



Julie Dzerowicz
Member of Parliament / Députée
Davenport



February 19, 2021

The Honourable Chrystia Freeland
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance

Via email

Dear Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Freeland,

This letter summarizes my 2021 Davenport Pre-Budget Consultations with my constituents. Davenport residents either participated in a virtual Pre-Budget Consultation that I organized on February 10th, or they submitted their specific input through email.

Economic Recovery

Top of mind for Davenport residents is an economic recovery that sustains our small independent businesses, brings back jobs, and continues to create opportunities for young people. The single most-suggested idea was some form of guaranteed basic income, to ensure every Canadian has a basic standard of living regardless of their situation. Other ideas included:

Social services and workers

- Moving forward with national childcare
- Prioritizing social services for investment—ensuring that vulnerable people, persons with disabilities, and others receive the support they need, and that the workers who provide these services earn fair wages
- Addressing the increasing number of contingent and gig workers, and finding ways to make sure they get employment benefits
- More investments in training and retraining for workers
- Improving digital literacy skills for workers and businesses



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- Investing in small Canadian businesses that adapted to serve the public throughout the pandemic
- Providing longer-term supports for unemployment

Small business

- Continuing to offer some sense of certainty for small businesses, by extending support programs if necessary and giving them time to plan—especially since consumers may be cautious until vaccination rates are very high

Youth

- Investing in education and employment opportunities for young people
- Continuing to invest in Canada Summer Jobs

Sector-specific ideas

- Supporting the Canadian aviation industry—though my constituents also want airlines to refund their customers. Some also suggested the government take a stake in the companies in exchange for targeted support
- Securing funding for charities and the non-profit sector, which has seen demand for their services go up, and donations go down since the pandemic began
- More attention for social enterprises, like one in my riding which provides employment opportunities for marginalized youth who otherwise couldn't get a job
- Investing in developing Canada's rare earth minerals, and the minerals necessary to make the batteries needed to electrify transportation and lower emissions

Taxation

- Continuing to find ways to fight tax avoidance, and tax wealth inequality

Health and COVID-19

COVID-19 is still a primary concern for most people in Davenport. Their ideas included:

- Making sure all Canadians can get a safe and effective vaccine
- Investing in manufacturing and supply chains in Canada, so that we have domestic sources of vaccines, PPE, and other essentials in the future
- Doing everything possible to suppress the new variants emerging around the world, and halt their spread in Canada
- Continuing our urgent work to implement a national pharmacare program
- Pursuing a national dental care program



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Youth mental health

- SNAP is a world-class program for youth mental health, which is run by the Child Development Institute based in Davenport. They have requested another 5-year partnership with the Government of Canada, and \$30M over those 5 years to continue their work. Continued investment in this program will be foundational to providing mental health services to vulnerable and high-risk youth and their families, who otherwise would not have access to quality mental health care services, and some of whom would contact the criminal justice system

Environment and Climate Action

Davenport residents understand that this recovery plan is an opportunity to accelerate our transition to a low-carbon future—and it is one we must seize. They suggested:

- Looking for more ways to incentivize the private sector to rapidly lower emissions, as we are doing by raising the price on pollution
- Investing even more in renewable energy, and working to end direct and indirect subsidies for fossil fuel extraction
- Incentivizing more car manufacturers to switch to zero-emission vehicles
- Increasing our efforts to retrofit buildings to lower their emissions, by focusing not only on homes but on apartment and condo buildings, commercial buildings, office towers, and other institutions
- Investing even more in public transit
- Shifting agricultural subsidies from supporting animal agriculture, which generates emissions, to more sustainable plant-based agriculture
- Continuing to reduce plastic pollution by stopping the production of plastic bags
- Setting more ambitious emissions-reduction targets, and exploring carbon budgets
- Investing in helping the public transition to zero-emission vehicles as rapidly as possible
- Investing in high-speed rail as a lower-emission transportation option—for example, along the Toronto-Montreal corridor
- One constituent also pointed out that combatting online misinformation—a key promise our government has made—will help defeat the dangerous notion that we do not need to act to stop climate change

Diversity and Disability Inclusion



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Davenport residents also recognized that certain communities have borne a heavier burden through this pandemic, especially racialized communities, persons with disabilities, and seniors. They suggested:

- Doing more work to engage and consult the neighbourhoods and communities that have been hardest hit by COVID-19, especially lower-income, racialized, and vulnerable communities, on what supports they need to successfully come out of this pandemic
- Moving forward with the Canadian Disability Benefit promised in the Throne Speech
 - One constituent pointed to the success of Australia's [National Disability Insurance](#) model as something Canada should consider
- As many businesses remain shut down, some would like to use the opportunity to make their spaces more accessible. Budget 2021 could include a program to cover some of the costs of installing wheelchair ramps and other accessibility features

Arts and Culture

In Davenport, we have one of the largest arts and culture communities in the country, and they have been disproportionately impacted by this pandemic. They are looking for sector-specific support to help them out of this pandemic and get them back on their feet. Their ideas include:

- Longer term financial supports in recognition of the complete shut-down of performances and live venues
- Rules to make sure tech giants pay their fair share for Canadian content, especially news content, on their platforms
- Greater training and retraining options specifically for self-employed people and artists. One constituent told me the main Ontario retraining programs do not apply to him since he is a self-employed artist
- Greater support for individual artists, who may not be affiliated with an organization, but still find themselves unable to work until big performances and events can resume
- Support for small venues, which only make money when they are packed for a show. If restrictions ease to allow 20 or 30 people in a venue, and subsidies drop with the end of that lockdown, small venues will lose support without being able to regain their revenue

Seniors

- Davenport residents want us to fulfil our promise from the last election to raise OAS and GIS
- They also expect us to bring in national standards for long-term care homes, to ensure our seniors are safe across the country



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Housing

The high cost of housing remains a huge concern for residents of my riding, from renters to young people who want to someday own a home. They suggested:

- Home prices continued to rise in the pandemic, making home ownership further out of reach for young people. We need to use all tools to make housing more affordable
- Looking for other housing models such as co-ops and affordable rentals to lower costs
- Continuing to invest in supportive housing, which not only houses vulnerable people but create jobs for the support workers
- That the Minister of Finance convene a meeting with all three-levels of government in Toronto to figure out how to use all tools, including those under provincial and municipal jurisdiction, to ensure housing is a right in our city

Immigration

- Davenport residents continue to support a pathway to citizenship for undocumented workers in Canada who are already economically integrated, and have jobs in industries in Canada which already have severe labour shortages
- They also advocate for Stats Canada to be able to acquire regional and local skills and labour data

Public Safety

- Continue to support programs and efforts to get at the root causes of gun violence
- Several of my constituents continue to call for cutting the budget for the RCMP in favour of more supports that address poverty, mental healthcare, and other social issues

Indigenous Services and Sovereignty

Many residents in Davenport care deeply about Indigenous issues, services in Indigenous communities, and advancing reconciliation and Indigenous sovereignty. They suggest:

- More infrastructure spending in Indigenous communities, once drinking-water facilities are complete and advisories lifted
- Including Indigenous stakeholders in conversations about equity in the budget

Infrastructure



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Davenport residents are excited about programs like the Canada Healthy Communities Initiative. They want to continue to see federal investment in:

- Urban green spaces
- Active transportation

Women and Gender Equality

Finally, I have several organizations in my riding serving women and girls. Davenport residents want:

- Continued support for women and girls affected by the rise in domestic violence that lockdowns have brought on
- Core funding not only for women's shelters, but for women's centres, which in many cases are the first line of contact. This would alleviate the burden of continually applying for proposals and grants.

Deputy Prime Minister Freeland, thank you for reviewing the recommendations from my constituents, and for all your hard work helping our economy recover from this unprecedented crisis.

My very best regards,



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MP Davenport



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