



TOP OF MIND

Answering the Call,
Adapting to Change.



**2022
PART 1:
INTERVIEWS**

**CONVERSATIONS
WITH SENIOR
LEADERS**

PRESENTED BY



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Governance
LEADING EXPERTISE

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FOREWORD

Good governance matters. Liberal democratic societies rely on the effective relationship between those elected to represent their communities and a select few professional non-partisan civil servants to ensure that day-to-day delivery of services to citizens is reliable, predictable, and reasonably managed. Civil servants also support effective decision-making for those democratically chosen to govern.

Be they municipal, provincial, or federal senior leaders, these civil servants are all distinguished by a “calling to serve.” They have a sense of duty to their communities and a sense of responsibility to help make things better. They put collective interest over personal interest. Usually well educated, they work and live in professional and social circles where the lines between their private selves and public service lives are often part of the same fishbowl. Their opinions and views on matters of state are purposely put aside to provide the best institutional advice to decision makers in the public interest. Often institutional advice is privileged information protected by access to information statutes like and national security legislation.

There are few “safe” spaces or designated fora where senior leaders can exchange unvarnished views on governance, public administration and the changing expectations society has for government. The COVID-19 pandemic has also eliminated the rare opportunities that did exist on the edges of in-person intergovernmental meetings and conferences.

One year after the lockdown, the Institute on Governance (IOG), with the generous support of the Brian Mulroney Institute of Government (the Mulroney Institute), undertook *Top of Mind*, a two-part study engaging senior public service leadership across Canada to gain insights through their eyes as vanguards of public institutions.

Their views reveal that public servants and their work are not immune or sheltered from the same forces shaping civil society. Indeed, those same forces are presenting both opportunities and challenges in both their work and its impact in our communities.

Despite the challenges of the pandemic and the increased complexity of growing social polarization, each participant demonstrated a strong sense of fidelity, duty, responsibility, and pride in their organizations.

The world was turned upside down virtually overnight with the global shutdown to battle COVID-19. Nevertheless, Canadians continued to receive critical services for health, safety, mobility, and access to markets for basic needs. These leaders were instrumental in “keeping us going” during a time of crisis. This report looks at what they have to say about the experience and what they see on the horizon.

Thank you to the Mulroney Institute for their generous support and to the dedicated team at the IOG who saw this project through.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 PUBLIC SERVICE MATTERS

The impact of the public sector in Canada is substantial. The overall public sector—including all three levels of government—represent roughly 40 per cent of Canada’s GDP and an estimated 20 per cent of its workforce. It supports citizens in areas as diverse as education, health, social services, infrastructures, immigration, environment and climate change, security and defense, resource and economic development, the administration of justice, and many others. Many of these are of shared interest between jurisdictions.

Historically, responsible liberal democratic societies have relied upon the effective relationship between those elected to represent citizens and a professional non-partisan public service to ensure the delivery of programs and services to the population is reliable, predictable, and reasonably managed. The public service also supports effective decision-making structures and processes required by those democratically chosen to form governments.

The public sector today is both driving and being driven by change of unprecedented proportions, and its leaders must adapt, innovate, and transform government organizations and services at top speeds. Major shifts in citizen expectations, adverse social issues, economic uncertainties, the nature of work, the role of governments, evolving technology and information, to name a few, will challenge democratic governments and the delivery of services to citizens for years to come. Public service leaders and executives are on the front line. As vanguards of the public interest and trust, they possess unique knowledge, perspectives, and insights into the forces shaping society. There is a need to give voice to, and share learnings from, the experience of senior public service leaders regarding today’s issues and future challenges.



1 Based on pre-pandemic numbers. Public Policy Forum, *Changing the Game: Public Sector Productivity in Canada*, Ottawa, 2014; Statistics Canada, “Canada Year Book – Government,” 11-402-X, 2011, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-402-x/2011000/chap/gov-gouv/gov-gouv-eng.htm>.



1.2 THE *TOP OF MIND* INITIATIVE

In the spring of 2021, the Institute on Governance (IOG), with the support of the Brian Mulroney Institute of Government (the Institute), launched the *Top of Mind* initiative, a national consultation with Canadian public sector leaders and senior executives from the federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments. The initiative solicited frank and candid analysis of the key challenges, valuable lessons and anticipated future trends facing Canada and its public institutions, as seen through the eyes of senior public sector leaders.

The essential objective of the *Top of Mind* research initiative is to provide public service leaders, and other interested parties, with a compendium and analysis of their colleagues' perspectives and thus serve as a catalyst to share insights, lessons, and potential solutions. By so doing, *Top of Mind* strives to better our understanding of the evolving role of the public sector and its leaders, and to facilitate further progress in public service governance, administration, and leadership.

Top of Mind research was conducted primarily through consultations with over forty influential public sector leaders, as well as an online survey of senior public service executives. Both were conducted in the spring and summer of 2021. This report documents the results, findings, and conclusions of this one-of-a-kind initiative.

2. CONVERSATIONS WITH SENIOR LEADERS

The unique and defining feature of the *Top of Mind* initiative is the IOG's exclusive opportunity to converse with many very senior public sector leaders across all three orders of government — Cabinet secretaries, deputy ministers, and municipal chief administrative officers. These confidential and candid discussions touched on different aspects of Canadian society and governments, public sector governance, challenges, and leadership.

Overall, the conversations provided a wealth of information and invaluable insights on a wide array of current topics, issues, likely solutions, and future trends. In order to facilitate the analysis and presentation of the results of this exercise, the interviews were documented, and leaders' key comments organized according to six major and interrelated themes presented in the following subsections. As well, the Annex to this document provides numerous additional examples of leaders' comments and a brief summary of the approach to the *Top of Mind* consultations.





2.1 SOCIAL CONTEXT AND CHANGE

Senior leaders helped us explore the unprecedented changes, issues, and uncertainties facing Canada and to which the public sector must adapt or respond. Almost all leaders consulted commented on one aspect or another of Canada's major social issues. These are many and include the pandemic, racial and social tensions, Indigenous reconciliation, poverty and economic inequities, media information, changing demographics and public expectations, technological changes, threats to democracy, and trust in governments.

Many of these issues are not new but often have been highlighted or have grown in importance following recent major events such as the pandemic, racial tensions, and the political polarization exemplified more dramatically in the United States. Understandably, the ongoing pandemic is often the most prevalent preoccupation of public sector leaders and a recurring topic of discussion. As such, COVID-19 is the explicit focus of the next theme (Subsection 2.2).

CANADIAN SOCIAL ISSUES SELECTED LEADERS' COMMENTS

"What we have right now is a health, economic, environ-mental, and social crisis. I look at it as a four-bucket crisis. ... It is a challenge for everyone, social crisis as the Black Lives Matter, it has amped up anxiety in the population."

"Social fragmentation, discrimination, lack of social cohesion and racialized conflicts. ...All these factors were there long before the pandemic. But we were able to keep them under the surface. ... But all these things resurfaced. ... how we treat marginalized people, and how do we put it back?"

"We need to understand the country. ... I do not think the bureaucracy at large and the government have understood the societal changes. ... The federal government will have to grapple with the amount of social discord and try to be a unifier and it will be hard to do because it is more than five minutes of thoughts."

"I would say another challenge is we talk about diversity and inclusion in every aspect we do. I am not sure all citizens are there with us on that. In our current government and opposition, there is a lot of work to do there."

"We are rejecting everything due to some of these concepts and [they] are being used without a deep understanding of how serious and meaningful they need to remain. Core foundation principles: We have not invested time to explain or defend core foundations in Canada and lost and devalued them on who we want to be as a country."

"The stuff we are hearing now and the hatred that is being exhibited, if they do not hear from leadership and not just condolences, people want to see steps that are in line with what people are expecting to hear. This is an opportunity in a diverse community in places like [name omitted] to put actions together to improve the quality of life of people."

"This country has done a lot of wrong, and we are naïve about reality. We have racism and economic problems; we need to look at ourselves a bit; and how do we have foreign aid building wells in Africa but no freshwater access in Indigenous communities."

"What I find interesting is the notion of the Indigenous children. We all knew about this, but it woke a lot of people up. Part of me says shame on you, we already knew about it, and you should know your country's history."

"If I start with Indigenous communities, there has been conversation and conversations. I think the Indigenous community is more than willing to work with us ..."

A. SOCIAL ISSUES

Leaders are keenly aware of the widespread and significant changes in our society. Many emphasized the gravity of social issues and the need for more concrete actions. They identified impediments to better progress, questioned past decisions, and suggested likely paths forward. Public sector leaders largely conveyed their genuine and heartfelt reflections on how to make things better. Some of their insights are noted in the following points.

- A common thread throughout the consultations is the general lack of understanding as a root cause of many social problems—the lack of sufficient understanding by governments and public services of social changes, the lack of understanding of our country's key foundational principles and concepts, and the citizens' poor grasp of issues and of how governments work. Similarly, one leader noted that not all citizens are on board with their governments when it comes to addressing issues such as diversity and inclusion.
- Social tensions are generally of a pervasive and self-propagating nature, creating more anxiety, polarization, and mistrust. Several leaders recognized that this increases the need to take timely and proper action and move beyond intentions and rhetoric.
- Leaders often raised reconciliation and Indigenous issues, expressing both concern for past events, as well as optimism in improved relations. Notably, the context of reconciliation appeared to differ by province.
- One leader fittingly identified difficulties in adapting to change, particularly technological change, as contributing to social anxieties and divisions:

“One of the most challenging things we are all facing is the technological change which drives a series of other pieces. ... What I am fearful of is not being able to keep up and our abilities as humans to adapt to this change. We have a lot of people that are keen to be early adopters and people that are never going to change, and I am worried that the bell curve will flatten and will get people more on each end of the curve. This pervades many areas of our society, and it is not linear at all. Our inability as humans to adapt to the change is driving strong discontent and frustrations and other normal things that are associated with change.”

INFORMATION AND MEDIA SELECTED LEADERS' COMMENTS

"One of the enlightenments was that we decided that facts, science, and some sort of reasons would be an arbitrary of our reasons. Declaration would create things to be true. We are in a world where we reversed that, the vaccination hesitancy rate is an example of that."

"Tolerance is on the decline, and it is all dressed up as the complete opposite. ... I think part of this is that problems are more complex, and there are no easy solutions. And if you can't hold a political mass long enough to explain the problem, it is hard to map out a solution."

"Social media has changed the tone around this [trust]. There is a lot of invalid and non-credible information out there. People are very quick to say their stories and it is one sided. Those become the news, and it is contributing to some distrust ... Governments are trying to be more transparent and have put out more information to access."

"It has to stop; Canadians do not follow parliamentary committees but get their news from there [social media]. We need to do something about the misinformation on social media as we do not say, 'This is a lie, and this is the facts.'"

"The role of social media—amplified voices which has been destructive. Traditional media is also not helping and to the point that I thought about sitting down with them and ask[ing] what they are trying to achieve and why they are not covering the good things we do. ... We have to find a way to incentivize the media to be more fact driven."

«La demande de l'internet/médias sociaux ... a été exacerbé en matière de pandémie mais la bonne affaire c'est qu'il y a un contre-mouvement où on veut valider l'information et il y a des réponses.»

«... Les réponses et les médias, la qualité de l'information sont plus présents. Un mouvement qui commence à s'implanter et cela devient plus marginal de contester. Face aux médias sociaux, il y a une prise de conscience collective et je crois que nous sommes en train de trouver réponses à ça ... les gens sont plus conscients qu'il y a de la fausse information et il faut faire attention.»

"Influence of social media has been challenging and its capacity to protract issues and proliferate arguments and the nonsense and bring groups of misinformed and ill-intended people together."

"Social media is very destructive towards trust in government. Its business model is based on negative emotions and that gets more clicks than positive ones."

B. INFORMATION AND MEDIA

As part of our Canadian context, the evolution of information and of the different media that disseminates it cannot be disassociated from current social issues and problems. Most of the leaders had similar or complementary views on the role of information, evidence, and science in our society.

- The dominant view is that the decline of accurate facts and evidence, and the increase in misinformation is at the centre of many social tensions and increasing intolerance, polarization, and conspiracy theories.
- Social media, and to some lesser extent traditional media, circulate misinformation to large audiences based on models that favour and build negative emotions.
- Citizens are generally ill served by the media and ill-informed, and governments do not always do enough to foster transparency and challenge misinformation.
- Some leaders are confident that a counter-movement is taking hold — one where media information and facts are better vetted and citizens more conscious of the risks of misinformation.

TRUST IN GOVERNMENTS SELECTED LEADERS' COMMENTS

"Trust is declining, and the population is less knowledgeable on government issues. It is a tough one, I would layer on that when the going gets tough the public disputes between levels of governments undermine public trust."

"Distrust is growing and the anti-maskers and anti-vaxxers, and there will always be a portion of that on the edge of the government. Transparency and accountability are needed. ... Some of the mistrust is earned, long term is very devastating."

"I think if you go back to people and [the] economic effects they are facing, we have got this frustration and sense of isolation that is becoming very problematic and is emphasized by our political leaders who are taking more polarized ways, and communication is becoming more rudimentary, and there is less diplomacy and statesmanship in any of this. ... I think we all know that trust leaves in horseback but comes back on foot. Rebuilding trust needs time."

"I think in the short term there is some increase in confidence in governments as they funded vaccines and it made a difference in battling the pandemic."

"We did an independent study ... a couple of years ago and before the pandemic and the level of trust of Canadians in government was 88 per cent. I think trust is back up now. ... There is direct trust when you have a service with somebody, and you have trust that builds in an indirect matter through listening to other trusted sources."

"As I hear and listen and have conversations with people, there has been a broad erosion in trust. ... There was a perception there was an element of businesses and society that had to carry much higher burden than others. ... You have people that say one thing and do another thing. ... I find it discouraging to see things are becoming more political than expert-related. This could only be rebuilt when there are political leaders willing to do that work. I think we have gone over the scale and politics is what is leading us to this lack of confidence and trust in institutions."

"And I do not think it is a given that declining trust is bad. I think a certain amount of distrust and skepticism in the government is not a bad thing. I am a fundamental believer in governments and elections."

"We have been incrementally inserting ourselves in the lives of our citizens and there will be the 'Chicken have not come home to roost' on that one."

"Incremental improvement is becoming more apparent, and we need to work more on blemishes. I think it is troublesome for governments, and they will not be well prepared for tomorrow if they are constantly apologizing for yesterday."

"I think there is a glib answer [re: trust] which is, I am not sure there is much you can do. We have been through a pandemic and went through shutdowns, and we still have 30 per cent anti-vaxxers. There have been real-life people that are dying, and yet we still have a bunch of people that say that does not prove it for me. We are living in an environment where trust is going to be hard to build."

Governments overall appear hesitant as to how to best deal and counteract the corrosive effects of social media and misinformation, and the ensuing erosion of citizens' trust in their institutions and governments.

C. TRUST IN GOVERNMENTS

We probed the leaders on the trends and status of Canadians' trust in their governments, and the consequences on the public sector's ability to deliver programs and deal with social issues. Their views were notably diverse and, in some instances, divergent.

- Foremost, there are different opinions as to whether public trust is strong or weak, declining or on the mend. For many, confidence in our institutions is low, in part because of the reasons outlined previously. Others are more optimistic and indicate that effective government action, such as the response to the pandemic, have increased peoples' appreciation for the role of government and improved their confidence.
- Politics and the actions of politicians also can often lead to waning confidence. For instance, leaders identified public disputes, lack of diplomacy and poor collaboration between governments as undermining trust. Governments increasing intrusions in the lives of their citizens — heightened during the pandemic — also have an impact.
- Others indicated that some of the mistrust is earned and that reasonable skepticism and mistrust can be healthy in a democracy.
- There is a better sense of consensus among leaders regarding how governments can foster better trust from their citizens. The following considerations were most noted:
 - Ensuring transparency and accountability;
 - Delivering services, getting results, and making a difference;
 - Setting realistic expectations;
 - Collaboration and cohesion between governments;
 - Promoting citizens' knowledge of key issues and government processes;
 - Responding to misinformation through science and objective evidence; and
 - Listening and giving voice to citizens.

Understandably, conversations often focused on the detrimental nature and complexities of social problems. However, reasons for optimism were also noted, often through insights into likely causes and remedies, such as the factors noted above for promoting better trust in governments.

Leaders mentioned an improved consciousness of both the general population and of public service leaders on various social issues, and increased involvement and engagement. Many reflected on governments' opportunities, which also ensued from the challenges identified, and on the actions and progress of their respective administrations.

THE PANDEMIC AND THE PUBLIC SECTOR SELECTED LEADERS' COMMENTS

"Working from home where it works has been a huge advantage. But you cannot fix a ship from home. ... PCO has been very useful in providing us access with information from home. ... At the same time, we spend a lot of time on Zoom and Teams, and it is ridiculous."

"A few years before the pandemic, there was someone who said there is no way we can work from home because our people cannot access our sensitive data. That all changed in a weekend, and all these myths were busted. We have proven so many things we were wrong about."

"We proved that working from home is feasible and does not affect the productivity of the workforce. It caused increased supervision, and manager must reach out to their employees. We would never go back to our old ways. ... One major lesson is that we can work from home efficiently without affecting any of our services."

"Our folks are telling us they do not want to go back to office ... I think for the future a 20-60 model would be needed. Twenty per cent of people must work from the workplace, and 20 per cent that you will never see again and for the 60 per cent in the middle, we need to find a hybrid solution. We need to watch out and not create an in-crowd and out crowd. I found there is a difference in opinion between the non-EXs who want to work from home, and EXs who want to go back to the office."

«Je vois les positionnements des élus par rapport à ça ["Black Lives"], on veut attirer l'attention sur certain chose mais le grand changement c'est la pandémie. ... L'effet extraordinaire de la pandémie, chez nous ça a apporté beaucoup d'innovation. Nous avons aplati les niveaux hiérarchiques ... nous nous enlignons aussi vers l'aménagement des milieux de vie puisque nos employées ont goûté au télétravail et demandent de rester ainsi ... Donc une accélération de la disponibilité au niveau des technologies, si nous n'avions pas eu la pandémie nous aurions eu de la difficulté à faire ces virages et avoir des réponses aussi rapides ... Ces changements sont dû pour rester et en plus ils bénéficient la conciliation travail-famille.»

"It's going to be harder and more necessary for politicians to trust public servants. They think they hardly do anything at the office so they will not work from home. The evidence is contrary to that. ... We have hard working staff, and the perversity is that if they work at home, they work way more than if they work at the office. How do we protect them and their mental health? I think this will drive a lot of changes in the future. How does all that work?"

2.2 THE PANDEMIC

Through our discussions, it was clear that the pandemic was (and still is) the topmost priority for governments and the inescapable topic of deliberation. While aspects of the public sector's COVID-19 challenges are found throughout this report, as they pertain to different topics, this subsection consolidates pandemic exclusive viewpoints and issues in keeping with the magnitude of the event and its aftermaths that will likely be felt for years to come.

A. PANDEMIC AND THE PUBLIC SECTOR

For many leaders, the more immediate effects of the pandemic were the upheavals to the public sector itself. Public service organizations had to adapt at a record pace when the pandemic struck, and Canadians had to lockdown. How do public service employees continue to deliver essential services in such an environment? Here is an overview of what we heard.

- The required move for most employees to work from home during the pandemic is seen by many as a resounding success and as a mixed blessing by others. The advantages most cited include:
 - Better productivity and performance.
 - Reduced cost and footprint reduced travel and congestion.
 - Healthier work-life balance and more flexible hours.
 - Human resources (HR) benefits, such as wider staffing opportunities.
 - More rapid deployment of technological solutions.
 - Communications less hindered by distance.
- However, not everyone is convinced that working remotely equates to better productivity:

“There is a lot of bias around it, I do not know what my employees are doing, I am not sure how productive they are.”

Furthermore, while many claim better productivity, supporting evidence is not clearly manifest.

“Performance management will be a strong one and not an easy conversation. Working from home piece brought it ahead, and strong performers want to be in the office and weaker performers want to work in home. I think it will erode public trust more. Work from home gets a side eye from a lot of [citizens].”

“There are a lot of opinions on the impact of Covid and what adjustments need to be made and I think it’s all still fuzzy and there is a lack of clarity around what is next, even for us in trying to plan on recovery.”

“The pandemic was very new to all of us. We were able to adapt and change quickly, and we have not missed a day. When you have departments under you like fire and sewers you cannot simply stop. ... We might have not been with the people as often, but we were able to keep our services up to expectations. We followed public guidance. For the most part, managers were in and only worked at home for a week.”

“We would not have had a significant use of remote work; we were back to the office within 80 per cent capacity within a month of the pandemic, and we went back to 100 per cent within two months of the pandemic. We do have work from home for vulnerable populations. We would not be the model organization for work from home.”

- Several preoccupations with working remotely include the following:
 - Mental health concerns due to overwork or isolation.
 - Fatigue with teleworking and remote interactions.
 - Difficulties managing staff and performance.
 - Public and politicians' negative perceptions of public servants working at home.
 - Challenges maintaining the same quality of services.
- It was broadly recognized that working remotely is not the solution for everyone or for all organizations. Depending on the nature of the work and the services provided, some work just cannot not be done remotely. In addition, some organizations are not well positioned for remote work. For instance, northern jurisdictions have greater technological challenges (e.g., internet) and municipalities appear to have a high proportion of "on the ground" services.
- While a large part of the discussions revolved around working remotely, the pandemic also brought with it other changes and innovations. Necessity helped refute some prior myths about work processes and environments. More than a few reported a flattening of the hierarchy, streamlining of approval processes, reductions in red tape, higher risk tolerance, and increased communication and collaboration with colleagues and other jurisdictions.
- Looking towards the future of work in the public sector, many leaders emphasized the vital need to retain the lessons and productivity gains of the pandemic. Leaders wish to avoid the "elastic snapback" to the pre-pandemic rule-heavy environment, which impeded rapid progress and delivery. This is explored further under the broader public service theme (Subsection 2.3).

MANAGEMENT OF THE PANDEMIC AND LESSONS SELECTED LEADERS' COMMENTS

"What we could have done better is having the ability to assess and identify a little earlier how different that was than any other crisis. The whole world had it and only some countries got it right out of the gate. When new threats present themselves, you need not bring old lessons into it."

"When the pandemic started, overnight we had a singular focus, which was understanding what the challenge was. One department was working for 18 months on a business continuation plan prior to COVID, we thought it was good practice. ... The plan was not serving the purpose when we reviewed it prior to lockdown, so we decided that every department would need a business plan, and it needs to be lean and agile, and value add. ... Everyone delivered, and everyone had a business continuation plan within 48 hours."

"It was interesting how industries were helping one another. ... From a public service perspective, we could be leaders and drivers to it—"Let me know when you need me to remove the barriers, so you can do whatever you need to do. I can remove barriers and give you the tools to impact government and innovate." PPE and N95 issues and Trump blocking it down, we wanted it made in Canada."

"Some of the things that saved our bacon [are] not sustainable. Some of the reforms will be short-lived such as procurement. People complain about how slow procurement is but if you want to avoid lawsuits then you need to make sure it is done properly."

"We have underestimated the impact of the pandemic, there is a lot of anxiety out there, the emergency needs, family violence, social occurrences within families and neighbourhoods and increase in crime. The pandemic has affected families with lower income, thus there is a lot of pressure on emergency services and food banks. We have been going through a very intense period; people need to be supported."

"One thing you can say ... there are places where things have worked well and others where they did not. ... I am struggling to see things that I can point to to say that this is how it should work. ... [vaccine rollout] we have supply and demand and incidence of disease if you put all of that with a table of experts and perimeters around and look at risks and who is vulnerable, and you think you can get a robust roadmap. It started that way, there was discussions on that and all the right work, had we followed it we would have landed in a different place. It was amazing to me how quickly it become politicizing."

"In public health, adaptability and responsiveness that was demonstrated throughout. We managed to get vaccines faster by moving away from the provincial system."

"Building on the lessons learned last year, I think we have the capacity to do things quicker, [less] risk aversion and giving people opportunity to move things faster than we used to before."

"We lost perspective of value and money as they have no meaning anymore. Us and the [province], we managed the pandemic as a political issue, and we have not been in front of it. We deal with the borders as political issues not the flow of the disease."

B. MANAGEMENT OF THE PANDEMIC

The pandemic was likewise a learning opportunity in crisis management. Leaders whose organizations had a more direct role in coordinating different aspects of the pandemic response reflected on how such a similar far-reaching crisis could be addressed and managed in the future. The following key lessons were noted.

- Leaders identified both areas of pandemic management successes, where things worked well, but also setbacks or failures where issues should have been better addressed.
- Shared observations of successes are often centred on improved flexibility, adaptability, collaboration within the public sector and with stakeholders, as well as the ability to innovate, take necessary risks and remove unwarranted barriers.
- However, there is a common view that the pre-pandemic crisis management and business continuity plans were not very effective for dealing with an event of this magnitude. There will likely be a rekindling of emergency and contingency planning interests and efforts once the worst of the pandemic is past.
- Similarly, a number of factors were underestimated at the outset of the pandemic, including the following:
 - How different the pandemic was from previous crises, both in nature and scope.
 - Its diverse impacts on people and on essential services.
 - How ill-prepared we were and how reliant on other countries.
 - How it amplified social issues, anxieties, and divisions.

“I was not prepared for this as a deputy minister. Every time we have a crisis in the department it is on you. ... Our muscles for crisis management and emergency planning and having the management structure ready to come on is a clear problem. It is a hard muscle to activate when it is not happening it does not come up to the top of the list.”

Despite these difficulties, the leaders concurred that the unusual alacrity with which public services — across all jurisdictions — adapted and responded to the crisis was largely unexpected and impressive.

THE PANDEMIC & SOCIAL IMPACTS

SELECTED LEADERS' COMMENTS

"I do think the pandemic has quickly underlined the way in which structural risk could have profound risk on our economy and society. Civilization is a thin veneer over chaos, and public governance and public institutions could be good to deal with this. 9/11 was a chaotic situation, but you watched it on TV and did not affect you directly. Most people during this pandemic saw the threat to their families and loved ones and affected them directly. The COVID situation underlined the fact that there are bigger problems and dangers out there that require collective actions."

"This is where we are saying what are those things that will stick, and we want them to stick. Do I need as much physical space as I did a year ago? Absolutely not. But will we have the guts to shed that space. There are tough decisions to make."

"All roads lead to Peel, such as the Amazon distribution centre, as critical. If the centre goes down, it puts down the economy and then it would start a new wave of COVID."

«Plus tard avec la pandémie, je vous annonce qu'on va avoir un gros chapitre centre-ville. Forcément avec le télétravail et nouvelle façon de faire, les centres-villes vont être différents. La pandémie nous a emmené certaines opportunités. ... pour repenser la mixité des centres-villes en lien avec le télétravail: reconsidérer l'usage des tours à bureaux en tours résidentielles.»

"From the whole society lens, in downtown Toronto it is all working buildings owned by pension plans. If we vacate the whole core, there will not be many other companies wanting to move there. Pension plans will decrease, and some of them are going through difficulties, this is something that should be looked at from a big picture change."

«... et ça nous permet de recruter de la main-d'œuvre partout à travers le QC. Ce qui est un atout extraordinaire pour être capable aussi d'avoir des bons niveaux d'emplois en région. Je crois que ça favorise l'occupation du territoire, la vitalité des communautés. Ça c'est un avantage extraordinaire de la conséquence de la pandémie à mon avis.»

"Canadians' view of government has sharpened because of the pandemic. The government has been very present since the beginning of the pandemic. The majority of Canadians probably recognize the importance of government and the public service and experts as a result."

C. FUTURE IMPACTS

While the impacts of the pandemic on the public sector are relatively straight-forward, there is more ambiguity and hesitation surrounding the longer-term impacts of COVID-19 on society overall. As result, this was not as prolific a topic of discussion. Nevertheless, various considerations were noted.

- The pandemic outlined some of society's vulnerabilities and the need to better understand how to prepare for such an event (e.g., what are the most vital infrastructures, services, and programs?).
- Most Canadians' perceptions of the importance of the role of governments and of the public service have been amplified because of COVID-19.
- While there is a solid consensus that some of the advantages which ensued from the pandemic — such as working remotely — should be retained, there is much less certainty as to the extent that will be the case.
- The longer-term impacts on the post-COVID-19 environment are uncertain. However, some key questions were raised:
 - Will governments actually shed some of their surplus office space, and how would office buildings be repurposed?
 - Whether the environmental benefits of reduced travel, transportation, and traffic congestion could be sustained, and how this would impact our infrastructures and economy.
 - The make-up of major cities' downtowns will likely evolve considerably as their mix of functions, services, and infra-structure adapt to new patterns of work and housing. Similarly, how will suburbs and rural regions strive to accommodate more teleworkers?

These changes may be substantial and would put additional pressures on the post-COVID-19 economy.

The above are but a few examples of possible post-pandemic challenges. As one leader put it, more attention needs to be focused on possible "big-picture changes" on the environment, the economy, and on society more generally. These changes would undoubtedly present both challenges and opportunities and could be nearly as daunting as the pandemic itself.

PUBLIC SERVICE MANAGEMENT AND PRIORITIES SELECTED LEADERS' COMMENTS

"[Challenges and Priorities]:

1. *Economic growth and the middle class.*
2. *Aging society, demographics will be a big issue*
3. *Global fracturing: IT and cyber and ... the need to effectively provide services and manage IT projects."*

"[Challenges and Priorities]:

1. *Inequality in our society: ...*
2. *Indigenous and reconciliation issues are crucial.*
3. *[Risks] We cannot be naive and be creating knowledge in our institutions to watch it be sold. We have to be smarter than that ... if we leave the car [in the garage] we will never get into an accident, but you will also never get anywhere.*
4. *Environment: a massive problem and just as differential on the impact on the vulnerable as the pandemic was."*

"The simultaneous question how we deal with people that demonstrated clearly on life and death issues that they are beyond science and acceptance. Consensus in the public institutions; if we do not agree that these are things, we need to tackle then it does not matter what the rest of the society thinks. ... People attacking health care workers and showing up in rodeos; public institutions have a duty that they identify this as a priority issue."

"Risk taking is like an elastic rubber band.'

'Risk like the virus is pouring in to snap the rubber band back to what it was.' Real effort needs to be taken to not go back to what it used to be. ... Some of those things will stick but I think the rules and risk oversight is already going back.

"I am realistic that the risk aversion and rules and systems are not a bug but a core feature of the system. This is not that we have bad actors that are trying to beat the risk and innovation out of the system, it is inherent in bureaucratic and hierarchical systems."

"Public policy is interesting, but if we cannot implement them, we are failing them. ... We need to be much more focused on making sure we are developing the plan, resourcing them, and implementing them. ... We should not lose those lessons from Covid, we can reverse the mistrust trend if public institutions do their job right."

2.3 PUBLIC SERVICE MANAGEMENT

Although the pandemic was, for most public sector leaders, the primary preoccupation in 2020 and 2021, public service challenges and opportunities also stemmed from a longer standing and wider range of issues. This section explores leaders' perspectives on public service management that are not exclusively tied to the pandemic, although there are still some unavoidable overlaps with pandemic issues. As well, the section is focused more on management issues as opposed to the subsequent theme centred on public sector governance (Subsection 2.5).

A. MANAGEMENT AND PRIORITIES

Public service management is a broad category and hence covers a lot of ground and groups major recurring observations related to the public services' priorities and management challenges.

The program priorities identified are numerous and diverse, given that leaders consulted have varied responsibilities and mandates. Thus many, if not all, of the current "hot button" topics were discussed. For instance, these included priorities in key program areas such as health care, education, infrastructure, climate change, economy, immigration, and security.

In addition, many priorities target important social issues that should hastily be addressed, such as those previously outlined (Subsection 2.1). Examples would include social inequities, diversity and inclusion, racism, reconciliation, social discord, misinformation, changing demographics, and public expectations. As a group, leaders essentially mirrored most major social problems through their topmost objectives and priorities.

Priorities focusing on issues or programs help define "what" governments should be doing. Leaders also had views on "how" to go about it. Some of these observations relate to topics too specific for our present purposes. However, others deal more broadly with how the public service manages and enacts its priorities. Chief among these are the following:

- An increased tolerance to risks and less restrictive rules and oversight contributed to the rapid turnarounds and successes experienced during the pandemic. Leaders identified the need for more efficient accountability and risk management regimes as clear takeaways from the pandemic, despite longer-standing concerns in these areas.
- There is a disproportionate emphasis placed on government policies and announcements to the detriment of the attention accorded to their implementation. More needs to be done to ensure policies, programs, and other initiatives are effectively planned, resources, coordinated, and monitored to ensure successful implementation and results.
- Greater and more complex problems and issues transcend the boundaries of individual jurisdictions. Leaders agreed that another lesson, reinforced by the pandemic, is the need for increased communication and collaboration between governments and with stakeholders. To cite a city administrator:

“Make stuff less about the announcements and make it about the issue. Communicate with Canadians on that front, what is the problem you are trying to fix here. I am dismayed by the lack of understanding in leading journalism of public service. People have the basics wrong, and it leads to bad discord.”

“People need to understand that each government has its own decision-making model. We need to communicate that better so people can understand.”

“Maybe there will be more alignment and vision. In the first 6 months of the pandemic, within the province we spoke 6-7 days a week, we never had those meetings before. We created bonds and relationships at the senior levels that I hope will stay.”

“I think one of our issues is ensuring that people have a macro understanding of the systems we are working. ... We need to do more in partnerships as opposed to solving all issues ourselves. We do not have the bandwidth; we need to think bigger and more collaboratively.”

“We need to do more in partnerships as opposed to solving all issues ourselves. We do not have the bandwidth; we need to think bigger and more collaboratively.”

- A number of leaders reflected that better communications with Canadians by the public service would help alleviate some of the serious concerns noted during the consultations, for instance through doing the following:
 - fostering better understanding of how governments work;
 - improving knowledge of issues facing governments;
 - understanding conflicting public priorities, expectations, and trade-offs; and
 - countering misinformation and disseminating objective evidence and expert opinions.

As part of the varied discussions on public services' current management challenges, two specific topics generated significant interest and merit consideration: Human Resources (HR) Management, and Business Processes and Information.

PUBLIC SERVICE – HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

SELECTED LEADERS' COMMENTS

“Challenge: The ability to accommodate individuals and still deliver. ... Competition for resources, after what people have seen what goes on with DMs and ADMs they would work in the private sector. The fight for talent will be more prominent. IT and finance people and skills that we need and if you will be criticized over executing a program you will go to the private.”

“We are now hiring people across the country, even if we do not have the footprint outside of Ottawa, which increases inclusivity. ... We are looking across the country for a better geographic representation. ... We are doing well in women, okay on Indigenous communities, not too bad in visible minorities and [are] lacking in people with disabilities.”

“When we got rid of the hierarchy, it changed the whole governance system. That was very unsettling for many people. What are institutions, a year ago it was buildings, eight floors and now it means nothing? It is the values and how we live them that defines the institutions; your visions and mandate changes everything. It takes us back to the basics rather than the comfort we had in that physical bubble.”

“The government pays competitively for some functions and not others and there are obvious gaps, and they will need to get their heads together and decide how they would want to pay for that. There is a broader gap in the HR front, and it is largely dominated by lack of strategic thinking. ”

“We are more alert to mental and personal issues; we claim high levels of productivity from working remotely but what are the impacts on social interactions and mental health?”

“Our absentees have fallen, and our productivity increased. I also learned that the downside of that people do not shutoff and I am worried for their mental health.”

“We had a bad structural deficit. We are starving our long-term care and health care systems. Women and visible minorities usually run the healthcare system. But there are not enough people. We need to pay people a decent wage and provide jobs to them fairly.”

“Challenges: the impact from the pandemic not only in terms of how we will work in the future but how do we fill positions with the right people. ... This pandemic has taken a terrible toll on many public servants who have been working on the frontlines. I think it is going to accelerate a grey wave in many organizations ... I think it is probably going to fall short to get us where we need to get. We are going to go into a period of real struggle to fill positions with highly skilled people.”

“I think the overarching one [lesson] was whatever you do or however you do it, you must take the temperature of the staff in the organization into consideration.”

“Performance management will be a strong one and not an easy conversation. Working from home piece brought it ahead, and strong performers want to be in the office and weaker performers want to work in home. I think it will erode public trust more. Work from home gets a side-eye from a lot of citizens.”

B. HUMAN RESOURCES (HR)

With respect to HR, preoccupations centred on the following matters.

- The challenges and difficulties in securing needed staff and talent are top of mind, and the situation was aggravated under COVID-19. While the remote work environment may favour hiring from across the country and a larger pool of candidates, there are also growing impediments:
 - The toll taken by the pandemic on the workforce (as well as vaccine requirements) will likely accelerate departures and early retirements.
 - Often, government compensation is not competitive.
 - For some, the public service is perceived as too bureaucratic, restrictive, and not well attuned to the expectations of a young and more mobile workforce.

Under these conditions, the struggle to hire skilled resources, in competition with the private sector, will intensify.

- The impetus to ensure public services' workforces are diverse, inclusive, and representative of the populations they serve will continue. While beneficial, this also adds complexity to HR functions such as staffing.
- Although many lauded the benefits of working remotely on employees' performance and productivity, others expressed misgivings. While there is no clear consensus and the situation may differ by organization, performance management will not be easier under a new remote work environment and will most likely require added scrutiny.
- The public service work environment is evolving from many perspectives: changing hierarchies, mental health awareness, diversity and inclusion, flexible work arrangements, to list a few. A mounting challenge for managers is to deliver programs and services efficiently while accommodating growing individual needs and HR expectations.

Leaders also shared some important HR lessons, in addition to those implied under the previous points. In the context of the many changes impacting employees, recurring messages included the following:

- Accommodate staff where possible and steer away from "one size fits all" approaches;
- Throughout the various changes and demands impacting the workforce, communicate and consult with employees. As one leader put it:

"Whatever you do or however you do it, you must take the temperature of the staff."

PUBLIC SERVICE – PROCESSES AND INFORMATION SELECTED LEADERS' COMMENTS

"It's less about the civil service and if it is ready but rather our institutional structures, such as IT systems. Some of the complaints that we brought out a lot of money and a lot of people took it that do not deserve or need it. That's how it works, we cannot calibrate the money to a business' taxes and payrolls."

"During the pandemic, we found that we can order things from Amazon and have it delivered to your doorstep within two days. This caused some questions to arise on our processes such as: why I can't have my government services delivered to me in the same way. ... We have a clunky IT system, half of what we do is web-based and the other half is paper-based."

"The IT infrastructure, if you want to make change in social instruments you need a system to work to do that. The system we have right now is 30 years old."

"People work hard and can solve problems really fast without the red tape."

"Reducing red tape, removing hierarchy, and get[ting] HR and IT much more streamline by necessity. We brought in people to our centre office to work on a project and an employee was given an MS Teams account and cloud-based sharing on day one, and when he got back to his department and requested these services, his wait time was 18 months. We were able to remove the red tape and give it to them immediately."

"Cyber security challenges got very aggressive in the past year, and we have put resources to avoid problems."

"A young person once told me he would not want to work in the government because of all the bureaucracies. Well, the downside of transparency is bureaucracies; it is part of our democracy, and we must account and do all that as it is better than the alternative."

"You still need a memo with a DM or minister's approval on it. There is a way to get there much quicker. These memos that used to go through six levels before I see them, people are now banging them out. ... I think it has reinforced the importance of giving people trust to do their own things."

C. BUSINESS PROCESSES AND INFORMATION

Business processes, information, and related technologies (IT) were areas that stood out as shared management challenges.

- Leaders recognized that the rapid deployment of IT solutions greatly contributed, in many jurisdictions, to the successes of working at home and remote (online) service delivery. Conversely, those with less ready access to technology (e.g., northern jurisdictions) faced more daunting challenges.
- Successes of corporations heavily reliant on technology (e.g., Amazon) and increases in cyber security threats have instilled a renewed sense of the pressing need to invest more in public service IT infrastructure, and deal with outdated systems. As well, the future of program and service delivery will necessitate further investments.
- Many public service jurisdictions, the federal government, have had long-standing objectives to streamline business and accountability processes and reduce red tape, often with limited success. While public service accountability remains an essential tenet, recent experiences have demonstrated that less process, approvals, and red tape is possible and beneficial. Leaders expressed the fervent need to retain this lesson.

THE ECONOMY

SELECTED LEADERS' COMMENTS

"A couple of things we have had a massive economic and social disruption this makes the 2008 economic crisis look like we lost a \$5 bill on the way to A&W. The impacts have been very differently felt. ... This time it is mostly women who are feeling the effects, the types of industries affected are different and marginalized people are being affected."

"As you see in the US there is a lot of optimism in growth. There is fear of a recession. I think people see that the federal government needs to make big spending to keep the going economy."

"In relative terms, we were able to roll out programs that kept the economy going. Canada is number three in the G20 and that is a function of being a rich country."

"Part of the challenge is inclusive economic growth and what it will look like."

"We will all be faced with an economic hit once we emerge from the pandemic. How do we recover from that?"

"Our rating agencies do not see that the COVID impacts on the economy is everlasting."

"The third issue is protecting the government from global impacts that are out of control. We are going through a low interest rate period which helped us borrow more. This has a huge impact in the long term, and it is not sustainable."

"Another challenge would be economic and financial challenges and how they are being considered. If we do not get all three orders of government working on that then I do not see great success ahead of time. ... With a strong economy, it will help us to deal with the other challenges ..."

"We have a hell of fiscal hangover coming out of this pandemic. We had a bad structural deficit. We are starving our long-term care and health care systems."

"When it comes to deficits, how ready or capable is the federation to respond to these historical productivity issues ...? I am not convinced where we are today that there is any will on the table to tackle this issue."

2.4 THE ECONOMY AND FISCAL MANAGEMENT

Most leaders (about two thirds) commented on the state of the economy, its prospects, and the importance of good fiscal and budgetary management.

A. THE ECONOMY

Clearly, COVID is the major factor currently affecting the world economy, including Canada's. There are divergent views, however, on how well-positioned is Canada for growth and recovery as (or when) it emerges from the worst of the pandemic.

- Leaders recognize that extraordinary spending was needed to deal with the effects of the pandemic, help save lives, and keep the economy going. Irrespective, most also worry that the resulting deficits and debt levels are unprecedented and unsustainable.
- For some, the situation is more troublesome as it exacerbates long-standing economic concerns, such as those related to low productivity, and much of the new spending is not focused on investing in economic growth. Major assistance programs were admissibly targeted to more vulnerable individuals, businesses, and industries impacted by COVID-19.
- Others are more optimistic. They point out that Canada is well-positioned economically among the G20, that the pandemic spending is a one-off occurrence, and that financial ratings agencies corroborate that the economy will rebound.
- Leaders are concerned that the exceptional COVID-19 spending appears to have skewed the perception of deficit spending and reinforced the appetite for the positive social outcomes of big deficits. Many reported a growing disconnect between the public's expectations and perceived entitlements, and the corresponding revenues and resources needed by governments to address them. This is compounded by the current low interest rates which facilitates borrowing but which likely will not last.
- In addition, there are structural deficits, such as in health care, transportation, and climate change, that the provinces and cities are hard pressed to resolve without further assistance.

FISCAL MANAGEMENT AND CAPACITY SELECTED LEADERS' COMMENTS

"Government aspiration on certain issues outstrips the spending of money. ... It will affect our international standing and our ability to defend our country in environmental, public safety, international, and health matters. ... Terrible things have happened, and we cannot handcuff the next generation."

"There are aspirations that are disconnected from the laws of government and scarce resources that the government needs to allocate. ... I think government needs to have a conversation about what is doable and what is not doable and what could be delivered implemented and operated."

"[The] pandemic has revealed provincial inability to pay for two fundamentals reforms ... equitable investment in health care and hospital beds. We cannot provide services without the revenue; you might be able to get away with borrowing right now. The understanding of fiscal restraint is wrong."

"I do not think they [Ottawa] understand the need for health care, education, and housing. There is a billion of dollars shortage there. The provinces are broke. [The] Government of Canada is soaking up this fiscal area to fill this space. I think this will result in undermining the healthcare."

"Another thing of great interest, there will be those who see many of those things that happened in the last year have positive outcomes. You can spend a generation full of new programming once, but you cannot do that repeatedly. How do you get yourself out of this world full of crises? When you are running you are at the pace you are running at that is unsustainable in the long run."

"But I think the outcomes could be catastrophic for trust if we got into a fiscal bubble. There is an appetite from the citizens for the government to do more. ... We are in a weird world right now that you could have all of this done for free. There has been no effort by government to increase taxes. The public loves getting things for free. I think there is appetite to spend more. This budget is the highest it has been in history. There is very little spending in the budget that would cause growth."

"The biggest issue is bringing the economy back to a level to continue to rely on taxes. In provincial and federal government, we issue bonds and borrow, and [it] is not sustainable. The debt level in Canada is very high; we need to bring it back to a level where we can sustain on taxes."

"The fiscal framework we are heavily relied on property taxes and do not have a piece of sales or income tax to face those emerging problems. People have this idea that property tax is too high, that is because we have an imbalance of the revenue stream. ... When you are a city and even if there is a constitution and legislation, in a lot of instances we end up with the solutions without the capacity to fix things."

"There is a complete disassociation between revenue and entitlements ... and a never-ending thirst for entitlement."

"A disassociation about what government does and what it pays for. It is an issue, and it is the foundation of every-thing I would say to answer any of these questions. There is a complete dis-sense between people's expectations of government and how they pay for it. It causes a general devaluation in institutions and in government work."

B. FISCAL MANAGEMENT

Most leaders expressed worries about our economic prospects in a post pandemic world, as well as the importance of fiscal choices and policies on any economic recovery.

It is safe to say that leaders' different views reflect current economic uncertainties, as well as, to some extent, the conventional diverging economic policies of different governments and political factions. Nonetheless, the importance of a strong economy in dealing with society's many demands is not disputed.

The pandemic has in essence aggravated the traditional economic conundrum of having to make some sacrifices to better our fiscal position and invest in growth for strengthen the economy and generate the revenues to afford needed social programs.

“Fiscal sustainability is another challenge. We have the federal and provincial governments that need to pay for all kinds of challenges. What is the fiscal plan to get us out of this deep hole that we had to create? It will require sacrifices along the way.”

As outlined through this report, the current evolving social context presents additional (new) difficulties and considerations, which could obstruct the road to prosperity and add complexity to economic decisions. Examples include the following:

- Increasing social tensions and segmentation can increase the need for effective social measures and programs, and also hinder consensus on needed responses and related economic priorities.
- The pressing nature of many social issues, climate change and the inevitability of changing demographics, preclude delaying many programs and expenses.
- The possible longer-term impacts of the pandemic, such as changing transportation patterns and use of office buildings, will likely require new investments (e.g., infrastructure).
- Governments' unprecedented deficits, debt, and weak fiscal positions coming out of the pandemic will limit economic policy options.

While the overall solution and economic policies rest primarily with the elected governments — at all levels — some leaders have cast doubts on whether there is the necessary collective will to tackle some of the difficult choices and decisions.

“But we are also allowing a set of behaviours that we find distasteful and not acceptable. People trying to have conversation about what does balance mean are being shut down. Hopefully, we do not sit here five years from now and say too bad that happened. We shut ourselves off and made ourselves an economic island, and we have no market for our resources, and our health care system is shutting down.”

Economic success will rest on the federation's ability to address these challenges and for the three orders of government to work together and reach some measure of consensus and consistency on economic priorities and policies. Coordination between jurisdictions is a key element of effective public sector governance.

NATIONAL GOVERNANCE AND PRIORITIES

SELECTED LEADERS' COMMENTS

"[The] parliamentary committee process is our way to talk to parliaments and people, and it is failing. We went from not doing enough to slaying deputy ministries for spending too much money. We have no concept of preparedness in this country. It is time to stand up for things that matter. ... We lost ourselves in the Westminster system. We do not answer questions because our ministries might be lying. ... Public servants do not know what to do, and a little bit of truth is needed for trust."

"I am skeptical about the Government of Canada's ability to lead the country. Ottawa lives in a bubble and does not know the priorities of provinces, territories, and municipalities."

"I think we need to rebuild trust in government. There are profound things we need to change, such as social media algorithms and our electoral system. To build a more cohesive society, we need to be more transparent. I think we must look at the way we look at people, and how we incentivize people, the role that corporate power plays in society."

"We have issues in supply chain integrity, competitiveness, how we manage IP, and naivety on issues on a global scale. ... There are many indicators that are pointing to the wrong direction in this country. The government needs to put good policy implementation to fix these issues. If the government does not do so, then I would be worried about my standards of living and my kids' ... Hints of reality from time to time would be good. ... We need to move the country not only the bureaucracies."

"I worry about is the role of parliament. That probably existed before the pandemic. I experienced it very specifically I get called before committees. But if you have watched it, I think you would find there has been more of the other stuff where things are not addressed, the questions are rarely taken into the heart of the discussion."

"I think in general as we start to emerge out of COVID and faced with the fiscal reckoning there is more effort taken to crystalize the tough choices we have. In general, we suffer in [province]. It is hard to be the only jurisdiction prepared to grapple with tough choices. The federation becomes more divided if the feds do not want to take these tough choices."

2.5 GOVERNANCE

Exploring public sector governance was one of *Top of Mind's* key goals. The previous sections have highlighted the increasing prevalence of “wicked” problems and daunting challenges senior leaders must face regularly. In this context, sound governance not only matters a great deal but is also the foundation for successful solutions and ways forward.

Public sector governance should provide for effective strategic direction, coordination, and oversight both within and across jurisdictions, and help sustain productive relationships between senior public servants and elected officials. The leaders’ prolific views and insights are organized under four main subtopics: National Governance, Political Interface, Engagement With Canadians, and Government Collaboration and Coordination.

A. NATIONAL GOVERNANCE

National governance deals with governance from a macro perspective, such as at the national, federal, and provincial levels, and beyond that of individual departments, cities, or institutions. While comments were abundant and diverse, a few areas generated more interest.

- Leaders have recognized both the strengths and benefits of our federation and parliamentary system, as well as expressed several concerns.
- Major challenges such as those pertaining to the pandemic, the economic situation, and deficits, would preferably require some measure of common policy direction across jurisdictions, which is not easily attained in our politically diverse and decentralized system. Ottawa has been accused of being in its own bubble, and many have stressed the need for coherent efforts to deal with the tough fiscal situation coming out of the pandemic.
- Jurisdictional issues abound. Complex problems normally cross jurisdictional boundaries, and there is not always adherence to our constitutional design and divisions of power. As well, for citizens, it is increasingly challenging to understand properly who is responsible for what.

«J'ai un grand souhait: la continuité, il y a des pays qui performant dans leur politique avec une certaine continuité. Si l'on recommence les politiques publiques au 4 ans, ce n'est pas simple. ... En ligne du « management », ce que tu apprends c'est tu dois prendre tes décisions sur le long terme.»

“We have our fair share of problems with the federal government historically, jurisdiction is not based on a popularity poll. There is a design, and we need to go back to this constitutional design. That is why they are there. ... A centralized model does not work; it is not a one size fits all.”

“I am a believer that the Constitution, with the division of powers and the fact that Canada has implemented a federal model, is one of our real strengths.”

“I am lucky enough to have experience in the provincial, municipal, and federal level. Our jurisdictions are broken, and we are focused on jurisdictions and that is the issue ironically. ... If we view all our mandates from the community view, you would not know who is responsible for what.”

- For many, the decentralized nature of the federation is a real benefit and allows decisions to better reflect the country's diverse regions and needs. One participant emphasized that tensions between the federal government and the provinces, including occasional conflicts, are healthy:

"There are fights between the provinces and the federal government about that [carbon tax]. I am not a centralization person; I think these conflicts when they happen, they are positive, they come up with better solutions because the community is taken into consideration. There is a creative chaos that comes with this. ... In many aspects I feel the tension between federal and provincial is helpful in sense of position, I think it helps us avoid centralization that could happen in our country."

- The Westminster Parliamentary committee process is not as effective as it should be. The committees do not always address the essence of key issues, do not always respect the neutrality of the public service, and on occasion pursue issues for mainly political reasons. Leaders noted this as another example of an area where many people do not fully grasp how the system works or should work.

"The last three months watching Parliament, it struck me the blurring of the roles between the ministers and public servants. I think if you do not solve it, then it calls the question on the neutrality of the public service. Ian Stewart re-fusing to provide documents and defending the neutrality of the public service."

"We frankly need less lawyers and processes and need to get back to key foundations of parliamentary democracy in Canada. ... If we think of Senator [Mike] Duffy's hearing, it went on so long, and people were saying 'what is going on?' It could have taken way less time. ... I think people are looking for a 'show me' model. We seem to have gotten ourselves way laid in ensuring ultimate fairness in the wrong way. We have lost substantial knowledge amongst the public generally, on what these things should be doing. In [province], there are many things in the parliamentary democratic system in Canada that people do not understand."

- Several leaders identified the lack of continuity and long-term strategy and planning as a chief shortcoming of public sector governance. The normal four-year electoral cycle does not facilitate longer-term visions and implementations, and often a change of government means a change in direction on key files.

POLITICAL INTERFACE AND ELECTED OFFICIALS

SELECTED LEADERS' COMMENTS

"I think that accountability is a huge issue. The accountability act has shifted a lot to deputy ministers but still limited that you still report to ministries. ... The increase pressure in centralization in PMO means bad decisions are being made because decisions are not being made. We need accountability to either be with the ministers instead of with ADMs with autonomic pressure. I do not think 25-year-olds in PMO are qualified to make the decisions they make."

«Il faut dire, nos niveaux politiques étaient très présents et se parlaient beaucoup ce qui aide pour la prise des décisions ... Mais c'est certain que les politiciens doivent apporter des propositions qui vont emmener les citoyens plus proches de l'information et de la décision.»

"We are losing the ability to tell truth to power and weigh options. We need to understand numbers and unintended consequences are not considered. We are responding yes to campaign promises because that is what we do, and it comes from platforms."

"Us [federal] and the [province] government, we managed the pandemic as a political issue, and we have not been in front of it. We deal with the borders as political issues not the flow of the disease. We deal with it as how do we deal with public or other government issues which causes people to be unhappy."

"We have gnarly problems and I feel it is embraced here and I get the sense everything feels so breezy: "we will get it fixed." It is almost like if you were to explain something you need to be stupid or else you cannot do it. I feel that in the broader public sector sense, which comes from partisan politics, if you explain an issue, they will accuse you of being incompetent and fingers are pointed."

B. POLITICAL INTERFACE

Leaders also offered candid views surrounding the inner workings of their relationships with their elected masters and the political bureaucracy generally.

There were more than a few positive comments regarding the interface between the public service and politicians, and the collaboration between politicians, particularly at the outset of the pandemic. Consider, for instance, the following:

- Politicians noted as being very present and talking to each other to facilitate decisions.
- Politicians aptly deferring to public officers on facts and science.
- Testimonies of positive minister and deputy minister relations.

Nonetheless, concerns and issues in this area greatly outnumbered more optimistic views. The most common critical observations centred along the following perspectives.

- The politicization of the public service and infringements on its independence. This was often reflected through strict adherence to political platforms and the reduced desire for objective policy advice and options.
- As a result, the public service's ability to provide sound policy advice, weigh options, and "speak truth to power" is being eroded. Some leaders specifically pointed out that the situation was essentially the same regardless of the party in power.
- Likewise, there are fewer safe spaces for senior public executives to provide analysis or options that are unpopular or not sufficiently in tune with their government's position. Issues get politicized that should not:

"We are in an era in which decision-making is so overly politicized that the role of the professional public servant has become diminished [from] what it should be. I think there is a broiling of political perspective about the role of the bureaucracy and the work that it does and is challenged to do, and the independence of that, in my view, is no longer understood or seen by a lot of political bodies, parties and individuals for what it truly supposed to be."

“There is less grace, and you do not see thoughtful reflective comments as opposed to this is a great bit for twitter. I worry about that as a foundational problem, ... My fear is that the multitude of jurisdictions amplifies the problems. We want to go back to a diplomatic place; this country needs to work and there are base political drivers. We are more focused on the 4-year cycle, and short-termism is deadly to us as a country.”

“I feel there is a reluctance to hear an opinion that is not my own and we need to create safe spaces where these discussions could happen and respect each other’s roles.”

“It has been interesting watching the province’s Covid response here in [province], and the extent to which they deferred to the public officer on the science and the facts. ... Governments can defer to experts and it’s a transferrable lesson. It is a unique lesson, politicians have taken responsibility and deferred to experts for communications.”

“It was amazing to me how quickly it became politicizing [re: vaccines]. The political resentment that immediately started and that more vaccines should be directed to hotspots, you gradually started to see a real erosion of those principles, and ultimately, it became a dogfight to get in a room and argue for allocations that align with the principles. But the principles were nowhere to be found when decisions were made. I find it discouraging to see things are becoming more political than expert-related. This could only be rebuilt when there are political leaders willing to do that work. I think we have gone over the scale, and politics is what is leading us to this lack of confidence and trust in institutions.”

- The tendency to centralize decisions under Prime Ministers’ or Premier’s Offices, or similar central agencies, is often detrimental to ministerial accountability.
- Similarly, the expanded and overextended role often played by political staff, without the needed authority or competencies, can impede and conflict with the deputy ministers’ responsibilities. According to one participant: “The public service is beaten down by the need to be responsible politically.”
- There is a degradation of sound political debate and reflection, and of thoughtful policy analysis and communication. These seem replaced by an increasing focus on instant communications, such as brief soundbites destined for social media. Leaders have observed that political debates and communications reflect less grace and diplomacy, and are more polarized and ideological.

COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT WITH CANADIANS SELECTED LEADERS' COMMENTS

"And if we do not understand Canada, we cannot serve Canada."

"I think communications with people and how we communicate with Canadians is important. We are now in such a different communication environment. ... We need to put more emphasize in that as effectiveness of communications is key. ... People are looking at ways on how to get the views of ordinary citizens into decision-making and policy-making. It went in the wayside, and people thought it could be dealt with on social media. But it has not proven to work because it divides rather than unites. We need to find creative ways on how we get their views into Parliament and into policy- and decision-making."

"How do we handle people who basically reject the concept of enlightenment and rationality as a decision-making force, rejecting the rules of our various institutions that see themselves moving and tearing down institutions and disbelieving things that are not up to their agreement or liking?"

"It is interesting in our province: the tone and process needs to be collaborative. We are seeing some really good success from that. I think we can work across different values and perspectives to achieve the same outcomes. There is a real value in working across and real merit to that."

"Increase expectations for accountability and in order to be accountable you need to be understood. If people are expecting something entirely different because they do not understand the role, in the law you are accountable but in their eyes you are not."

"We are starting to reach out to the private sector and share our thoughts on what the future will look like. We have 13 sectors councils, truckers, manufacturing, fisheries. ... We work with them all the time and see what they need. That is a relationship we focus on and maintain."

"We need to be more open to change and hearing from public on how we could change things."

"There was a perception there was an element of businesses and society that had to carry much higher burden than others. Institutions generally are suffering from the perception that decisions are not being made based on the right criteria and we are not being told the truth and transparency on how these decisions are being made."

"We need to guard our institutional credibility as it has been undermined by social media. I think the need to always make things complicated such as global warming and car-bon targets, needs to be simplified in a rational and justifiable way so people can get it."

"Recognizing that people have different values and views and it's important to hear perspectives from everyone and give them voice. ... We must change our approach using multichannel ways to consult and engage with and see what they are going through to properly cater to them."

"Truth is more important. I would say the public service needs to have a stronger spine and demonstrate leadership, be a little bit bold in connecting with Canadians. ... and not drinking our Kool-Aid too much and always painting a rosy picture on the other side of people dying. What it needs the most is to step up. You cannot be captured by a rosy outcome."

C. COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT WITH CANADIANS

An effective means to foster productive debates and understanding is for the public service to communicate and engage directly with Canadians and relevant stakeholder groups. Engaging and giving voice to constituents is a vital part of good public governance and, most often, a necessary step to effective strategic direction and decisions founded on shared expectations and majority consensus.

While leaders put forth different ideas on communications and engagement, there was unanimity as to the overall importance for governments of properly reaching out and involving its citizens. As well, this topic is closely linked to issues identified previously. The road to improving trust in public institutions, the public's understanding of issues, and countering misinformation and social dis-cord, goes through effective communications. Some noteworthy considerations:

- The communication environment, media and expectations have all evolved considerably in recent years. Governments must keep pace and revisit how to best communicate and engage its citizens. Leaders provided several useful examples as to how their respective organizations are taking action and innovating to better reach out to its citizens.
- Some of the communication innovations necessitated under the pandemic are being retained or expanded to better reach broader audiences.
- Different leaders noted that communication is important but not the goal. In addition, governments should actively consult and engage the public to determine peoples' needs and concerns and obtain their input on some key decisions.
- Engagement requires sustained effort and patience, especially when there are divergent views and values. Consider the following advice:

"You have to be prepared to accept that things are going to take longer to accomplish and to really reflect the goals and aspiration of Indigenous populations. You need to realize it will take a while and a lot of back and forth and you must be patient with Indigenous groups and their capacity to engage, and constantly assist them to engage. It will not be accepted if you do not take time to work to their pace."

- Leaders also advise honesty and transparency are prerequisites for good communication — do not create false expectations! Leaders shared some telling examples where communications had failed due to lack of transparency or honesty (see Annex, Theme 5.C).
- Consultations also confirmed that, with certain groups, communication and engagement efforts will not likely bear much fruit. There are segments of the population that are either inherently anti-government or for which evidence, expert opinions, and rationality are only valid if they support their pre-set beliefs. Recent events, including the pandemic, have provided many examples. Nonetheless, efforts to communicate, inform, and engage should include all Canadians, particularly harder to reach audiences.

GOVERNMENT COLLABORATION AND COORDINATION SELECTED LEADERS' COMMENTS

"The challenging part about government is that everything that is important crosses jurisdictions and department lines. ... It crosses departmental governance. How do you make progress on issues that require multiple players around the table?"

"When there is a 'Team Canada' approach to negotiate things like NAFTA, you see people coming together and better inter-government cooperation. But, for example, the COVID alert app, you could not even get an agreement from premiers to use the same platform. Moreover, vaccine credential; for it [to] work and for other countries to trust it, you need a pipeline from all jurisdictions and all premiers to verify these credentials."

"If you look at our federation and how it works, a lot of it is impeded due to the size of it. It is hard to get collective changes due to the factions of the government. We are operating in a broader concept. ... We are not a cohesive country;. ... Every province wants to do its own thing."

"When I look within our own government, collaboration is what we really try to promote and mental health. ... Cross-departmental is a model that could be successful in different sectors. It may take more time, and people may need to compromise to fix these issues. How do we create those spaces and areas that you are rewarded for working cross-departmental and provincial governments?"

"There have been really sweet spots during the pandemic where collaboration between all levels of government that we have not experienced before. ... One of the strategic lessons we need to take on and harness: what is real collaboration and what underpins it? Is it sharing data, evidence, venturing out to find out what we have in common with non-traditional partners, and how do we do that in a Westminster system? How can we harness and build this on?"

"We must re-examine the systems in which we work in. ... We must have a whole of government approach; I do not only mean on the provincial level, we need to get better at reaching other jurisdictions."

"We are working in a more horizontal way than ever before, but many of our structures are very vertical. How do you marry those wicked horizontal issues with our vertical institutions? How does the government work together with the public sector to solve these issues while fitting our Westminster system? It is difficult with multi-layer expectations over orders of government and to marry that with the political nature of the system."

D. GOVERNMENT COLLABORATION AND COORDINATION

Like the engagement of citizens, an overarching consensus emerged from the consultations surrounding the necessity and benefits of better collaboration both within and between public sector jurisdictions. There is also broad agreement that this remains one of the biggest challenges in modern public sector governance (refer also to survey results). The subject flows naturally from prior comments pertaining to national governance. However, while national governance attempted to focus primarily on jurisdictional responsibilities and governance mechanisms (e.g., Parliamentary committees), here the focus is on collaboration and coordination. As in most other areas, leaders identified both examples of successes and difficulties.

- In instances where joint efforts and collaboration between jurisdictions were present at the outset, success was more evident. One leader noted the “Team Canada” approach to the North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) negotiations as an illustration. A few leaders observed heightened collaboration for some aspects of the COVID-19 response, particularly at the outset of the pandemic.
- Municipal chief administration officers have described how several Canada’s largest cities have been meeting regularly to discuss common issues and solutions in relation to the pandemic, and how their contacts with both provincial and federal ministries have intensified.

“The feds have assigned ADMs [assistant deputy ministers] and DMs [deputy ministers] to help us [cities]. When you have an aging population and under investment in infrastructure and young generations wanting to go back to work, you need to be more deliberate in approaching these issues. ... Let us agree on the topic, we will focus on outcomes we are trying to achieve and respect the roles and responsibilities of each of us and decide what works.”

«Alors le décloisonnement a permis d’être beaucoup plus proches entre secteurs et ministères, ce qui est très bien. Cela a apporté de l’innovation, rapidité et assouplissement des règles. ... avec le gouvernement fédéral nous [province] avons eu énormément de contacts avec le ministère de la sécurité publique et l’armée ainsi que la sécurité civile. Effectivement il y a eu un rapprochement significatif. Beaucoup d’interventions avec le fédéral pour les communautés autochtones pour trouver des solutions.»

“We have coalesced as big cities like we have not done before. We have a meeting every two weeks with all major cities around the country. It took us 90 minutes to come up with our challenges that require the government’s help. I think from governance perspective, cities matter now more than ever, and we need provinces to realize that. We are caught in a war of ideologies with the province. Lots of good collaboration, but we are caught up in it. ... We need to put all the ideologies aside and work on the same page.”

«Le télétravail nous emmène, les 3 paliers du Gouvernement ensemble car les municipalités ne pourront plus faire ces changements seul. Les paliers doivent avoir la même compréhension des enjeux et de programme.»

- The size of the country and its various jurisdictions and peoples inherently makes us diverse, which more often favours decentralized approaches in different areas. However, this makes coordination both more challenging and necessary. As such, several impediments to better collaboration were brought up:
 - Public service structures and responsibilities are “vertical” (hierarchical) by nature, which does not facilitate working on common “horizontal” issues that cut across jurisdictions.
 - A number of mechanisms under Westminster systems (e.g., privacy laws, Cabinet confidences, etc.) often do not enable the easy transfer of information needed for effective collaboration.
 - Having multiple players around the table, with often dissimilar priorities and mandates, tackle cross-jurisdictional issues takes time and patience, which can play against the pressing nature of the issues.
 - The partisan perspectives of different governments are not always reconcilable. As well, in Canada, the powers of the different jurisdictions are complex and not always clear or respected.

“If you look at our federation and how it works, a lot of it is impeded due to the size of it. It is hard to get collective changes due to the factions of the government. ... We are not a cohesive country; we are a large federation. ... Every province wants to do its own thing, half the provinces are talking about setting up their own manufacturing capacities” [re: vaccines].

“In Canada, it struck me, we have fallen into coordination issues: municipal vs. federal vs. provincial. There is a perception put out there where a lot of Canadians are fighting and blaming one another. Personally, I would ask: what do Canadians want out of their governments?: consistent public health guidance and consistent directions. We have not been very successful, and we caused more damage than good in terms of direction. ... It has raised some questions for me about the provincial and federal dynamics again. Who is responsible for what and what is the line between them?”

LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES AND REQUIREMENTS

SELECTED LEADERS' COMMENTS

"Leaders — They must be honest and spend time listening and less talking. They need to defend the people that are working for them. Self-interest has become the narrative of the day. I think that we have lost our understanding of Canada. ... Stop talking and start doing for the next generation."

"But if I only had two, it would be innovation and execution not defined by, can you pull the Memorandum to Cabinet in short order, but actually what we do on ground in real time."

"We need leaders that do not think 'this is not my role, it is yours.' Leaders are here for citizens and clients. Leaders today and tomorrow need to have their ego checked at the door, as it is not about us but about the people we serve."

"Ability to translate the political and public sector back and forth to the deputy level. Those things make or break the government."

"To some degree, these are ones [competencies] I value but I value them more now: [being] poly-dextrous and able to be deep vertically when they need to but horizontal by nature. ... People who have creativity and can unleash it ... can take risk that they are aware of ... can ask question why not? ... mobilize and support and not just within their unit or department but across levels of government. ... Tech-savvy, responsive, reflective; approach without borders; be able to work across different orders of government."

"Leaders:

- *The higher you go up the more your job is HR. You need people who know how to develop and build a team.*
- *People you can trust and can clearly communicate.*
- *Being comfortable with issues that may cost you your job"*

"Leadership and understanding that you cannot be just in your lane, and you must think of the bigger picture. The smartest person in the room might not be the best leader."

"Breath of experience and understanding everything from operations to policy."

"It is now for courage, creativity, and good communications. We have a level of complexity, and we need courage to tackle some of these issues."

"We need someone with a lot of patience, empathy, listening skills, collaborative skills, problem-solving, good interpersonal skills, and understands the machinery of government and how things can be done without a big stick."

"We are good at calculating input and risk, but we should be more outcome oriented. ... Commitment: it's a seven day work week."

"Character leadership: There is a fear of speaking truth to power when it came to council, and culture gets built for different reasons. ... Having people that have that as their DNA is important to me and I look for in new leaders"

2.6 LEADERSHIP

Implementing major changes initiatives; dealing with “wicked” problems; managing people and talent; reacting to crises; overseeing ongoing programs and operations; developing policy options; ensuring good relations with politicians; collaborating with other jurisdictions; engaging with Canadians; promoting good governance; safeguarding public values and ethics, etc. The list is endless, but it all falls on the shoulders of our public service leaders and senior executives.

A. COMPETENCIES AND REQUIREMENTS

We asked leaders: “What essential competencies, skill, or expertise will be most needed by senior public sector executives in the future?” The cumulative list of qualifications that leaders indicated would be required by future executives is as long and as diverse as the list of challenges they are likely to face. The examples provided herein (box insert next page) illustrate the variety of responses provided. Nonetheless, some suggested competencies and requirements were more prevalent than others.

- The needed competencies cited most often gravitated around the following:
 - Critical, strategic thinking and sense of the long term;
 - People and talent management;
 - Communications;
 - Implementation, delivery, and outcomes focus;
 - Risk tolerance and management;
 - Relationship and people skills;
 - Values, integrity, and ethics;
 - Compassion and empathy;
 - Flexible and pragmatic; and
 - Innovative and tech-savvy.
- There were no evident inconsistencies in what the leaders felt were the most important skills, except to some extent whether generalists or experts were preferable (or both were needed).

“I am a fan of generalists. You need practical problem solving. ... You need practical leadership to try to metal through. I don’t think the deputy needs to be an expert.”

“We emphasized generalist skills at a certain time; some people know how to get things done. A minister can arrive and face a whole staff of generalists. So, we need the management expertise and domain knowledge assembled within a set of skills any minister needs.”

EXECUTIVE HR AND TALENT MANAGEMENT

SELECTED LEADERS' COMMENTS

«Le recrutement c'est comme l'honneur de la guerre, au QC on va changer le mode de recrutement (nouveau projet de loi en janvier). Quelqu'un qui a fait un Bac en droit n'aura pas besoin de passer un concours pour entrer dans la fonction publique, même chose pour ingénieur. Quand tu as un diplôme, surtout pour les ordres professionnels, semble que la qualité a déjà été vérifié. ... Il nous faut faire ces changements, la pénurie est présente et importante.»

«Selon l'expérience des 5 dernières années (re: corruption au niveau municipal) besoin d'un programme pour former les futurs sous-ministres.»

"I do not feel in the public sector we have done anything to protect the value of what the public sector does. Nobody is prepared to talk about what the commitment is to work in the public sector. Either deliberately or inadvertently, we avoid this conversation."

«Ce qu'il faut aussi est de la valorisé (valoriser le travail des gens dans la fonction publique). Pas de message du genre « faire ménage dans la FP » (négatif). ... Il faut expliquer ou le dire, je crois que les plus hauts dirigeants nous avons cette responsabilité de faire une bonne communication (interne / externe). Aujourd'hui, si nous n'avons pas une bonne visibilité c'est moins attrayant. ... Nous devons être attrayant, innovant et il faut que nous donnions de l'espace aux gens pour que les politiciens valorisent la fonction publique.»

"Giving more prominence and shield leadership when we do not get it right. ... Watchdogs must be rethought because they are designed to shoot survivors."

"Rewarding and recognizing people who are not just successful in traditional ways but in non-traditional ways. Allow for rapid promotion and interim responsibilities. Some of them flourish, and I think we need to be more creative and supportive and allow more acceleration in roles."

"I am a big advocate of fearless advice and faithful implementation. I think we must reset the value of that matrix."

"You need to tell your team that what they do matters and how they do it matters. ... People need to know they are valued and that is what I am dealing with."

"We have the competencies and skills at the leadership level that will bring us along. If I were to leave tomorrow, they would be in good shape, and I would feel like my job is done."

"I have experienced this more at the city of [omitted], you are advanced by superiority and promotions are based on the assumptions of superiority."

"The granular skills you need to be in the public service, for senior executives there is a level of intellectual capacity that has been dismissed... in the sense, it is run by one person who is the smartest and everyone else is told what to do."

B. EXECUTIVE HR AND TALENT MANAGEMENT

Beyond desired leadership competencies, leaders also provided broader observations and advice on the management of the executive cadre and talent, and more generally on HR matters within the public service.

While the subjects explored varied, a lot of good advice revolved around learning, selection, and promotion of executives, people management, and the value we put on the public service. Examples of the breadth of this advice is reflected in the diverse examples provided (next page). However, two items are especially noteworthy and could serve as transferable lessons:

- A leader noted that the Québec government is changing its hiring practices (and legislation). People who are members of a professional order or possess certain diplomas, will no longer be required to be hired through a competitive process, as their competencies have already been determined.
- Senior public sector leaders, and politicians, in particular, must make better efforts to value the public service and communicate the importance of the work it does (e.g., in the past, political messaging has often been unjustified and detrimental).

ANALYTICAL SUMMARY

A summary integrating both reports has been developed entitled *Top of Mind: Insights, Issues, and Opportunities for Good Governance in Canada*.

ANNEX: LEADERS CONSULTATIONS – APPROACH AND SUMMARIES

INTRODUCTION

For Part 1 of the *Top of Mind* initiative, the IOG invited several very senior public sector leaders to participate in private consultations and share their views on the key challenges, lessons, and anticipated trends facing Canada and its public sector. Most invitees agreed to participate, and the IOG senior executives interviewed a total of 42 senior leaders. These included 14 federal deputy ministers, 7 provincial or territorial cabinet secretaries, 11 provincial or territorial deputy ministers, and 10 chief administrative officers or director generals of major municipalities. Overall, this group included representation from all regions, provinces, and territories.

APPROACH

The interviews were conducted on a confidential basis and were partially structured. Proposed interview questions and topics were submitted in advance; however, leaders could deviate from the suggested agenda. Detailed interview notes were taken to record the essential points of the discussions. The interview notes were subsequently reviewed, recompiled anonymously, and analyzed according to six main themes:

1. Social Context, Issues and Trends
2. The Pandemic – Challenges and Future Impacts
3. Public Service Management
4. Economy and Fiscal Management
5. Public Sector Governance
6. Leadership

Comments, observations, or other points raised by the leaders were organized according to these themes, as well as by subtopic within each theme. These themes overlap to some extent, and some comments may relate to more than one. Due to the large volume of interview notes, a selection of most interesting, representative, or original comments are presented in the following summary tables, and some are also presented in the main section of this report. In all, the comments included in this Annex account for approximately half of the total content of the complete interview notes.

Please be advised that, while the comments and interview notes from which they are compiled provide a fair and representative account of the interviews, these are, nonetheless, not quotes or literal statements by the leaders. Caution should be exercised as the comments presented reflect informal notes and not verbatim recordings of the leaders.

A.1 SOCIAL CONTEXT, ISSUES AND TRENDS (THEME 1)

The major topics or elements covered under this theme relate mainly to social issues, changes, and trends; reconciliation and Indigenous issues; media, public information and communication, science, and evidence; trust in governments and democracy; international issues and context.

Theme 1: Social Context, Issues and Trends – Selected Comments

1.A SOCIAL ISSUES AND CHANGES

We were ticking along in such a reserved manner until George Floyd's death. ... I received an email from an employee saying, 'your silence on this matter is deafening.' ... Later on, when it was too late, we put out a message and then we had a day with all our black employees, and I felt very naïve, and it was very sad.

We need to understand the country. ... I do not think the bureaucracy at large and the govt have understood the societal changes. ... The federal government will have to grapple with the amount of social discord and try to be a unifier, and it will be hard to do because it is more than five minutes of thoughts.

One thing ... is the change of demographics in Canada and the need to make progress in diversity and inclusion. ... How do our institutions reflect well the demographics? We must get on the issue of racialized Canadians and making sure they can take their place.

Social fragmentation, discrimination, lack of social cohesion, and racialized conflicts. ... All these factors were there long before the pandemic. But we were able to keep them under the surface. The pandemic did not give us the opportunity because we were directed to other things. But all these things resurfaced: lack of social cohesion, discrimination, how we treat marginalized people, and how do we put it back.

There is an enormous social shift, and a part of that is major divisions in our societies and in aversion to the enlightenment.

One of the most challenging things we are all facing is the technological change which drives a series of other pieces. It continues to accelerate and that will continue at a steep angle. What I am fearful of is not being able to keep up and our abilities as humans to adapt to this change. We have a lot of people that are keen to be early adopters and people that are never going to change, and I am worried that bell curve will flatten and will get people more on each end of the curve. This pervades many areas of our society, and it is not linear at all. Our inability as humans to adapt to the change is driving strong discontent and frustrations and other normal things that are associated with change.

We have 30,000 households at risk of losing their housing, how do you stop that from happening? ... The well-being of people struggling is top-of-mind issue.

And we have a great swath of unemployed men; people have not spoken about that. They are being overlooked and devalued; this pandemic has focused more on women. ...

Canada is a relatively small country with a big trading economy, and we are interdependent on the rest of the world. We see this in issues like economic relations, national security, and health. Global interdependence in an era where the norms and rules are fraying. Since the failure of Soviet Union, we had a positive trajectory through expansions of norms and rules that benefit smaller countries like Canada, but that space will be more fought. ... The centre of gravity will be Asia, and we need to up our game in Asia. We have solid alliances in the EU [European Union] and the US, but we need to be more present in Asia and have better capacity not from the diplomatic perspective but from a substantial perspective.

Theme 1: Social Context, Issues and Trends – Selected Comments	
1.A	SOCIAL ISSUES AND CHANGES
	We are all suffering, which is the larger issue. There is a growing sense that that is the way you did it. And because of colonialism or whatever other concepts, we are rejecting everything due to some of these concepts and are being used without a deep understanding of how serious and meaningful they need to remain. Core foundation principles: we have not invested time to explain or defend core foundations in Canada and lost and devalued them on who we want to be as a country.
	We have seen changes that have been occurring not just in the province or country but also globally. It impacts us in various ways: social and societal movements all over the world result in action in one form or another. We have had a status awareness office that has a large mandate; it is a catalyst within government to raise awareness to consider gender equalities. ... It is part of what we need to think of in responding to larger societal issues.
	I would say another challenge is we talk about diversity and inclusion in every aspect we do. I am not sure all citizens are there with us on that. In our current government and opposition, there is a lot of work to do there. We are working on child poverty and that is one we are trying to figure out.
	What we have right now is a health, economic, environmental, and social crisis. I look at it as a four bucket-crisis. ... It is a challenge for everyone. Social crisis as the Black Lives Matter; it has amped up anxiety in the population. The pandemic has hit the lower income levels more than the middle class and upper classes. This put a lot of strain on a lot of things like housing, food security, and housing cost and availability. The pandemic shines a light on homelessness. ... We are all faced with the shelter issue and affordable housing.
	I think one of the points that has really emerged front and centre for [jurisdiction], which is not specific to the pandemic, is the extent of inequality in our society and the problems it has created which contributes to the mistrust within the govt. The govt in [jurisdiction] is not being seen as effective in solving that issue. One change I see is the acknowledgement of this issue, and it is becoming the subject of our future. I also see an increase in consciousness.
	Government is gender-balanced and more diverse but is still lacking in representing people with disabilities.
	La diversité a prit une part importante, l'enjeu vient de prendre une tournure dans les 2 dernières années: Une accélération du virage. ... On (et tout autre palier gouvernemental) doit de façon transparente adresser l'enjeu de diversité au sein de corps municipale.
	Systemic racism, I would not say it has been here for centuries and pass it off as an empty statement. If we do not fundamentally change our attitudes and actions, then change is not real. ... There is an opportunity in [jurisdiction] and confronting black racism, naming it is a start and real action needs to be taken to tackle these issues. ... The stuff we are hearing now and the hatred that is being exhibited, if they do not hear from leadership and not just condolences, people want to see steps that are in line with what people are expecting to hear. This is an opportunity in a diverse community in places like [here] to put actions together to improve the quality of life of people.

Theme 1: Social Context, Issues and Trends – Selected Comments

1.B INDIGENOUS ISSUES

The lack of trust in bureaucrats is driving more transparency and change. What I find interesting is the notion of the Indigenous children. We all knew about this, but it woke a lot of people up. Part of me says shame on you, we already knew about it, and you should know your country's history. I keep hearing 'stop writing cheques; it is not just about money,' but there must be compensation there.

One of the biggest movements and public policy direction that directly affected us is the reconciliation issue. There has always been pressure to better reflect that dynamic in the workforce. There have been louder and bigger calls to try to ensure the workplace reflects the population and reflect the values. There is a lot of pressure on the government to address reconciliation, as there has been a greater focus to it. It is adding to the level of pressure to what we do.

In respect to Indigenous issues, I am not an expert on that, and its quite new to me, and [jurisdiction] has a large Indigenous community. One-in-five people is Indigenous, and the funding mechanism is different and there is a federal government responsibility there. I have not observed the significant increase in tension on that. It is an eye opener in other provinces because we have such a big population it did not create any new pressures.

One example: the missing action plan and murdered Indigenous women and children. [Jurisdiction] has been a huge part of responding to that. There is a pile of responses that will require time and different mechanisms, and we need to make sure we respond to them.

Historically, we have had good relations in [province], we feel a lot of what is happening nationally. We feel it differently. We did not have a residential school here; there were school programs, and we all must grapple with that.

[Jurisdiction] has been focusing on its relationship with first nation. We have three nations that we operate on their territory. We have a good a relationship with them, and our staff have really put the effort into reconciliation.

If I start with Indigenous communities, there has been conversation and conversations. I think the Indigenous community is more than willing to work with us.

This country has done a lot of wrong, and we are naïve about reality. We have racism and economic problems; we need to look at ourselves a bit, and how do we have foreign aid building wells in Africa but no freshwater access in Indigenous communities.

Theme 1: Social Context, Issues and Trends – Selected Comments	
1.C	MEDIA AND INFORMATION
	It must stop, and Canadians do not follow parliamentary committees but get their news from there [social media]. We need to do something about the misinformation on social media as we do not say this is a lie and this is the facts.
	Social media is very destructive towards trust in government. Its business model is based on negative emotions and that gets more clicks than positive ones.
	COVID has created a great sense of the importance of government. There have been feedback loops. ... It accelerated the society's view on government, and it has shined a light on bad government. It also accelerated the polarization of society whereby a conspiratorial national supremacist element is becoming stronger and more radicalized. You are seeing a [fraction] of that in Canada, which is way milder than the US. You can see it in anti-maskers and anti-vaxxers. It has shined the light on it and validated its role, and it has been amazing in showing the cause and effect and give voice to crazy people that are radicalizing the society.
	One of the enlightenments was that we decided that facts, science, and some sort of reasons would be an arbitrary of our reasons. Declaration would create things to be true. We are in a world where we actually reversed that, the vaccination hesitancy rate is an example of that. This is not a small proportion of our populations, in the US to this day some of the Republicans believe that the elections were stolen and would not ever be convinced otherwise. This destroys public institutions.
	We have seen enormous departures in populations, in [province], the frustrations of the nurses were quoted in people on their death beds saying this is all a hoax.
	One of the challenges is ... continued explosion of social media and the notion you could control it somehow. ... Communicate with Canadians on that front: what is the problem you are trying to fix here? I am dismayed by the lack of understanding in leading journalism of public service. People have the basics wrong, and it leads to bad discord. We need to better inform the media as they drive discussions on the public service
	La demande de l'internet/médias sociaux ... a été exacerbé en matière de pandémie mais la bonne affaire c'est qu'il y a un contre-mouvement où on veut valider l'information et il y a des réponses. Le Gouv commence à être moins « interpellé », du sens que si tu ne veux pas te faire vacciner tu n'auras pas certain privilège ou même des limites à ce que tu pourras faire. Les réponses et les médias, la qualité de l'information sont plus présents (ramener fait et science). Un mouvement qui commence à s'implanter et cela devient plus marginal de contester. Face aux médias sociaux, il y a une prise de conscience collective et je crois que nous sommes en train de trouver réponses à ça (aux abus). ... les gens sont plus conscients qu'il y a de la fausse information et il faut faire attention.
	The role of social media–amplified voices has been destructive. Traditional media is also not helping and to the point that I thought about sitting down with them and ask what they are trying to achieve and why they are not covering the good things we do. The way we can get a grip on this is by controlling what is communicated and what is the media releasing. We have to find a way to incentivize the media to be more fact-driven. The public service is struggling to keep up with the demands of the public, which has caused the frustration of citizen.
	Social media has changed the tone around this [trust]. There is a lot of invalid and non-credible information out there. People are very quick to say their stories, and it is one sided. Those become the news, and it is contributing to some distrust within government. Governments are trying to be more transparent and have put out more information to access. From the pandemic point of view, people are [making a] spectacle of vaccines, numbers, and the data.

Theme 1: Social Context, Issues and Trends – Selected Comments

1.C MEDIA AND INFORMATION

Tolerance is on the decline, and it is all dressed up as the complete opposite. There is a certain perception in the government of [jurisdiction] that is not being challenged, and people in central Canada understand the magnitude of that. I think part of this is that problems are more complex, and there are no easy solutions; and if you can't hold a political mass long enough to explain the problem, it is hard to map out a solution.

Generally, there is much greater sensitivity over various issues, and we now have more awareness. Personal viewpoints that are controversial or racially insensitive are no longer accepted. This is due to social media which increases the odds of that information coming out there, and it can be shared really quickly, and context might be lost. We need to up our game and behaviour to impact the image of the organization and the impact it may have for those hearing those words.

We see some challenges with media and social media and how easily people could insulate in their own bubble and media and their ability to cover the stories that matter to people. In that environment, their ability to reach their audience and they struggle in bounce reporting. We have that less in [jurisdiction], trying to find the truth in the balance. Media covers opposite viewpoints, and sometimes you get someone from the mountains, all of those factors.

I also think it [the challenges] around institutions' trust and being able to live in the era that people protest at every street corner and that is their right. How do we create an environment where people think they have a quality life to not need to do it? We have the media volatility; it is worse than I have seen anywhere. It has so much influence on the thought process of [citizens]. If a wrong narrative comes out its very hard for people to change their minds on it. I look at stories now, and I think to myself, my editor or producer would have never let me run this. It is not sourced properly; it is not fact checked; and there's a lot of innuendo.

We survived the Trump phenomena, and it has left its mark in valuing what we have, but we do not want to be like that. It is the corrosive piece in some places. ... We have a pastor, and he said, 'do not impose those vaccination cards on us because we will rebel.' If you force people to be vaccinated to worship on Sunday, then you are infringing on them. ... Low vaccination uptake in those part of the province and not because they are anti-vaxxers, but they are anti-government.

Influence of social media has been challenging, and its capacity to protract issues and proliferate arguments and the nonsense and bring groups of misinformed and ill-intended people together.

Social media spectrum, and the impact it has on trusting institutions. Most people on social media do not have a name or a picture and spread misinformation, and it causes the decline in trust in institutions.

Theme 1: Social Context, Issues and Trends – Selected Comments

1.D TRUST IN GOVERNMENTS AND CONTEXT

I think there has been a shift in ... views of the role of governments. Five-to-ten years ago, everything was good: there was lot of economic progress and no extra threat. At the time, there was the question of the role of government and people were looking at non-profits, NGOs [non-governmental organizations], and the private sector where interesting things were going on. I think COVID, climate change, a generational development of activism in gender, and racial activism has changed the calculus. It is like the 1960s but better [informed]. There are aspirations that are disconnected from the laws of government and scarce resources that the government needs to allocate. They are well informed of the issues they need to address.

I think in the short term there is some increase in confidence in governments as they funded vaccines, and it made a difference in battling the pandemic. I don't think I have a good understanding of how trust is influenced by a pandemic. We do not have a sense of the outcome at this point. ... You have places with high levels of deaths but good performance in polls and good trust. I do think it is early to know if there has been a substantial change in confidence.

And I do not think it is a given that declining trust is bad. I think a certain amount of distrust and skepticism in the government is not a bad thing. I am a fundamental believer in governments and elections.

People that make these observations on vaccine rollout—I think more profoundly all these issues of trust in governance and confidence—are the same people who would turn to the government.

First, you hate the police when you get a ticket but when they keep you safe the trust meter changes quite a bit. Context matters, and if you look at the work of our pollsters you see vulnerability in society has a direct relationship with government. We have enjoyed a trust bubble in the last while. It is unclear if it will settle or see structural shifts.

We did an independent study ... a couple of years ago and before the pandemic, and the level of trust of Canadians in government was 88 per cent. I think trust is back up now. I think we are an expansion to the macro level system [?]. There is direct trust when you have a service with somebody, and you have trust that builds in an indirect matter through listening to other trusted sources. You are influenced by things that have nothing to do with you, but you are still influenced by them.

I think there is a glib [trust] answer which is, I am not sure there is much you can do. We have been through a pandemic and went through shutdowns, and we still have 30 per cent anti-vaxxers. There have been real-life people that are dying, and yet we still have a bunch of people that say that does not prove it for me. We are living in an environment where trust is going to be hard to build.

Canadian's view of government has sharpened because of the pandemic. The role of government has been very present since the beginning of the pandemic. Most Canadians probably recognize the importance of government and the public service and experts as a result. There is a portion that view the government as a negative force, such as people who do not believe that COVID is real and vaccines are being forced and measures were too strict. There is an opportunity in a sense to capitalize on the sharpened views. Another implication is trust and understanding of the role the government. This thesis would suggest it has increased. ... The finest hour has been the execution of immunization; we took some hits on the supply early on and now we are on our way to be a global leader. That level of societal cohesion around that common goal in the spring and summer and federal and provincial cohesion has been remarkable and why we are successful.

Theme 1: Social Context, Issues and Trends – Selected Comments

1.D TRUST IN GOVERNMENTS AND CONTEXT

My own sense is trust is declining, and the population is less knowledgeable on government issues. It is a tough one, I would layer on that, when the going gets tough, the public disputes between level governments undermines public trust. I think showing it is important to publicly display that all levels of government can work together and have a cohesive unified force.

People need to see that we are doing with real reconciliation and real action at the frontline. ... Trust is earned and demonstrated. Trust is shaken in a lot of things we have seen over the past couple of years. ... People really need to see openness and transparency to be able to trust us. It has been a big part of conversation here in [jurisdiction]. People do not believe that the government is giving non-partisan good advice, so proving that we are doing it in their best interest would rebuild trust.

Trusting government to deliver services because there is nowhere else to go, and government had to make fundamental decisions such as the state of emergency. We have been incrementally inserting ourselves in the lives of our citizens, and there will be the 'Chicken have not come home to roost' on that one.

To what extent the govt is trusting Canadians to do things? In the earlier days of the pandemic, the federal govt announced a wage subsidy program, and yesterday, we announced that hires need to be vaccinated. We have vaccination cards, and the federal govt wants to use it as a model. Have we stopped trusting each other and the answer is, yes?

C'est certain que le clivage social de « Black Lives Matter » affecte la confiance des gens envers l'état, c'est certain qu'on la ressent mais je sens peut-être que l'impact des USA sur le Canada anglais doit être plus élevé qu'au QC. ... Ce grand clivage est présent, mais du même temps on le senti passé au niveau des corps de police –on a cette pression là et en même temps il y a un certain courant pour le « depolicing » mais je trouve que cela est 'en train de se tasser' un peu.

[To build trust] I would listen, learn, and lead. We must listen to what they are saying, and I truly believe we are listening to the people of [jurisdiction] who came to talk about the issues on racism. We have systematic racism in the [jurisdiction] and in the society. ... They did not believe me when I said we do have systemic racism, and I told them they can judge by our actions moving on. We must be better learners in this space. My leaders have been taking anti-racism training sessions starting January 2021. I have gone through that training, and it is a new level I have not seen in my career before. We need to take it to another level, and I learned that it is not good enough to say you are not a racist, but you need to be anti-racist. We need to get out there, lead and do things.

For me it's about being realistic, sympathetic, empathetic, and keep in mind the people are in [public] service for us. We act in the best interest of people who support us. This is how you retain trust of Canadians.

One of the things that I thought of is that confidence in public institutions is not there. One of my communications strategies within my organization is building confidence. The public sector confidence is gone which results in the exact opposite of what we need within our organization. ...

We have been gaining international attention for our climate change action plan. That is a plan that is very aggressive and seeks to reach target net zero in 2030. If we include people in conversations and give them voice, we will retain trust.

Theme 1: Social Context, Issues and Trends – Selected Comments	
1.D	TRUST IN GOVERNMENTS AND CONTEXT
	I believe that COVID has the potential to change the trajectory on how Canadians feel trust in public institutions. It represents an opportunity that we had not had ... during my career, I am not sure if it is consistent in the rest of the country. When you do not need public institutions, it is easy to lose public confidence in delivering on mandates and make citizens' lives better. ... I think public trust could be strengthened when governments deliver on their mandates and have a positive outcome on citizens lives.
	On the issue of public trust, I think during COVID we were able to fix things that are broken at an incredible speed. However, in normal times the length of time it takes to fix things that are broken is too long which causes a decline in public trust ... We should not lose those lessons from COVID, we can reverse the mistrust trend if public institutions do their job right.
	Confidence in governments becomes cyclical over time, some-times government appear more trusted than others ... When you go through something as broad and deep as a pandemic, coming out with new terms and language, there is a lot of change happening quickly and increases distrust. With the Trump administration and the misinformation, they had put out that also creates a sense of distrust.
	One of the quickest places to go [build trust] is transparency and openness with data. The relationship between government and decision making and science, which itself is subject of debate. That relationship that is put out there, it has really exposed and ... I think it has forced us to look at how we do things and what we are expected to do. There is a role for academia in exploring this question. ... People need to have trust and confidence in govt, and we need to earn that every day. How do we do it? A variety of creative engagement, consultations exercises, putting your work out there, being transparent for the work we do. Do not be afraid of siding with non-traditional partners. Let people see that we are challenging ourselves.
	A lot of citizens are suffering. Their businesses are suffering, and they have lost family members. When you are going through that the natural reaction is to blame someone, and the blame is put on govts in most cases.
	Nobody defends either of these things anymore [what govt does and pays for], and when they do, they are affected by social media and the cancel culture. I think that is what the core of the issues we confront here. There is a complete disassociation between revenue and entitlements ... and a never-ending thirst for entitlement. ... This is impacting this govt because it impacts the provincial revenues and society ...
	Trust eroded over time incrementally, and we are starting to really feel it recently. It is not just govt but includes govt. Some of it there has been growth from people coming from other countries and cultures. Dynamics are different, and their view on govt is way different than people who grew up here. Technology is competing a little bit, and it is no longer there as one source of information and creates a challenge on how we engage and reassure we do not have a different agenda.
	I think if you go back to people and economic effects they are facing, we have got this frustration and sense of isolation that is becoming very problematic and is emphasized by our political leaders who are taking more polarized ways and communication is becoming more rudimental and there is less diplomacy and leadership in any of this. ... I think we all know that trust leaves in horseback but comes back on foot. Rebuilding trust needs time and often people do not have the time.

Theme 1: Social Context, Issues and Trends – Selected Comments

1.D TRUST IN GOVERNMENTS AND CONTEXT

I am not sure; it is a tough one [re: trust], and I see it playing out on who you put out to deliver messages. Distrust is growing, and the anti-maskers and anti-vaxxers, and there will always be a portion of that on the edge of the government. Transparency and accountability are needed. What are you doing with their money and what kind of services are they getting for their tax dollars and is it useful to them? Some of the mistrust is earned, long term is very devastating.

About three or four years ago, we started to look at the evaporation of trust in public institutions. When I was a kid in the 1970s, there was a respect or honour you gave to certain offices and trusts in the system. When we started talking about it three years ago and proliferation of social media opened the world to share their opinions. ... One reason why trust is declining is because citizens do not understand how things are done and the processes. When people have an understanding of the institutions and its mandates, then if they do not like it, they can think about how they could change it.

I do not believe that trust in govt is equal to trust in democracy. I believe that some people equate them together. We struggle with that and miserable public opinion ratings because of what we do. It is like the health care system: government is not delivering it well but if you ask them how your experience was, they will say it was great.

We are going through a relatively hard time in our institutions with cancel culture. Incremental improvement is becoming more apparent, and we need to work more on blemishes. I think it is troublesome for governments, and they will not be prepared or well prepared for tomorrow if they are constantly apologizing for yesterday.

To build trust, it's all about giving voice to people. We have a diversity and inclusion steering committee. We have an anti-racism action plan; we stood up for women. We could have not talked about these issues five years ago. There are a lot of proactive things that you could do. ... On the racialized side, with the mistrust in police, we had some instances where police did not help themselves. Recently, I had a file in which a police officer fined an African man for jaywalking, but he did not stop the three or four other white men doing the same. We are revisiting how policing services are delivered. ... The Black Lives Matter movement has caused us to revisit our policing.

Covertly, you have the challenges we have had with [province] where the govt had to step on their own feet time and time again. As I hear and listen and have conversations with people, there has been a broad erosion in trust. ... The whole notion that Walmart and Costco can keep their doors open and small businesses had to be closed. I understand the logic behind that, as they wanted to limit mobility. The optics was hard to explain and confusing to people and undermines confidence. There was a perception there was an element of businesses and society that had to carry much higher burden than others. Institutions generally are suffering from the perception that decisions are not being made based on the right criteria, and we are not being told the truth and transparency on how these decisions are being made. You have people that say one thing and do another thing. ... I find it discouraging to see things are becoming more political than expert-related. This could only be rebuilt when there are political leaders willing to do that work. I think we have gone over the scale, and politics is what is leading us to this lack of confidence and trust in institutions.

A.2 THE PANDEMIC – CHALLENGES AND FUTURE IMPACTS (THEME 2)

The major topics or elements covered under this theme relate directly to the pandemic and include mostly pandemic impacts and issues on the public service; management and coordination of the response; public health and considerations; and future social, environmental, and economic impacts.

Theme 2: The Pandemic - Challenges and Future Impacts – Selected Comments	
2.A PUBLIC SERVICE ISSUES	
	Working from home where it works has been a huge advantage. But in defence you cannot fix a ship from home. ... PCO [Privy Council Office] has been very useful in providing us access with information from home. ... At the same time, we spend a lot of time on Zoom and Teams, and it is ridiculous. The improvement in IT systems forced by COVID is an advantage.
	Prior to the pandemic, we were already mobile working because we could not fit into our footprint. Since we started working from home, we saw acceleration in project approvals. This means an extreme workload; however, the technology has supported that. People are now very tired. ... Productivity has been very high at the cost of people working too hard.
	There is a certain fatigue with teleworking. The kind of work we are doing virtually will open a lot of opportunities for us in the future. People are hungry for those personal communications. ... [Lessons:] Remote work and future of the workplace, I think we are going to be working it out over the next few years. ... We can do it differently but how do we do it effectively and in a way that works for everyone.
	Before the pandemic, I have been investing in this agency to advance it. A few years before the pandemic, there was someone who said there is no way we can work from home because our people cannot access our sensitive data. That all changed in a weekend, and all these myths were busted. We have proven so many things we were wrong about.
	Our folks are telling us they do not want to go back to office. ... People are getting bigger on working from home. I think for the future a 20–60 model would be needed. Twenty per cent of people must work from the workplace and 20 per cent that you will never see again and for the 60 per cent in the middle, we need to find a hybrid solution. We need to watch out and not create an in-crowd and out-crowd. I found there is a difference in opinion between the non-EXs [executives] who want to work from home, and EXs who want to go back to the office. Then it is how do we do deal with our big factories; all of this must be based on the business needs.
	How we work, that will last. The physical office vs. teleworking. I am looking at hiring an ADM [assistant deputy minister] in the coming months. One of my ADM candidates is from Montréal and is not open to moving. I would have not considered that before, but now I would consider it. Now I can hire from the University of New Brunswick, for example, to stay closer to their communities in Fredericton. That is one that is important to keep. There is a lot of bias around it, 'I do not know what my employees are doing, I am not sure how productive they are.' From the surveys I have seen, most employees and managers prefer working from home. I think this changes the way we work.
	We have an opportunity to look at our physical footprint moving forward. This would put us in a better position to adjust our expenditure space moving forward. I would not need office space for 2,700 people anymore. This discussion would have not been possible before the pandemic.

Theme 2: The Pandemic - Challenges and Future Impacts – Selected Comments

2.A PUBLIC SERVICE ISSUES

The 9-to-5 in the office approach is not as needed as we thought. The overly conservative mentality of if someone is not in front of me, it means they do not work is clearly wrong. ... Flexibility, focusing on the job, and the outcomes is the best approach. The regions vs. headquarter is not an obstacle anymore. We opened a lot with the pandemic in terms of working from home. It changes the way we manage transportation in terms of parking and rush hour. It comes with challenges such as recruitment and onboarding people and innovative discussions that you do not have anymore. There is one condition for me for working from home, which is equality of services. ... We have developed a process and started a plan for the future of the work. I think the lab part will be a long discussion with my staff because there is some stuff that can be done from home and others that cannot.

The pandemic was very new to all of us. We were able to adapt and change quickly, and we have not missed a day. When you have departments under you like fire and sewers, you cannot simply stop. We did manage to keep things the way the public expected. We just finished our satisfaction survey, in terms of quality of life and service level, 89 per cent said that they were satisfied of our services. I think for us, we knew the roles and duties, and we acted quickly accordingly. We might have not been with the people as often, but we were able to keep our services up to expectations. We followed public guidance. For the most part, managers were in and only worked at home for a week. We had the services and capability to make them right.

We were going to a flexible working agreement anyway. We saw this as a real thing in the fall of 2019, and we started work-ing on it. By March 2020, we were full blown into it, and everyone was working from home. By March, we were looking at reducing our footprint and programs. We proved that working from home is feasible and does not affect the productivity of the workforce. It caused increased supervision, and manager must reach out to their employees. We would never go back to our old ways. Managers and supervisors may have become lazy over time and would only want to see you grab a coffee in the morning to know you are working. We polled our people, about one third wanted to stay at home and one third wanted a hybrid solution and one third wanted to go back to the office. I like working more in the office as I work by feeding on people and engaging. ... One major lesson is that we can work from home efficiently without affecting any of our services.

Donc télétravail, on planifie que lorsque tous seront vaccinés les gens reviendront mais en mode hybride et nous la ville, on va suivre cela. La leçon de la pandémie : l'agilité doit être nécessaire dans nos programmes.

We claim high levels of productivity from working remotely but what are the impacts on social interactions and mental health? There has been a lot of reaching out between provinces about it; there is a lot of fertile discussion on the future of remote working.

Performance management will be a strong one and not an easy conversation. Working from home piece brought it ahead, and strong performers want to be in the office and weaker performers want to work in home. I think it will erode public trust more. Work from home gets a side-eye from a lot of [citizens]. We owe it to public to step up our game and move work from home culture.

There has been a lot of positive learning in the pandemic, and we are now learning those and building on them. We would not have had a significant use of remote work; we were back to the office within 80 per cent capacity within a month of the pandemic, and we went back to 100 per cent within two months of the pandemic. We do have work from home for vulnerable populations. We would not be the model organization for work from home.

Theme 2: The Pandemic - Challenges and Future Impacts – Selected Comments

2.A PUBLIC SERVICE ISSUES

The pandemic exposed a lot of issues with us being able to attract workers and not having a workforce locally. When we were not able to travel or move, there was a limit to being able to attract people to the workforce. Working from home did not work as well for us as other jurisdictions. A lot of us were not equipped to work from home. When we started working from home, we had to invest in technology and buy a lot of computers. Other jurisdictions could connect easier with their employees, it is not as simple in [the North]. A lot of people do not have the broadband to work from home.

I think teleworking worked really well. Everyone was installed on Teams, and information exchange was enhanced by teams and other sharing technologies. Our offices are empty; it is just me and 3 ADMs that are there on a daily basis. I think it is a trend that is here to stay. We will be allowing more people to work from home.

I think it is important now to look at how the workplace will look like in the future. We have seen the effectiveness of the online learning, and it works perfectly; and I think better than it has before. The way we were able to succeed is by gaining the trust of people.

We are very privileged in the public service; a lot of our work was easy to move to home. People did not lose their jobs in the public service, when your career is based on this small risk. ... In the early days, we were making progress, but six months in, I heard someone say I cannot wait to go back to normal. People had a sense of what normal is. My program was front and centre of the responses. ... People got more comfortable with the concept that things do not have to be perfect to be okay.

I think the first thing is, its going to be harder and more necessary for politicians to trust public servants. They think they hardly do anything at the office, so they will not work from home. The evidence is contrary to that, and it will be challenging for the society. I think we have noticed that our managers were forced to do a better job at managing because their people were not in the office. We have hard-working staff and the perversity that if they work at home, they work way more than if they work at the office. How do we protect them and their mental health? I think this will drive a lot of changes in the future. How does all that work?

I have seen people exercises their influence to get things done. We have seen people working harder and being very innovative and creative around how they can get things done more quickly. Mindful of lags and legislations and looking for ways to do that in the healthiest way possible. Second thing, we can have the kind of work-life relations that keeps us engaged and happy while working from home. We have a program for people to have flexible hours; we did not launch into that full board until COVID started. We have learned we can sustain a model for old folks or young kids that are commuting a couple of hours every day. Our absentees have fallen, and our productivity increased. ... The downside of that people do not shutoff, and I am worried for their mental health. But these are some of the things I have seen we can be way more agile in execution of new ways we have not seen before.

Resiliency has increased, and the system will bounce back. People work really hard and can solve problems really fast without the red tape.

Theme 2: The Pandemic - Challenges and Future Impacts – Selected Comments

2.A PUBLIC SERVICE ISSUES

Je vois les positionnements des élus par rapport à ça (clivage - Black Lives), on veut attirer l'attention sur certain chose mais le grand changement c'est la pandémie. Ça frappé fort comme incidence sur notre organisation, changement marqué. L'effet extraordinaire de la pandémie, chez nous ça a apporté beaucoup d'innovation. Nous avons aplati les niveaux hiérarchiques, nous sommes en gestions de crises et il nous faut trouver des solutions rapidement, ce que nous avons fait. ... Mais nous nous enlignons aussi vers l'aménagement des milieux de vie puisque nos employées ont goûté au télétravail et demandent de rester ainsi pour la suite ... Donc une accélération de la disponibilité au niveau des technologies, si nous n'avions pas eu la pandémie nous aurions eu de la difficulté à faire ces virages et avoir des réponses aussi rapides du Gouv. Pour la mise en place de nouvelles façons de travailler car tout s'est fait pour tous en même temps et c'est extraordinaire. ... Ces changements sont dû pour rester et en plus ils bénéficient la conciliation travail-famille ...

We kept people working from home since the beginning of the pandemic even when other organizations were going back to the office. If our staff is feeling uneasy then leave them at home, issues are being resolved faster and efficiently. For those who found working from home very depressing, we allowed them to go back to the office. We gave them the option to do what works best for them. It improved our communications with our managers and our frontline staff.

Things we have dreamt about it before the pandemic, almost unimaginable, happened. Teleworking and the reality that we are all in is not going away. There are good and bad things about it. The idea of modernizing government in terms of the way we deliver services, all those things we are fast moving. You can access your bank at your time and convenience and make decisions. There are people that are running that to allow you to have that luxury. That's what is exciting about all of this, we do not have to make the case anymore. We just have to find the money and time to deliver services better and more efficiently.

There are a lot of opinions on the impact of COVID and what adjustments need to be made, and I think it's all still fuzzy; and there is a lack of clarity around what is next, even for us in trying to plan on recovery. I will need to give a lot of my staff time off to relax and reboot. Figuring out what we need to do moving forward is a black hole and listening carefully and weighing all opinions out there and realizing we need to stitch it back together.

Theme 2: The Pandemic - Challenges and Future Impacts – Selected Comments

2.B PANDEMIC MANAGEMENT AND COORDINATION (INCL. LESSONS)

[Lessons] Issue of interdependency; as we look forward and with the uptake in cases in India, everyone around the world in Western democracies with a good vaccine supply realize that their problem is our problem.

[Lessons] Crisis management and emergency forums, I was not prepared for this as a deputy minister. Every time we have a crisis in the department, it is on you. ... Our muscles for crisis management and emergency planning and having the management structure ready to come on is a clear problem. It is a hard muscle to activate when it is not happening. It does not come up to the top of the list.

What we could have done better is having the ability to assess and identify a little earlier how different that was than any other crisis. The whole world had it and only some countries got it right out of the gate. When new threats present themselves, you need to not bring old lessons into it.

Theme 2: The Pandemic - Challenges and Future Impacts – Selected Comments	
2.B PANDEMIC MANAGEMENT AND COORDINATION (INCL. LESSONS)	
	The government decided to increase immigration levels, all while the borders are closed. So how do you do it and how do you innovate to accomplish that. When we first announced it, we felt like it was a bold move and the response to it was very positive. Doubling down on immigration during a pandemic is not where you are supposed to be. Which makes me think there is a level of trust in our institutions.
	There is mix opinions on the federal and provincial guidelines. What we see is that there was a higher number of people than we have ever dealt with than before, and we delivered things faster than we did before [COVID-19 programs]. We have an appetite to do more permanently. There are a considerable number of political actors that knew that we could do more. This is a trust booster and indicator that more can be done if we invested more.
	Some of the things that saved our bacon is not sustainable. Some of the reforms will be short-lived such as procurement. People complain about how slow procurement is, but if you want to avoid lawsuits then you need to make sure it is done properly. It is an implementation shop.
	We are not necessarily dealing with the economy but with psychology. We knew the federal govt was going to come up with benefits, but we did not know what it was. Were our programs perfect? No, they were not but they were quick, and they were blunt instruments that served a purpose. ... A lot of people will get the \$500 they do not need but I am okay with that, and the minister will be okay with that. There were some risks with that, and we were okay ... We did not have time to deal with instruments and blunt instruments were okay. When you hear of a single mom that cannot afford groceries, it helped us understand the psychology of it and not the economics.
	One thing I have been consistent with my colleagues, do not move back to the way it was just because it was that way. There are mitigating circumstances; we have a lot of burned- out people. I have not been home since July, and my family is in Ottawa. Our public sector is unevenly staffed because of talent. We had to find the best people for certain jobs and overworked them. I could not have a B team on the vaccination. ... I always start my meeting with the COVID update.
	Another lesson is the need to be nice. We have underestimated the impact of the pandemic; there is a lot of anxiety out there: the emergency needs, family violence, social occurrences with-in families and neighbourhoods, and increase in crime. The pandemic has affected families with lower income, thus there is a lot of pressure on emergency services and food banks. We have been going through a very intense period of time; people need to be supported. We have been taking more risks and future risk associated with those kinds of projects and other kinds of projects. Risk profile at the federal level has lessened. We have influenced that a lot working with the govt to craft different approaches.
	I think it has been interesting watching the province's COVID response here in [province] and the extent to which they deferred to the public [health] officer on the science and the facts. ... Building on the lessons learned last year, I think we have the capacity to do things quicker, [less] risk aversion and giving people opportunity to move things faster than we used to do before.
	We lost perspective of value and money as they have not meant anymore. Us and the [province] govt, we managed the pandemic as a political issue, and we have not been in front of it. We deal with the borders as political issues not the flow of the disease. We deal with it as how do we deal with public or other government issues which causes people to be unhappy.

Theme 2: The Pandemic - Challenges and Future Impacts – Selected Comments

2.B PANDEMIC MANAGEMENT AND COORDINATION (INCL. LESSONS)

For most of us in the public service has been an amazing experience of setting aside things and beliefs that we had long held and reconceptualised them over the last year. We have developed an amazing tolerance for risk that we did not have before. Previously, I was the DM of Finance, we created three income support programs from nothing including developing the technology in a little over 10 months. We would have never been able to do this before covid. Procurement and development of technology in normal times would be impossible.

It was interesting how industries were helping one another. In the health sector people were looking at how we could put multiple patients on the same ventilator. From a public service perspective, we could be leaders and drivers to it. Let me know when you need me to remove the barriers, so you can do what-ever you need to do. I can remove barriers and give you the tools to impact government and innovate. PPE and N95 issues and Trump blocking it down, we wanted it made in Canada.

When the pandemic started, overnight we had a singular focus which was the understanding of what the challenge was. One department was working for 18 months on a business continuation plan prior to COVID, we thought it was good practice ... It was a difficult task, and we had a lack of an understanding of what the future would look like. The plan was not serving the purpose when we reviewed it prior to lockdown, so we decided that every department would need a business plan and it needs to be lean and agile and value add. Within two hours we book-ed in every senior executive leader to a workshop, and we had 48 hours to plan this. We were successful with this, we had 100 per cent attendance. Everyone delivered and everyone had a business continuation plan within 48 hours.

Four weeks in we said it was impressive how quickly we were moving and created a new team to document the behavioural change within the organization. It was a very fascinating exercise, and we even had the clerk and some of our ministers working on it. This team called the 'Parallel change team' they studied these changes, interviewed, and studied those who were underway. That team shared it is important to study and be a study organization. I always confuse why you would have this change initiative and it would work in one area, and it almost never does scale up to all departments ... and we do something remarkable in a region and the other regions would not adopt them. Pandemic challenges:

- Aging population and increased pressure on health care syst; interest in the last several years to improve education, health care, long term homes. But it all takes time to do so.
- We used lean thinking which does not work with resilience in an organization when you have employees that lost 15 months and they are the only subject matter experts and working 70–80 hrs a week. How do manage our expenses from a HR standpoint and how do we improve resilience in dealing with future crisis?

There has been an Ontario plan for sick pay, isolation centres, and benefits and we still need to do more.

In public health, adaptability and responsiveness that was demonstrated throughout. We managed to get vaccines faster by moving away from the provincial system. We got an early start and built relationships with local municipalities, and we had staff that may have been laid off, available to support this. Communities come together as a result of crisis.

I think it has been interesting watching the province's COVID response here in [province] and the extent to which they deferred to the public [health] officer on the science and the facts. ... Building on the lessons learned last year, I think we have the capacity to do things quicker, [less] risk aversion and giving people opportunity to move things faster than we used to before.

Theme 2: The Pandemic - Challenges and Future Impacts – Selected Comments

2.B PANDEMIC MANAGEMENT AND COORDINATION (INCL. LESSONS)

One thing you can say ... there are places where things have worked well and others where they did not. My broader view of the landscape is, there has been an erosion [trust] and it is a material erosion, and I am struggling to see things that I can point too to say that this is how it should work. Example, vac-cine rollout in [province] with experts sitting around tables would be a problematic event that could happen, we have supply and demand and incidence of disease if you put all of that with a table of experts and perimeters around and look at risks and who is vulnerable, and you think you can get a robust roadmap. It started that way, there was discussions on that and all the right work, had we followed it we would have landed in a different place. It was amazing to me how quickly it become politicizing.

Theme 2: The Pandemic - Challenges and Future Impacts – Selected Comments

2.C PUBLIC HEALTH CONSIDERATIONS

I am appalled by the reaction of Canadians over vaccine rollouts because people in countries like India are going to have to wait two-to-three years for it. Canada is number three; we cannot compete with countries like the UK who is home to two of the biggest manufacturers for the vaccines. We all know that we will get the vaccine, it's a matter waiting two-to-three weeks more than the Americans.

We hear more critiques on the vaccine and pandemic side but on the economic side we have been praised.

With Indigenous communities, we have had success with remote immunity and vaccinations ... and we are now dealing with outbreaks in some areas. This shows that these communities are very vulnerable to disease and how inequitable, in terms of health status and health of population works, across government on foreign workers, Indigenous workers.

There is a few [challenges], virtual care, and you can do a lot of it and do it pretty well. What happens if we get to over 1,100 people in the ICU? We thought at 800 people, we would need to introduce split ventilator use. The system adapts, reforms around problems, and solutions emerge. We were able to take people from Manitoba even though we were crunched up. ... I think we could have picked up more without trouble. [P13]

We started the school year by providing disposable masks to all school divisions. The province did not have a masking requirement until November but were encouraging it since last summer. As the fall moved along, we recognized that school divisions had challenges in teaching a class. Either they were part of a cohort of a positive case or unable to instruct as they tested positive.

The pandemic has put a lot of things in sharp focus and uncovered some strengths and weaknesses, and on the equity dimension, we have seen how much COVID infiltrated at risk communities, and you cannot unsee it. When you look at the pattern of diseases, testing and vaccination and it is all the same things.

In respect to COVID, there has been mental challenges, and we had to spend a lot to save lives.

From a business continuity perspective, we worked with the Ministry of Health and increased the likelihood that teachers will not have to go into isolation when they come in contact with a positive case. They updated the rules. If your staff was wearing a medical grade mask and wearing a face shield and did not contaminate themselves, they would look at the situation and decide if the equipment was used properly and will not have to go into isolation.

Theme 2: The Pandemic - Challenges and Future Impacts – Selected Comments

2.C PUBLIC HEALTH CONSIDERATIONS

In the earlier days of the pandemic, the federal government announced a wage subsidy program, and yesterday, we announced that the hire needs to be vaccinated. We have vaccination cards, and the federal government wants to use it as a model. ... Low vaccination uptake in those part of the province and not because they are anti-vaxxers, but they are anti-government.

Commitment to protect the most vulnerable, we got more people out of the streets by the open wallet [?] ... Cambridge was a learning facility owned by Shoppers Drug Mart and sold to CIBC and ... now to someone that comes from the tech sector background. That owner elected to lease that facility to accommodate a refuge for homeless people. It worked flawlessly and kept more people warmer. You do not get a high success rate for the cohorts that prefer to stay on the streets. But success of 40 per cent is great.

The pandemic shines a light on homelessness in the city. We are all faced with the shelter issue and affordable housing. They are two separate issues: shelter is about people living in sheds and tents on the side of the road, and affordable housing is about sustainable, affordable, and attainable housing. The housing file is not part of my municipality, and yet, I am having to deal with it. We had to take people who are working in the planning department and reassign them. It has an impact on our production.

Theme 2: The Pandemic - Challenges and Future Impacts – Selected Comments

2.D SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

The pandemic has brought to life family life like we have not done before. Imagine being a family moving to Ottawa for the first time, and your kid spends a whole year not making a friend. We try to limit moves to the minimum so that family cohesion could continue. We have had a few improvements in work but many disadvantages.

I do think the pandemic has quickly underlined the way in which structural risk could have profound risk on our economy and society. Civilization is a thin veneer over chaos, and public governance and public institutions could be good to deal with this. 9/11 was a chaotic situation, but you watched it on TV and did not affect you directly. Most people during this pandemic saw the threat to their families and loved ones and affected them directly. The COVID situation underlined the fact that there are bigger problems and dangers out there that require collective actions and government could be shock absorbers.

We know that we can operate this way. The transit system will be in trouble, the restaurants will be in trouble and the MP will be pressed on these issues. This is where we are saying, what are those things that will stick, and we want them to stick. Do I need as much physical space as I did a year ago? Absolutely not. But will we have the guts to shed that space? There are tough decisions to make. There are unintended consequences such as mental health issues, and we know now what triggers behaviours when it is not handled properly.

Canadians' view of government has sharpened because of the pandemic. The government has been very present since the beginning of the pandemic. The majority of Canadians probably recognize the importance of government and the public service and experts as a result. There is a portion that view the government as a negative force, such as people who do not believe that COVID is real and vaccines are being forced and measures were too strict.

I have said to myself, and out loud sometimes, all roads lead to Peel, such as the Amazon distribution centre, as critical if the centre goes down, it puts down the economy and then it would start a new wave of COVID.

Theme 2: The Pandemic - Challenges and Future Impacts – Selected Comments

2.D SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Innovation is good, and we think different about transit operators and maybe there will be a time they can drive the LRT from home.

The pandemic has opened our eyes to differences in our communities to people that have to go to work and people that could do remote work. Some call centres and manufacturing companies have shifted to teleworking and hiring people over-seas for their call centres. To what extent are we as government going to encourage remote work opportunities that is not lured by traffic congestion but rather cost-saving. It is a tough thing for govt to work remotely, but we managed to do it.

There are two things ... influenced by the pandemic and the shift in work: traffic congestion, and greenhouse emission and our carbon footprint. To the extent those things could be sustained and would not be disruptive for the millions of people that do not want to occupy their square feet in downtown ... I think it is a huge uplift going forward the notion of remote work.

C'est certain qu'il y a des conséquences comme pour les buildings mais à mon avis ce sera temporaire. Ex : nous ne pouvons voyager, mais ça va repartir vite.

En janvier 2020 pas assez de re-questionnement du centre-ville (c-v). C-v était effervescent (bureaux, commerces, spectacles, tourisme etc.) L'équilibre y était et l'exercice de planification n'incluait pas le questionnement du centre-ville. Plus tard avec la pandémie, je vous annonce qu'on va avoir un gros chapitre c-v. Forcément avec le télétravail et nouvelle façon de faire, les c-v vont être différent. La pandémie nous a emmené certaine opportunité, PUM va tracer les lignes pour repenser la mixité des c-v en lien avec le télétravail: reconsidérer l'usage des tours à bureaux en tours résidentielles ... Suite à la pandémie:

- comparé 6 grandes villes: défis en commun des c-v
- Impacts sur transport et usage des c-v
- Peut pas revenir au même mixte de fonctions des c-v; on doit reconsidérer l'usage
- Contribution du Fédéral doit augmenter: changement bureau / résidence (télétravail)
- Municipalités ne peuvent pas faire seul; différents paliers doivent supporter
- "grapper" au c-v de nouveaux programmes

We have appreciated through the uneven impacts of the pandemic how incomplete and ineffective our previous [social] efforts have been.

I think the most important issue is transparency and open communications. A lot of citizens are suffering, their businesses are suffering, and they have lost family members. When you are going through that, the natural reaction is to blame someone. and the blame is put on governments in most cases. For example, with the border restrictions and international travels, it is a lot of money for any middle-class person. In Ontario, the majority of people are from somewhere and have to do international travels to see their families.

From the whole society lens, in downtown Toronto, it is all working buildings owned by pension plans, if we vacant the whole core there will not be many other companies wanting to move there. Pension plans will decrease, and some of them are going through difficulties, this is something that should be looked at from a big picture change. ... As people are getting used to work from home and post-pandemic changes, we need to reach a level of self-sustaining, and this might mean more immigration and be a centre of excellence at a specific sector. [Province] is centre of North American continents that could be an advantage, and we need a good economic development advantage.

Theme 2: The Pandemic - Challenges and Future Impacts – Selected Comments

2.D SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

We are in a privileged position as public servants. It is a profound privilege for me to serve people and the economic and social risk that we have [?]. It shaped the core of what we do. The risk and innovative and trying new things will help us have the conversations we are having right now. The conversations on equity we are having now are more productive than they were before. There is a foundation here we can build on it and serving people in a different way and teleworking. We were lazy on those things and did not have the client in our interest when thinking about those. But now we are having those conversations.

Ces changements [télétravail] sont dû pour rester ... et c'est bon pour le développement durable. Alors ils sont là pour rester et on sent que le Gouv du QC prend des décisions dans ce sens-là. Le télétravail, car nous en avons la capacité technologique, va s'accroître et c'est là pour rester.

Et ça nous permet de recruter de la main-d'œuvre partout à travers le QC. Ce qui est un atout extraordinaire pour être capable aussi d'avoir des bons niveaux d'emplois en région. Je crois que ça favorise l'occupation du territoire, la vitalité des communautés. Tous ce qui est des tâches de niveaux professionnel et même technologie de l'information peuvent faire tellement de choses à distance puisque la technologie nous le permet. Ça c'est un avantage extraordinaire de la conséquence de la pandémie à mon avis.

[Challenges] We see people coming out of the pandemic as burnt out. I think managing [population] growth and all the pressure that comes with that. And its impact on affordability and livability. I also think expectations over service deliveries and the cost of those things and how we manage these things.

In reaction to the pandemic, people are becoming much more organized, educated, and specialized on issues that require a response from the government.

Stable income gives you more stability to your community. There have been discussions on income standard, and the COVID benefits did bring stability for the community.

You see a lot of inequities in the treatment of businesses and leaks at the council and various boards of trade, the whole notion that Walmart and Costco can keep their doors open and small businesses had to be closed. ... There was a perception there was an element of businesses and society that had to carry much higher burden than others. ...

We are more fortunate than most, the pandemic has not hit us as hard ... We have had enough taken away from us. Sectors like hospitality and restaurants are closing. Job numbers are increasing, and people are still moving here. We are growing by 10,000 per year. We are growing in leaps and bounds. ... This is largely due to immigration. About 60 per cent of our growth is immigration: 47 per cent ... from outside of Atlantic Canada, 7 per cent within Atlantic Canada, 6 per cent international immigrants.

A.3 PUBLIC SERVICE MANAGEMENT (THEME 3)

The major topics or elements covered under this theme relate mainly to public service (PS) general priorities and challenges; management issues; change management; risk management; HR management, organization, and values/ethics; business processes; information technology (IT) and management (IM); finance and procurement; specific program delivery or issues.

Theme 3: Public Service Management – Selected Comments
3.A OVERALL CHALLENGES, PRIORITIES AND MANAGEMENT
[Challenge] I think the understanding that we are not a country that is ready for emergencies. I think the next time we go through something like this, there will be the same issues.
Challenges: Net zero emissions by 2030, climate change, and inclusivity.
[Challenges]: 1. Economic growth and the middle class. ... issue of housing, ... a lot of sectors and the middle class have savings coming out of the pandemic and could bounce back. ... a lot of sectors that are hard hit and a lot of women in those sectors. What does it mean for family income? 2. Aging society, demographics will be a big issue ... We need to prepare for it in a different way than we have been. 3. Global fracturing: IT and cyber and ... the need to effectively provide services and manage IT projects. This is the future of work and how we would be working.
The public sector is ready to respond to those challenges in some sectors. The feds are good in policy development. We are also good on the delivery of programs and services. But we need to make it more accessible and user friendly.
We need to continue to invest in the public service; we need be willing to change the governance when it needs to be. We need to get out there; we are a small but relative player in a world changing dramatically. We have the opportunity to contribute, and we need our voices to be heard and be an influencer in a world as it evolves.
I think we are ready, but we are at great risk of underestimating the histories and return to form and snapback that will happen. We are not recognizing the effort that is needed to not return to ordinary forms. To the Clerk’s point, she is preparing us for that conversation. In [department], we have gone heavily digital, and we are rolling that hard, and we are trying to figure it out and how to work remotely. There are institutional barriers that are imposed that prevent managing working remotely.
We had a vivid illustration on how systemic risks can have an effect, and I think dealing with systemic risks is important. ... I think the public service is ready, we have a lot of reasons why Canadian government is not as effective as it could be. If you look at our federation and how it works, a lot of it is impeded due to the size of it. ...
We have the network and the money and the reputation to manage these things. ... Normal times, each province would send out an order to the federal government then they would place an order [re: vaccines]. But now, the federal govt had to step in and order it themselves because otherwise we might wait years. I think our civil service is capable, but our institutions may not be ready. The challenge of the civil service is that we are having to manage from a very difficult situation. We are having to juggle things that are beyond our scope.
We are now in a place to not go back to normal. I think we are past that point where we would go back to normal. My staff will not be back in the office until maybe next year. That gives us a lot of time to think about what it would look like before it would be time. There will be a different normal.

Theme 3: Public Service Management – Selected Comments

3.A OVERALL CHALLENGES, PRIORITIES AND MANAGEMENT

We are at a point where we have the opportunity to change how the federal govt works and the importance of govt as perceived by Canadians. A lot of it will be behind the deputy's doors and sits within our employees. I worry about debates about govt and partisans and beneficiaries of public service. In the past year, I could not be prouder of the team and how they pulled together their leadership, humility, resilience, empathy. People really deliver. It has been a fantastic and fulfilling year. If you would have asked me on 1 April last year, I would not have expected this. The public service delivered.

The TBS [need full term] system will go back to the tradition way, and it will be difficult. I think there will be a classic of the return of the classroom in TBS.

How do we lock in that ability to do the extraordinary in moments of great need in a fast pace? I worry about slippage with to some degree in the past three-to-four months elements moving from incredible speed and scope to decisions that are far more difficult to obtain right now. I think the risk of total backsliding is zero but to really capitalize on the gains on cultural levels will take active work. Some things need to be reflected on and reset. On one level, I would say some the key expectations such as auditor general were not met.

[Advice] Make stuff less about the announcements and actually make it about the issue. Communicate with Canadians on that front: what is the problem you are trying to fix here? I am dismayed by the lack of understanding in leading journalism of public service. People have the basics wrong, and it leads to bad discord. We need to better inform the media as they drive discussions on the public service.

We have an understanding that there is a big risk of everything going back to old ways when you do not have pressure or a singular focus. We had documented 1,000 priorities for govt, and we knew we could not do any one of them as well as we do them in a pandemic, so we distilled them down to 86 priorities and we saw improvement; 84 per cent of them are now on track to be completed.

We demonstrated that we could be innovative, flexible, problem solve, deliver services virtually and at home. ... Not everything should stick because it worked for that context. It allowed us again to be innovative. ... I think the public sector is ready to take this on and keep those lessons learnt.

How do we support our industry from an economic driver but fit in a national goal? It was contributing something to the greater need. We should implement this same philosophy in other areas in Canada. I have seen so many benefits to government and public service bigger than my department. I think all of a sudden as a country we all aligned our priorities within the system. ... We all have the same common issues and priorities that we did not have before. Maybe there will be more alignment and vision. In the first six months of the pandemic, within the province, we spoke six-to-seven days a week; we never had those meetings before. We created bonds and relationships at the senior levels that I hope it will stay.

Theme 3: Public Service Management – Selected Comments

3.A OVERALL CHALLENGES, PRIORITIES AND MANAGEMENT

Pour moi les défis seront

1. Continuer de répondre au besoin de la population. Les citoyens se tourne de plus en plus vers l'état pour avoir des réponses. L'état a eu une réponse exceptionnellement efficace dans le cadre de la pandémie. Les citoyens s'habituent à un état efficace même si ça « chiale » beaucoup dans les médias. Dans le collectif il y a un certain mécontentement mais dans l'individuel les gens sont souvent satisfaits.
2. Le défi est un de communication ex : les policiers se sont adressés directement à la population pendant la pandémie et cela a été très efficace. Parfois, moins de journalisme et plus de communication directe serait certainement une façon efficace de communiquer et les gens ont apprécié la transparence et l'information, suivis.
3. Le défi de la gouvernance du secteur publique est de faire attention à ne pas ajouter de la réédition de compte et de suivis. C'est ce qui guette nos fonctions publiques. Il faut trouver une façon de donner de l'espace aux décideurs pour être capable d'atteindre leurs objectifs.

We have also found that because citizens are demanding more, we must find ways to deliver better. For example, we need to find better ways to clear the snow off the sidewalks to make it more accessible for people with disabilities. ... The pandemic has also showed us we need to be more in tune with new Canadians, Indigenous communities, LGBTQ+ groups. It forced us to look hard at our new demands. You cannot always satisfy everyone but at least try keep up. ... We have so many demands on our public sector right now; we are transitioning into the green economy, and you need to maintain health care, offshore oil, and all interest groups and unions. We need to lower the public expectations to meet these needs.

Challenges:

1. Inequality in our society: We have been living on the backs of the vulnerable and marginalized. ... In the next 14 years, all growths will come from immigration, and if you do not get that right, they will not come and will have other places to go. ... The tolerance level has gone, and it is a mind shift.
2. Indigenous and reconciliation issues are crucial. Canadians put a lot of premiums on fairness and equity, and a lot of our future development is resting on the young demographic. We cannot build it on the backs of Indigenous.
3. [Risk] We have to get out of the mediocre frame and stop building our businesses and selling it in the states so you can retire. We cannot be naive and be creating knowledge in our institutions to watch it be sold. We have to be smarter than that and play in the big boys and girls league. ... You need to be rule makers not rule takers. We are paying big prices on polarized views [?], and if we ... leave the car [in the garage], we will never get into an accident, but you will also never get anywhere.
4. Environment: a massive problem and just as differential on the impact on the vulnerable as the pandemic was. It is the sleeping giant and ... need to figure out a way to make it work. The negative impact of the environment is just as devastating as the health on the marginalized and vulnerable populations.

We must be vigilant on the elastic snapback. You can start to see it in people's eyes; they say things will be back to where they were. We have to be vigilant to apply all the good lessons learnt. We have to be super clear on risk tolerance. For example, on [program] what is the level of risk as it is different now, you take it online. You need to be careful about it and the ceremonies that are now virtual. How much has my risk gone up? I hope my risk is low [?], and if it is, I will happily take it.

Theme 3: Public Service Management – Selected Comments

3.A OVERALL CHALLENGES, PRIORITIES AND MANAGEMENT

We have responded to crises before and did it well; we are not starting from a place where we do not have the tools and structure. They will have to adapt and add a new skill set than we have today. But this was the same case before, when I started there was no computers or emails.

What we have to understand here on two different levels the societal expectations of public institutions. ... The simultaneous question how do we deal with people that demonstrated clearly on life and death issues that they are beyond science and acceptance. Consensus in the public institutions; if we do not agree that these are things we need to tackle then it does not matter what the rest of the society thinks. There is no way that people are currently opposed to the very measures that its Cabinet is advancing not just in words but in deeds. People attacking health care workers and showing up in rodeos, public institutions have a duty that they identify this as a priority issue.

My analogy which [the Clerk] picked up on, we have a board of management. 'Risk taking is like an elastic rubber band.' 'Risk like the virus is pouring in to snap the rubber band back to what it was.' Real effort needs to be taken to not go back to what it used to be. We had a battle with TBS on a full report on our plans to do for the benefits and why we want to do this, how it is done, and what is the need for it. Some of those things will stick but I think the rules and risk oversight is already going back.

I am realistic that the risk aversion and rules and systems are not a bug but a core feature of the system. This is not that we have bad actors that are trying to beat the risk and innovation out of the system. It is inherent in bureaucratic and hierarchical systems. We have to be realistic about those factors and about the fact that the Minister is super happy about getting a disability benefit in.

Public policy is interesting, but if we cannot implement them, we are failing them. Any discussion that does not have a positive outcome on Canadians is failing them. We need to be much more focused on making sure we are developing the plan, resourcing them, and implementing them. This is a lesson we have learnt in BC over and over again. We should not lose those lessons from COVID; we can reverse the mistrust trend if public institutions do their job right.

We are less risk averse and more inclined to be adventurous. We can actually do it and do while being responsible and protect and reveal the impact we can do. We have swung the other way a lot on quick transfer payments and some of our post audits are showing us higher level of mistakes than we usually tolerate. The sky does not fall, and we can manage learnings and move ourselves on and we can do it with our political colleagues, and they own accountability in ways we generally do not. We can work on these together.

[Challenges] People need to understand that each government has its own decision-making model. We need to communicate that better so people can understand.

[Challenges]:

1. Increase polarity and fracturing in the country. I am very concerned about [the] federation.
2. I see a lack of diplomacy to be able to try and bridge or find common ground, and I do not think we have the right mechanism to do that.
3. The public sentiment and one standard for long-term facility and everything.

Theme 3: Public Service Management – Selected Comments

3.A OVERALL CHALLENGES, PRIORITIES AND MANAGEMENT

[Lessons] The public having access to public officials in an open manner that retains confidence. Most people now have trust in public health. We have to take some lessons from them and how they were an unbiased broker and the openness and how we retain this moving forward. The public will not have an appetite for increased openness or hearing from multiple people at all times. ... Communicating with people where they are and getting the message out there is also a lesson to be learnt and how they hear what we are trying to convey the information we are trying to provide. More openness, higher engagement of public sector employees and more platforms.

There are not new [affordability/liveability, expectations], but I do think they will require different approaches than we used in the past. They are not issues that we are trying to get ahead off. I think one of our issues is ensuring that people have a macro understanding of the systems we are working. Also, understanding how the province works and what is the impact of their decisions on us. We need to do more in partnerships as opposed to solving all issues ourselves. We do not have the bandwidth; we need to think bigger and more collaboratively. Building on the lessons learned last year, I think we have the capacity to do things quicker, [less] risk aversion and giving people opportunity to move things faster than we used to do before.

[Lessons] The first we are more agile than we give ourselves credit for. Citizens did not see a degradation in services. We went remote in 24-to-72 hours and delivered services. I think we learnt that we do not really care where people work from. I am hesitant to say that, but it reinforces that things can be done no matter where you are. There are several services you can now get online. We forced people to make online payments and online registrations. If other levels of government did not know how important municipalities are and their soft services, now they do. ... No, we are not ready to respond to these challenges. I am very impressed and proud of what we do. But I am less confident that the levels of government above us have figured out their organization readiness to address this.

That's what is exciting about all of this [pandemic], we do not have to make the case anymore. We just have to find the money and time to deliver services better and more efficiently. ... As exciting as that work is, and we enjoy that, in a [big] city ... there are so much competing reality. I will need to open City Hall at some point. I have other legislatures I have to deliver to council. I feel like air traffic control; I have planes landing and some taking off and if you do not manage that work carefully you will spend a lot of time and energy and not produce the results you want. It is about priorities. That might sound easy, and I work with very ambitious people, and they all want to do the next step, but you cannot do it all.

Theme 3: Public Service Management – Selected Comments

3.B HR MANAGEMENT, ORGANIZATION AND VALUES

[Challenges] The ability to accommodate individuals and still deliver. ... Competition for resources, after what people have seen what goes on with DMs and ADMs they would work in the private sector. The fight for talent will be more prominent. IT and finance people and skills that we need and if you will be criticized over executing a program, you will go to the private.

We are now hiring people across the country even if we do not have the footprint outside of Ottawa, which increases inclusivity. ... We now started hiring people from BC, Toronto, and Edmonton, and we are looking across the country for a better geographic representation. ... We are doing well in women, okay on Indigenous communities, not too bad in visible minorities and lacking in people with disabilities.

Theme 3: Public Service Management – Selected Comments

3.B HR MANAGEMENT, ORGANIZATION AND VALUES

We have an educated cadre of people that have a sophisticated outlook on government and society, we still attract a lot of talented people. It's less about the civil service and if it is ready, but rather our institutional structures.

When we got rid of the hierarchy, it changed the whole governance system. That was very unsettling for many people. We have to re-teach them how to manage people. People who worked on that had a 20 per cent hiring satisfaction. The data is there for us to mine. What are institutions, a year ago it was buildings, eighth floor and now it means nothing? It is the values and how we live them that defines the institutions; your visions and mandate changes everything. It takes us back to the basics rather than the comfort we had in that physical bubble.

A surprising element of COVID is that what was harder to do as an organization, we had to do, and we found ways to do it. We have to watch there is not a snapback there. We need to pay attention to culture we generate, things like coming back to the workplace and how do you want to do it. There must be a good change management conversation with your workforce.

The exhausting of the public service is an issue, and the capacity to keep going like that is an issue. A lot of work that has been done in the past year or two and you can see the effects of that.

One of the issues we face is that we have a lot of collective standing agreements, and they have been standing for a number of years. We need to settle them through bargaining or settlements, and it is creating pressure financially and in employee groups as well. ... We have a lot of retirement in the healthcare system which means shortages in employees, and we need to think how to fill these shortages.

The public service is like everybody else, they are tired. ... When we see a shift from the pandemic, we will need to call on our teams and have them be as honest as they could be to see what the best approach is to move forward.

Our absentees have fallen, and our productivity increased. I also learned that the downside of that people do not shut off, and I am worried for their mental health, but these are some of the things I have seen we can be way more agile in execution of new ways we have not seen before.

We had a bad structural deficit. We are starving our long-term care and health care systems. Women and visible minorities usually run the health care system. But there are not enough people. We need to pay people a decent wage and provide jobs to them fairly. It is not just PSW [personal support workers], child care workers and underdevelopmental stages. We are running all these services on underpaid agile forces. It is a huge challenge, and they are not unionized and sooner or later they will be. It might be the way that we can invest more in them.

Nous avons aplati les niveaux hiérarchiques, nous sommes en gestions de crises et il nous faut trouver des solutions rapidement, ce que nous avons fait. ... Mais nous nous enlignons aussi vers l'aménagement des milieux de vie puisque nos employées ont goûté au télétravail et demandent de rester ainsi pour la suite. Ce qui a emmené une demande de la part des employées et une réponse positive de la part du Gouv.

I think the overarching one [lesson] was whatever you do or however you do it, you must take the temperature of the staff in the organization into consideration. We had virtual meetings with our managers very often in our early times and we got a sense of how the organization is feeling. ... I guess we want to be flexible, and it is not a one size fit all, and you need to foster that into your plan. Listen to your staff and do not try to solve every problem on your own because you will fail. ... We are ready and capable, but the thing is, we must listen to all our employees at all levels and solutions. When you have such a big workforce, you will get excellent solutions and ideas.

Theme 3: Public Service Management – Selected Comments

3.B HR MANAGEMENT, ORGANIZATION AND VALUES

Workforce challenges: the impact from the pandemic not only in terms of how we will work in the future but how do we fill positions with the right people. We will need to adjust the grip on working in the office and at home. ... This pandemic has taken a terrible toll on many public servants who have been working on the frontlines. I think it is going to accelerate a grey wave in many organizations. ... I think it is probably going to fall short to get us where we need to get. We are going to go into a period of real struggle to fill positions with highly skilled people. There needs to be a real focus on succession planning and growing skills for people to fill some of those roles. You will not have years to do this, we are seeing this already in some professions. I think it will be broader and affect all levels of govt. If you are in a small town in Ontario, you are already having a tough time getting people that have a good set of skills to do some jobs.

The government pays competitively for some functions and not others, and there are obvious gaps, and they will need to get their heads together and decide how they would want to pay for that. There is a broader gap in the HR front, and it is largely dominated by lack of strategic thinking.

I think most fundamentally for the PS has been a deep reflection on who we are and who do [citizens] expect us to be. We have a good record of progress at looking at diversity inclusion and anti-racism in the PS. Looking back at [prior Secretary] and beyond, we have taken significant strides. This year gave us opportunity to look at the progress we did. ... It has been really impactful and emotional to listen about people we have been working alongside all these years, and we never thought these are their experiences. We really try to identify barriers. How representative we are and how informed we are in a real way.

We are more alert to mental and personal issues; we claim high levels of productivity from working remotely but what are the impacts on social interactions and mental health? There has been a lot of reaching out between provinces about it, there is a lot of fertile discussion on the future of remote working.

Another challenge is the labour force in [North] and being able to attract enough people to recruit them, and a lot of people are not as committed to delivering these services. I do not think there is any jurisdiction to help solve that in [our] case, there are few jurisdictions to incentivize these gaps in the workforce from local populations. I think we need to attract infrastructure investment and incentivize local population to join the govt workforce. Govt is the largest employer ... and has a real impact on the economy.

Recruitment, Training, and Retention: We need to find a way to bring more people to the govt. We need to be reaching out to those people and make sure they get the proper training and education, so they are ready to work in the govt. We have a beginning of a plan, and the govt has a recruitment plan and equality workplan. We are preparing pre-working training programs and making sure to engage Indigenous populations to make sure they are interested, they understand the perks of working in the government, and encourage them to get the training and education to fill those positions. We need to work to create a recruitment strategy alongside NTI [Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated], and we have funding allocated to it. The key is creating those programs and recruiting people. We need to actively go to populations and making sure they are interested.

Performance management will be a strong one and not an easy conversation. Working from home piece brought it ahead and strong performers want to be in the office and weaker performers want to work in home. I think it will erode public trust more. Work from home gets a side-eye from a lot of [citizens]. We owe it to public to step up our game and move work from home culture. Strong sense on our goal and the client that we serve.

The organization is tired, and they have been through a lot and see people going down, and I do not know what to do other than getting fresh legs here and make people take their vacation. What is the future of bureaucracy and how do we rejuvenate it, and it is a worry for me?

Theme 3: Public Service Management – Selected Comments

3.B HR MANAGEMENT, ORGANIZATION AND VALUES

Its different under the current elected government in [province]. During the previous [political party], provincial government, public servants got too comfortable. Under [them], you were allowed to have a Twitter account and social media to interact with people, now you do not. Civil service is silenced. We are here to do what the government asks us to do. There is a whole crew of civil service, and if you burn them out, they would not be able to do things next time.

We have to discard some decision-making issues—hierarchical and differential—and have the right people reporting to DMs. A lot of it was to free them up to do the job with minimum bureaucracy. I have empowered ADMs and directors because they have been in charge, and they delivered. I told them to take the risk and get it done.

There are mitigating circumstances, we have a lot of burnt-out people. I have not been home since July, and my family is in Ottawa. Our public sector is unevenly staffed because of talent. We had to find the best people for certain jobs and overworked them. I could not have a B team on the vaccination. ... We are not there because we have got conception issues, and we will not be able to hire the right people to do that. People are burnt out and we have uneven talent. [P17]

[PS Challenges] Turnover and retirement blooming and a wave of people leaving the PS that would have not retired otherwise. That will continue and our succession preparedness is needed.

I think the talent would be one for us [challenge], with people continuing to retire and the inability to recruit and increase pressure in the job market. We see people coming out of the pandemic as burnt out. I think managing growth and all the pressure that comes with that. And its impact on affordability and livability. I also think expectations over service deliveries and the cost of those things and how we manage these things.

There is a fatigue in government, and there will be a lot of people that will want to leave the PS. How good is your succession plan is? For many of us, it is spotty. When you put all these variables together, you will need a 12 month-and-beyond strategy to replace the people that might leave while achieving corporately what you want to do.

Theme 3: Public Service Management – Selected Comments

3.C BUSINESS PROCESSES, RESOURCES, AND INFORMATION

When we have to use new technology, we are not good at it. We go by the mentality of seeing if it is successful abroad then we adopt it.

It's less about the civil service and if it is ready but rather our institutional structures, such as IT systems. Some of the complaints that we brought out a lot of money, and a lot of people took it that do not deserve or need it. That's how it works, we cannot calibrate the money to a business' taxes and payrolls. I have a lot of people working for me that could easily work as an investment banker.

A young person once told me he would not want to work in the government because of all the bureaucracies. Well, the downside of transparency is bureaucracies; it is part of our democracy, and we must account and do all that as it is better than the alternative.

During the pandemic, we found that we can order things from Amazon and have it delivered to your doorstep within two days. This caused some questions to arise on our processes such as why can't I have my government services delivered to me in the same way? COVID has exacerbated this issue; we have a clunky IT system, half of what we do is web-based and the other half is paper-based.

Theme 3: Public Service Management – Selected Comments

3.C BUSINESS PROCESSES, RESOURCES, AND INFORMATION

I do think that the ability to speed up some stuff and to be more flexible makes me think we have a lot of work to do. We have a lot of bureaucracies in the govt, we can shed some stuff. How do we deal with that moving on?

Infrastructure, the IT infrastructure, if you want to make change in social instruments or EI you need a system to work to do that. The system we have right now is 30 years old.

You still need a memo with a DM or ministers' approval on it. There is a way to get there much quicker. These memos that used to go through six levels before I see them, people are now banging them out. We have been working from home since March 2020, and we are pushing for an unassigned seating and meeting rooms. I have been asking for electronic signature books for years and now I have that. I think it has reinforced the importance of giving people trust to do their own things. Deputies typically guard briefs with ministers.

Some of the things that saved our bacon are not sustainable. Some of the reforms will be short-lived such as procurement. People complain about how slow procurement is but if you want to avoid lawsuits then you need to make sure it is done properly. It is an implementation shop.

Digital modernization: we will meet the challenge; we upped the game to be a lot more honed. Cyber security challenges got very aggressive in the past year, and we have put resources to avoid problems.

We are not perfectly equipped, but we are moving in that direction, and it will take some time. Most of those challenges are not financial challenges. I do not need a lot of money to be anti-racist. Even restoring the economy, we do not need money, it is more about red tape reduction.

People work really hard and can solve problems really fast without the red tape.

On the issue of public trust, I think during COVID we were able to fix things that are broken at an incredible speed. However, in normal times the length of time it takes to fix things that are broken is too long which causes a decline in public trust. In the past, we legislated that by how long it takes to develop technology and fix these issues. We have blown that out of the water, and we need to work to fix things faster.

This is how we arrived at those five themes: [lessons]

- Enabling technology; there was a lot of case studies that happened during the pandemic that would have never happened pre-pandemic. The biggest risk was 'falling back into pre-COVID ways of doing business, which was time-consuming, inefficient, and had several barriers to bringing about change.
- Reducing red tape, removing hierarchy and get HR and IT much more streamline by necessity. We brought in people to our centre office to work on a project and an employee was given an MS Teams account and the cloud-based sharing on day one and when he got back to his department and requested these services, his wait time was 18 months. We were able to remove the red tape and give it to them immediately.

From the province's perspective, we worked with school divisions and developed a contingency fund partly funded by the federal and partly by the province, and we essentially left the choices on how to spend that money in the hands of school divisions as they have different needs. We worked with school divisions to find efficiencies within the system and find items at a lower price such as masks and the face shields.

Nous avons fait une transition technologique et nous sommes toujours sur cette vague, poursuivons notre transition et elle est technologique ... La vague de changement technologique nous a permis aussi d'avoir des outils virtuels c'est excessivement puissant au niveau des consultations des employées et nous pourrions en faire davantage ce qui est extraordinaire car on consulte notre clientèle de plus en plus (bonne pratique) et on veut savoir la satisfaction de celle-ci. Cela nous permet suivis de plainte, sondages et des fois nous n'avons pas toujours les outils mais cette vague technologique nous le permet et c'est très positif.

Theme 3: Public Service Management – Selected Comments

3.C BUSINESS PROCESSES, RESOURCES, AND INFORMATION

[Challenges] I would say that we just went through a budget process, this council is more socially leaning and more open to take areas of responsibility that they are not responsible for. It has caused the federal and provincial government to engage more with us. I have had a lot of conversations with them, and relationships strengthen. I had a conversation with DM of housing in [province] yesterday on what we are doing and why we are doing it. My issue would be if it would be sustained.

I think the public have a higher expectation and want value for dollar, and waste does not sit kindly with them. For us, it's an understanding of your community. Stable income gives you more stability to your community. There have been discussions on income standard, and the COVID benefits did bring stability for the community. For us, the key is how we move forward and deal with expectations.

Theme 3: Public Service Management – Selected Comments

3.D PROGRAM DELIVERY AND ISSUES

We have been working with Statistics Canada to map out our type of investments in underserved and unserved communities. Infrastructure is important in society, when you are building a new road or when you need access to water or waste management. We have launched a new program called Green Inclusivity; the inclusivity part is part of the eligibility to look who has what. It focuses on who does not have access and makes sure they get access. We had to make sure we are representative of Canada, so we had to change our footprint.

From a public service standpoint, the public service needs to focus more on its craft and find more efficient ways to provide for our services and focus more on providing to Indigenous communities.

During the pandemic, we found that we can order things from Amazon and have it delivered to your doorstep. ... This caused some questions to arise ... such as why can't I have my govt services delivered to me in the same way? ... We had to rethink every single line of our business. The side we wanted to hold on to, we had to reinvent. Canadians expect a better service. ... In general, I think that public tolerance to poor public services has gotten lower. We see it in our space in our business. We are fighting hard on technical [deficit] to bring that picture and retain public trust.

In the last year... within my team, we spent more time engaging with stakeholders. I think the dynamic of our relationship with our stakeholders has changed.

What we have to understand here on two different levels the societal expectations of public institutions. ... The expectations have changed, such as service delivery: can I get them online, how can I interact, how can we organize ourselves and the workplace?

Innovation is useful, and labs and hubs are more common now. I think that is a positive.

Top challenges [Education]: We have been working very consciously with our First Nation partners because we know when we look at our outcomes that those students are not coming out as well. It is not them; it is us. We need to make changes to our system and stop being so paternalistic and make sure we are more collaborative. ... One of our priorities in our education plans is a focus on inclusive safe and welcoming schools. That will be a significant undertaking for all of us.

Our demographics are concerning and more long term, the aging population of the province and how do we shift and adapt? We need to encourage others to want to live and work here [immigration]. It touches everything, and it is immense. As you shift your demographic and financial situation changes, how do you respond to what will be a more culturalist and diverse place as you go through all of this? How do you think of a more diverse future while building policy?

Theme 3: Public Service Management – Selected Comments	
3.D PROGRAM DELIVERY AND ISSUES	
	Climate change is the biggest challenge coming out of this. It was our biggest challenge going in, and we were kind of stuck. We have accomplished a ton of social change in our lifetime. Such as smoking indoors, it used to be acceptable to smoke in office buildings and meetings. I think we can get through social change faster when we see the tipping point coming. Oil companies are redefining themselves as energy companies.
	Meeting the changing needs of our citizens. For example, recently for Ramadan, we deleted off the books our noise bylaws which used to prevent mosques from calling. We do not have the right to give them an exemption, but, instead, we removed that from the books. We erased the bylaw that prevented you from doing that. It had a huge positive effect on the Muslim community, and there are lots of immigrants that have not heard that in years. This was a very small and powerful example. Some of the needs are not changing but we are realizing them.
	Young people are leaving [the economy]. We need to do better and develop our tech, oceans, and fisheries sectors. We need young skilled workers to stay here.
	Diversity will be a challenge in terms of education of different cultures and try to push an acceptance of people and their culture. [City] is now more diverse than before. We need to adapt to expectations.
	[Challenges]: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Equity and reconciliation; you cannot ignore that portion of the population. 2. Climate change and resilience; money globally will find its way to urban areas that have real plans and investing dollars to deal with climate change. If you do not invest and protect that, the money will move somewhere else. 3. Overall and individual mental health and well-being; addiction and mental health services have not been in demand like this before. If you ignore that all the housing you might build, all the jobs you might create, then good luck.
	We need to reduce volumes and pressures on the courts and how can we deal with internment sentencing in other ways.
	Challenges: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We need to look at our health sector, and it has been revealed that we do not have an integrated health sector. There is a strong policy appetite on what do we mean by integrated care. There are conversations that have started on that. 2. Rebuilding the economy; it was interesting to see that the number of company closures during COVID was less than the year prior to that. There was not out of the ordinary closures, but it felt very different, and people's plans have been shattered and jeopardized. We have invested a lot in innovation, but we need to look at the connection between that and the marketplace. 3. More infrastructure investment.
	I would say it is the infrastructure gap, and there is a gap in housing, and other pieces of infrastructure. This presents a real challenge to governing and delivering service in comparison to other jurisdictions.
	The pandemic exposed huge shortfalls in the health care system. We have a very expensive health care system; we use the funds in the most efficient way. We were not ready to support a pandemic. With the aging population and we need to look at long-term planning, what kind of health care model do we need and start investing in that. We have a lot of retirement in the health care system, which means shortages in employees, and we need to think how to fill these shortages.

Theme 3: Public Service Management – Selected Comments

3.D PROGRAM DELIVERY AND ISSUES

Challenges:

1. The Economy
2. Good job in integrating people into our society. We have an aging population, and we need to replace the retired workers with the right talent. We do equality really well but not equity.
3. Climate change, we are an island and reliant on our national resources. I think [province] is small, we will not have a big dip on climate change globally, but we do need to do our role. We have good players from other departments to work with us on it. We cannot focus only on the economy in my department but on sustainability as well.

Another challenge is we talk about diversity and inclusion in every aspect we do. We are working on child poverty and that is one we are trying to figure out. We have a lot of child poverty and young singles living in poverty, and we will have a challenge with that moving on.

When I spent time in health [care] their logic was, we will not build more long-term homes and ... would invest in the community. But they did not really invest much. The growth numbers were concerning, and we could not maintain them in the community. We finally shifted this conversation and the government changed, and it took them a while to settle. We are still facing that until someone fixes dementia and Alzheimer's, there is no solution for that. We had 85 beds and dropping for 1,000 people and Alzheimer rate was 8 per cent. So, 85 beds are not enough for that.

I think the other two [challenges] is simpler approach on how we deal with managing the public, such as making road space available for patios. We designed the process from scratch, and within two weeks, you were able to apply for the permit. We gave them little guidelines to be able to do it. We accepted more safety risk than we typically could. We had no issues, and we took a huge risk on it. Our risk tolerance was higher, and we were able to do things faster. We knew it was temporary, and we knew there would be bumps in it and it was not going to be perfect.

[Challenges] Growth because we do not control the levers for growth. If you ask a citizen what they care about, they would say their garbage is picked up and their toilet can flush. Schools are at the right places, there are hospitals, and access to health care. It not just the number of growth but also that we can attract people for growth. ... Social services, homelessness, and mental health and relativeness of it. No one is managing it in my jurisdiction, only fingers are being pointed; we need to deal with it.

[Nous avons] crée un bureau pour contrer ce racisme. Mission : supporter l'ensemble de l'organisation pour accélérer le changement de comportement et façon de faire. ... Service de police a reconnu et déposé une nouvelle politique de profilage raciale pour assurer d'avoir des changements comportements opérationnels à l'interne mais qui influence à long terme les méthodes.

Personnes vulnérables: Doit penser en dehors de la boîte, la pandémie a mis sous tension ces personnes. Pour l'avoir vécu en mesure d'urgence, l'impact de la pandémie sur itinérants, c'est énorme (6 grandes villes tous pareil)! Nous avons aidé QC ouvrir refuges, encore à ce moment, il faut être en « phasing-out » des mesures temporaires auprès des personnes vulnérables mais avoir des programmes rapides en « phasing-in » pour supporter ces populations-là par habitations. Aussi QC, qui doit adapter son programme d'Accès Logis et son programme PSL (supplément de loyer) sans compter le volet de la santé. Avec pandémie, on rajoute l'importance de supporter cette population vulnérable à un autre niveau, plus qu'avant.

A.4 ECONOMY AND FISCAL MANAGEMENT (THEME 4)

The major topics or elements covered under this theme relate mainly to the economy in general (e.g., macro-economic issues, growth and recessions, productivity, GDP, monetary policy, specific economic sectors) and fiscal management (e.g., government spending and revenues, taxes, deficits and debt, transfers, government budgets).

Theme 4.: Economy And Fiscal Management – Selected Comments	
4.A ECONOMY	
	In relative terms, we were able to roll out programs that kept the economy going. Canada is number three in the G20, and that is a function of being a rich country.
	A couple of things we have had a massive economic and social disruption this makes the 2008 economic crisis like we lost a \$5 bill on the way to A&W. The impacts have been very differently felt. In 2008, it was mainly in manufacturing industries, and the bounce back was very quick. This time it is mostly women who are feeling the effects; the types of industries being affected is different, and marginalized people are being affected.
	Stakeholders are going through the economic changes that have to do with the pandemic. On the mining side, it is coming back; and on the forestry side, lumber price is so high, energy is not going that bad; it was going worse before the pandemic. ... The stakeholders see the need for investments for the recovery of the economy. Tourism and accommodation are suffering, but they have a tremendous ability to bounce back. Aviation and transportation will be affected long term.
	As you see in the US, there is a lot of optimism in growth. There is fear of a recession. I think people see that the federal government needs to make big spending to keep the going economy. The US came in with a lot of money as well, and they use that to combat climate change. They need to address specific state issues, such as the cold weather in Wyoming. In Canada, where we see that is in Alberta and Saskatchewan, I do not think the government is tackling that.
	Part of the challenge is the inclusive economic growth and what it will look like.
	The federation itself; I think the way the economy is going now we can see that the trend by region is different. Atlantic Canada is having difficulty to find cheap electricity. Alberta and Saskatchewan are challenged by what is going on. The gravity of Canada is shifting from west to the east. Québec is doing well, and Ontario is not bad. Newfoundland and Labrador, Alberta, and Saskatchewan are suffering. How do you make sure that the decisions we make do not have a big effect on the east?
	Balancing the budget will be difficult, but we are in reasonable shape and have a good handle on it to head on economic recovery. Major investment and economic decision in the province and part of it is the way the government responded to them. On the topic of our economy, recovery is based on natural resources; I wish we were a little bit better on that, and we will meet the challenge one way or another.
	Nous faisons un simple déplacement, il serait intéressant de faire l'analyse sur l'impact économique dans les sociétés développement commerciale ailleurs que dans le centre-ville car nous consommons beaucoup plus dans nos quartiers qu'avant. Il y a un déplacement de l'économie et en comparaison au grands vecteurs économiques, les gens sont plus riches en moyenne (dépense plus dans leur quartier qu'avant).
	We will all be faced with an economic hit once we emerge from the pandemic, how do we recover from that?
	[Challenges:] Rebuilding the economy; it was interesting to see that the number of company closures during COVID was less than the year prior to that. There was not out of the ordinary closures, but it felt very different, and people's plans have been shattered and jeopardized. We have invested a lot in innovation, but we need to look at the connection between that and the marketplace.

Theme 4.: Economy And Fiscal Management – Selected Comments

4.A ECONOMY

Our rating agencies do not see that the COVID impacts on the economy is everlasting.

The third issue is protecting the government from global impacts that are out of control. We are going through a low interest rate period, which helped us borrow more. This has a huge impact in the long term, and it is not sustainable. There are a number of difficulties and I do not know how the global economy will change. Borrowing could be a sustainable way to deliver services in the future. We need to anticipate how the world is going globally.

There are good aspects to change we are sitting on right now. But we are also allowing a set of behaviours that we find dis-tasteful and not acceptable. People are trying to have conversation about what does balance mean are being shut down. Hopefully, we do not sit here five years from now and say too bad that happened. We shut ourselves off and made ourselves an economic island; and we have no market for our resources, and our health care system is shutting down.

Au niveau économique, nous ferons face à des situations budgétaires plus exigeantes mais le Canada, à mon avis, est bien positionné. Au QC on est en manque de main-d'œuvre criant même en pandémie alors je crois que ça repartira assez rapidement.

Another challenge would be economic and financial challenges and how they are being considered. If we do not get all three orders of government working on that then I do not see great success ahead of time. ... Challenges: Restoring the economy. With a strong economy it will help us to deal with the other challenges ...

[Challenges] Firstly, the economy and the budget, our province is going through a rough state and as a capital city we will be going through it at a higher level. ... We are focused on the economy right now, so I think over the next five years that will be a challenge.

Challenge: I think before the pandemic we were in a great position economically and moving to new space for us and focusing our attention on start-ups and creating quality of life measures that we thought would be important. COVID interrupted that. It will be a challenge moving forward in creating that buzz and magic again.

Theme 4.: Economy And Fiscal Management – Selected Comments

4.B. PUBLIC SECTOR FISCAL MANAGEMENT

Government aspiration on certain issues outstrips the spending of money. It is going to affect other parts of the federal infrastructure. It will affect our international standing and our ability to defend our country in environmental, public safety, international, and health matters. ... Terrible things have happened, and we cannot handcuff the next generation. Housing will not be affordable and health care will not be affordable. ... and it will be interesting to see what happens over the summer [re: federal election] because a lot of unaffordable social programs will come forward.

I do think on the international side, we are very stretched. ... We need to reframe ourselves from a policy perspective and make sure we have the right people and capacity to sustain a focus on it. Attracting young talent would help us in these relative issues. We need to build our capacity to where the world is going.

There are aspirations that are disconnected from the laws of government and scarce resources that the government needs to allocate. ... I think government needs to have a conversation about what is doable and what is not doable and what could be delivered implemented and operated at a speed we are not accustomed to using and tools we are not accustomed to and not operate in hierarchy.

Theme 4.: Economy And Fiscal Management – Selected Comments
4.B. PUBLIC SECTOR FISCAL MANAGEMENT
<p>Pandemic has revealed provincial inability to pay for two fundamentals reforms going from no fiscal capacity to pay for health care, equitable investment in health care, and hospital beds. The middle class will demand hospitals, and when they do not get it, that will destroy our Medicare. We cannot provide services without the revenue; you might be able to get away with borrowing right now. The understanding of fiscal restraint is wrong. ... There is a certain tweet from Councillor [name withheld], he says: ‘governments that are serious about doing things need to pay for them.’</p>
<p>I do not think they [Ottawa] understand the need for health care, education, and housing. There is a billion of dollars shortage there. The provinces are broke. Government of Canada is soaking up this fiscal area to fill this space. I think this will result in undermining the health care. As a result, a failure of the federal government to be more responsive. Provinces have no choice, they are broken, they have one choice which is to lash out on other levels of the government.</p>
<p>Another thing of great interest, there will be those who see many of those things that happened in the last year have positive outcomes. You can spend a generation full of new programing once, but you cannot do that repeatedly. How do you get yourself out of this world full of crises? When you are running, you are at the pace you are running at that is unsustainable in the long run.</p>
<p>I believe the public is ready, and there could be near term benefit from them. But I think the outcomes could be catastrophic for trust if we got into a fiscal bubble. There is an appetite from the citizens for the government to do more. If you want to end chronic homelessness then it would cost you \$16 billion a year. We are in a weird world right now that you could have all of this done for free. There has been no effort by government to increase taxes. The public loves getting things for free. I think there is appetite to spend more. This budget is the highest it has been in history. There is very little spending in the budget that would cause growth. The bulk of the budget is not aimed to invest in growth.</p>
<p>The [full name here] Martin income tax cuts that would be probably better in size like the GST cut. It was an interesting experiment, more sustainable from a tax perspective, and another that should not be done due to the tax cut. The recognition of the GST cut was unbelievably popular. [Full name] Flaherty then asked the questions which was what the income tax from Martin’s cut is. It was very low. Nobody really felt it. It was a good example that the politics of this is important and how you should play it out. If people want the government to do more things, then you need to tax more. For example, if you want a better disability benefit, would you be willing to pay two points more on the GST.</p>
<p>We have a hell of fiscal hangover coming out of this pan-demic. We had a bad structural deficit. We are starving our long-term care and health care systems. Women and visible minorities usually run the health care system. But there are not enough people. We need to pay people a decent wage and provide jobs to them fairly.</p>
<p>I think the public have a higher expectation and want value for dollar and waste does not sit kindly with them. For us, it’s an understanding of your community. Stable income gives you more stability to your community. There have been discussions on income standard, and the COVID benefits did bring stability for the community.</p>
<p>[Transport collectif] Prévoit revenir à la normale dans trois ans. Nous étudions quelle façon moduler l’offre des services pour revenir à la normal dans trois ans. Évidemment ça passe par du financement provincial car gros manque à gagner dans mon budget. Aussi, impact économique des changements autres que ceux du centre-ville: déplacement dans les quartiers / soutien aux quartiers.</p>

Theme 4.: Economy And Fiscal Management – Selected Comments

4.B. PUBLIC SECTOR FISCAL MANAGEMENT

I cannot imagine being a city manager spending the next few years going to the feds and wanting to offset the revenue balance; we would lose in our transition to sustainability.

When it comes to deficits, how ready or capable is the federation to respond to these historical productivity issues? I am not convinced where we are today that there is any will on the table to tackle this issue. You might see something coming from the ministers of finance, but most politicians are focused on what is happening at home and making sure health care is top of mind and get their economies working again.

In respect to COVID, there has been mental challenges, and we had to spend a lot to save lives; it is not a structural spending, and we will balance out just like it did last year. Our rating agencies do not see that the COVID impacts on the economy is everlasting. There are no structural issues that affect our creativity. Some governments have spent significantly more, and their ability to balance the debt is harder.

The biggest issue is bringing the economy back to a level to continue to rely on taxes. In provincial and federal government, we issue bonds and borrow and is not sustainable. The debt level in Canada is very high; we need to bring it back to a level where we can sustain on taxes. This needs to be looked at as what is changing in the society.

My fallback position in terms of broader societal change around a bit of a disassociation about what government does and what it pays for. It is an issue, and it is the foundation of everything I would say to answer any of these questions. There is a complete dissent between people's expectations of govt and how they pay for it. It causes a general devaluation in institutions and in government work ... when I first started in the federal government, and we were on the verge of a collapse in the country, and we had to fix that and there was a key misunderstanding of the deficit in this country. This is impacting this govt because it impacts the provincial revenues and society, and we have a great swath of unemployed men.

There is a complete disassociation between revenue and entitlements ... and a never-ending thirst for entitlement.

[Advice] Embrace complexity, and I have a much broader preoccupation within deficits; we need to collectively confront that they are serious things, and they are underpinning prospects of future generations.

In the pandemic, you need to spend but you also need to be strategic because you need to look at how it would like after the pandemic. ... Challenges include: Fiscal recovery is also fundamental, and you cannot do it without trust.

Fiscal balance and economy in [province] have borne pretty well because of federal money, and we were more or less open. We had restrictions, but, for the most part, we have done okay. But trying to get government back to the balance will be difficult. How do we wean people out of supports such as businesses, anxiety from the wage subsidies, also for [citizens] that make the best decisions for themselves CERB [spell out], CRB [spell out], and EI, and they were not thinking five years out? It was a safety net, and we need to get people back to work. I am worried about employment starting again.

We need to be good stewards of public resources. ... There is a reckoning coming out of the spending from the pandemic. Sometime in March or April, when the auditor general puts up the report, the state of the finances of [province] will be challenged. ... The fiscal reckoning worries me. That will be a challenge to really get to do things to health care. Is there a bigger discussion in govt on the role of healthcare? I worry about if we can outpace demand with transformation. I worry about the ministry and get some stability to pass it to a successor. ... I worry about our capacity and there is a dance between an ascended agencies such as OPH [spell out] and weakened ministries.

Theme 4.: Economy And Fiscal Management – Selected Comments**4.B. PUBLIC SECTOR FISCAL MANAGEMENT**

The fiscal framework we are heavily relied on property taxes and not have a piece of sales or income tax to face those emerging problems. People have this idea that property tax is too high, that is because we have an imbalance of the revenue stream. ... When you are a city, and even if there is a constitution and legislation, in a lot of instances, we end up with the solutions without the capacity to fix things.

On the federal side we had a deficit of \$400B in 2020, which I realize is COVID, but throwing money at every issue is not the solutions.

[Challenges]: Firstly, the economy and the budget, our province is going through a rough state, and as a capital city, we will be going through it at a higher level. ... Property tax is a big challenge; it does not respond to a timeline. Relying on a single type of taxation is not the way to go. Managing expectations and a demanding public while continuously evolving as an organization and debts surfacing. We have major capital works to do as a city. We are focused on the economy right now, so I think over the next five years that will be a challenge.

Fiscal sustainability is another challenge. We have the federal and provincial governments that need to pay for all kinds of challenges. What is the fiscal plan to get us out of this deep hole that we had to create? It will require sacrifices along the way. In [province], I cannot imagine this government—if it gets re-elected—that there will be 35 health units. Having various actors have added a layer of politics.

We have serious fiscal reality that we need to face in the next five years. It is a serious financial situation that requires strong leaders to take us through it. Our demographics are concerning and more long term. ... It touches everything, and it is immense. As you shift your demographic and financial situation changes.

A.5 PUBLIC SECTOR GOVERNANCE (THEME 5)

The major topics or elements covered under this theme relate mainly to national governance, institutions, and jurisdictions; politicians, elected officials and interface with the public service; communication and engagement with Canadians and stakeholders, consultation and participation, public trust; collaboration and coordination between and within governments; public service internal governance, accountability and decisions, strategy, and planning; public service culture, values, and ethics.

Theme 5: Governance – Selected Comments

5.A NATIONAL (MACRO) GOVERNANCE AND PRIORITIES

Parliamentary committee process is our way to talk to parliaments and people, and it is failing. We went from not doing enough to slaying deputy ministries for spending too much money. We have no concept of preparedness in this country. It is time to stand up for things that matter and stop caring so much about the ridiculousness of parliamentary committee. ... We lost ourselves in the Westminster system. We do not answer questions because our ministries might be lying. Janice is the first one that addresses these things. Public servants do not know what to do, and a little bit of truth is needed for trust.

We have to make sure we have capable institutions in areas where Canadians are counting on us. We need them to be effective and make Canadians feel they are being well served. There is nothing worse than being archaic in terms of reducing people's trust of people in government.

I would say the government has marshalled its capacity to deliver advice, decisions, and implementations at a speed unimaginable. Massive complex issues and big decisions were formed up in speed that is unimaginable. Institutional capacities were expanded.

I am skeptical about the Government of Canada's ability to lead the country. Ottawa lives in a bubble and does not know the priorities of provinces, territories, and municipalities. I do not think they understand the need for health care, education, and housing. There is billions of dollars shortage there. The provinces are broke.

So, the issue of economic polarization and the gap between the rich and the poor was highlighted in the pandemic. We have known about these issues in our societies for a long time, but the pandemic just highlighted it more. At least for the current government, this is animated in big policy moves. You see this is the US as well. There is more interest in systemic risk and some of the societal fractures have been underlined in a very significant way in the pandemic

I think we need to rebuild trust in government there are pro-found things we need to change, such as social media algorithms and our electoral system. To build a more cohesive society, we need to be more transparent. I think we must look at the way we look at people, and how we incentivize people, the role that corporate power plays in society. You can make a case that the reforms that were brought by [Prime Minister Jean] Chrétien on corporation was a very positive development: limitations on corporations. If you want to tackle the profound problems of our times, we will need to limit the power of corporations and how power is distributed in our society, and its relations to our government and elites. I think we are better set up than other countries.

Theme 5: Governance – Selected Comments
5.A NATIONAL (MACRO) GOVERNANCE AND PRIORITIES
<p>We have issues in supply chain integrity, competitiveness, how we manage IP, and naivety on issues on a global scale. When you scratch the surface there are issues there. There are many indicators that are pointing to the wrong direction in this country. The government needs to put good policy implementation to fix these issues. If the government does not do so, then I would be worried about my standards of living and my kids.' ... Hints of reality from time to time would be good. We need to search for those indicators that show us we have a long way to go. That dose of reality is a healthy thing to do. We need to move the country not only the bureaucracies.</p>
<p>The one that strikes me is that I worry about is the role of Parliament. That probably existed before the pandemic. I experienced it very specifically I get called before committees. But if you have watched it, I think you would find there has been more of the other stuff where things are not addressed, the questions are rarely taken into the heart of the discussion.</p>
<p>I am a believer that the Constitution with the division of powers and the fact that Canada has implemented a federal model is one of our real strengths. If only federal govt was responsible for long-term care. If the provincial govt did not do a good job, what makes you think a national federal govt that is not present in that area would do better. The responsibility needs to be put in the hands of the provincial govt to deal with the issues they are dealing with. I worry we conflate difference with weakness recognizing the difference in country having national border. I am relatively skeptical of the argument now that we need to impose long-term [care] standards because ultimately it reflects a non-evidence hubris that the federal govt does things better.</p>
<p>Government is back, but internationally, it is back too. Issues of globalization is more emphatical than it was before. The tensions with China and Russia, and you can see the return of nation-state in Canada and the US as well. But probably more in Canada. Stakeholders do not question that; the state is there and needs to intervene. They would question the intervention itself.</p>
<p>I think there is a national agenda, and this government has a strong one. Climate change is huge, and they won in front of the Supreme Court on carbon tax. There are fights between the provinces and the federal government about that. I am not a centralization person; I think these conflicts, when they happen, they are positive, they come up with better solutions because the community is taken into consideration. There is a creative chaos that comes with this. I am not very negative about it. I do not find we are doing so bad on this. I do not think the US can pass a carbon tax like we did. In many aspects, I feel the tension between federal and provincial is helpful in sense of position, I think it helps us avoid centralization that could happen in our country. I do not think it is necessary.</p>
<p>Regardless of who the government is, there will be an ambitious agenda, and I think regardless of what it looks, like the federal government needs to figure out what it does best and do it well. Whether its broadening or shrinking of the government.</p>
<p>I think it depends on relationships, it is only when a premier or a PMO takes on one of those areas and is able to build a coalition of the willing, then anything could happen. When it comes to deficits, how ready or capable is the federation to respond to these historical productivity issues we had in the past? ... I am not convinced where we are today that there is any will on the table to tackle this issue [deficits].</p>
<p>I think, in general, as we start to emerge out of COVID and faced with the fiscal reckoning, there is more effort taken to crystalize the tough choices we have. In general, we suffer in [province]; it is hard to be the only jurisdiction prepared to grapple with tough choices. The federation becomes more divided if the feds do not want to take these tough choices.</p>

Theme 5: Governance – Selected Comments

5.A NATIONAL (MACRO) GOVERNANCE AND PRIORITIES

Balancing complex priorities, you cannot do it all, and you need to take information to do that. At the highest level, it's conflicting. For example, approvals for resource development activities, duties consultations, 10-year growth plan, but you have to go through it in a sustainable way and some priorities that are there are not optional. ... Managing expectation of stakeholders where there is conflict.

We have our fair share of problems with the federal government historically, jurisdiction is not based on a popularity poll. There is a design, and we need to go back to this constitutional design. That is why they are there. ... The other piece I continually work as many of these changes emerge, economics, climate change, but what is the answer: We will have a centralized model, and it will work great! I make fun of this, and you see this trend all the time. A centralized model does not work; it is not a one size fits all. There is a human desire for simplicity in face of complexity. I would listen to the crown talk about diversity but at the same time everyone is going to do it their own way.

In [province], we truly have the prospects; people were getting disqualified while running because they failed to fill a form correctly. It is widely distracting, and all the things that we do not need. We need less rules more principles and fair effective ways of dealing with these issues. We frankly need less lawyers and processes and need to be back to key foundation of key parliamentary [democracy] of Canada. We need a hearing to say what happened. If we think of Senator [Mike] Duffy's hearing, it went on so long; and people were saying, what is going on? It could have taken way less time. ... I think people are looking for a 'show me' model. We seem to have gotten ourselves waylaid in ensuring ultimate fairness in the wrong way. We have lost substantial knowledge amongst the public generally on what these [things] should be doing. In [province], there are many things in the parliamentary democratic system in Canada that people do not understand.

I have had discussions on how you deal with expertise on different levels of government. Democracy and politicians make decisions and weighing complex issues economic aspects of health, mental health, and economic stability for the province and individuals and families. No one has all the expertise to deal with all of that, but the science table became the room of many. There are legitimate debates that we need to have with experts that need to be accountable to the public.

There is a broader demand and expectations for the government to be there, and it is stronger than it has ever been. It could lead to a renaissance in the role of government.

We have to create things for information and accountability, and if I have to decide, I will say spend the money because it is needed. We need to not go back to the treasury board order, but I need accountability back for good decision-making. Our government requires that and last thing you need is a premier or a PM to govern without Parliament and legislation.

J'ai un grand souhait: la continuité, il y a des pays qui performant dans leur politique avec une certaine continuité. Si l'on recommence les politiques publiques au 4 ans, ce n'est pas simple. Au QC, nous sommes un peu à l'abri mais au fédéral on a vu des « clash ». ... En ligne du « management », ce que tu apprends c'est tu dois prendre tes décisions sur le long terme. Parce qu'il faut que l'on « voie » même les autochtones ont des choses à nous apprendre. (Ex : Ils mettent une 7e chaises autour de la table (7e génération)) ça il faut que ce soit plus présent dans nos prises de décision à long terme.

Theme 5: Governance – Selected Comments

5.A NATIONAL (MACRO) GOVERNANCE AND PRIORITIES

There are several themes, the first thing I would say is jurisdictions. I am lucky enough to have experience in the provincial, municipal, and federal level. Our jurisdictions are broken, and we are focused on jurisdictions and that is the issue ironically. Now I am at the municipal level, if we view all our mandates from the community view, you would not know who is responsible for what. It is not my mandate, and the fact that I do not know these things is the core of the issue. There is no centralized body to provide advice to decision-makers. [City] is becoming a large city, and we are having big city problems.

Notwithstanding the constitutionality, we almost do not exist, except by legislation by provinces, people are facing the reality and are viewing us as an ally that helps them. That is the biggest issue we are facing here in [City] along with our counterparts in the country.

Theme 5: Governance – Selected Comments

5.B POLITICAL INTERFACE AND OFFICIALS

I think that accountability is a huge issue. The Accountability Act has shifted a lot to deputy ministers but still limited that you still report to ministries. I had a huge fight with PMO, they wanted an upfront payment for a project and could have been an illegitimate act. He wanted me to blow the vote and ... The increase pressure in centralization in PMO means bad decisions are being made because decisions are not being made. The Harper government was heavily criticized for that, but this government is not any better. ... We need accountability to either be with the ministers instead of [...] accountability with ADMs with autonomic pressure. I do not think 25-year-olds in PMO are qualified to make the decisions they make.

We are losing the ability to tell truth to power and weigh options. We need to understand numbers, and unintended consequences are not considered. We are responding yes to campaign promises because that is what we do, and it comes from platforms.

I think prioritizing that we are in an emergency but lost the sense of urgency. We need to tackle these complex problems and deliver results faster. To do so, we are going to need to have a framework for speed and innovation. We need to shift our framework from careful due diligence to moving and keeping it right. This requires a different bargain between the public sector and elected officials that serve. It is taking some lessons learnt from [the COVID-19] emergency to implement that.

We lost perspective of value and money as they have no meaning anymore. ... Us [federal] and the [province] government, we managed the pandemic as a political issue, and we have not been in front of it. We deal with the borders as political issues not the flow of the disease. We deal with it as how do we deal with public or other government issues which causes people to be unhappy.

Public service is beaten down by the need to be responsible politically.

We agreed, at the time, the Canada-US free trade and the 1995 referendum and abide by a set of rules, and we all agreed to all move on. If you look at Brexit now and the impact of micro-targeting led to a major global power go down a path that will clearly decrease its place and trade options in the world for a specific date and time. We have international actors that are exploiting this; and if we think here in Canada, we are immune to this, you see the maverick party and all these issues, there will be a force in Canadian politics. Their volume and presence will be changed electoral outcome and policy outcomes.

Theme 5: Governance – Selected Comments

5.B POLITICAL INTERFACE AND OFFICIALS

The last three months watching parliament, it struck me the blurring of the roles between the ministers and public servants. I think if you do not solve it, then it calls the question on the neutrality of the public service. [Position/ title] Ian Stewart refusing to provide documents and defending the neutrality of the public service. The federal government was facing this when the Harper govt came in, and he came in with an ambitious agenda on the federal Accountability Act and the public servants delivered. You can do it with a minister, but how do you prove that you are neutral? Leading into election we need to brief key stakeholders and parties on all issues.

Il y a un phénomène en situation de crise, tous cherchent l'efficacité et le monde sont conscient de l'urgence/la situation et les décisions doivent se prendre rapidement. Il faut dire, nos niveaux politiques étaient très présents et se parlaient beaucoup ce qui aide pour la prise des décisions ... Mais c'est certain que les politiciens doivent apporter des propositions qui vont emmener les citoyens plus proches de l'information et de la décision. Quatre ans c'est long, c'est là qu'on souffre. L'information va tellement vite et notre système électoral n'a pas suivi et faut que l'on trouve ces modalités-là. Je crois que tous les cherchent et je crois que l'on les trouvera mais c'est certain que c'est plus long qu'imposer des solutions comme dans certaine dictature. On avance d'un pas et recule de deux mais je crois qu'on avance tout le temps [P18]

There has been a marginalization of bureaucracies at the expense of the unelected appointed people. You rarely see a DM on the media, you see a chief of staff or assistant; these people are very smart, but they do not have any allegiance to the organization and have no jurisdiction.

Covertly, you have the challenges we have had with [province] where the government had to step on their own feet time and time again. ... There has been a broad erosion in trust. It has been a tough challenge, and we have not gone through such a thing with such sacrifices and decision-making before. The biggest frustration I find where I look at how decisions are made there is some of the rational descriptors and announcements made by political experts and then you have the scientists coming out saying they do not listen to us or take our advice.

The politicizations of some of these decisions that should not have been as political have caused a lot of people to be skeptical of what is striving [?]. You see a lot of inequities in the treatment of businesses and leaks at the council and various boards of trade, the whole notion that Walmart and Costco can keep their doors open and small businesses had to be closed.

There is not enough respect for public servants that sit there, and I think the people have no window into everything. We are in an era in which decision-making is so overly politicized that the role of the professional public servant has become diminished of what it should be. I think there is a broiling of political perspective about the role of the bureaucracy and the work that it does and is challenged to do, and the independence of that in my view is no longer understood or seen by a lot of political bodies, parties, and individuals for what it truly supposed to be. Until we restore that, and it becomes a strong principle on which policies are developed and decisions are made, and I think we will continue be mired in this environment.

We have gnarly problems, and I feel it is embraced here; and I get the sense everything feels so breezy 'we will get it fixed.' It is almost like if you were to explain something you need to be stupid or else you cannot do it. I feel that in the broader public sector sense which comes from partisan politics, and if you explain an issue, they will accuse you of being incompetent and fingers are pointed.

Theme 5: Governance – Selected Comments	
5.B POLITICAL INTERFACE AND OFFICIALS	
	For senior elected figures, there is an evolution where there is less and less of invisibility on that [re: solutions]. Cabinet confidence is very important; there is a growing sense that there are more accountabilities taken on advice they make. I think the structure and some of those practices are being devalued and we are losing something in that. To the extent to which people do not understand how government works or how it is paid for, or they do not understand the difference between jobs and elected officials.
	[Leadership:] Ability to translate the political and public sector back and forth on the deputy level. Those things make or break the government. We are all here to serve the public and having that trust at the political level can be a challenge. I have a tremendous minister we started together, and we get along really well. I dread the day there is a cabinet shuffle. You have to control your minister or political level will get in our way and an apparent challenge to separate strong leaders from weak leaders. Bridge the gap between the political level and bureaucracy.
	There is less grace, and you do not see thoughtful reflective comments as opposed to this is a great bit for twitter. I worry about that as a foundational problem, and I feel that here. My fear is that the multitude of jurisdictions amplifies the problems. We want to go back to a diplomatic place; this country needs to work and there are base political drivers. We are more focused on the four-year cycle, and short-termism is deadly to us as a country.
	I think the first thing is, it's going to be harder and more necessary for politicians to trust public servants.
	Everyone has known for 50 years what needs to be done to fix our health system; it's not the issue of fixing but rather the poli-tics of going from here to there.
	The relevancy of government and trust between political experts and bureaucracy is also a challenge. The first budget in Ontario the public servants were not allowed in and that has all changed. If there is a change in government then you are back to square one. When you are coming out of a pandemic you need to hit a strike.
	Le gouvernement Legault ... ils ont aligné les délais de nos planifications stratégiques au mandat. Donc nous sommes tous aligné (ministères), nous ferons notre planning stratégique en accord avec le politique donc cela donnera beaucoup plus de profondeur à nos planifications car elles seront beaucoup plus appuyées par le politique, ce qui est vraiment bien puisque c'est la première fois que je vois un gouvernement s'intéresser autant à la planification stratégique.
	For me there are four big shifts: The fourth one, and that worries me the most and speaks to real democracy, is the degradation of political debate. We are not seeing the [Pierre] Trudeau-clerk debates that we saw in the 1970s and 1980s; it is so polarized and ideological and dirty. We are following the American evolution of this for whatever reasons. I hope one day Canadians will say we do not want to follow American roads. I think we need to call out and measure out this polarization and segregation. No party is immune from it; they are all as bad as each other.
	I think people are worried by the toxicity of partisan politics and what is missing in the discord is not what they are doing but what is best for Canadians.
	It has been interesting watching the province's COVID response here in BC, and the extent to which they deferred to the public officer on the science and the facts. Looking at Ontario and Alberta, and looking at how the politics affected the communication, I think it has resonated well in [province]. Govts can defer to experts, and it's a transferrable lesson. It is a unique lesson; politicians have taken responsibility and deferred to experts for communications.

Theme 5: Governance – Selected Comments

5.B POLITICAL INTERFACE AND OFFICIALS

From a governance perspective ... I have seen a decline in finding good people to run for offices. There is so much time required, and expectations are so high. Good people are not putting themselves forward. They would rather be working in the private sector. We need to find ways in which the politicians are not the enemy anymore. I do not have an answer on how to solve that.

It was amazing to me how that quickly it become politicizing [re: vaccines]. The political resentment that immediately started and that more vaccines should be directed to hotspots, and you gradually started to see a real erosion of those principles, and, ultimately, it became a dog fight to get in a room and argue for allocations that align with the principles. But the principles were nowhere to be found when decisions were made. I find it discouraging to see things are becoming more political than expert-related. This could only be rebuilt when there are political leaders willing to do that work. I think we have gone over the scale, and politics is what is leading us to this lack of confidence and trust in institutions.

[Advice] I feel there is a reluctance to hear an opinion that is not my own, and we need to create safe spaces where these discussions could happen and respect each other's roles.

Nous avons traité de front, une chance d'avoir des élus qui nomme les choses. Ex : Maire a reconnu le racisme systémique et crée un bureau pour contrer ce racisme. Mission : supporter l'ensemble de l'organisation pour accélérer le changement de comportement et façon de faire.

Theme 5: Governance – Selected Comments

5.C. COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT WITH CANADIANS AND STAKEHOLDERS

And if we do not understand Canada, we cannot serve Canada. I am sick of us talking about our most important relationships, and there is a day for everything, and we are too influenced by that instead of governing.

On the issue of trust, I think it is interesting because we are talking about the pandemic, and Canadians have been trusting of the government during the pandemic. They have respected the guidelines and accepted vaccines. We have a society that has a fair degree of social trust and cohesion.

I think communications with people and how we communicate with Canadians is important. We are now in such a different communication environment, how people are getting their information vs how we are communicating our information. We need to put more emphasize in that as effectiveness of communications is key. Social media is very destructive towards trust in government. ... People are looking at ways on how to get the views of ordinary citizens into decision making and policy making. It went in the wayside and people thought it could be dealt with on social media. But it has not proven to work because it divides rather than unite. We need to find creative ways on how we get their views into Parliament and into policy- and decision-making. We have gained trust during the pandemic, but this an opportunity the government will need to prove itself in terms of policy and other delivery areas.

Truth is more important. I would say the public service needs to have a stronger spine and demonstrate leadership, be a little bit bold in connecting with Canadians, and growing up greater value and not drinking our Kool-Aid too much and always painting a rosy picture on the other side of people dying. What it needs the most is to step up. You cannot be captured by a rosy outcome.

Theme 5: Governance – Selected Comments

5.C. COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT WITH CANADIANS AND STAKEHOLDERS

How do we handle people who basically reject the concept of enlightenment and rationality as a decision-making force, rejecting the rules of our various institutions that see themselves moving and tearing down institutions and disbelieving things that are not up to their agreement or liking? We need to recognize that these are the issues. Why worry about the questions out there?

The stakeholders' biggest concerns right now are how do we implement things and what are the consequences of the pan-demic. They see a role for the govt to solve their issues, and they are demanding their help to achieve these targets. They see the feds playing a key role and a partner from the funding perspective. I did not get a call from any areas that did not say thank you for your help on the pandemic. We hear more critiques on the vaccine and pandemic side, but, on the economic side, we have been praised except from the deficit side.

The lack of trust in bureaucrats is driving more transparency and change. ... In a departmental view, you need to be more open on what you are doing and engaging more people in what you are doing.

We created a strong relationship with the ministry [and First Nations], which helped in dealing with issues that came from the pandemic. ... Relationships with school divisions increased since 2014, and prior to that, we would meet with them once a month for an operational meeting and once a quarter for more strategic and planning meetings. When the pandemic hit [in] March 2020 up until now, we have been having weekly meetings; they are short. We also have chief medical officer joining our meetings. Our partners value this opportunity and his views on how things are going. We have had really good discussions and discords at the weekly meeting. It is a small group that allows us to have all these discussions on important matters. We follow that up with a larger meeting, and the chief medical officer joins us on that as well and provides an update; and it goes out to all our First Nations education authorities and school divisions and key organizational partners and federation of [provincial] Indigenous nations.

We came ahead and felt it in [province]; we have had two organizations that pivoted or created. It is still in the infancy stages, but we are helping them run it. We did not have service delivery partners before. We did not have association of newcomers or religious groups before. Those are partners that we can have real conversations with them on policy development. Having those partners, we can work with and really try to support the community. Governments do really well in equality but really suck at equity.

Coordination on the ground is really challenging which is a governance issue. All the government responses have been really good, and I had to check my own reaction a couple of times. We had our anti-racism secretary coming in and telling us about at-risk communities, and they were helpful to shine a light on some things. Necessity is the mother of invention. How do we move to a more collaborative thinking and how do we move forward on that and make sure we do not go back to the way we were before? I have been so deep in COVID for a year and a half, and I think our biggest challenges is on the ground in Western Canada.

We also took some hits from stakeholders such as nurses.

We were struggling before COVID and how do we get single moms in front of council? We were considering creating a free drop-in day care in City Hall. People can now communicate with council on google. ... Our old paradigm was seeing old, retired people, and now we are seeing more young people and single moms and dads. We will invite people to speak in chambers again, and we will keep the google access to it as well. We continue to re-learn lessons we heard before such as public engagement.

Theme 5: Governance – Selected Comments

5.C. COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT WITH CANADIANS AND STAKEHOLDERS

We have had some really good results, with more engagement in stakeholders more broadly than we had before. ... Engaging stakeholders with things that are beyond their scope and mandate can help solve this issue. ... We still struggle with the clarity in our communications and for it to be communicated in a way people would understand. I think it is important to continue to build coalitions and engage other sectors and parties on issues and working on solutions.

We need to be more open to change and hearing from public on how we could change things.

For our organization, we find it is important to be communicating and engaging with citizens and interest groups to solve these issues. You need to take the time and effort to make sure their demands are met, and there is a rationale behind every decision, and it is communicated properly. We now have an engagement and communications division. But we found it is not about the spin, it is about properly communicating our perspective and properly explain it to the citizens. ... I think you must try and be honest. People see through answers when you tell them what they want to hear. You must use more facts and level up with people. Do not be afraid to say no when you need to. Do not say you will deliver on something later; it will come back and bite you in the back later. If you cannot work to do what the citizens want, you need to work with them to find something that works or tell them why it does not work out.

Planification urbaine ... Ne doit pas se faire de façon anarchique mais plutôt une planification en amont [M10]

The whole notion that Walmart and Costco can keep their doors open and small businesses had to be closed. I understand the logic behind that, as they wanted to limit mobility. The optics of that was hard to explain and confusing to people and undermines confidence. ... There was a perception there was an element of businesses and society that had to carry much higher burden than others. Institutions, generally, are suffering from the perception that decisions are not being made based on the right criteria, and we are not being told the truth and transparency on how these decisions are being made.

I think the Indigenous community is more than willing to work with us. We have to find governance approaches that speaks to them meaningfully such as regular efforts to make good decisions about land and people and set us on our trajectory.

What we have done was amend existing acts, there has been nothing that is fundamental rethinks. But that will come. The interesting thing about what we are doing now is that I can talk to you now and have a conversation with you despite geographical boundaries. We have been doing this with First Nation's leaders. We talk about changes to laws and understand their priorities and aspirations. But we have started a process of being able to have a discussion.

I think it is interesting in our province, the tone and process needs to be collaborative. We are seeing some really good success from that. I think we can work across different values and perspectives to achieve the same outcomes. There is a real value in working across and real merit to that. When it comes to some sticky issues such as climate change, diversity, racism and Indigenous, we need to take a collaborative lens and engage, and everyone gets something out of it. It does not have to be black and white.

[Challenges] ... People need to understand that each government has its own decision-making model. We need to communicate that better so people can understand.

Theme 5: Governance – Selected Comments

5.C. COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT WITH CANADIANS AND STAKEHOLDERS

[Reconciliation advice] You have to be prepared to accept that things are going to take longer to accomplish and to really reflect the goals and aspiration of Indigenous populations. You need to realize it will take a while and a lot of back and forth and you have to be patient with Indigenous groups and their capacity to engage, and constantly assist them to engage. It will not be accepted if you do not take time to work to their pace.

We do not do enough to focus on communicating to people within government and what government does and what services they deliver. A lot of people do not always see government to be beneficial. So, they should bring the word about the good they do. We also need to focus on the benefits the government brings to the people.

Everyone I know in [province] is blaming [Premier], but this is a federal requirement. If you look at social media everyone says they will never vote for [XX] again. When there is loss and frustration, they blame the existing govt. Once COVID is fully over we will observe a lot of change in many provinces and federal governments. So, I think the best approach is transparency and make the people a partner and make them heard. We get a lot of grief from the general public on vaccinations and dates, so we try to communicate with them as much as we can.

Accountability: increase expectations for accountability and in order to be accountable you need to be understood. If people are expecting something entirely different because they do not understand the role, in the law you are accountable but in their eyes you are not.

When the former premier [name omitted] came to office and moved me to labour and education, his key thing was to restore relationships with post-secondary institutions and universities. ... When restaurants were closing the dialogues with the industry went well as the trust was there. ... The way we were able to succeed is by gaining the trust of people.

[Governance challenges:] ...

- Effective stakeholders' engagement and working with the federals effectively.
- How to demonstrate impact while sustaining federal budgets. In the pandemic, you need to spend but you also need to be strategic because you need to look at how it would [look] like after the pandemic. We are starting to reach out to the private sector and share our thoughts on what the future will look like. We have 13 sectors, councils, truckers, manufacturing, fisheries, we work with them all the time and see what they need. That is a relationship we focus on and maintain.
- Those are the key challenges to me; social inclusion is key and that's important and the relationship to see between the university space and other broader. We just had a discussion on diversity and a sexual violence committee and mental health committee all working together in moving the social agenda.

We need to give the institutions back to the people; we have obligations to keep tax money safe and provide economic growth and not lose sight of those who are serving. We are moving to citizen-centric design and being more inclusive with voice. There are a few ways in which [province], we work on this and create a paradigm shift.

We have been seeing this and feeling this, and our response is to give back our institutions back to the people by trying to involve them more readily and more transparency in creating the solutions for themselves. When we have things coming for assessment, we just hired an expert in citizen-centric assessment to look at the submissions to make sure we are not just ticking the boxes and there are meaningful measures. Citizen-centric approach is one tool in a big toolbox. I do think there is more to be done to let people see behind the curtains. This would let a lot of people cringe. I mean letting people really understand how the sausage is made.

Theme 5: Governance – Selected Comments

5.C. COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT WITH CANADIANS AND STAKEHOLDERS

How does an organization change to make Indigenous reconciliation be bigger and affect how we do our work? It is a bigger dialogue which is challenging all levels of the government and bringing learning across the organization. It is more bottom-up approach to reconciliation and more of a foundational change in my career.

We need to guard our institutional credibility as it has been undermined by social media. I think the need to always make things complicated, such as global warming and carbon target, needs to be simplified in a rational and justifiable way so people can get it.

The pandemic has hit the lower income levels more than the middle class and upper classes. This put a lot of strain on a lot of things like housing, food security, and housing cost and availability. All of this together creates a toxic mix. If you think of what we are learning and what actions we would take from all of that, communication is key here in educating people. Recognizing that people have different values and views, and it's important to hear perspectives from everyone and give them voice. Twenty years ago, we were all focused on equal pay, and now time has changed to diversity and inclusion, gender equality, and feminism. We must change our approach using multi-channel ways to consult and engage with and see what they are going through and changing our approach to cater to them.

If we include people in conversations and give them voice, we will retain trust. We always engaged in polling. The whole polling piece is now ramped up a lot and that's how we gain and retain trust. We need to explain why certain things are happening in a certain way. Leaders need to step up and be seen beyond talking heads. Our public engagement before was online: here is our website, here is our survey, and you can come to our public committees. The online world has opened a lot of doors for us. Not only did we change the kind of work to do with organization, we are giving the opportunity to be heard.

I think the way we do business and the need for transparency is important. It has been a big challenge for us and the transparency of decision-making and that is where you contrast. The world I live in there is only four things you can do and do in camera. When you get into the provincial and federal governments, Cabinet secrecy, and the number of non-disclosure agreements signed to be able to have discussions on decision-making and policy-making has gone way up. The word 'embargo' is thrown around on almost everything, and I think it is laughable because, in every announcement, the pattern is everyone is sworn to secrecy on conversations and then it gets leaked to the media and then the announcement comes in a day later confirming what the media says. The process could not be any less transparent.

Theme 5: Governance – Selected Comments

5.D. COLLABORATIONS AND COORDINATION BETWEEN OR WITHIN GOVERNMENTS

Coordination and collaboration across departments is required to work together. It is hard to put out easy information in a Westminster system. We must know what we are doing for Canadians to understand.

From a global governance perspective, we are likely to be in a more challenging era where we need to be more engaged going forward. The challenging part about government is that everything that is important crosses jurisdictions and department lines. ... It crosses departmental governance. How do you make progress on issues that require multiple players around the table?

Theme 5: Governance – Selected Comments

5.D COLLABORATIONS AND COORDINATION BETWEEN OR WITHIN GOVERNMENTS

If you look at our federation and how it works, a lot of it is impeded due to the size of it. It is hard to get collective changes due to the factions of the government. We are operating in a broader concept. ... We are not a cohesive country; we are a large federation and share a border with what was the biggest COVID hotspot of the world. ... Every province wants to do its own thing; half the provinces are talking about setting up their own manufacturing capacities.

Going forward, we should avoid tearing each other apart, and we do this very well. You need a system that has free voice, but it has to be grounded. What is the underlying factual basis and is it real? It did not help that the government set up individual institutions and did not take the advice from these institutions. It ignored some institutions and met other institutions upfront based on whether they look good on camera. Even when there is no news, it is still important because we have the bias.

The public expects the government to deal with those margins of society and not create an unsafe environment for everyone. When there is a 'Team Canada' approach to negotiate things like NAFTA, you see people coming together and better inter-govt co-operation. But, for example, the COVID alert app, you could not even get an agreement from premiers to use the same platform. Moreover, vaccine credential: for it to work and for other countries to trust it, you need a pipeline from all jurisdictions and all premiers to verify these credentials.

There is greater recognition for the importance and the need of govt. In Canada, it struck me, we have fallen into coordination issues: municipal vs. federal vs. provincial. There is a perception put out there where a lot of Canadians are fighting and blaming one another. Personally, I would ask: what do Canadians want out of their govt? Consistent public health guidance and consistent directions. We have not been very successful, and we caused more damage than good in terms of direction. ... It has raised some questions for me about the provincial and federal dynamics again. Who is responsible for what and what is the line between them?

Governments need to play to role, and there is an opportunity to further secure it to the extent that Canadians understood the difference between the provincial and federal govts. Federalism was working very well in the early days, and it fell apart as the pandemic began to unfold. The finest hour has been the execution of immunization, and we took some hits on the supply early on, and now we are on our way to be a global leader. That level of societal cohesion around that common goal in the spring and summer and federal and provincial cohesion has been remarkable and why we are successful.

When the going gets tough, the public disputes between level governments undermines public trust. I think showing it is important to publicly display that all levels of government can work together and have a cohesive unified force. ... One of the challenges I see is that different orders of government working together. Intersection between the demand for digital services and insistence on data security, proliferation of watch dogs, and independent bodies, and continued explosion of social media and the notion you could control it somehow.

The parent-child relationship continues between provinces and municipalities. I do not think I want to make too much of the municipal realities. I think good things could come out of them. We have an environmental file that is \$26 million dollars deep, and it has been pulled and pushed by the provincial govt. The gloves have dropped, and it should not get to that. In hindsight, when you look at that, you think how something could possibly get to that.

Theme 5: Governance – Selected Comments

5.D COLLABORATIONS AND COORDINATION BETWEEN OR WITHIN GOVERNMENTS

We also see changes as we do more work across levels of government. All three levels of govt have a role; we see there is an issue with jurisdictions that gets in the way on of solving problems. ... We need to do more in partnerships as opposed to solving all issues ourselves. We do not have the bandwidth; we need to think bigger and more collaboratively. ... Another thing would be working across jurisdictions, as bureaucratic boundaries can be a hinder. I think it is important to figure out how to work through that.

Getting the right leadership in place to tackle these issues is one. How different levels of government would work together is two. I do not think we are historically set to solve these issues and have jurisdictions work together. I think we must come up with new ways to work together. ... Also, understanding how the province works and what is the impact of their decisions on us. We need to do more in partnerships as opposed to solving all issues ourselves. We do not have the bandwidth; we need to think bigger and more collaboratively.

The bureaucracies: Departments at the provincial level and even in municipalities do not work together to solve problems.

I see a fantastic opportunity for cities like [city] to push the urban agenda with upper levels of the government. ... Municipalities are working together like they have not before; we have common issues, and our approach with the federal government is collaborative. ... About 10 months ago, we created the greater [city-city] area executive. It is all the city managers and CAOs [full term] within municipalities within this metropolitan area. ... This urbanized area is Xth in GDP in the country. How it works is automatic; how unified are we in terms of thinking within this area? It varies; no one is required to think in this way. There are half a dozen matters we need to talk about in this urbanized region. Those matters include sustainability, racism, etc. ... We have been identifying actions we could take in each of those areas to make lives better. I told this group, lets revisit this in a year and see if this hurdle is useful.

When I look within our own government, collaboration is what we really try to promote and mental health. ... Cross depart-mental is a model that could be successful in different sectors. It may take more time, and people may need to compromise to fix these issues. How do we create those spaces and areas that you are rewarded for working cross-departmental and provincial governments?

TB [full term] is the tail end of the process, it is ever an impediment, it means that it went through the Cabinet before understanding the cost of it. So, we wait for ministers for the cost of it. Federal government spending authority is in the hands of finance and PMO, there is no dialogue on budget priorities; there is a contest between ministers to put things in faster. There is not much finance discipline.

I think, all of a sudden as a country, we all aligned our priorities within the system. ... We all have the same common issues and priorities that we did not have before. Maybe there will be more alignment and vision. In the first six months of the pandemic, within the province, we spoke six-to-seven days a week; we never had those meetings before. We created bonds and relationships at the senior levels that I hope it will stay.

There have been really sweet spots during the pandemic where collaboration between all levels of government that we have not experienced before. We have really enjoyed significant good times in that sense. The level of cross-sectoral collaboration, in the early days, PPE became relevant to non-relevant sectors and put everyone in contact with one another. One of the strategic lessons that we need to take on and harness: what is real collaboration and what underpins it, is it sharing data, evidence, venturing out to find out what we have in common with non-traditional partners and how do we do that in a Westminster system. How can we harness and build this on?

Theme 5: Governance – Selected Comments
5.D COLLABORATIONS AND COORDINATION BETWEEN OR WITHIN GOVERNMENTS
[Challenges:] Effective stakeholders' engagement and working with the federal effectively.
We must re-examine the systems in which we work. ... We must have a whole of government approach; I do not only mean on the provincial level; we need to get better at reaching other jurisdictions. Sometime the feds came out with a pro-gram, and it works brilliant for an area but not for others. We need flexibility to serve different regions and peoples. In [province], we need to be able to do it ourselves, be better at holistic approaches, more of an ecosystem with municipalities and as well as regionally.
We are working in a more horizontal way than ever before but many of our structures are very vertical. How do you marry those wicked horizontal issues with our vertical institutions? How does the government work together with the public sector to solve these issues while fitting our Westminster system? It is difficult with multi-layer expectations over orders of government and to marry that with the political nature of the system. I grapple with that all the time. How do you integrate bringing the government to engage with citizens to solve issues?
Aussi la pandémie, a permis aux secteurs de travailler plus entre eux car ils faillaient trouver des solutions. Les centres de détentions sont des endroits exigeants, ils y avaient des-en-jeux pour les employées et les personnes incarcéré donc les équipes de soutiens sont venu en appui et nous avons travaillé beaucoup avec le ministère de la santé publique. Alors le décloisonnement a permis d'être beaucoup plus proches entre secteurs et ministères, ce qui est très bien. Cela à apporter de l'innovation, rapidité et assouplissement des règles.
Avec le gouvernement fédéral nous avons eu énormément de contact avec ministère de la sécurité publique et l'armé ainsi que la sécurité civile. Effectivement il y a eu un rapprochement significatif. Beaucoup d'intervention avec le fédéral pour les communautés autochtone pour trouver des solutions.
I think the main challenges is bringing cities back. We have coalesced as big cities like we have not done before. We have a meeting every two weeks with all major cities around the country. It took us 90 minutes to come up with our challenges that require the government's help. Re-opening issues, transit issues, downtown vibrancy, and opening up again. I think from governance perspective, cities matter now more than ever, and we need provinces to realize that. We are caught in a war of ideologies with the province. Lots of good collaboration, but we are caught up in it. ... We need to put all the ideologies aside and work on the same page. Right left and centre are usually always saying the same thing but in different ways. They need to get over themselves and work on that.
This council is more socially leaning and more open to take areas of responsibility that they are not responsible for. It has caused the federal and provincial government to engage more with us. ... I think the province and the feds realized if they want to do things fast and efficiently, they can rely on the municipalities. But at the same time, they should not be downloading onto municipalities.
The feds have assigned ADMs and DMs to help us. When you have an aging population and underinvestment in infrastructure and young generations wanting to go back to work, you need to be more deliberate in approaching these issues. I think it is a 'we'll see kind of approach,' the discussions are happening. ... Let us agree on the topic; we will focus on outcomes we are trying to achieve and respect the roles and responsibilities of each of us and decide what works.

Theme 5: Governance – Selected Comments**5.D COLLABORATIONS AND COORDINATION BETWEEN OR WITHIN GOVERNMENTS**

Le télétravail nous emmène, les trois paliers du Gouvernement ensemble car les municipalités ne pourront plus faire ces changements seul. Les paliers doivent avoir la même compréhension des enjeux et de programme. Exemple: 6 grandes villes ont demandé au Gouv du Canada d'identifier les centres-villes comme des 'grappes,' et être traités comme des microcosmes particuliers qui mériteraient de nouveaux programmes d'investissements particuliers et pour permettre de contribuer au PIB.

Gouvernance - La leçon de la pandémie : l'agilité doit être nécessaire dans nos programmes. Si l'on veut s'adapter nous ne pouvons plus fonctionner comme avant, soi-disant, recevoir l'aide du Gouv. Fédéral on doit passer par la Province (enfer). En termes de Gouvernance cela nous poussera à être encore plus agile. QC doit permettre au Fédéral d'avoir des ententes directement avec municipalités.

A.6 LEADERSHIP (THEME 6)

The major topics or elements covered under this theme relate mainly to executive competencies and requirements, executive HR and talent management, general leadership, and HR-related issues.

Theme 6: Leadership – Selected Comments
6.A LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES AND REQUIREMENTS
Leaders: They have to be honest and spend time listening and less talking; they need to defend the people that are working for them. Self-interest has become the narrative of the day. I think that we have lost our understanding of Canada. ... Stop talking and start doing for the next generation.
Leaders: Resiliency and being open to not having all the answers and working differently with less hierarchy. Teleworking does allow for flattening the hierarchy in government.
Leaders: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision, the ability to create vision and engagement. We need people who will engage and can engage with thought leaders, Canadians, and the political level to understand where others are coming from and the range of views and bring it into government and use all this wisdom and expertise in developing forward views and perspectives. • Capacity to deliver. Sometimes it is policy and sometimes operations. ... It is an area where we could be stronger in developing our operational talent. Those are hard jobs, and it is a different skill set. So, ensuring a real focus on operational leadership is very important.
Leaders: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong values and skills of managing people not rules. • Ability to identify problems really well and underlying complex issues and the ability to see completely different solutions. • Willingness to take on some risks in trying different approach.
Being happy in a civil service job, I say you need to have strategic patience and a profound sense of the long run. A lot of the problems we look at are resolved over a long period of time. ... Effective civil servants are the ones that understand uncertainty and think in the long run. ... You need to have a long-run perspective, and I think so much of our society weighs against that. ... I think the same applies to leaders; you may be doing something that maybe your grandkids may see the results for.
Leaders: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think compassion, tolerance, empathy is important as you move forward. • Good talent management and become more tech savvy. The digital side is very important, and leaders need to be tech-savvy, people-centric.
Leaders: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovation, openness to innovation. I think we made progress in that, but it is not a dominant characteristic we assess people on. • What I would have now that been not on my radar two years ago is execution and the ability execute systems. • I think there are other skills as well such as the ability to deal with a political class.
But if I only had two it would be innovation and execution not defined by, can you pull the Memorandum to Cabinet in short order, but actually what we do on ground in real time.

Theme 6: Leadership – Selected Comments

6.A LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES AND REQUIREMENTS

I was talking with one of my leaders who is struggling a lot, and I told them that when I was an ADM, and on the list to be a DM, sometimes my biggest concern was my skin thick enough for the job? I did not believe it at the time; I thought you can be socially sensitive and have a heart; it does not mean you do not have resiliency.

I think emotional intelligence is becoming more important within the organization. People do not accept things that they would have years ago. We spent too much time on the knowledge of the people and not enough on their capacity to adapt, adjust, and understand what is going around the town. [F12]

Leaders: To some degree these are ones [competencies] I value, but I value them more now:

- People who are polydextrous and able to be deep vertically when they need to but horizontal by nature.
- People who have creativity and can unleash it.
- People who can take risk that they are aware of.
- People who can ask question why not?
- People who can mobilize and support and not just within their unit or department but across levels of the government and comfortable to move from one context to another.
- Tech-savvy.
- Responsive.
- Reflective.
- Approach without borders.
- Be able to work across different orders of government.

Leaders:

- The higher you go up, the more your job is HR. You need people who know how to develop and build a team
- People you can trust and can clearly communicate.
- Being comfortable being in issues that may cost you your job.

Leaders:

- Not subject matter experts but deputies that could lead and think.
- Adaptability: you have to be adaptable or else you would be in the wrong business. I need the expertise when we need it.
- Project management skills and to do that on time to meet objectives.
- Matrix thinking to be able to look at the parts that go together.
- Leadership and understanding that you cannot be just in your lane, and you have to think of the bigger picture. The smartest person in the room might not be the best leader.

Leaders:

- I think listening to diverse voices is keys.
- dealing with the unknown is a leadership imperative and with all the skills, the public servants have brought into the pandemic such as leadership. ... In the city of [xxx], on a daily base we go back to our well-established values in solving issues. We are relying more on them more than we had before.
- It comes down to leadership and ability to mobilize teams through leadership; it has always been the case in the past and is the case now.
- Breath of experience and understanding everything from operation to policy.

It is now for courage, creativity, and good communications. We have a level of complexity, and we need courage to tackle some of these issues.

Theme 6: Leadership – Selected Comments

6.A LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES AND REQUIREMENTS

Leaders:

- the ability to assess talent and hire key leaders. You need to find leaders that put aside their humility and do their jobs and not micromanage. They must have the courage to make difficult choices based on not a lot of time and information. You cannot discourage your employees when they take risks and fail.
- Flexible and pragmatic, it is such a complicated environment right now you must be able to make deals and see where the solution is between two very different polar points. You need to put your principles to the side and see the solution.

Leaders:

- A blend of the civil and political piece, people need to have more empathy and understand that the decisions, they make effect some of us more than others. Public servants need to realize the impact of some of their decisions on citizens and communities. Therefore, I think the survey piece is important as it allows us to have this connectivity with people.
- Communications is key, and we need to realize people need to understand what is happening. Knowing we cannot do things alone and we need our employees that work with us and the development of their skills to help us achieve these goals such as their emotional intelligence. Nobody is perfect, and we try to learn on the way, but we try to adapt and work better.

Leaders Besoins Fondamentaux:

1. Vision Commune,
2. Mobilisation des employées,
3. Résilience (déploiement agile) et Adaptation.

Leaders:

- We need to ensure we are hiring people with high tolerance for risks. We can deliver more programs quickly and fundamental work can be done at a speed much superior to what we have traditionally done.
- You need to know how to work as a team.
- You need to know how to implement; we need people who can deliver programs and think at a strategic level
- Communications skills: the environment is complex and complicated, and we need to hire people that can sort their problems through dialogues and discussions. In [province], we are doing a lot of work on reconciliation, including actively trying to align our laws. It requires us to have the ability to engage and communicate with people who are not legislative experts but know how these laws affect them.

Leaders:

- Flexible and nibble and living in the grey.
- Work within policy.
- Culture: we cannot underestimate culture within an organization. We need someone motivational and supportive.

Theme 6: Leadership – Selected Comments

6.A LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES AND REQUIREMENTS

Leaders:

- We really need good critical thinkers and sophisticated data analytics. We pioneered some work here on data sets into a data dashboard, and it serves us well. We need little pockets of data experts, and we need to look at that at a serious ways and key capacities.
- Valuing evidence, integrity, and processes.
- We need people that are non-threatened by sharing. Airing on the proactive, resilient, and able to motivate and articulate a vision that could be a lucid or evolving, and it can be changed dramatically. How do you keep people informed and appreciated in the context of what they are doing?

Leaders bringing in innovative solutions to challenges. We need leaders that do not think 'this is not my role; it is yours.' Leaders are here for citizens and clients. Leaders today and tomorrow need to have their ego checked at the door, as it is not about us, but about the people we serve. It is our jobs when we need to connect dots on what we are being asked; we need to know who we should talk to connect the dots.

Ability to translate the political and public sector back and forth to the deputy level. Those things make or break the government.

Having the conversations on things that are uncomfortable. We are all here to serve the public and having that trust at the political level can be a challenge.

Leaders:

- I think they need innovative thinking and participate in all of government decision-making and support it, and lose your portfolio hat and think more broadly.
- Think more inclusively.
- People's manager.
- I am a fan of generalists; you need practical problem-solving ... and it helps when they are people on the outside and can connect and understand political nature of decision-making and have respect for it. You need practical leadership to try to metal through. I do not think the deputy needs to be an expert.
- Relationship manager.
- You need to be resilient; and it is huge, and I watch people who have it and still show it and some who had it 18 months ago and lost their mojo, and you cannot train for that; and you either got it or you crumble.

Leaders:

- You need systems thinkers and people that understand how systems intersect, and benefits of freeing up any barriers.
- You need folks that have relationship orientation because it is all about relationships.
- They have to be enablers and appreciate entrepreneurs in our system, which we have not done in the public sector. Trying to create an environment where good, calculated risk is tolerated. If you are working with someone that will throw you under a bus, you would not be able to do this. [P14]

Leaders:

- Critical thinking is most important: the ability to critically analyze and issue and give good advice quickly
- Literacy and numeracy.
- Empathetic leader and with those foundations and literacy and numeracy that is the package you need.

Theme 6: Leadership – Selected Comments

6.A LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES AND REQUIREMENTS

Leaders:

- It is what we always had which is a mix of steady nerves and domain knowledge in various aspect of public administration.
- We emphasized generalist skills at a certain time, some people know how to get things done. A minister can arrive and face a whole staff of generalists. So, we need the management expertise and domain knowledge assembled within a set of skills any minister needs.
- As [TB Secretary] says, we need people who can do qualitative analysis. Ministers can come and are responsible but in a world that is so complicated, do not kid yourself ADMS and DMs run the government. I think ministers are still powerful, but they cannot keep their hands on implementations and run everything smoothly
- Being able to write and communicate.

Leaders:

- Communications skills are always front and centre.
- Managing expectations.
- Responsiveness.

We need someone with a lot of patience, empathy, listening skills, collaborative skills, problem-solving, good interpersonal skills, and understands the machinery of government and how things can be done without a big stick.

Leader:

- Being able to work with different stakeholders and build coalitions and resolve conflicts.
- The ability to talk to the public, understand how to have conversations and engage the public on sensitive issues.
- Make sure people that come to the organization understand technology and how to run management performance and manage these issues.

Leadership: To me it's positivity, energy, and relationship-building. Positivity is key for organization resilience. Energy is a critical component of leadership. Relationship building is important to solve issues and create alignment and cohesion.

Leaders:

- Public servant leadership, very much focused on co-production of new programs and services, way more outcome focused. We are good at calculating input and risk, but we should be more outcome-oriented.
- Ability to work with stakeholders and listen and come up with solutions. Problems are more complex here and require different skill set.
- Commitment: it is a seven-day work week.
- Confidence: handling background and experience to get credibility.
- Character: who you are as a person and how do you relate to people and earn trust and respect. Are you honest; are you approachable and are you civic in your thinking?

Theme 6: Leadership – Selected Comments

6.A LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES AND REQUIREMENTS

Leaders:

- First and foremost, it's about people leadership. We are an organization of 5,000 doing everything. Our workforce is what allows us to fire on all cylinders. People leadership, people with good political acumen, and people with integrity and ethics and are in it for the right reasons.
- Character leadership, I have really seen over the years a lot of our organizations falling away from hiring the best people with the right expertise. There is a fear of speaking truth to power when it came to council and culture gets built for different reasons ... Having people that have that as their DNA is important to me and look for in new leaders.

Theme 6: Leadership – Selected Comments

6.B. EXECUTIVE HR AND TALENT MANAGEMENT

We in the department ran a competitive process to form a pool for visible minorities, we qualified 70 people out of 700 applicants and waived the language requirements. This is being used by other people in other departments as well. My idea is that if you want to hire an EX1 from the pool then it might not work. But [for] most of the generalist jobs in EX1, sure it does. The number of racist comments on this pool we had in the beginning and now, it is marked as courageous act.

Foremost, people need to make decisions and give advice, and we are losing this ability. We are caught up in a cycle of people not knowing how to write policy because there was no interest, and we are seeing some of that right now. ... We are responding yes campaign promises because that is what we do, and it comes from platforms. The next generation have to fight that.

We have an educated cadre of people that have a sophisticated outlook on government and society; we still attract a lot of talented people.

Giving more prominence and shield leadership when we do not get it right. We cannot shield not learning. Watchdogs have to be rethought because they are designed to shoot survivors. A lot of those organizations are there saying, put the car in the garage, and we need to create this framework for the thought leader.

Being a successful leader does not change, but as you start to deal with things, you need to innovate and push hard. There are five new competencies. These become more important, you need to be more assertive to keep up with the fast-changing pace. How do you do that without working your workforce?

Rewarding and recognizing people who are not just successful in traditional ways but in non-traditional ways. Allow for rapid promotion and interim responsibilities. Some of them flourish, and I think we need to be more creative and supportive and allow more acceleration in roles.

I am a big advocate of fearless advice and faithful implementation. I think we have to reset the value of that matrix.

Part of the challenge as senior leaders is identifying talent of upcoming senior leaders. I had three ADMs in the past three years. I had to mentor them, and two of them got promoted. One of them ... came in from Health; she was one of those people that could be put anywhere and would be brilliant at it. They now put her in charge of [province's] vaccine rollout, and she is succeeding. We have one of the best ones in the country. You need a [name of Clerk Exec. Council] and folks that can maximize the team they have to move them up and create better senior leaders.

Theme 6: Leadership – Selected Comments
6.B. EXECUTIVE HR AND TALENT MANAGEMENT
<p>You need to tell your team that what they do matters and how they do it matters. You need to do it in a respectful manner, people need to know they are valued and that is what I am dealing with. I work with my ADM, and we feed off each other to make sure we do not leave anything out. It is worth the investment. I think we need to have a wholesome discussion to know what it is going to look like a year from now.</p>
<p>We have the competencies and skills at the leadership levels that will bring us along. If I were to leave tomorrow, they would be in good shape, and I would feel like my job is done.</p>
<p>Selon l'expérience des 5 dernières années (ex-corruption au niveau municipal) besoin programme pour former les futurs sous-ministres.</p>
<p>Doit adapter les programmes, si on attend le Gouvernement on ne peut réaliser programme (p. ex-pandémie). Importance de l'intention et l'intelligence du déploiement (p. ex éviter corruption) Si programme parfait (sans risque) alors pas assez rapide. Doit être rapide/agile/travailler avec incertitude. Doit travailler dans l'incertitude, ne pas attendre la certitude totale avant d'agir.</p>
<p>Talent requirement, people leading the organization need to make sure they recruit the right talent to replace them.</p>
<p>I have experienced this more at the city of [omitted]; you are advanced by superiority, and promotions are based on the assumptions of superiority.</p>
<p>There is a lot of turnovers to bring in fresh ideas and fresh blood. We need to find ways to attract talent from outside either in a consulting capacity or more senior leader capacities. Practices used in the private sector could be moved into the government.</p>
<p>When I did the transition from the private sector to the public sector, I went back 10 years. There are less technological advancements and capacities. We need to be able to raise the knowledge-base of our senior staff. In [city], hospitals have a mini-MBA certificate program; it gives you the basics of an MBA program; and we need to look at the same thing here and raise the bar. We need to attract people from the private sector and bring in fresh ideas and different point of views. A lot of things I am implementing here I have done in the city of [xxx], and it is not new, but it gets results.</p>
<p>The granular skills you need to be in the public service, for senior executives there is a level of intellectual capacity that has been dismissed in the sense it is run by one person who is the smartest one and everyone else is told what to do. I worked for the government; in all cases, they had high expectations for officials, and I thrived in that. It was like, 'do your job and get it done, and if you think there is something wrong in what I tell you, speak up.'</p>
<p>We had to adjust our vaccination team: the manager there made the assumption that he is more of an operational lead. But I told him we need to work as a team. I helped make him a leader and created a process and a safe space.</p>
<p>Le recrutement c'est comme l'honneur de la guerre, au QC on va changer le mode de recrutement (nouveau projet de loi en janvier). Quelqu'un qui a fait un Bac en droit n'aura pas besoin de passer un concours pour entrer dans la fonction publique, même chose pour ingénieur. Quand tu as un diplôme, surtout pour les ordres professionnels, semble que la qualité a déjà été vérifié. ... Il nous faut faire ces changements, la pénurie est présente et importante au niveau du QC et si nous continuons à envoyer les gens vers les concours, ceux-ci se tourneront au privé et nous aurons passé à côté de bons candidats. Cela s'en vient ...</p>

Theme 6: Leadership – Selected Comments

6.B. EXECUTIVE HR AND TALENT MANAGEMENT

I think one key challenge is the ability to attract the right people for this work. Both as elected officials and government appointees. The job that our city councillors and mayors have is a really hard one and they do not make a lot of money. They usually are the first to be criticized. In our last election, 9 out of the 11 available positions were filled by new members who have never been in council. Thus, I think it is important to be able to attract the right people to solve these wicked problems.

We need to focus on getting the right people in elected positions. Trying to encourage and incentivise the right diverse group of people to get into these jobs. How do we tap into the huge diverse population across Canada?

It is being pragmatic and 'don't die' principle. You need to leverage the talent of your staff to provide solutions to problems. Don't be a hero and try to do it yourself. You must work hard and be prepared. The biggest mistake we do sometimes, we think because you are the CAO then you need to have the answers and make the decisions. If you let your ego in your way, you would fail miserably, you must set that aside.

We are going to have to think about how we can manage organizations differently. ... Most of our staff do not want to go back to working eight hours a day at a desk that could be an example on managing the organization differently.

Theme 6.: Leadership – Selected Comments

6.C GENERAL HR ISSUES OR ADVICE

We are working closely with HR to have a more inclusive workforce.

They [students] bring in fresh skills and more facts data and evidence, and the PS need to do more that. Bring in people that mold themselves and not ones that get molded.

There is a lot of fragmentation of strategy, and we need to step back and not worry about the pipes but what flows in them. Remove impediments to data and have good structure and be transparent.

We do have a very talented young generation, and let us use it. We are leaving a lot of young views with diverse thoughts that could help us. Diversity is about setting the table for greater respects for those views and be more appreciative.

My most valuable asset is my workforce. How do I do it without burning the workforce?

I do not have my head fully around it yet, this capacity to manage people at a different place. How do you manage in this environment, and how do I work with my employees and motivate them when we are not together? How do I build a team? This would take a level of creativity and assertiveness. We cannot rely on the things we used to do and depend on being together in a physical space anymore. We must put more effort to build a more inclusive workspace and be open more to our blind spots.

Public institutions are resilient. In a narrow sense, we need to add people with different service demand issues, people that can think of a different part of public policy than we did before. This is not new. If you look at conversation we have on diversity and inclusion, none of that was a part of this conversation before. ... We are capable of bringing expertise to deal with these things. This will be different but require new skill set. Post-2001 the area focuses for CSIS [Canadian Security Intelligence Service], and the language requirement changed from when we were dealing with Soviet Europe, but the basic concept is the same.

Theme 6.: Leadership – Selected Comments	
6.C GENERAL HR ISSUES OR ADVICE	
	We need to be more deliberate and focused on diversity, both in terms creating opportunities and being representative, and on people who can take issues on discrimination and racism. People who have the courage and humility and open to different solutions to take on that.
	The requirement to be public comes and goes. Some governments want the public sector to come out and do the talking, while others are required to stay in the backend dealing with issues. I rarely do public speaking anymore; under the [party], I was doing something every week.
	Government is important, and it is fun. It is meaningful work to do public management at this scale. To be able to decide what kids learn in math and in what order. Those responsibilities are wonderful with all the challenges this year. I keep writing the same blog over and over time, BLM [Black Lives Matter], discovered kids' bodies [at] residential schools, and anti-Asian hate. We are big agencies and can do something about it, not just feel bad about it. That is why we work here, and we give up fame and fortune.
	Je pense que si tous nous mettons de l'avant le sens de l'état / le service publique (moins protectionniste et plus ouvert / partage), je pense que cela pourrait améliorer à tous les niveaux. La crise nous a montré que nous sommes capables de le faire, objectif commun, et nous avons vu qu'il y a eu une grande efficacité à travers cette crise-là, même s'il y a eu difficulté/tristesse. Les gouvernements ont répondu « présent » alors si nous sommes capables de continuer dans cette voix, mettre le client / la population en premier; je crois que c'est quelque chose d'extraordinaire.
	The first thing I would say develop a higher risk tolerance, regain that mojo and be willing to fail. For the leaders above us, allow us to take risks and fail and change the status quo. I would say we need to be less rules based and be more focused on how clients interpret services.
	We will figure it out and, at the end of the day, the public sector is resilient. I hope in the future things do not erode to a point where there are no good role models to look for to do things the right way. Sometimes I feel there is a reluctance to hear an opinion that is not my own, and we need to create safe spaces where these discussions could happen and respect each other's roles.
	How to adapt to new generational changes coming; we will be forced to deal with that in a different way. And how do you take advantage of that and not lose an opportunity? A big trans-formation of our resources. People do not see themselves going into the PS long term, and how do we change that and attract millennials into the PS? People bring something new, be distributive decision-makers and challenge the status quo.
	One team one Govt of [province] focus has two elements: 1. Focus 2. Urgency outcomes: Such as distilling the 1,000 priorities to 84 priorities. Urgency lets us do things fast and not have perfection come in the way. Our clerk and premier are very outcome-oriented; this approach was required in the pandemic and becoming a more common behaviour.
	I do not feel, in the public sector, we have done anything to protect the value of what the public sector does. Nobody is prepared to talk about what the commitment is to work in the public sector either deliberately or inadvertently, we avoid this conversation.
	I have a strong leadership team, 90 per cent of them are women, and they are very effective. I count on them to succeed. Our people are our greatest assets, equality, and inclusions is fundamental on that.

Theme 6.: Leadership – Selected Comments

6.C GENERAL HR ISSUES OR ADVICE

It is important to get out of the bubble and ask questions and have uncomfortable conversations. We rely a lot on staff telling us things, and we hope to have good staff for that. Social media can be powerful, and a lot of people from the public sector avoid it. Sometimes criticism is valid and trying to read the comment section and seeing what people are saying and not dismissing that because it is uncomfortable. Allowing yourself to be uncomfortable is incredibly powerful, and we need to be doing a lot of that.

We have the privilege of creating what life is like for our neighbours and citizens, and we need to be mindful of that. ... We need to be more in partnerships and not be the knowers of all answers but the askers of all questions—and then we find answers. Governments have not been like this. You need to listen carefully, and let it move you in some way.

I think the main thing is to be listening to Canadians as they know what they need and what they want. ... From a hierarchical point of view, it gets harder to get a hold of what important stakeholders and Canadians are thinking.

Ce qu'il faut aussi est de la valorisé (valoriser le travail des gens dans la fonction publique). Pas de message du genre « faire ménage dans la FP » (négatif). ... Il faut expliquer ou le dire, je crois que les plus hauts dirigeants nous avons cette responsabilité de faire une bonne communication (interne / externe). Aujourd'hui, si nous n'avons pas une bonne visibilité c'est moins attrayant. Nous devons toujours être en mouvement avec des choses attrayantes. Ce n'est plus que du 9 à 5; 30ans au même endroit, les gens se « magasine » des places. Nous devons être attrayant, innovant et il faut que nous donnions de l'espace aux gens pour que les politiciens valorisent la fonction publique.

Cela est notre responsabilité mais les politiciens doivent également le faire. Pour les attirer, doit comprendre que ce n'est plus du « top down », nous voulons de la collaboration et nous sommes en équipe, cela doit être participatif. Nos façons de travailler, faut s'adapter car les gens veulent être impliqué et prendre part. Donner un sens à leur ouvrage (éviter les 6–7 paliers d'autorisation et de correction) ... Donc il faut vraiment changer nos façons de diriger et cela doit être fait dans le cadre collaboratif et avec du coaching. C'est donner du sens et plus de latitude à la fonction publique.

Let us agree on the topic: we will focus on outcomes we are trying to achieve and respect the roles and responsibilities of each of us and decide that work. Selflessness and lose the ego, and please let us celebrate the achievement of the outcomes we know is important it is not about the legacy or your name on a plaque, it is about the basic quality of life Canadians expected.

Conseils

- garder liens et contacts rapides;
- changer façon de faire;
- Éviter de retomber dans nos vieilles pantoufles et rester en mode agile. Continuer hors de la pandémie.



