

# BRENDA SLOMKA



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## Inflation-Justified Municipal Tax Increases Problematic Says Slomka

(Kingston, ON) Mayoral candidate Brenda Slomka commits to the ongoing protection and improvement of municipal services - including necessary and appropriate infrastructure investments - but questions the current practice of inflation-justified tax increases written into the City's Strategic Plan 2011- 2014.

Ms. Slomka maintains that the current practice of increasing taxes at or near the rate of inflation is systematically unfair to residents who do not have inflation-adjusted income growth, especially those on fixed incomes or with stagnant wages/small business revenues.

Commented Slomka: "An annual tax increase of 2.5 to 3% over 15 years adds up to approximately 40% or more from the base year. This type of increase can be absorbed by individuals who have income indexed to inflation but not for the increasing number of people with fixed or declining income. Too many people are being unfairly squeezed between a rock and a "regressive" municipal tax."

Municipal tax is considered regressive because it is based on property value not income. Therefore, someone with low income would be paying the same (property) tax as some with high income with similarly valued homes. A progressive tax - like federal and provincial tax systems - increases as the taxable income increases.

Brenda believes that Kingston urgently needs to broaden the commercial tax base in order to relieve pressure on property taxes as well as directly develop alternative sources of revenue that are low risk. She has advanced a number of proposals on how this could occur and pointed to the town of Kapuskasing's innovative solar energy developments, whose revenues the Province effectively guarantees under contract as an example of the entrepreneurial leadership required to keep taxes stable.

"I am aspirational not ideological on the tax stabilization issue," commented Slomka. "If we cannot fully achieve our goals then I would support a reasonable tax increase for essential infrastructure and services. But before we go there, let's make sure we have exhausted other alternative revenue potentials. Let's broaden the tax base, let's adopt a culture of innovation that generates new sources of revenue, and let's continue finding efficiencies in the

operations of our municipal government. This benefits everyone.”

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