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Laurence Lavigne Lalonde leaves politics

Gariépy to run in VSMPE



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Lanvac Surveillance's Stephanos Georgoudes (second from right) is seen here with associates Victor, Jake and Yianni at the Lanvac booth during the Security Canada East Salon at the Laval Sheraton on April 30. (Photo: Martin C. Barry, Newsfirst Multimedia)



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Ensemble Montréal announces Gariépy to run in VSMPE

MATTHEW DALDALIAN
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter
matt.newsfirst@gmail.com

Ensemble Montréal has named Sylvain Gariépy as their mayoral candidate for the Villeray–Saint-Michel–Parc-Extension borough in the upcoming municipal elections. The announcement was made May 29 by party leader Soraya Martinez Ferrada, who returned to her political roots in the borough where she was first elected.

Gariépy is a veteran urban planner and former president of the Ordre des urbanistes du Québec. “He’s been very active as an urbanist in his life... and that’s what Montreal needs,” said Martinez Ferrada. She stood alongside longtime borough councillors Mary Deros and Josué Corvil to introduce Gariépy. “People like Sylvain, they’ll step up to serve Montreal by the experience in his knowledge about what this city needs,” she said.

Housing

The press conference took place in front of a vacant city-owned building, the former Montreal Chinese Hospital, chosen deliberately to highlight one of the campaign’s central promises: to transform such spaces into social and affordable housing. “[The building] is a perfect example of what we want to achieve,” Gariépy said.

The housing crisis was top of mind throughout the announcement. Martinez Ferrada said an Ensemble Montréal administration would prioritize homeownership by abolishing the “règlement pour une métropole mixte” (bylaw for a mixed

metropolis), a bylaw designed to ensure housing is included in large developments. “We’re going to abolish the mixed regulations... that has not given the results that the city needs,” she said.

The Ensemble Montréal leader also committed to making homeownership more accessible for young families by working with both the private and non-profit sectors, and by launching a “Famille Propriétaire” (Homeowner Family) program to help first-time buyers access homeownership through flexible support. The plan includes allowing buyers to pay the welcome tax in 12 monthly installments instead of all at once. “We want to keep our families here in Montreal,” she said.

Urban Planning

In addition to housing, Gariépy stressed the importance of community-informed urban planning. He specifically addressed concerns around recent bike path installations in the borough. “Prior to... putting a bike path on the street, I think we need to communicate... work with [residents],” he said. “We need to listen to the people and not go the other way around.”

Mary Deros, borough councillor for Parc-Extension, was more direct in her criticism of the current administration. She recounted an information session held before the installation of a bike lane on one Parc-Extension avenue: “They bulldozed the project without listening to seniors, to large families, to handicapped people of how their lives would be affected,” she said. These are the changes that will be brought



Ensemble Montréal leader, Soraya Martinez Ferrada announces Sylvain Gariépy (far right) as mayoral candidate for the Villeray–Saint-Michel–Parc-Extension borough on May 29.

about under the leadership of Sylvain Gariépy and Soraya Martinez.”

Communication

The bike lane debate in Parc-Extension has become a flashpoint in borough politics. In 2024, the city moved forward with protected bike lanes on a few avenues, removing parking spaces in the process. The decision sparked protests and a legal campaign from the Coalition for Democracy

Montreal, which argued that residents weren’t properly consulted and that the loss of parking has disproportionately affected seniors, families, and people with disabilities.

While borough officials defended the project as a necessary step to expand safe cycling infrastructure, critics said the process felt imposed rather than collaborative.

Gariépy said he plans to maintain communication with residents by being physically present. “You knock on the doors and you inform people directly of what the intentions are and you bring them to the table to have a discussion,” he said. “We need to be there where it happens.”

Coming Leadership

Ensemble Montréal also confirmed that incumbents Mary Deros and Josué Corvil will seek re-election in Parc-Extension and Saint-Michel, respectively.

The announcement is one of several major moves Martinez Ferrada has made since becoming leader of Ensemble Montréal earlier this spring. A former federal cabinet minister and MP for Hochelaga, she left her role as Minister of Tourism to run for mayor of Montreal. The 2025 municipal election is set for November.



Sylvain Gariépy speaks on what he aims to bring to the Villeray–Saint-Michel–Parc-Extension borough if he is elected on May 29 2025.

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Elena Molter
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OPINION & Editorial



Reforming Canada's trade remedy system for turbulent times

In four short months, Donald Trump's second presidency has disrupted the circulatory system of global trade.

In addition to the toll so far and potential further costs of his tariff war, which has closed off the US market to a large swath of Canadian products, is the exposure faced by Canadian manufacturers to a flood of foreign-made goods, also shut out of the United States, searching the globe for any port in a tariff storm.

The real danger is that many of these goods will be unfairly priced – dumped or subsidized by their home government – threatening even more commercial harm to Canadian companies.

Canada has laws that allow manufacturers redress in the form of anti-dumping and countervailing duties. Called trade remedies, those laws generally follow the provisions of the 1994 World Trade Organization Agreement, which incorporates the rules laid down in the 1947 General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), as well as subsequent WTO agreements.

These laws – most enacted decades ago – now have to meet the new global reality; not only Trump's trade war but China's aggressive state-subsidized export policies. There is concern that the existing system may be too slow, too cumbersome, and too expensive for the Canadian companies that need to use it.

The question is how to equip it better while keeping within the basic strictures of the World Trade Organization Agreement, CUSMA and Canada's other trade agreements that incorporate those international rules.

Here's an overview of how Canada's trade remedy system works. It's governed by the Special Import Measures Act (SIMA) and starts with an investigation by the Trade and Anti-Dumping Programs Directorate within the

Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) after it receives a "properly documented" industry complaint about dumped or subsidized imports entering the country. The CBSA has jurisdiction as the department collecting regular import duties and, over time, has inherited the added responsibility of dealing with anti-dumping and countervailing duty cases as well.

After a preliminary determination, the case goes to the Canadian International Trade Tribunal (CITT), which holds an inquiry to determine whether these imports are actually causing, or threatening to cause, material injury.

There are some fairly straightforward ways to improve the system, some of which I recently outlined, that would not depart from existing agreements. For example, the government could easily issue regulations to reduce complex technical and procedural hurdles that have evolved over years and have added substantially to the costs private parties have to bear.

Another fairly straightforward change would be to amend statutes such as SIMA to clarify that the overriding mandate of Canada's trade remedy agencies is to protect Canadian companies and their employees from low-priced imports flooding into the country, especially dumped and subsidized ones. Currently, there is no clear direction in the governing statutes.

There are, however, other more substantial changes to be considered to adapt Canada's trade law system to a radically changed global trading environment.

For example, the Department of Innovation, Science and Economic Development (ISED), which deals most directly with the manufacturing sector, is not involved in the trade remedy process directly or indirectly.

The government should consider moving the

Trade and Anti-Dumping Programs Directorate as the trade remedy investigation arm from the CBSA into ISED, which has the direct linkages to Canadian industry, as opposed to it being a kind of stand-alone orphan operating within the CBSA structure.

The other structural adjustment involves a bit of inside baseball but one that has a bearing on overall system effectiveness. Under changes legislated in 2014, the CITT is serviced by the Administrative Tribunals Support Service of Canada (ATSSC), an agency created 11 years ago to consolidate services to a number of federal tribunals, including the Canada Industrial Relations Board, the Canadian Cultural Property Export Review Board, the Canada Agricultural Review Tribunal among others.

While the ATSSC process has been working reasonably well and is staffed with dedicated professionals, the result is a bifurcation of functions, with the CITT as the central decision-maker having no control over the staff that provides the support so critical to its operations. That includes collecting and analyzing information from parties, issuing reports that backstop tribunal inquiries and providing general legal and technical advice.

To remedy this disconnect, all staffing functions and operations should be returned to the CITT – including all hiring – so it has direct staff control and can ensure that legal, economic and other support is geared to its particular needs.

Coupled with an effort to remove or simplify many process requirements that have accumulated over the years, these two structural changes would ensure the CITT can meet the challenges of a radically new trading environment.

Lawrence Herman

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FRAPRU launches week of action against Quebec's housing crisis

As protests unfold across Montreal, neighbourhoods like Parc-Extension continue to grapple with affordability and displacement

DIMITRIS ILIAS

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter
dimitri@newsfirst.ca

A province-wide mobilization effort is underway as the Front d'action populaire en réaménagement urbain (FRAPRU) launches a week-long campaign to draw attention to Quebec's worsening housing crisis. The initiative, which includes approximately 15 actions, aims to pressure government officials to increase investment in social housing and take urgent steps to address homelessness and housing insecurity.

While no events have been explicitly announced in Parc-Extension, the neighbourhood remains deeply affected by many of the issues FRAPRU is targeting. Over the past decade, Parc-Extension has experienced steep increases in rental prices, mounting concerns about tenant displacement, and the rapid spread of gentrification tied to nearby real estate development, including the

expansion of the Université de Montréal's MIL campus.

According to data from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), the vacancy rate across Montreal remains under 2%, and the average rent for a two-bedroom apartment has climbed over \$1,100 per month — unaffordable for many households in Parc-Extension, where the median income is significantly below the city average.

The mobilization week, which began May 27 and will run through early June, features protests, public assemblies, and symbolic occupations of vacant lots or buildings — intended to draw attention to the lack of government support for long-term, non-market housing solutions. These actions are taking place in neighbourhoods across Montreal and other cities in Quebec.

In a press release, FRAPRU reaffirmed its demand that the Quebec government commit to building 50,000 new social housing units over

the next five years — a figure the group says is necessary to meet current demand. The organization has also called for greater protections for tenants facing eviction due to renovation-related displacement ("renovictions"), a practice frequently reported in high-pressure areas like Parc-Extension.

The housing challenges in Parc-Extension are well-documented. Local organizations and tenants' rights advocates have reported rising incidents of lease non-renewals, substandard housing conditions, and unaffordable rent hikes. Many residents — particularly new immigrants and low-income families — struggle to find stable and dignified housing amid tightening market conditions.

Though not included in FRAPRU's official list of actions this week, Parc-Extension's realities mirror those in areas where protests are occurring. For many residents, the crisis is not new

but increasingly urgent.

At the municipal level, the City of Montreal has made commitments to expanding affordable housing, but progress has been slow. Several construction projects funded under city and provincial programs remain stalled due to inflation, construction delays, and administrative hurdles.

FRAPRU's actions are expected to culminate in the submission of a formal petition to the National Assembly of Quebec, calling on lawmakers to act decisively in the face of a growing crisis that touches every region of the province.

As the week unfolds, attention remains fixed not only on high-profile demonstrations, but on the underlying structural issues affecting neighbourhoods like Parc-Extension — where access to decent, affordable housing remains one of the most pressing social challenges of our time.



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Laurence Lavigne Lalonde leaves politics

A controversial legacy in Parc-Extension



DIMITRIS ILIAS | Local Journalism Initiative Reporter | dimitri@newsfirst.ca

After more than a decade in municipal politics, Laurence Lavigne Lalonde, borough mayor of Villeray–Saint-Michel–Parc-Extension, has announced she is stepping down and will not seek re-election this fall. Her departure, confirmed in a social media statement on May 9, marks the end of a polarizing mandate — particularly in the Parc-Extension district, where several of her initiatives were met with strong community resistance.

Lavigne Lalonde, 41, stated she is leaving “with head held high and the sense of duty fulfilled,” reflecting on her 12-year journey that began as a city councillor in 2013. She became borough mayor in 2021 under the Projet Montréal banner and also served on the city’s executive committee, overseeing portfolios such as ecological transition and urban agriculture.

In her farewell message, she explained her decision to leave politics not as a retreat, but as a pivot:

“I’m leaving because I want to do more, to do things differently — and that’s what I’ll be exploring in the months ahead,” she wrote.

She expressed pride in her accomplishments, particularly citing her role in developing Montreal’s first climate plan and implementing regulatory protections for tenants. In Villeray–Saint-Michel–Parc-Extension, she pointed to the creation of 15 kilometers of protected cycling infrastructure and numerous “green and safe” community spaces as tangible improvements.

But in Parc-Extension, one of Montreal’s most densely populated and economically marginalized neighbourhoods, her progressive urban vision often clashed with local realities.

The bike lane backlash

Chief among the controversies was the rollout of protected bike lanes on key streets such as Querbes Avenue, de l’Épée, and Ball Avenue — corridors that previously accommodated hundreds of on-street parking spots. The removal of an estimated 250 spaces sparked intense backlash from residents and small business owners, many of whom said the changes were imposed without genuine community consultation.

A coalition of residents even filed a legal challenge against the borough, arguing that the plan failed to consider the unique socio-economic conditions of Parc-Extension, where many families rely on cars for work, errands, and

caregiving. Seniors, people with disabilities, and newcomers — who make up a significant portion of the neighbourhood — reported increased difficulty navigating their daily routines.

The borough, under Lavigne Lalonde’s leadership, defended the move, citing long-term environmental and safety goals.

“These bike lanes were not a whim. They came from years of mobility studies and consultations. Parc-Ex deserves the same level of infrastructure as other parts of the city,” she told media during the controversy.

Still, the public outcry was not easily quelled. Protests were held, signs were defaced, and at least two confrontations involving cyclists and residents made headlines. Borough council meetings became battlegrounds for dueling visions of urban mobility — one centered on active transportation and climate goals, the other on survival and practicality in a neighbourhood with little room to spare.

A divisive legacy

For supporters, Lavigne Lalonde represented the face of a forward-thinking, environmentally conscious administration determined to modernize outdated infrastructure, even in the face of resistance. For critics, she symbolized a top-down approach to urban planning that ignored the lived experience of vulnerable communities.

In her statement, the mayor acknowledged both the collaboration and the conflict:

“I am grateful that, together, we dreamed of greener, safer, livelier neighbourhoods. We fought against inequity and built things — even when it was hard, even when we disagreed,” she wrote.

Her party leader, Projet Montréal chief Luc Rabouin, paid tribute to her contributions, calling her “a close colleague with whom I share many affinities” and suggesting that she would have played a significant role in a future administration.

But as the borough turns the page, the question remains: will her successor continue the path she charted, or seek to mend the rift with those who felt sidelined?

In Parc-Extension, the answer may depend on whether City Hall truly listens — not just to visions of sustainability, but to the communities caught in the middle of the transformation.



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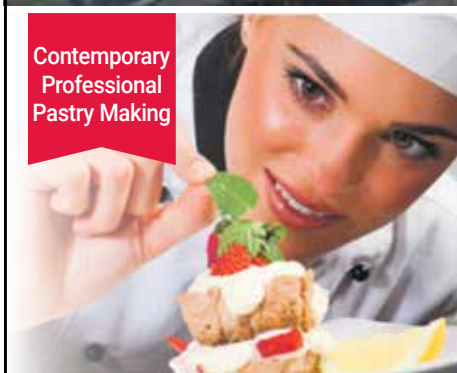
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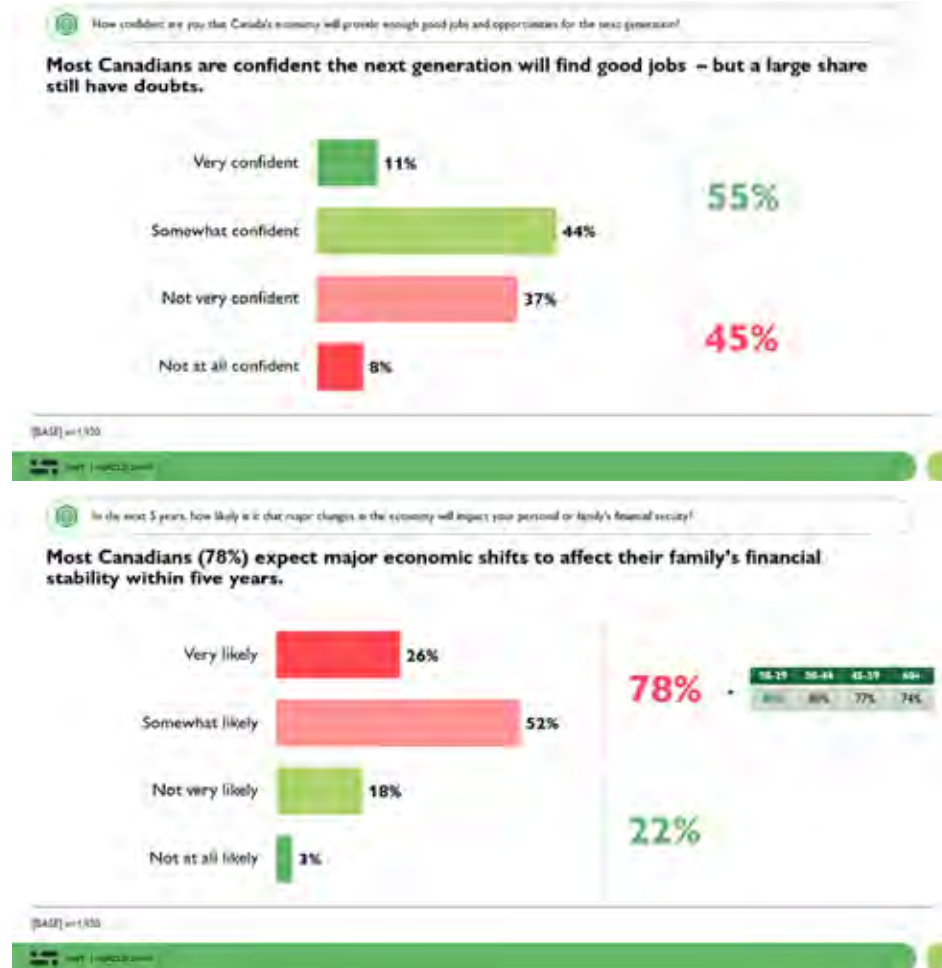
Between April 16 and 21, 2025, Abacus Data conducted a national survey of 1,920 Canadian adults (18+), on behalf of the University of Toronto, to understand what Canadians believe is needed to succeed in a rapidly changing world. The findings reveal a country at a turning point: confidence in long-term stability is wavering, yet support for bold, forward-looking action is strong. Canadians are calling for a new economic strategy – one that invests in innovation, equips the workforce for change, and attracts global talent to keep Canada competitive in the years to come.

A divided outlook reveals growing economic precarity

Canada stands at an economic crossroads. While more than half of Canadians (55%) remain confident that the economy will deliver good jobs for the next generation, a sizable 45% are not so sure. This divide reveals something deeper than a split in outlook – it highlights a continued shift toward a precarity mindset, where economic uncertainty is no longer limited to vulnerable groups but felt across generational, political, and socioeconomic lines. For many, the future feels less like a promise and more like a risk – highlighting growing unease about economic opportunity and stability.

Most Canadians expect financial disruption ahead

Today, many Canadians are preparing themselves for long-term financial disruption. 78% believe that major changes in the economy will impact their family's financial security within the next five years. Younger adults feel this the most, with 83% of those aged 18 to 29 expecting financial disruption. Even among those who have typically felt more insulated from change – older Canadians and higher-income earners – the sense of vulnerability is rising. This unease isn't just about inflation or interest



rates. It reflects a broader anxiety that Canada's systems – its workforce, institutions, and industries – aren't keeping pace with a rapidly changing global economy.

Urgency to future-proof the workforce and economy

Across the board, Canadians believe the country isn't doing enough to prepare. Half

of respondents say Canada is falling short on training and upskilling workers, and over 8 in 10 (82%) agree that failing to invest in future-ready industries puts the country at risk of falling behind. Notably, this concern is shared across age groups and political affiliations, including 88% of those over 60.

This isn't simply a call for economic stimulus, it's a demand for strategic modernization.

Canadians are making it clear that traditional approaches to jobs, education, and growth no longer fit today's rapidly evolving reality. In their place, there's growing support for forward-looking policies and investments that build resilience and prepare the country for long-term uncertainty.

Canadians support a forward-focused economic strategy

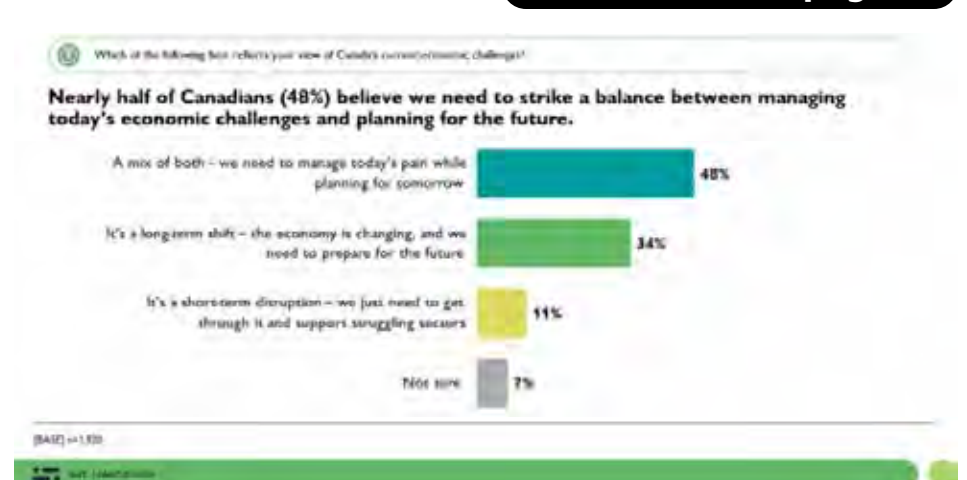
While many recognize the need to address short-term pressures, even more believe Canada must look ahead. Nearly half (48%) say we must manage today's challenges while actively planning for tomorrow, and another 34% say the current economic moment reflects a long-term shift that demands preparation for the future. Together, these findings reflect a forward-looking mindset, with most Canadians acknowledging the need for a new economic strategy that looks beyond short-term relief.

Broad support for investing in innovation and R&D

Canadians show strong support for investing in research, innovation, and next-generation sectors. 73% support boosting research and development in new and emerging industries, more than those who want to support existing industries (66%) or attract multinationals with tax incentives (58%). This suggests Canadians prefer to build economic resilience from within, through innovation, research, and strategic talent development.

This preference for nurturing homegrown innovation is echoed in the 78% who agree the federal government should increase investment in Canadian universities and research hospitals to both strengthen innovation and attract top global researchers. This consensus reveals a shared belief among Canadians that Canada's long-term success lies in building knowledge-based industries and preparing for an evolving global economy.

► Continued on page 9



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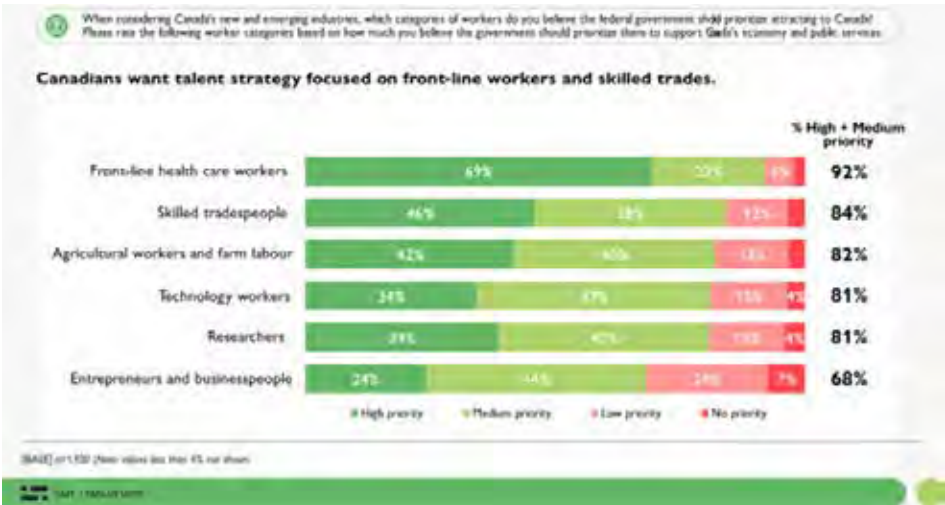
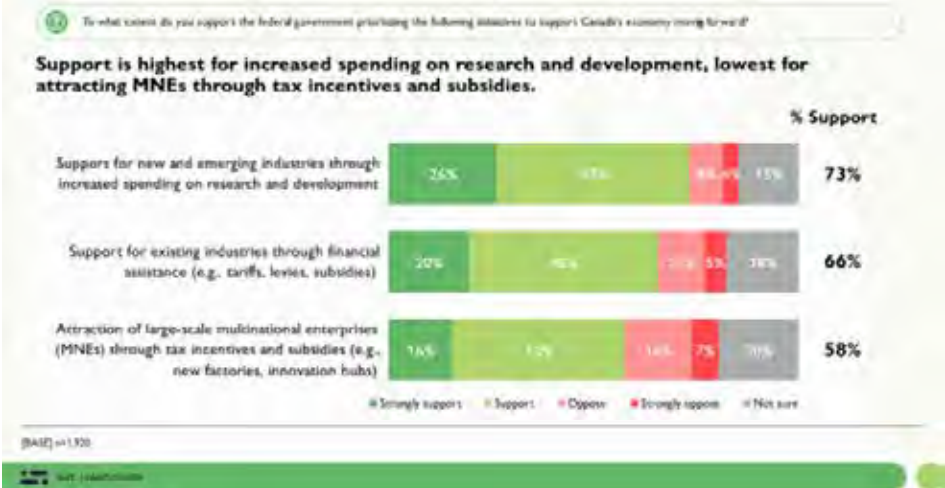
Global talent seen as essential to Canada's economic growth

Many Canadians recognize that global talent is not a threat, it's a resource, with 57% saying attracting international talent is essential to future economic growth, even if it means less immediate opportunities for domestic workers.

Support is particularly strong for bringing in workers who can fill critical gaps, such as

healthcare professionals (92%), skilled tradespeople (84%), tech workers (82%), and researchers (81%).

This reflects a recognition that sustaining economic competitiveness depends on bringing in skilled workers, not just training them at home. Canadians increasingly understand that it's not just about protecting domestic jobs, it's about ensuring the country can lead in a global economy. Support for practical, impact-driven immigration aligned with labour market needs shows a forward-looking view of what growth really demands.



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Worker Category	% High + Medium Support	TOTAL	VOTE INTENTION			
			LPC	CPC	NDP	Other
Front-line health care workers	92%	92%	95%	90%	95%	85%
Skilled tradespeople	84%	84%	85%	84%	90%	78%
Agricultural workers and farm labour	82%	82%	84%	81%	84%	79%
Technology workers	81%	81%	81%	82%	83%	67%
Researchers	81%	81%	80%	78%	85%	75%
Entrepreneurs and businesspeople	68%	68%	69%	71%	65%	54%

(BAI2) n=1,920

The upshot

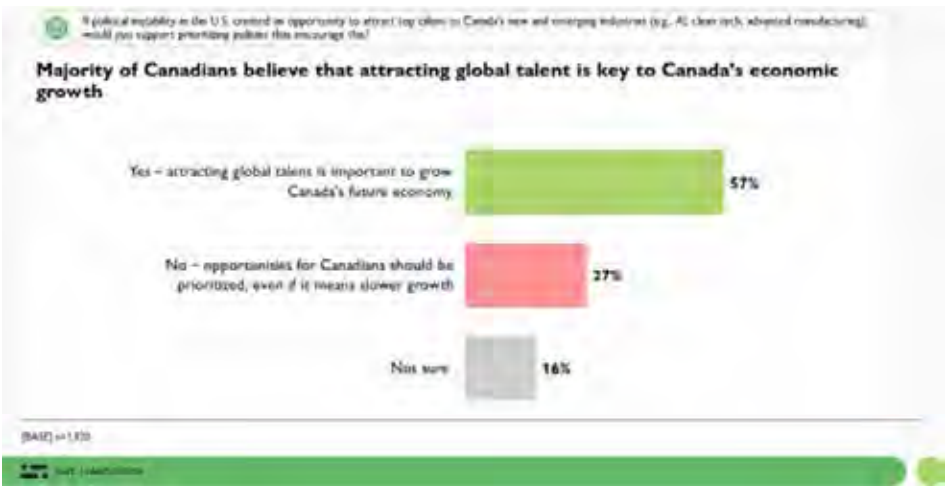
Canadians are no longer thinking only about today's challenges, they're questioning whether the systems meant to support them are built for the future. The rise of the precarity mindset is a clear signal that people feel increasingly vulnerable in the face of rapid economic change. Confidence is fractured, concern is widespread, and expectations are shifting.

But within that uncertainty lies a powerful consensus: Canadians want to see the country take bold steps to future-proof the economy – there is growing support for investments in innovation, upskilling, and homegrown research capacity. There is also a forward-looking view

that Canada's competitiveness depends not just on supporting local talent, but on attracting the world's best to help build what comes next.

This isn't about choosing between growth and protection, or between domestic opportunity and global talent. It's about designing a strategy that equips Canada to lead, by investing in the industries, skills, and people that will shape the future.

To move from precarity to preparedness, Canada must act decisively: invest in innovation, build resilient systems, and welcome the talent that will power tomorrow's economy. Canadians are ready for a strategy that's as ambitious as the moment demands.



Majority of Canadians believe that attracting global talent is key to Canada's economic growth

Response	TOTAL	VOTE INTENTION			
		LPC	CPC	NDP	Other
Yes – attracting global talent is important to grow Canada's future economy	57%	59%	51%	54%	52%
No – opportunities for Canadians should be prioritized, even if it means slower growth	27%	17%	33%	29%	32%
Not sure	16%	14%	13%	17%	11%

(BAI2) n=1,920



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Lanvac expands offerings with 'Libris 2' emergency communicator for seniors

Growth continues at Canada's leading third-party alarm monitoring wholesaler

MARTIN C. BARRY | Local Journalism Initiative Reporter | marty@newsfirst.ca

In the ever-evolving world of security and surveillance, Lanvac was promoting something new and quite advanced at the Security Canada East trade show at the Laval Sheraton on April 30.

Alarm dealers can now use the Lanvac.Mobi web app to run on and off system tests, check for signal history, request reports and even create new customer accounts or modify existing accounts, according to Stephanos Georgoudes, one of several members of a family who have been deeply committed to Lanvac for decades.

Exclusive to NBG

The company, Canada's leading third-party wholesaler of alarm monitoring, monitors

alarm systems for intrusion, fire and medical emergencies, and has a sister company, NBG Telecom, which sells alarm products to Lanvac dealers or to any other alarm services retailer for that matter.

Since last year, NBG has begun distributing the Libris 2 Personal Emergency Response Communicator from Numera exclusively in Canada. For vulnerable seniors and other at-risk persons, it is regarded as a comprehensive mobile safety and wellness solution that features fall detection, GPS location, 4G/LTE support and a 48-hour battery.

"We're the only ones in Canada who have it," Georgoudes said in an interview with *Newsfirst Multimedia*, noting that it's a mobile medical pendant with two-way voice.



Lanvac Surveillance's Stephanos Georgoudes is seen here with a Libris 2 Personal Emergency Response Communicator from Numera, which Lanvac is distributing exclusively in Canada. (Photo: Martin C. Barry, Newsfirst Multimedia)

Automated two-way voice

Worn around the neck or on a belt, a button activates a medical event alarm which goes to the Lanvac central monitoring station, and a two-way voice call is automatically placed to a human operator at Lanvac. Along with the alarm signal, the user's GPS coordinates are also automatically sent to central.

"If the person needs help, the operators know exactly where to dispatch the ambulance," said Georgoudes, adding that the Libris 2 also has fall detection. If the device senses a sudden drop with a corresponding velocity of speed, a fall detection alert is sent out, and the alarm central immediately contacts the significant other responsible for the well-being of the user.

Monitoring with GPS

With the Libris 2, family also get access to an online portal that allows them to check in periodically on the loved-one who's wearing a Libris pendant. Through GPS technology, they can set up a virtual geo-fence that will trigger notifications to family members if the user accidentally or unintentionally passes outside pre-set boundaries.

With Security Canada conventions also taking

place in western and central Canada this year, the gatherings are always a time for security experts from across the country to focus on building and renewing relationships with hundreds of professionals deeply involved in Canada's security services sector.

Deep roots in Montreal

Lanvac was founded by brothers John and Bill Georgoudes. Raised in Montreal's Park Extension district – which was at one time home for most of the city's Greeks – they turned their initially small burglar alarm business into a big-time contender.

Lanvac's first monitoring station was in Montreal's Parc Extension neighbourhood, in the basement of a building at the corner of Durocher and Jean Talon. Bill got his elementary education at Barclay School on Wiseman Ave., while John attended Strathcona Academy in Outremont.

Bill received his secondary education at the former William Hingston High School, which has since become the area's most important community centre. John attended another legendary secondary school, Baron Byng High, which was made famous internationally by Canadian novelist Mordecai Richler.



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Lanvac Surveillance's Stephanos with another of NBG Telecom's distributed products: the Bosch ULC Fire Monitoring Kit. (Photo: Martin C. Barry, Newsfirst Multimedia)

From litter to life

Parc-Extension prepares for neighbourhood makeover

DIMITRIS ILIAS

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter
dimitri@newsfirst.ca

Residents of Parc-Extension are being invited to take part in a borough-wide community clean-up on Saturday, June 7, 2025, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., as part of an initiative to revitalize the streets and public spaces of the

area's northern sector.

Organized by Ville en vert in partnership with the borough of Villera-Saint-Michel-Parc-Extension, the event encourages local participation in maintaining and improving the urban environment. Volunteers will gather outside the William-Hingston Community Centre, located at 419 Saint-Roch Street, where cleaning supplies will be distributed.

The clean-up effort aims to target streets, alleyways, and green spaces that have been affected by litter and general wear. The event also aligns with broader environmental goals pursued by Ville en vert, a non-profit that works across several Montreal boroughs to promote ecological awareness, sustainable urban planning, and community involvement in environmental projects.

Parc-Extension, one of the city's most densely populated and culturally diverse neighbourhoods, has long faced challenges with waste management and insufficient green space. This event is intended to be one of several grassroots efforts to address those concerns through direct local action.

The borough has also emphasized the importance of community participation in improving quality of life, and similar events have been held in previous years across



Villera and Saint-Michel, often drawing dozens of residents and volunteers.

No registration is required to participate. Residents are encouraged to dress appropriately for the weather and bring reusable water bottles. In case of heavy rain, the event will be postponed to Saturday, June 14, 2025.

For more information, participants can contact Ville en vert or consult the borough's official website.

Support for seniors hits milestone

MATTHEW DALDALIAN

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter
matt.newsfirst@gmail.com

The Quebec government is marking the one-year anniversary of its ambitious seniors action plan, La fierté de vieillir (The pride of aging), with what it calls concrete and measurable improvements in the lives of older adults across the province.

First launched in May 2024, the five-year, \$23.4 billion initiative is billed as one of the most comprehensive in provincial history — targeting everything from housing affordability and home care to community inclusion and labour retention.

Minister Sonia Bélanger, who serves as Minister responsible for Seniors as well as the Laurentides region, described the progress made over the past 12 months as “moving in the right direction.”

Impact across sectors

The plan's first year saw a range of initiatives rolled out, many of them tied to tangible outcomes in seniors' everyday lives. Nearly 400,000 individuals received at-home care services over the past year — part of a massive push that delivered more than 37.5 million hours of home support across the province.

In terms of housing, 2,555 affordable units intended for seniors have either been completed or are currently under construction. Long-term care also received a boost, with 3,168 new spots

created in senior homes and alternative care facilities.

At the same time, the government focused on keeping older Quebecers active in the workforce. Changes to the Quebec Pension Plan contributed to the continued employment of over 12,000 seniors aged 65 to 69.

Financial support remained another cornerstone of the plan. Over 1.1 million seniors benefited from the tax credit for older adults, aimed at easing cost-of-living pressures that remain top-of-mind in communities like Laval.

Local outreach

Beyond the numbers, the government emphasized its effort to reduce isolation and build stronger connections with older residents. Over 298,000 safety check-in calls were made to seniors' homes, and 45,000 older Quebecers were reached through community outreach and geriatric social work.

The province also adapted or developed 61 small-scale infrastructure projects across Quebec, aimed at promoting social inclusion and enhancing the quality of life for older adults.

These efforts were paired with a push for public awareness. Throughout the past year, nearly 900 people took part in a series of webinars designed to elevate seniors' voices and promote the plan's core goals. A virtual town hall in April drew close to 1,200 participants — a turnout Bélanger says reflects the growing interest in aging-related issues.

“More than ever, society is mobilized to allow seniors to fully experience this stage of life,” Bélanger said. “To be recognized and valued in their communities.”

More to come in year two

The plan — which includes 102 distinct measures coordinated by 35 provincial ministries and agencies — also sets out 16 long-term targets to monitor progress.

So far, \$4.6 billion of the total budget has already been allocated. That funding has also gone toward developing new legal, digital, and financial tools tailored to seniors' needs, as well

as launching public campaigns that challenge stereotypes around aging and highlight the contributions of older Quebecers.

Additional investments are expected in year two, which will see a continued focus on long-term care reform, affordable housing development, and expanded outreach.

Initiatives tied to the province's Alzheimer's and neurocognitive disorders strategy will also take on greater visibility in the coming year, according to the ministry.

With the first year of implementation behind them, Bélanger says the government is well-positioned to move into the next phase of the plan. The early momentum, she argues, isn't just about statistics — it's about setting a lasting direction.

The ultimate goal, she emphasized, is to foster pride in aging and strengthen community support across the province. “We are definitely well-positioned for the next steps in carrying out our action plan,” she said.

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DIRECT ANSWERS

FROM WAYNE & TAMARA

NO EXPLANATION NECESSARY

Q Last year I abruptly ended a relationship with my next-door neighbor because she used me as a convenience and did not treat me as a friend. Six months ago she sent a card explaining that she did not understand why I no longer talked to her. I did not respond.

Now she has employed the use of mutual acquaintances to get to me. I have not addressed this to them because, quite frankly, it didn't involve them. Unfortunately, now it does. How do I address this without coming off as the "bad guy."

Connie

A Connie, if your ultimate concern is what other people think, you are always going to lose because you don't control the thoughts of others. Whatever baggage, home life, and previous experience in this world they have will determine what they feel about you. Since you cannot change their beliefs, ideas, or experiences, you cannot determine how they will feel about anything they come into contact with.

A person you don't hold in high regard, or wish to have contact with, has now decided to enlist others to get what she wants. You took away her ability to use you, so she is now using others to get back to using you again.

If you are concerned that these mutual acquaintances think, you are going to put yourself under the control of others again. But

if you wish to have your own life and exercise your rights as an individual on this planet, you must put how you feel about yourself, and your actions, first. Simply tell those acquaintances, despite what this neighbor may have told them, you've made it clear you do not wish to have contact with her.

Make it clear you are under no obligation to explain why. If we wish to be free to have our own likes, friendships, and pursuits, then we can't allow others to impose their likes over ours. Any explanation you give will only elicit arguments from your neighbor about why she gets to have her way.

This is not a debate. This is your life, and this is your right. Users, abusers, and controllers do not take no for an answer. If you let them tie you up in justifying yourself, then they have succeeded. Simply make it clear you choose not to be around her and you are not going to let anyone else force you to.

This woman doesn't feel you are free to run your life according to your own wishes. That she is now telling others what you did not tell them, only validates your position.

Pretending to like what you don't like only gets you more of what you don't want. Pretending to like people you don't like allows users, abusers, and manipulators to use, abuse, and manipulate you. Why? Because that is their stock-in-trade. That is their cash crop.

Wayne & Tamara

EMOTIONALLY UNDERWEIGHT

Q After spending years in an emotionally abusive marriage, I finally, with the help of a therapist, was able to leave. Recently I met a man I am becoming fond of. He treats me with respect and caring. The only reservation I have is he is about 40 pounds overweight.

The night we met six months ago he told me he was in the process of losing weight, but he has not lost any so far. I'm trying to be honest with myself and ask if this is something I can overlook. If I decide to end the relationship, should I tell him

the truth or say I don't think we share the same active lifestyle?

Meagan

A Meagan, there is no reason to hurt his feelings or to elicit promises of change from him. When he fails to live up to his promises, you will first be angry and afterward heartbroken. Love is not piecemeal. The reason you can't be with him is that you don't love him.

Wayne & Tamara

WAYNE & TAMARA MITCHELL are the authors of YOUR OTHER HALF (www.yourotherhalf.com)

Send letters to: Direct Answers, PO 964 Springfield, MO 65801-0964

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- (Kumato) Tomatoes (pack) (Canada)
- Onions (2lbs) (Canada)
- Lettuce (Mex/Cali)
- Cucumber (Canada)
- Mushrooms (Canada)
- Eggplant (Mex/Cali)
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Week of June 1 to 7, 2025

The luckiest signs this week:
SCORPIO, SAGITTARIUS AND CAPRICORN



ARIES

You'll be successful at work this week if you take the time to negotiate, ask questions and finalize agreements. The situation with the people sharing your home will improve once you set clear rules.



TAURUS

No matter what project you're working on, focus on fine-tuning the details and preparing thoroughly. You'll be surprised by the attention you receive on social media.



GEMINI

Your unique style will make you stand out from the crowd. You'll be admired by others. A comment you make could draw a lot of unexpected attention and turn all eyes on you.



CANCER

If you're considering a move, this could be the perfect opportunity to redecorate. The birth of a new family member could brighten your week. Participating in a training course could help you advance your career.



LEO

Your reliability and discretion will earn you the trust of those around you. Some people may confide in you unreservedly. Expect some surprising revelations that leave you astonished.



VIRGO

Your travel plans may prove to be more difficult than you expected. You may have to play chauffeur for your loved ones on various occasions. You'll show ingenuity on a project, which may cause you to be committed for the long term.



LIBRA

Before finalizing any major purchases, take a day or two to think things over. This pause could help you negotiate a better deal and potentially save you money.



SCORPIO

Prioritize rest this week! At work, drinking a second cup of coffee could help clear your mind and boost your productivity. You'll be more creative, so trust your intuition as it guides you toward successful outcomes.



SAGITTARIUS

Your plans may change unexpectedly. If your guests cancel on a planned activity, embrace the calm and enjoy some relaxation instead of stressing out.



CAPRICORN

At work, you'll take the lead in organizing a housewarming or birthday party for your team. The event will be a huge success. You'll become even more popular among your colleagues.



AQUARIUS

You'll discover vital information about a course or training program that could help you advance your career. Seize this opportunity to expand your professional horizons.



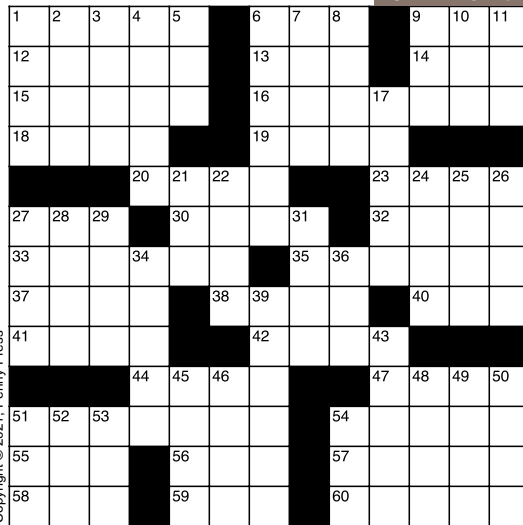
PISCES

Summer vacation is just around the corner! This may cause you some concern about your children's summer activities. Carefully choose a suitable day camp and involve them in the decision-making process to ensure they have a fun summer.

Coffee Break

CROSSWORDS

PUZZLE NO. 281



ACROSS

1. Take a hike
6. Moreover
9. Subside
12. Scoundrel
13. Mama deer
14. Not me
15. Musical drama
16. Underground prison
18. Student's need
19. Toward the center
20. Knitting stuff
23. Try to persuade
27. Plant fluid
30. Apparel
32. Grand celebration
33. Readied for shipment
35. Fragments
37. Measure of land
38. Keep away from
40. So far
41. "_____ Came Bronson"
42. Footed vases

DOWN

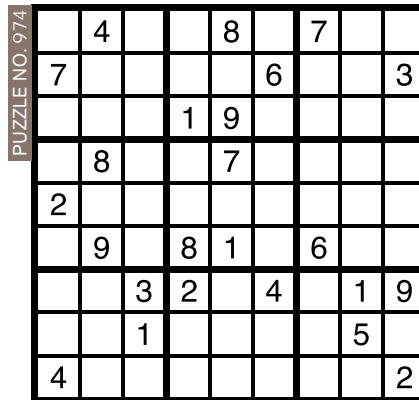
44. Sincere
47. Hail
51. Be magnetic
54. Outdoor-meal site
55. Mediterranean, e.g.
56. "_____-Devil"
57. Presses
58. Biddy
59. Patch of grass
60. Sorts
17. Dig out
21. Chowd down
22. Fishing sticks
24. Suggestive
25. Boundless joy
26. Sunrise direction
27. Shout to a cat
28. Curved structure
29. Cut back
31. Cowboy's prod
34. Opera voice
36. Tourist's stop
39. Pursued
43. Frightening
45. Mountain gap
46. Repeat
48. On the crest
49. String
50. Defeat
51. Fire remnant
52. _____ off (make angry)
53. Dark beige
54. Orchestra _____

Sudoku

HOW TO PLAY:

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column, and every 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 through 9 only once.

Each 3x3 box is outlined with a darker line. You already have a few numbers to get you started. Remember: You must not repeat the numbers 1 through 9 in the same line, column, or 3x3 box.

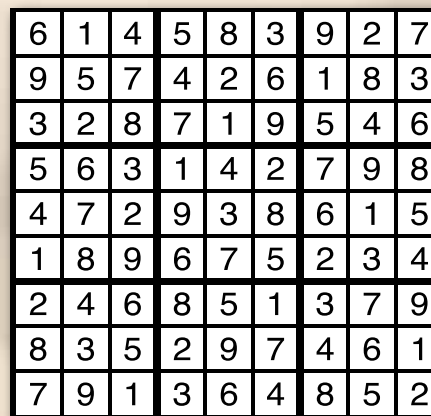


Last Issue's Answers

CROSSWORDS



Sudoku



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