the theme words listed below will be found in the puzzle, either vertically, horizontally, diagonally or even backwards. The puzzle will be easier if you find the bigger words first. As you find a word, **CIRCLE EACH LETTER** and then check the word off the list of theme words. Some letters might be used more than once, so be careful to leave all letters visible. The letters left over will solve the puzzle, and may be one word or a phrase.

S	B	F	S	T	S	Y	E	C	N	A	N	I	F	F	X	N	S	R	P	
O	T	E	B	D	L	C	T	G	D	P	L	A	N	S	I	O	T	E	B	
T	N	I	O	J	A	G	N	I	V	A	S	M	O	D	M	X	N	F	U	
O	L	R	N	P	O	E	V	C	R	V	E	R	E	L	U	S	E	E	L	
L	S	B	I	U	G	I	L	S	O	U	X	K	R	M	I	S	M	D	L	
R	L	T	X	E	D	N	I	L	E	L	C	Y	C	O	S	E	T	A	R	
S	A	F	E	E	N	E	A	E	A	O	H	E	N	N	S	I	S	R	D	
L	E	E	N	V	G	T	T	U	L	U	A	S	S	I	N	I	E	E	Y	
B	D	D	E	V	I	T	I	S	O	P	N	R	O	T	S	E	V	N	I	
T	L	A	E	L	E	T	E	S	O	I	G	N	E	O	I	A	N	D	U	
N	E	R	E	M	R	C	A	I	A	P	E	R	A	O	R	S	F	I	N	A
E	I	G	S	S	O	R	G	G	S	A	N	D	P	H	T	W	O	R	G	
M	Y	M	A	N	F	C	G	M	E	A	I	S	O	B	B	I	G	R	L	
E	U	U	O	R	T	R	N	U	T	N	N	R	I	U	S	O	E	O	P	
L	I	M	I	T	E	Y	T	I	R	U	T	A	M	S	Y	E	N	O	M	
P	Y	I	I	S	K	K	O	M	N	T	E	I	E	I	Y	G	E	D	C	
P	R	N	S	X	R	N	O	E	E	V	E	R	C	D	N	T	L	R	L	
U	N	I	G	R	A	M	P	R	E	F	E	R	R	E	D	R	A	E	B	
S	V	M	M	L	M	M	M	P	B	R	S	S	R	S	R	S	T	N	S	
E	D	E	R	E	T	S	I	G	E	R	T	M	T	S	S	C	E	T	A	