

**DEFEATING HARPER:
REFLECTIONS ON THE VOTE
TOGETHER CAMPAIGN**

DECEMBER 2015



Thank you to the thousands of Leadnow supporters who contributed their ideas, money, and time to design, fund, and power Vote Together.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is intended to provide a summary of the Vote Together campaign, its results, and lessons learned. We want to capture and publish reflections before the end of 2015, while the memories are still fresh and lessons are emerging, as a first step in a deeper process of analysis and reflection.

In the 2011 federal election, a majority of people voted for a change in government, but because of vote splitting in our broken first-past-the-post electoral system, the incumbent Conservatives won 100 percent of the power with 39 percent of the vote. In the run up to the 2015 federal election, Leadnow supporters decided to launch the Vote Together campaign because of the unique threat posed by the Harper Conservatives to our democratic institutions. Progress on our community's priorities - a strong democracy, a fair economy, and a clean environment - was impossible while they held power.

On October 19th, 2015, a majority of people voted for change, and Harper was defeated when the Liberals won a majority of seats in parliament, with 39 percent of the popular vote. **Despite everything Harper did to outrage Canadians during four years of majority rule, the Conservatives lost just 235,000 votes compared to their 2011 total. They were defeated by a wave of new voters who were motivated to vote for change, combined with the local and national consolidation of the change vote.**

The Vote Together campaign was the largest campaign ever organized by the Leadnow community:

- **1.15 million visits to www.votetogether.ca, which featured an unprecedented amount of local information about all 338 ridings**
 - This total included 779,000 unique visitors
- **Fundraised over \$100,000 for riding-level polling** from nearly 3000 donors
 - The most comprehensive, publicly available local polling ever done by an independent group in Canada: commissioned 57 local polls across 37 ridings
- **90,848 supporters pledged to vote together** for the best local candidate who could defeat the Conservative
 - Nearly 20,000 pledges came from face-to-face conversations
- **5,626 volunteers**
 - 3,256 for national phone banking, 2,370 for door-to-door canvassing
 - 51,617 live, voter-to-voter conversations at the door and on the phones
 - 20,000+ voter-to-voter conversations in the final 2 weeks
 - 1,427 canvasses, phone banks, recruitment, and training events
 - Hand-distributed 74,100 flyers
 - 45 local teams of volunteers (11 in target ridings, supported by staff)
- **Recommended candidates in 29 Conservative swing ridings**, places where the Conservatives had strong finishes in 2011, and where 500+ people pledged to vote together

- **Recommended candidates won in 24 of the 29 ridings**
- **Reached millions of people through 200+** national and local newspaper, TV, and radio show hits

In designing the Vote Together campaign, we learned from past strategic voting efforts which consisted of websites featuring riding-level recommendations based on national polls and regional projections. For the Vote Together campaign to successfully unite the vote at the riding level, we needed reliable local polling backed up by face-to-face conversations that could turn out the vote for recommended candidates. Leadnow was uniquely placed to run this campaign because our 500,000+ person community could channel resources - volunteer time to get out the vote and donations to fund local polling - from across the country into backing candidates in targeted Conservative swing ridings.

338 separate elections took place on October 19th in each of Canada's ridings, and understanding the outcomes of the Vote Together campaign requires looking at the individual ridings targeted by our campaign. In the end, the Leadnow community voted to make recommendations in 29 ridings - 16 for Liberal candidates and 13 for NDP candidates. **The Conservatives were defeated in 25 out of 29 ridings, and our community picked the candidate who would defeat the Conservative, or come second, in 26 of the 29 ridings.**

Since the election, we've engaged thousands of people through in-person debriefs and online surveys in order to understand the Vote Together campaign's impact. **In all targeted ridings, voter turnout was 5-10 percent higher than the national average and in a number of ridings, the margin of victory was smaller than the number of people who pledged their votes.** On average, more than 9 out of 10 vote pledge signers followed through with voting for the Leadnow recommended candidate in their riding.

We are learning many lessons. For example, we could have provided our community with better analysis in the candidate recommendation process - including more information about the risks of making a recommendation in a riding like Vancouver Granville where two non-Conservative candidates were ahead of the Conservative candidate. In the few ridings where our community recommendations were incorrect, we could have focused more resources on polling in the final days of the campaign to catch the Liberal surge.

However, it was never our goal to learn how to run an even more sophisticated strategic voting campaign in the future - our goal is to help the Leadnow community do its part to end strategic voting forever. While we are pleased that the Harper decade has come to an end, we are once again in a situation where a majority government has been elected with just 39 percent of the vote. The good news is that the Liberals, along with the Greens and NDP, committed to making the 2015 election the last "first-past-the-post" federal election in Canadian history. Now, we can build on the lessons we've learned about large-scale integrated campaigning and organizing to engage people in a campaign for strong, fair, and proportional electoral reform.

If we can change the way we vote, and bring in a system where every vote counts equally, then we will never need to run a Vote Together campaign again. We can make sure that this is the last time anyone gets a majority of power with a minority of the vote. We can help parties put aside hyper-partisanship and work together to represent a majority across Canada.

As a community committed to deep, meaningful change, our job has just begun.

INTRODUCTION

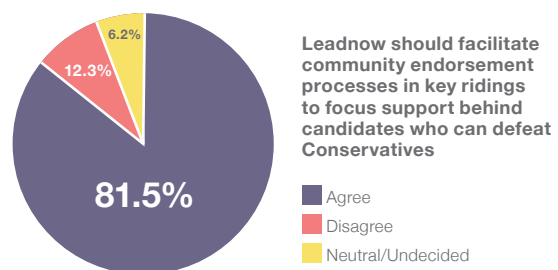
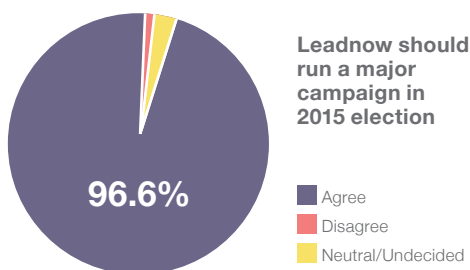


On October 19th, thousands of people across Canada voted together to defeat the Harper Conservatives. There was a national Liberal wave, to be sure. But in dozens of close ridings, where the result hinged on razor-thin margins, this was the result of months and years of dedicated planning and organizing by volunteers fighting for every last vote.

Leadnow's Vote Together campaign connected millions of people who wanted change with the information and tools they needed to make a difference on election day.

The Conservatives were standing in the way of progress on the issues the Leadnow community cares about – a strong democracy, a fair economy, and a clean environment – and our first-past-the-post voting system gave them a huge advantage against the fragmented opposition. The 2015 election was our best chance to take the first step towards deeper change by making sure our broken electoral system didn't let the Conservatives win again.

In mid-2013, to decide what to do, we turned to the Leadnow community for direction.



Leadnow supporters overwhelmingly voted to unite behind the best local candidates who could defeat the Harper Conservatives in swing ridings, then thousands of supporters contributed their ideas, money, and time to design, fund, and power the Vote Together campaign.



Strategic voting efforts are not new. However, they have previously consisted of websites featuring riding-level recommendations based on national polls and regional projections. For the Vote Together campaign to successfully unite the vote riding-by-riding, we needed reliable local polling information backed up by face-to-face conversations that could turn out the vote for recommended candidates. We also saw voting together as a means, not an end. Ultimately, we wanted to create change on October 19th while building the people-power that could push for lasting change under a new government.

It was an ambitious strategy and for a first time effort, it paid off well. In this report, we document how we went about building this campaign, how we executed the strategy in Conservative swing ridings, our first reflections on its success – as well as what we could have done better.

“We needed to do more than just vote to defeat Harper. I was interested in Leadnow’s community approach, intent to follow-up post election, and going beyond basic strategic voting.”

- Bruce, Vancouver



This report

By its nature, this report can only be a first attempt of what we hope will be a deeper analysis in the months and years to come. We are just two months on from the 2015 election in writing this; the campaign and our analysis is fresh but not yet complete. The reflections here have been compiled by the Leadnow staff team, in consultation with our supporters, but do not necessarily reflect the views of the whole community.



To put this report together, we started with the core piece of the puzzle that made Vote Together happen: the thousands of volunteers who gave their time to the campaign. In a series of in-person and online debriefs, as well as phone and online surveys, we've gathered initial thoughts and reflections from Leadnow supporters across the country, and in the target ridings where we focused our efforts. We've added to this an evaluation by the Leadnow staff team in the weeks after the election.

We have also put together an assessment of Vote Together's success and shortcomings by taking a look at the breakdown in each of the key swing ridings where people voted together. We've combined this with an online poll to understand how many voters in target ridings followed through and voted strategically.

Please read on and share this story. **If you have any feedback that you would like to add, as a Leadnow supporter or observer of the Vote Together campaign, please get in touch at leadnow@leadnow.ca.**

What now?

“So, what’s next?” is the question we’ve been waiting nearly a decade to ask. Now that Harper has been defeated, we can start the real business of creating the lasting changes that millions of people voted for.

As a community, Leadnow was organized exclusively under a Conservative federal government. What we stand for has not changed – but the political landscape has. A new government, as well as over 200 new Members of Parliament, give us a window of opportunity to push for and to achieve progress on some of the biggest challenges of our time.

We’ll continue to hold our government to account, to help people speak out together so their voices will be stronger than narrow short-term economic or political interests. And we will continue to find ways to bring our communities together, so that we can create change in Ottawa and towns and cities from coast to coast to coast. We’ll prioritize issues as a campaigning community, and we’ll make sure that our government holds firm to deliver on its promises.

“Our supporters see voting together as a means. It isn’t an end. We’re building political power outside the system through this election, in order to have an impact on October 19th. But, ultimately, to push whoever is in government to take action.”

- Amara Possian, CBC As it Happens, Sept. 10 2015

The first of those starts now, with Prime Minister Trudeau’s promise to reform our broken first-past-the-post voting system. With a fair and proportional voting system, we’ll be able to concentrate on what we want to vote for, rather than on what we are forced to vote against. We can make sure that parties set aside micro-targeting and hyper-partisanship, and work together to represent a majority across Canada.

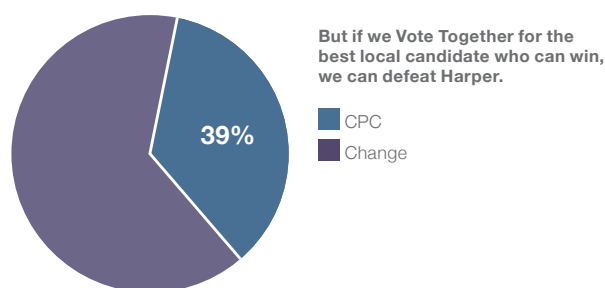
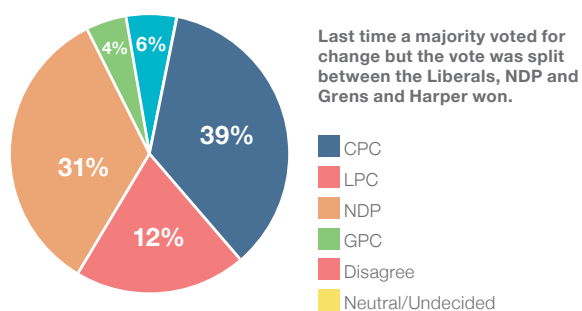
As a community committed to deep, meaningful change, our job has just begun.



Vote Together was a campaign to connect voters who wanted change in the 2015 federal election with the tools and information they needed to select, support, and unite behind the best local candidates to defeat the Harper Conservatives, and move Canada forward.

Our Broken Electoral System

The Vote Together campaign was made necessary by our broken first-past-the-post voting system, which gave the Harper Conservatives 100 percent of the power with just 39 percent of the vote in the 2011 federal election. We understood that while a majority of Canadians wanted change in 2015, Harper could win again because of vote splitting that allows Conservative candidates to win, despite a majority of voters casting ballots for the Liberals, NDP, and Greens.



“I was just appalled with our government, and that Harper would get 39 percent of the vote and 100 percent of the power.”

- Jackie DeRoo, New York Times, Oct. 15 2015



Our Theory of Change

The Harper Conservatives won their 2011 majority with 6,201 votes across 14 Conservative swing ridings. Knowing that less than ten thousand well-targeted votes could swing the outcome of the election, we focused on channeling resources from across the country - volunteer time making phone calls and canvassing, and donations for in-riding polling - into targeted Conservative swing ridings.

If enough of people in Conservative swing ridings united behind the best local candidate who could defeat the Conservatives, we could stop the riding-by-riding vote splitting that twisted a minority of votes into a majority of seats for the Harper Conservatives.

In order to successfully unite the vote riding-by-riding, we needed reliable local polling information in order to identify the best candidate who could win, as well as field efforts that could get out the vote for that candidate. We fundraised over \$100,000 from nearly 3000 donors to provide the most comprehensive, publicly available local polling ever done by an independent group in Canada - 57 riding-level polls across 37 ridings - and featured that information, as well as all other riding-level polls, at www.votetogether.ca.

In Conservative swing ridings where over 500 people pledged to vote together, we ran recommendation processes so local Leadnow supporters could decide if they wanted to formally endorse a candidate. In the 29 ridings where supporters endorsed a candidate, we helped get out the vote for the recommended candidate by sending volunteers to their campaigns and, in the 11 ridings with the most momentum, through canvassing door-to-door, phoning, delivering letters and thousands of flyers, and texting.

Vote Together supporters who lived outside Conservative swing ridings also had a crucial role to play. We helped them direct thousands of phone calls and donations from across the country into Conservative swing ridings. No matter where people lived, we gave them the tools they needed to make a difference on October 19.

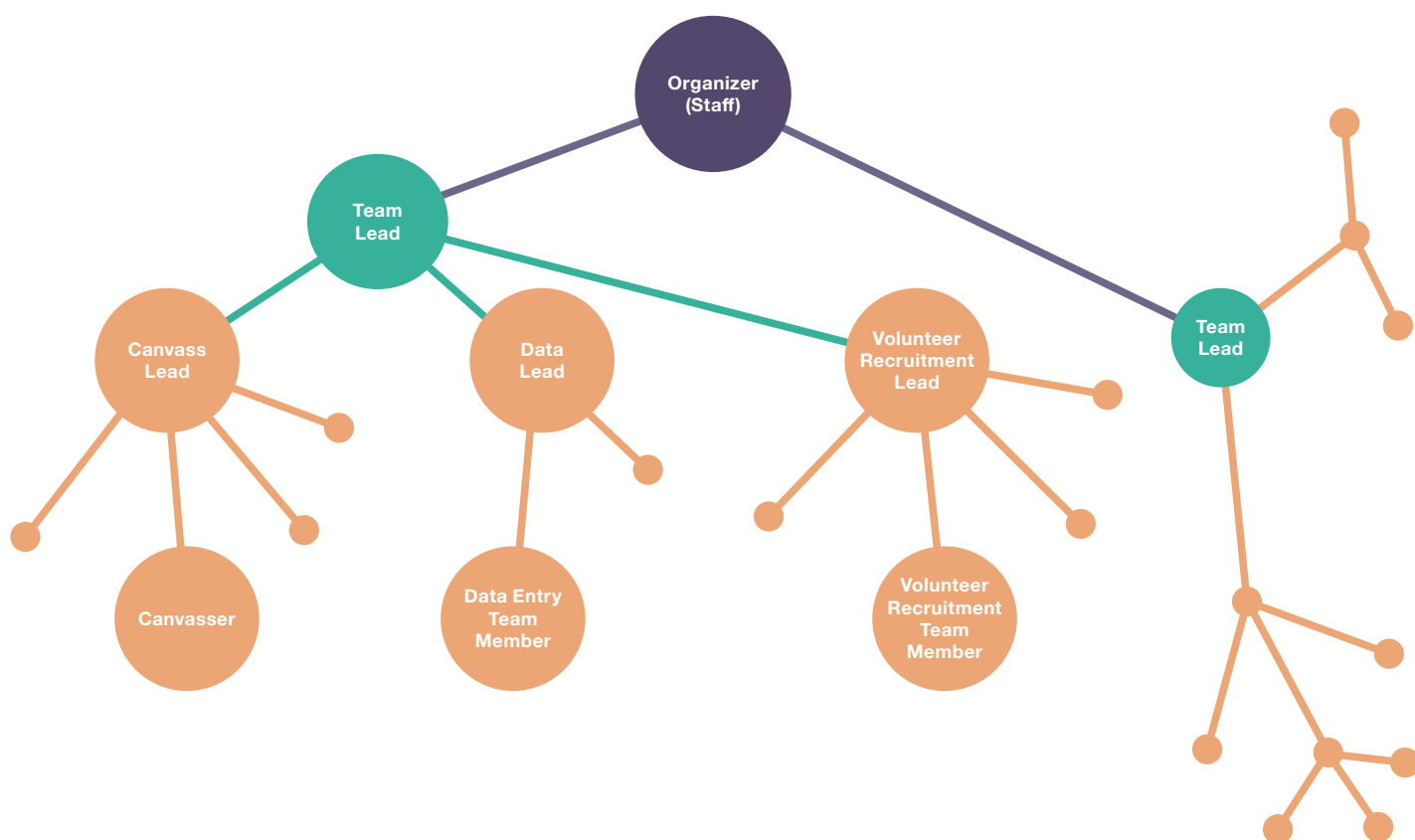
Our Organizing Model

In order to have an impact, we knew we needed to build a massive campaign on a tight budget. Since a top-down and centralized staff-driven model would never be able to reach the necessary scale, we decided to focus on developing volunteer leaders who could play core leadership roles within the campaign.

Drawing inspiration from organizing structures developed by many social movements, and the digitally-enabled, distributed field organizing model used in Barack Obama's 2008 and 2012 presidential campaigns, we developed an organizing model centred around a network of interrelated teams.

Each team was led by a volunteer leader, who coordinated a core team of volunteers responsible for specialized roles such as canvass coordination, data entry coordination, and volunteer recruitment. This core team coordinated canvassers, phone callers, and data entry volunteers.

This structure allowed a staff team of just seven organizers to support a massive field campaign, engaging 5,626 volunteers who had over 51,617 live, voter-to-voter conversations through canvassing door-to-door and by making phone calls through the virtual phone team.



¹ A “swing” riding is a riding where the result was close previously, and there’s a reasonable chance it could be different this time. For the purposes of this campaign, we were only interested in swing ridings where the Conservative won by less than 15 percent, or NDP, Liberal, or Green MP won by less than 5 percent and the Conservative came in second.

² For the results of all 57 riding-level polls, visit: <http://www.votetogether.ca/localpolling/>

³ For the full list of recommended candidates, visit: <http://www.votetogether.ca/recommendations/>

⁴ See Appendix I for a full overview of the campaign including the Vote Together website, polling, candidate recommendations, and getting out the vote.

Not Just a Strategic Voting Campaign

Vote Together was never a simple strategic voting campaign. We provided a one stop shop of information and tools for people who wanted change on October 19th, while building an independent progressive force that could outlast the election. We spearheaded an unprecedented approach to principled, independent, people-powered politics, recruiting supporters from across party lines and using an innovative mix of online and offline tactics.

The Vote Together campaign was designed to learn from past strategic voting efforts which relied on projections from national polls, and did not include field organizing efforts. In addition to sharing an unprecedented amount of riding-level information with 779,000 people through www.votetogether.ca, we experimented with a distributed leadership organizing model, recruited and trained 5,626 volunteers who connected with tens of thousands of voters, fundraised over \$100,000 for local polling from nearly 3,000 donors, made 29 cross-partisan community recommendations -- and backed those up with over 51,617 direct conversations at the doorstep and on the phone to mobilize the vote in the final weeks of the campaign.

We also put our broken first-past-the-post voting system at the top of the agenda. The Greens, Liberals and NDP all made robust pledges for electoral reform, and we look forward to working with the new government to help ensure that commitment is met.



“I am proud of having participated in VoteTogether’s inspiring strategy, and proud of all of you wonderful young people at Leadnow who direct us. You have given us everything: courage, skills, a platform, those data forms, and mostly, hope.”

- Shannon, Kitchener



OUTCOMES

Vote Together by numbers



1.15 million visits to www.votetogether.ca, which featured an unprecedented amount of local information about all 338 ridings.

This total included 779,000 unique visitors.

Fundraised over \$100,000 for riding-level polling from nearly 3000 donors.



The most comprehensive, publicly available local polling ever done by an independent group in Canada: commissioned 57 local polls across 37 ridings.

90,848 supporters pledged to vote together for the best local candidate who could defeat the Conservative.

Nearly 20,000 pledges came from face-to-face conversations.



- 5,626 volunteers
- 3,256 for national phone banking, 2,370 for door-to-door canvassing
- 51,617 live, voter-to-voter conversations at the door and on the phones
- 20,000+ voter-to-voter conversations in the final 2 weeks
- 1,427 canvasses, phone banks, recruitment, and training events
- Hand-distributed 74,100 flyers
- 45 local teams of volunteers (11 in target ridings, supported by staff)

On October 19th, an overwhelming majority of Canadians voted for change, and Harper was defeated. Votes for the Liberals, NDP, and Greens outnumbered votes for the Conservatives by a factor of more than two-to-one. At a national level, the Liberals won a majority of seats in parliament, with 39 percent of the popular vote.

However, while the electoral defeat of the Conservatives was decisive, the result on election night masks an important fact: despite everything that Harper did to outrage Canadians with four years of majority rule, the Conservatives lost just 235,000 votes compared to their 2011 total -- only 4 percent fewer votes than the vote share that gave them a majority in the last election. What defeated the Harper Conservatives was a wave of new voters, especially across Ontario, combined with voters consolidating behind the party or local candidate they perceived as being best positioned to defeat the Conservatives.

Digging deeper, 338 separate elections took place on October 19th in each of Canada's ridings, and understanding the outcomes of the Vote Together campaign requires going much further than the national narratives of the election, and looking instead at the individual ridings targeted by the campaign.

So, what happened?

The Vote Together campaign's impact in a riding is difficult to fully measure because it included media coverage of local polling



Recommended candidates in 29 Conservative swing ridings, places where the Conservatives had strong finishes in 2011, and where 500+ people pledged to vote together

Recommended candidates won in 24 of the 29 ridings

Reached millions of people through 200+ national and local newspaper, TV, and radio show hits

Reached 2,020,145 users on Facebook and 286,446 users on Twitter during the week of the election.

and recommended candidates, email correspondence to the full Leadnow list in each community, and the local share of the organic web traffic. In target ridings, it also included flyers, direct voice messages, texts, and other tactics that multiplied the total footprint of the campaign beyond the pledge signers and direct conversations with voters. The table below shows topline numbers and results in ridings where the Leadnow community recommended candidates.



⁵ For more information about the content of riding pages at www.votetogether.ca, see "The election website: [votetogether.ca](http://www.votetogether.ca)" in Appendix I.

⁶ For the results of all 57 riding-level polls, visit: <http://www.votetogether.ca/localpolling/>

⁷ For the full list of recommended candidates, visit: <http://www.votetogether.ca/recommendations/>

Riding	Pledge Signers	Total Conversations ⁹	Leadnow Recommended Candidate	2015 Federal Election Winning Candidate	Margin of Victory
Target Ridings⁹					
Port Moody—Coquitlam (BC)	1,076	3,127	NDP	NDP	2,814
Vancouver Granville (BC)	5,432	16,790	NDP	Liberal	9,177
Calgary Centre (AB)	964	1,983	Liberal	Liberal	906
Saskatoon—University (SK)	568	904	NDP	Conservative	4,474
Elmwood—Transcona (MB)	1,685	6,271	NDP	NDP	61
Eglinton—Lawrence (ON)	1613	5,668	Liberal	Liberal	5893
Etobicoke—Lakeshore (ON)	1,454	4,951	Liberal	Liberal	13,834
Kitchener Centre (ON)	1,926	5,519	Liberal	Liberal	9,594
London North Centre (ON)	1,149	2,217	Liberal	Liberal	12,432
Willowdale (ON)	552	1,397	Liberal	Liberal	7,395
Fredericton (NB)	1,045	2,791	Liberal	Liberal	9,742
Recommendation Ridings¹⁰					
Cariboo—Prince George (BC)	598	186	NDP	Conservative	2,596
Courtenay—Alberni (BC)	1,314	453	NDP	NDP	6,964
Cowichan—Malahat—Langford (BC)	795	n/a	NDP	NDP	6,960
Kootenay—Columbia (BC)	1,125	315	NDP	NDP	285
Nanaimo—Ladysmith (BC)	1,197	266	NDP	NDP	6,270
North Okanagan—Shuswap (BC)	697	204	NDP	Conservative	6,539
North Vancouver (BC)	841	282	Liberal	Liberal	19,057
Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke (BC)	999	348	NDP	NDP	5,243
South Okanagan—West Kootenay (BC)	811	264	NDP	NDP	4,929
North Island—Powell River (BC)	1,052	593	NDP	NDP	7,876
West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country (BC)	1,437	433	Liberal	Liberal	18,627
Calgary Confederation (AB)	752	1,225	Liberal	Conservative	1,259
Winnipeg South Centre (MB)	874	231	Liberal	Liberal	17,054
Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas (ON)	589	n/a	Liberal	Liberal	9,899
London West (ON)	630	186	Liberal	Liberal	7,138
Ottawa West—Nepean (ON)	633	154	Liberal	Liberal	16,326
Peterborough—Kawartha (ON)	798	221	Liberal	Liberal	5,344
Waterloo (ON)	826	n/a	Liberal	Liberal	10,067

Vote Together target ridings

Vote Together recommended candidates won in 9 out of 11 target ridings, many of which were ridings where the Conservatives won in 2011 (or would have won, in the case of new ridings), in some cases by thousands of votes. Only one of our target ridings, Saskatoon-University, was won by the Conservatives. In Vancouver Granville, where local polling showed the NDP and Liberals could both defeat the Conservatives, the Liberals won while local Leadnow supporters voted to back the NDP candidate.

In target ridings, the candidate recommendations were backed up by a strong on-the-ground presence. Our 5,626 volunteers had direct conversations over the phone or in-person with 51,617 voters across our 11 target ridings during the campaign. The Vote Together campaign also received local media coverage in most target ridings, helping reach thousands more voters and emphasizing the need to base strategic voting on in-riding polling information.

Ridings where we made recommendations, and won

Outside of our target ridings, the Leadnow community voted to make recommendations in an additional 18 ridings. In 15 of those ridings, our recommended candidates won on election night - 8 recommended Liberal candidates, and 7 recommended NDP candidates. Voter turnout in these ridings was on average 5 percent higher than the national average.

From the outset the Vote Together campaign was focused on local context, and many recommended NDP candidates were able to win their seats despite a national Liberal wave that - in a number of ridings - could have easily led to vote splitting and a Conservative victory. For example, in Kootenay--Columbia, recommended NDP candidate Wayne Stetski won by less than 300 votes, beating Conservative incumbent David Wilks. The Liberal candidate finished third, but posed a serious risk of vote splitting with 19 percent of the vote. Leadnow had well over 1000 vote pledges in this riding: more than three times the margin of victory.



⁸ Together, our volunteer teams made a total of 258,086 attempts (phone numbers dialed and doors knocked) by phone and through canvasses, which yielded 51,617 conversations/contacts. Most in target ridings were door-to-door, street and event canvassing, supported by phone. All in recommendation ridings were through distributed phoning program.

⁹ See "Conservative swing ridings" in Appendix I for more details about target riding selection and activities. For the full list of recommended candidates, visit: <http://www.votetogether.ca/recommendations/>

¹⁰ See "the Candidate recommendation process" in Appendix I for more details about recommendation riding selection and activities. For the full list of recommended candidates, visit: <http://www.votetogether.ca/recommendations/>

Ridings where we made correct recommendations, but our recommended candidates lost

In Calgary Confederation and Saskatoon--University, Leadnow's recommended candidates lost to the Conservatives. However, in both cases the recommended candidates finished second, on par with our local polls. In Saskatoon--University, Claire Card of the NDP lost to Conservative Brad Trost, but was over 6 percent ahead of the Liberal candidate. In Calgary Confederation, Liberal Matt Grant lost by just 2.4 percent, with the NDP a distant third.

Ridings where we made recommendations, and got it wrong

In our target riding of Vancouver Granville, the Leadnow community voted to recommend Mira Oreck of the NDP, but Liberal candidate Jody Wilson-Raybould ultimately won. This particular situation proved to offer challenging and public lessons that the Leadnow community takes very seriously. We have undertaken a detailed report of our campaign in Vancouver Granville and our community recommendation process, which is included in Appendix II below.

In Cariboo--Prince George and North Okanagan--Shuswap, the results on election night showed that our recommended candidate was not the candidate best positioned to defeat the Conservatives on election day. In both ridings, we only had one round of local polling and we did not poll late enough to catch the Liberal wave. Local polling used in our process indicated that the NDP was best positioned to defeat the Conservatives, yet on election night, the Conservatives won and the Liberal candidates came in second.

Ridings where we halted our recommendation process

There were two ridings that met our criteria for a community recommendation vote, but where we did not release a formal recommendation: Burnaby North--Seymour and Coquitlam--Port Coquitlam both had over 500 vote pledges, and local riding level polling. In Burnaby North--Seymour, three rounds of local polling showed the NDP with a clear lead, and in Coquitlam--Port Coquitlam our local polling showed the NDP with a close lead over the Conservatives.

We launched our community recommendation process in both ridings, as they met the criteria for a 2-way race and we asked vote pledge signers if they wanted to recommend the local NDP candidates.

In the case of Burnaby North--Seymour, we halted the recommendation process when it looked like the riding had become a 3-way race instead of a 2-way race. A Mainstreet/Postmedia poll had been released after we started running our recommendation process, showing the Conservatives ahead, and the NDP and Liberals tied for second. We did not have a volunteer team in the riding and had committed to only running recommendation processes in 3-way races if we had a local team (like in Vancouver Granville).

In Coquitlam--Port Coquitlam, participation in our community vote was unusually low.

¹¹ A more detailed report on the campaign in all 11 target ridings is included in Appendix II below.

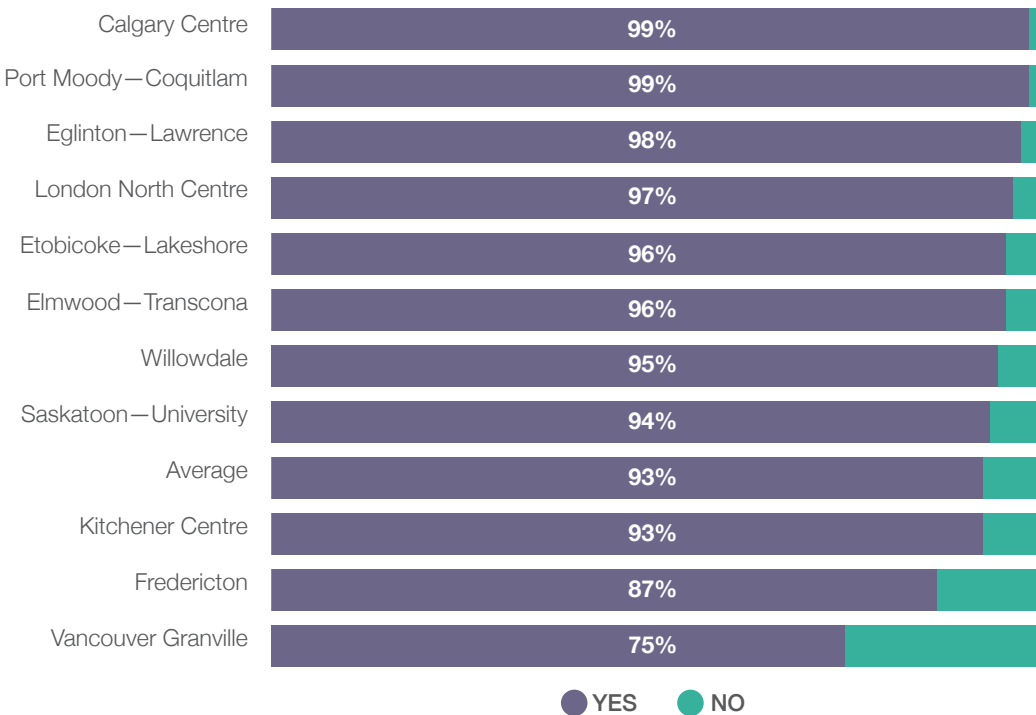
Combined with the fact that local polling showed a tighter race than in other ridings, we lacked sufficient confidence in the result to make a recommendation.

In both ridings, we contacted Vote Pledge signers, updated them on the situation, and made it clear that there would not be a recommendation one way or the other. The result on election night confirmed that halting our recommendation process was the correct course of action, as both races were won by Liberal candidates.

How did vote pledgers actually vote, and why?

From November 7-11, 2015, to help understand the impact of the Vote Together campaign, we surveyed 3,347 Vote Together pledge signers and other Leadnow members in our 11 target ridings. The survey explored how our community voted, the reasons for their voting choice, including whether they voted strategically, whether they voted for the recommended candidate, and also their degree of favorability towards the major federal political parties. A summary of the results follows.

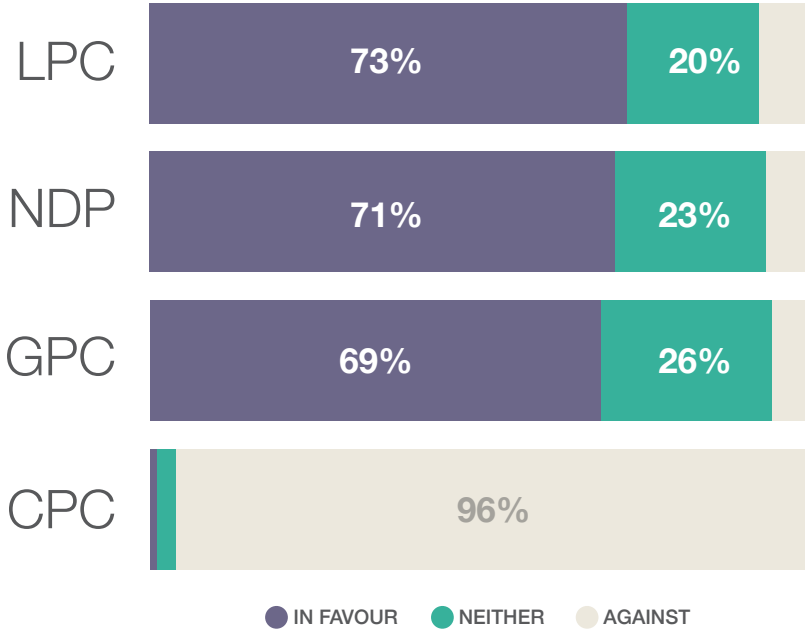
Fig 1. Did you vote for the Vote Together recommended candidate? (Vote Pledgers only)



On average, more than 9 out of 10 vote pledge signers followed through with voting for the Leadnow recommended candidate in their riding. The three ridings where this was lower were Kitchener Centre, where the race had been a close 3-way race until the last days of the campaign, Fredericton, where support for the Green Party was high, and Vancouver Granville, which is discussed extensively in Appendix II.

Fig 2. Feelings About Major Parties

How do you feel about each of the following federal political parties? Are you strongly in favour, in favour, neither in favour nor against, against, or strongly against.



Leadnow members reported overwhelming opposition to the Conservatives, and most reported either favourability or neutrality towards the Liberals, NDP, and Greens. The low degree of opposition to the NDP and Liberals will have contributed to people’s willingness to vote strategically, in order to achieve the goal of defeating Conservative candidates.

Fig 3. Vote Choice by Riding (Includes non-pledge signers)

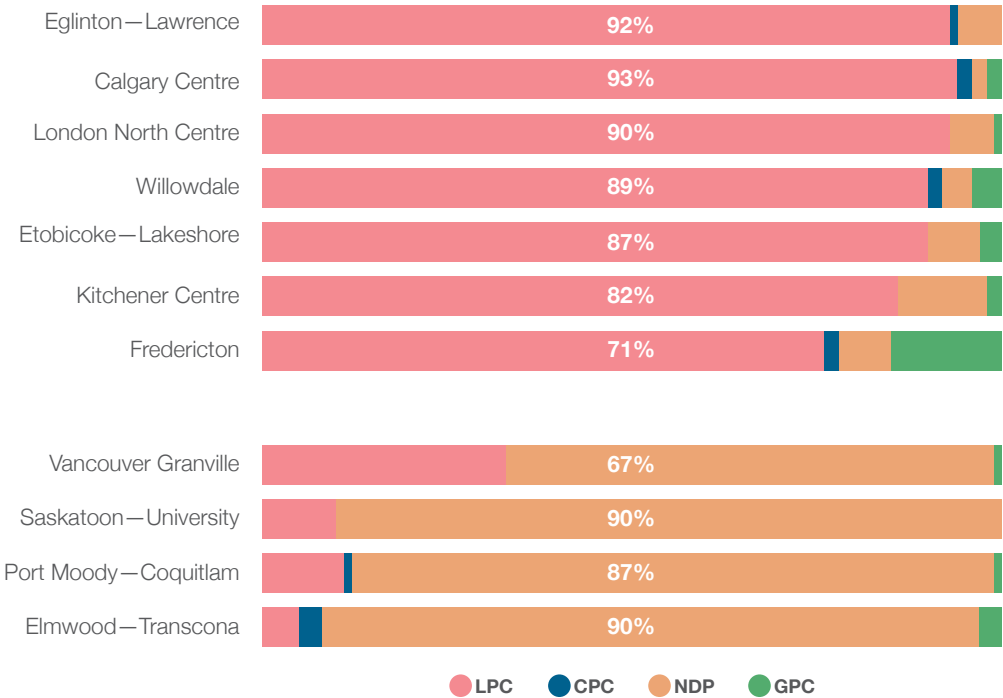
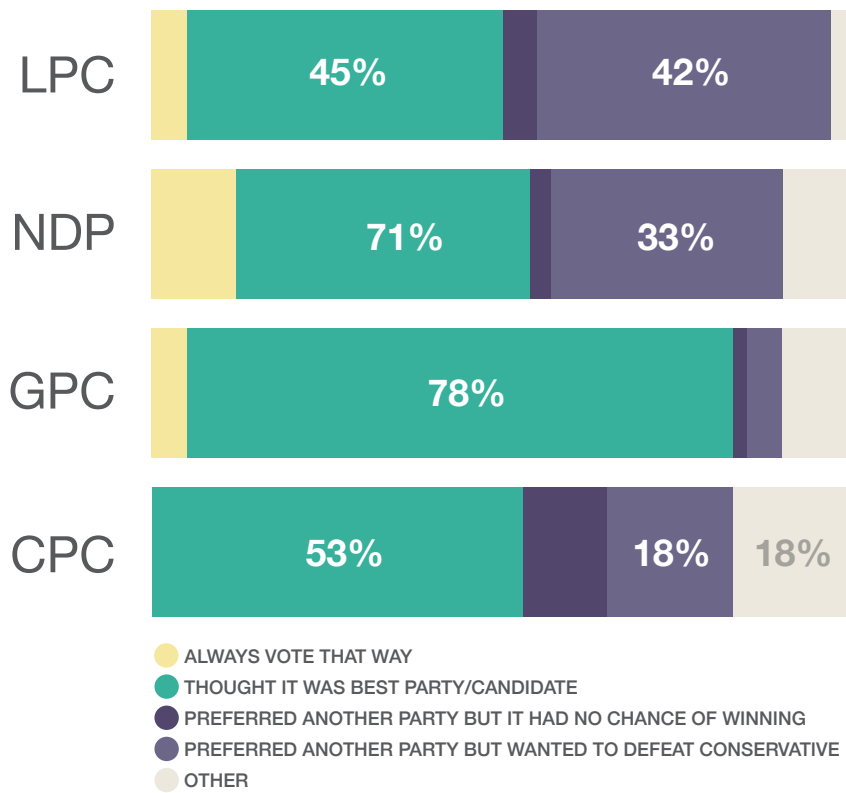


Fig 4. Reasons for voting, by vote choice

Which one of the following reasons comes closest to the main reason you voted for the party you chose?



Among NDP and Liberal voters, the reasons our supporters gave for voting the way they did were split roughly evenly between those who voted their preference (because they always vote that way, or they voted for the candidate or party they felt was the best), and those who voted strategically (because they believed their preferred party had no chance of winning, or they wanted to make sure to defeat the Conservatives). Among the smaller number of Green voters, the primary reason by far was that they felt that was the best party or candidate. **A substantial number of respondents noted in their comments that they voted their preference, but that their preference had been in line with the Leadnow recommendation, and they would have been willing to vote strategically in their riding had that been necessary.**

“Even though my preferred candidate was the one that was supported by the Leadnow campaign I was prepared to vote strategically for the first time in my life to oust the Conservatives. I appreciate all the time and energy that the campaign took to organize an effective response to the conservative agenda.”

- Rhys, Etobicoke--Lakeshore

Shifting votes, and defeating Conservatives

To estimate the direct impact of the Vote Together campaign on shifting votes in order to help defeat Conservatives, we analyzed the results of our vote choice and preference survey (above) in our 11 target ridings to estimate the number of votes shifted -- voters who had signed our pledge who voted strategically. This was achieved by combining the rate at which voters who responded to the survey self-reported as having voted strategically, together with the total number of vote pledge signers in the riding.

Riding	Margin of Victory	Vote Pledges	Votes Shifted Among Pledges
Port Moody—Coquitlam	2814	1076	334
Vancouver Granville	9177	5432	1738
Calgary Centre	906	964	376
Saskatoon—University	4474	568	244
Elmwood—Transcona	61	1685	944
Eglinton—Lawrence	5893	1613	726
Etobicoke—Lakeshore	13834	1454	669
Kitchener Centre	9594	1926	944
London North Centre	12432	1149	575
Willowdale	7395	552	226
Fredericton	9742	1045	491

Among vote pledgers in our 11 target ridings, an estimated 7,266 people voted strategically - voting for a party that was not their first choice - for candidates recommended by the local Leadnow community in order to defeat the Conservatives. This does not include the network effects of the campaign, and voters we likely moved who had not signed the pledge.

In Elmwood--Transcona, the measurable number of votes we can estimate we moved is significantly higher than the margin of victory, and in Calgary Centre it is a substantial portion of the margin. For comparison, it is worth remembering that in 2011, Harper won his

majority by 6,201 votes across the closest 14 ridings. Our campaign was designed to be especially necessary as a fail safe in a situation where turnout and Conservative strength remained similar to 2011 levels. In the end, while Conservative strength was similar, turnout was substantially higher.

Elmwood Transcona

Elmwood-Transcona was the closest race in the country. NDP Daniel Blaikie won by 61 votes



The national conversation: voting Harper out & strategic voting

Strategic voting is an inherent feature of a first-past-the-post voting system, and the impulse to vote strategically is strong when a government that is rejected by a majority of the electorate could still win because of vote splitting - exactly the situation we found ourselves in after the 2011 election. One of our objectives with the Vote Together campaign was to link strategic voting with its underlying cause: a broken first-past-the-post voting system.

More broadly, our message focused on the need for people to work together for change. Since Leadnow's launch in 2011, our campaigning has helped shape a national narrative that Harper's agenda was contrary to the values of an overwhelming majority of Canadians, on issues from the environment, to democracy, pipelines, omnibus bills, justice and First Nations rights. We've helped stop some of the worst elements of Harper's anti-democratic agenda.

In the 2015 election, even as the Conservatives tried to distract the public with divisive issues, a major ballot box question was change, underlining a widespread desire to vote Harper out at all costs. The Leadnow community's work over the last four years, together with the hard work of countless other organizations and movements, contributed significantly to that ballot box question. Our work engaging people in the political process also contributed to the hundreds of thousands new voters that turned out this election, motivated by opposition to Harper's decade in power and the desire to vote together for change.

In order to defeat Harper within the context of a broken first-past-the-post electoral system, we knew two things were necessary: first, we needed to engage and motivate large numbers of voters in key swing ridings, and second, we needed those voters to rally behind the candidate best able to defeat the Conservative candidate. Neither voter turnout alone, nor strategic voting information alone, could achieve our goals under a broken system. We needed to engage and motivate new voters, while giving them clear, local information about how to make their vote count in their riding.

Engaging new people in politics

Since 2011, through our online and field campaigns, Leadnow has been building a movement of people who care deeply about the issues. Our mass engagement in opposition to the Harper Conservatives' agenda helped fuel a widespread desire for change in this election. In 2011, one of the lowest voter turnout rates in Canadian history helped hand Harper his majority. In 2015, voter turnout jumped to 69.1 percent, the highest in 22 years, with 2.9 million additional voters heading to the polls.

Across our 11 target ridings with teams on the ground, turnout was even higher, averaging 70.7 percent,. That is 1.6 percent above the national average. Comparing the increase in turnout in our target ridings to the provincial averages for this election, this represents 12,584 additional voters who cast ballots in our ridings with teams.

Riding	Turnout 2011	Turnout 2015	Turnout Δ
Fredericton	64%	77%	+14%
Eglinton—Lawrence	66%	72%	+7%
Etobicoke—Lakeshore	62%	70%	+8%
Kitchener Centre	62%	68%	+6%
London North Centre	60%	73%	+12%
Willowdale	56%	61%	+6%
Elmwood—Transcona	56%	66%	+10%
Saskatoon—University	66%	78%	+13%
Calgary Centre	54%	72%	+18%
Port Moody—Coquitlam	59%	70%	+11%
Vancouver Granville	59%	68%	+10%

Paired with sustained, deep field organizing in our target ridings, and focused consolidation of the vote around candidates who could defeat the Conservatives, we believe our mass engagement of Canadians helped fuel widespread desire for change, and contributed significantly to Harper's defeat on October 19th.

Perceptions of Vote Together from Leadnow community members

In early December 2015, we surveyed Leadnow supporters in order to understand how they feel about the new political context, and to set campaign priorities for the new year. The

survey also included questions about the election outcomes and the effectiveness of the Vote Together campaign. A large majority of the 7,647 respondents (81 percent) reported they were satisfied or very satisfied with the election outcome overall. When asked about the Vote Together campaign, 88 percent agreed that the Vote Together campaign was necessary to overcome the challenges of our broken first-past-the-post voting system, and 78 percent agreed it was an overall success.

A majority of those surveyed (56 percent) agreed that Vote Together provided useful information about their local riding. However the results varied widely, which is reflective of the nature of a campaign that focused our local-organizing efforts, local polling resources, and candidate recommendations process in a relatively small portion ridings across the country. Among our 11 target ridings with teams, 78 percent of respondents said the campaign provided useful local information, with a lower level of agreement (47 percent) in Vancouver Granville, and higher (84 percent) across our other target ridings.





LESSONS LEARNED

Sharing lessons is one of the best ways we can grow and develop as a movement. This section contains a snapshot of the lessons we learned throughout Vote Together and we hope that many more insights and lessons will emerge in the months to come. This list has been compiled by Leadnow staff, in consultation with many volunteers and members of our community, but it is by no means exhaustive.

Candidate Recommendation Process

- **We should have communicated the details of our candidate recommendation process earlier and with more clarity – specifically, where we would recommend candidates and how.** Late in the campaign, we heard from supporters who were disappointed to learn we weren't recommending candidates in every riding, and from others who were confused about how the process would work - or why we chose a participatory process in the first place. Had we clearly communicated the details of the process earlier, it would have fostered greater trust and a broader understanding of the campaign.
- **We should have provided more analysis - and possibly even advice - for the candidate recommendation process.** We empowered vote pledge signers to make the final decision about whether to recommend a candidate in their riding - and in 3-way races, which candidate they wanted to choose. This approach is grounded in our belief in engaging supporters in strategic decisions, which is integral to Leadnow's model. However, in some cases we failed to provide our community with adequate context and analysis to make an informed decision. Were we to do this again, in ridings like Vancouver Granville, Burnaby North--Seymour, and Esquimalt Saanich-Sooke, we would highlight the volatility and risks shown by the polling and even consider advising our community to not recommend a candidate, while maintaining their power as decision-makers.



“Only timely, in-riding polls can give Canadians the reliable information they need to make an informed vote. Political parties conduct these polls all the time -- yet they tightly guard the results (unless it suits their interests to leak them). The public has never before had access to objective, in-riding polling done by credible pollsters willing to put their reputations on the line. It’s simply been too expensive. Until now.”

- Adam Shedletzky, Ottawa Sun, Oct. 18 2015

Reflections on local polling

- **Our polling got it right in 90 percent of ridings where we made recommendations.** As a tool for predicting the candidate best placed to defeat the Conservatives, our local polling served its purpose. The local polling we used in our recommendation processes (which was a combination of polling commissioned by Leadnow, and other publicly available riding-level polling) did not catch the Liberal surge in Vancouver Granville, but did correctly predict the race in 26 out of 28 2-way race ridings, with Leadnow recommended candidate winning on election night in 24 of these ridings.
- **The more data the better.** The 3 ridings where our polling got it wrong suffered from lack of data. In Cariboo--Prince George and North Okanagan--Shuswap, we only had one round of local polling, as they only reached the threshold of 500 vote pledges late in the campaign. And in Vancouver Granville, our only 3-way target riding, poor access to landline numbers to conduct the polling may have contributed to the inaccuracy that the NDP and Liberal candidates were tied. With more resources we could have conducted additional rounds of tracking polling, and with this been able to assess local trends more clearly. This level of analysis would have particularly helped for more volatile 3-way swing ridings.

¹² Results from 2015 Leadnow community survey: <http://www.leadnow.ca/2015/12/we-heard-you/>

¹³ For further reflections on our candidate recommendation process in Vancouver Granville, please see Appendix 2.

- **It was tough to get the timing right.** So much changed in the week leading up to the election day that wasn't captured in our earlier rounds of polling. Our largest round of polling was still a few weeks before election day, based on the assumption that the overall state of the race in 2-way races was unlikely to change. That proved mostly correct, but at the time it raised concerns among our supporters that the polling was out of date. In hindsight, it would have been better to channel resources into more polling in the immediate build up to election day - or the weekend before, in ridings that seemed unpredictable. It was a hard balance between getting local, accurate information to the Leadnow community as close to election day as possible, and also leaving enough time to carry out a candidate recommendation process and then mobilize the vote for our recommended candidates.

Deeply engaging the Leadnow community, and reflections on our organizing model

- **The model worked.** Our organizing model enabled us to build local leadership, which created the capacity necessary to execute a people-powered campaign. In just the final two weeks of the campaign, our volunteers had conversations with over 20,000 people in 11 target ridings.
- **Digital tools and training made it possible.** We used NationBuilder to facilitate our distributed organizing. It enabled us to scale up by distributing communication, data entry and event planning. Our multi-day leadership trainings and specific skill-training strengthened our teams and was critical to developing our local leaders.
- **Investing in organizers and the local context was key.** Being flexible with our model allowed teams to adapt their structure and tailor communication to what worked in their communities. Once we increased our staff organizer capacity, we saw a significant increase in distributed leadership, and impact in ridings where organizers were physically present. Remote support for the teams proved challenging, but possible once we had a network of leaders in place.
- **Testing was a core part of the strategy.** We piloted our organizing model in Vancouver Granville by developing teams there first. This was valuable and efficient, as we were able to test our systems and then adapt them for other ridings. Throughout the campaign we incorporated lessons from Vancouver Granville, which meant our other teams were able to leapfrog and develop faster.

“The initial meeting was very informative and inspirational and definitely made me want to continue with LeadNow. The lead captains and organizers at each canvass event were well organized and very helpful.”

- Dean, Vancouver

Affecting the national conversation and Vote Together in the media

- **Defeating Harper trumped campaigning on issues.** We thought that we would be able to spend more time talking about the issues that motivate our community - but in the end we found that we had to focus on the “defeat Harper” message as it was powerful and succinct, and consumed all of our campaigning capacity.

- **Talking about voting reform was the right choice.** By focusing on “vote splitting” and the need for electoral reform we managed to put ourselves in the media spotlight for the “strategic voting” conversation - and also elevated voting reform as a core topic in the election.
- **Our national presence was in tension with our local strategy.** The narrative we received in national media told an exciting story and built our profile, but also set unrealistic expectations for some of our members in ridings where we didn't have the resources to run boots-on-the-ground campaigns and recommend candidates.

Influencing parties and candidates

- **Our community influenced party platforms before the election.** Over the last three years we have consistently elevated voting reform as a major issue. Along with the excellent work of Fair Vote Canada and others, we believe that our work helped to elevate the importance of the issue for the NDP, and shift the Liberals' position when they announced a commitment to end first-past-the-post within 18 months.
- **Our communication with parties and candidates could have been more proactive.** We met with people in leadership positions in all three opposition parties in the run up to the election to explain our campaign, as well as with opposition candidates in our target ridings for the same purpose. While this helped to alleviate perceptions that we were a partisan front for one party or another within the leadership teams, it did not stop us from being accused of the same by many of their supporters, and some candidates. We also could have communicated better with the parties, particularly the Greens when it became clear that Conservative swing ridings on Vancouver Island would be included in our recommendations.

CAMPAIGNING

The 'big experiment' of strategic voting

Anybody But Harper movement seeks to channel NDP and Liberal votes to ensure a winner, but critics question tactic's value

ERIC ANDREW-GEY
KITCHENER, ONT.

Michele Cadotte wishes she could vote for the Green Party. A committed environmentalist, she cares about conservation and climate change more than any other issue.

But Ms. Cadotte has decided to vote strategically this election. She loathes the Conservative government and Prime Minister Stephen Harper — tipping them has become her top priority.

“I would vote for a centipede if it would get rid of Harper,” she said recently.

On Election Day, there being no centipedes on the ballot, she will probably vote for the Liberal



LeadNow's Michele Cadotte, left, and Eryn Weber Becker, right, sign up Kitchener Centre voter Fiona MacGregor. (A. ANDREW-GEY FOR THE GLOBE AND MAIL)

wide political campaign, LeadNow's internal numbers suggest impressive headway. About 14,000 people have signed LeadNow's pledge to vote for whomever or candidate has the best chance of beating the local Conservative, according to the group's website.

Ms. Proulx expects LeadNow to have a bigger impact than earlier strategic-voting efforts by focusing on races at the constituency level. In the past, tactical voters have been asked to keep an eye on national polls to determine their choice, which makes little sense in a country where there are no nationwide candidates.

LeadNow, for its part, has assembled a trove of polling data on 35 swing ridings that it thinks could succeed to vote splitting, mostly based on past election

strategic voters to pick a hand-winner.

Anyway, LeadNow may well have bigger problems than a few tight races. The reliability of their local polling is unclear. The sample sizes are perilously small, at about 100 per riding, and their contracts, ironically, used robo-polling, which tends to yield respondents with the patience or intensity of feeling to stay on the line with an automated caller.

Of course, LeadNow is far from the only outfit trying to channel the anti-Harper surge. There's the straightforwardly titled strategicvoting.ca, the Dogwood Initiative focusing on British Columbia, and a raft of unions including behemoths like Unifor trifling their members to vote tactically.

But strategic voting has its pitfalls. Critics point out that Cana-

“It was an effective way to bring discipline and local information to strategic voting to make it effective, with two objectives: to change the government and then to change the voting system. It was democratic - people who signed up had a say in which candidate would be endorsed.”

- Derek, Vancouver

CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS



The Leadnow community ran the Vote Together campaign hoping that we would never have to run a campaign like it again. Defeating Harper was an important first step towards repairing our democracy, and now we need to work towards the next step -- ensuring that by the 2019 election, we have a fair voting system that no longer needs Vote Together, or a campaign to prevent the worst outcome.

The first step is now complete: Harper is gone. We can pause for a moment and let that sink in. Vote Together was by no means the only force operating against Harper – and as it is clear from this report, there are mistakes and tactics we would try differently if we had the chance. That said, we can look back on a campaign that did what it set out to do. A campaign that helped swing 25 out of 29 key ridings, that helped swing the election in parts of Canada where our voting system allowed the votes to count.

In a post-election survey we asked Leadnow community members how they felt about the new Liberal majority government, and what role they thought Leadnow should play in this new political context. A large majority of respondents (64 percent) told us that they think the Trudeau Liberals share some of their values, and will do the right thing some of the time, but that we will need to push them to do better in other cases. See our blog post for detailed results of the community survey, but topline campaign priorities include restoring environmental laws, investing in a clean energy

economy, stopping trade deals that would allow multinational corporations to sue our governments (e.g. TPP), cracking down on tax evasion, supporting a shift to more progressive tax structure, pushing for bold policies to end poverty, and working to reform our voting system.

With Harper gone, we can finally draw a line through the politics of division that ruled for a decade. Yet the broken voting system that got Harper elected in the first place remains, and the fact remains that Trudeau has now won 100 percent of the power with just 39 percent of the vote, the same undemocratic margin that handed Harper his majority in 2011. The Vote Together campaign was designed as a response to our broken first-past-the-post electoral system, and voting reform in particular will be a major feature of Leadnow's work over the next year.

So the next step starts now: we have to make our votes really count, so that we never have to vote strategically again. Surveys of the Leadnow community and members of the public who support voting reform both show that a key priority is to find a system that ensures more proportional results. True democracy means - among other things - a fair voting system where every vote counts. One where our MPs hold a broad spectrum of views throughout the country. One where parties work together for the benefit of all of us. One where elections are fought to win over the hearts and minds of all of us – not a strategic percentage in just a handful of swing ridings.

The answer to this is proportional representation, and with it a kind of politics that gives people real power to choose who governs us, and what they govern us for. What form of PR, you might ask. That's to be decided. And as the Leadnow community, we can help shape a national conversation about what electoral reform should look like for Canada.

The Liberal Party has been elected with the promise to fix the way we vote within 18 months of gaining power. We celebrate that commitment and we will work to engage people across the country in the process to support a change to a proportional voting system. The real victory for Vote Together will be in achieving this fairer voting system – and in doing so creating a stronger democracy.

“The long-term objective of Vote Together is to make strategic voting obsolete by replacing Canada’s winner-take-all system.”

- Ian Austen, New York Times, Oct. 15 2015

¹⁴ 20 percent said that they share their values entirely and we should support them, while 14 percent said they were waiting to see what the new government does, and only 4 percent said that they share no values and we should fight them like we fought Harper. Full results: <http://www.leadnow.ca/2015/12/we-heard-you/>

¹⁵ Results from 2015 Leadnow community survey: <http://www.leadnow.ca/2015/12/we-heard-you/>

¹⁶ Results from 2015 Leadnow community survey: <http://www.leadnow.ca/2015/12/we-heard-you/>

¹⁷ Canadian Electoral Reform - Public Opinion on Possible Alternatives: http://www.broadbentinstitute.ca/canadian_electoral_reform

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW

This appendix contains an overview of the Vote Together campaign and the actions the Leadnow community took across the country through votetogether.ca, polling, candidate recommendations, and local teams.

Targeted Conservative Swing Ridings

What's a swing riding?

A “swing” riding is a riding where the result was close previously, and there's a reasonable chance it could be different next time. For this campaign, we were interested in swing ridings where the Conservative candidate won by a narrow margin, or where they narrowly came second.

Identifying Conservative Swing Ridings

We identified 72 Conservative Swing Ridings where vote splitting threatened to lead to a Conservative win in a given riding, even if the majority of people voted for change. Ridings were identified as Conservative swings if the Conservative Member of Parliament won in 2011 by less than 15 percent. Ridings where the NDP, Liberal, or Green MP won by less than a 5 percent and the Conservative came in second - meaning the riding was vulnerable to a Conservative victory - were also identified as Conservative swings.

Identifying Conservative Swings in brand new 2015 ridings

Riding boundaries were redrawn for the 2015 election and our analysis of Conservative Swing Ridings was based primarily on the official “redistribution” of the 2011 results by Elections Canada. Past results from the 2006 and 2008 elections were also mapped onto the new 2015 boundaries, giving us a snapshot of what would have happened if the new boundaries were in place over the last three elections.

Building organizing teams in select Conservative Swing Ridings

Our theory of change rested on the idea that we needed teams on the ground in these swing ridings to engage voters face-to-face - in addition to a strong presence online to recruit people to the campaign.

We selected target ridings with field teams run by paid Leadnow organizers based on the following criteria:

- Close margins: we looked at the ridings where the Conservatives won by slim margins in 2011, or where vote splitting could easily let the Conservatives win in 2015
- Local Strength: we looked for ridings where there were already a lot of people in the Leadnow community, or strong community teams already working on the ground
- Don't Back One Party: as a starting point, we looked for a group of ridings that had a balance between opposition party strength in the 2011 election
- Coast-to-Coast: we wanted to make sure that we were focusing efforts on ridings across the country

We tried seeding teams in over a dozen ridings and ultimately channelled resources into the 11 ridings that gained the most momentum. For months leading up to Election Day, local teams canvassed door-to-door and made phone calls in these 11 ridings. There were three stages to the field campaign: build a block of voters, focus support behind the best candidate positioned to defeat the Conservative, and then get out the vote for that candidate.

These 11 target ridings were: Fredericton, Eglinton—Lawrence, Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Willowdale, Kitchener Centre, London North Centre, Elmwood—Transcona, Saskatoon—University, Calgary Centre, Port Moody—Coquitlam, and Vancouver Granville.

We also supported teams in these ridings by leveraging the power of our national community. We built a distributed network of volunteer phone-bankers who used our virtual phone bank to call into Conservative swing ridings from their own homes, supported by volunteer coordinators who sustained the program through the campaign's lifecycle.

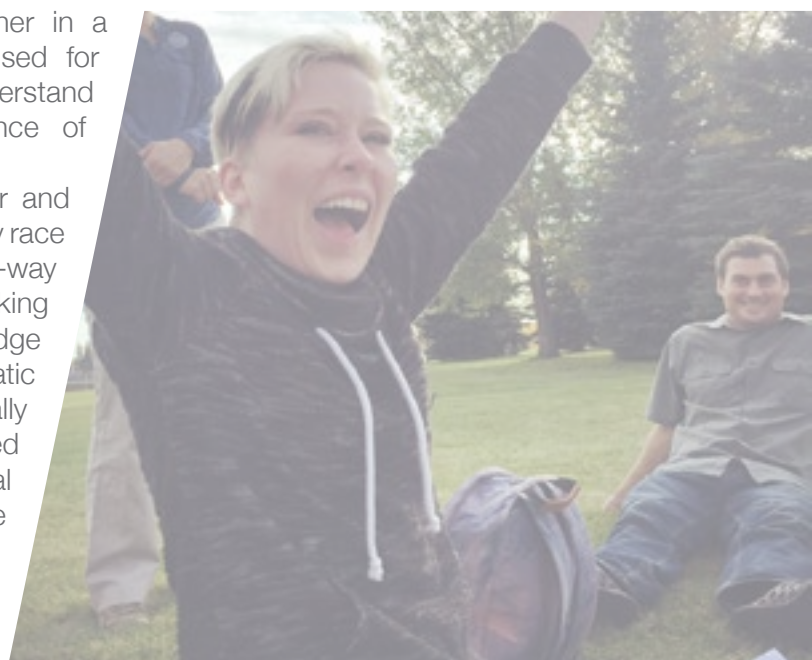
“Whereas most strategic voting websites only provide information, generally about which ridings may be close enough for strategic voting to matter, VoteTogether.ca is taking things a step further this election by going door to door, informing others how to vote strategically.”

- Mike MacDonald, CBC News, Oct. 11 2015

Supporting teams in non-target ridings

Alongside the 11 target ridings that had paid Leadnow staff organizing field teams, Vote Together teams run by local volunteers popped up every week in Conservative swing ridings across the country. These were self-organized local teams, reflecting the model of distributed leadership that Leadnow was cultivating. We provided different levels of support to these teams, based on a series of thresholds and what our resources allowed:

- If 500 people pledged to vote together in a Conservative swing riding, we fundraised for riding-level polling to help local voters understand which candidate has the best chance of defeating the Conservative.
- If 500 people pledged to vote together and local polling indicated it was a clear 2-way race (or if local polling showed it was a three-way race but we had a strong local team working on the ground), we invited local vote pledge signers to participate in a democratic process to decide if they wanted to formally recommend a candidate. If they decided to recommend, we pushed out a social media graphic blitz and rallied the entire Leadnow community in the riding to help get out the vote for the recommended candidate.



Volunteer-led teams were the core of our success. In the last weeks of the campaign, local leaders stepped up in dozens of ridings to help take the campaign to the streets in their communities. Using organizing kits and resource guides created by Leadnow, and with the support of Leadnow's National Organizer, local leaders executed an incredible range of tactics to promote Vote Together in their communities and on a national scale. Some highlights include:

- 34 “Ignite” organizing meetings, hosted in living rooms, community centres and public parks across the country.
- 17 Vote Together rallies, which attracted close to 500 attendees, and made headlines in local newspapers.
- Local fundraising drives which raised thousands of dollars towards local riding-level polling.
- Tens of thousands of flyers distributed, hundreds of vote pledge signatures gathered, and dozens of letters-to-the-editor published.

Election hub: www.votetogether.ca

Our election website, votetogether.ca was a one-stop-shop providing anybody who wanted change with the tools and information needed to defeat the Harper Conservatives. A sophisticated information hub, votetogether.ca was built to empower people in every riding across the country. Users simply had to enter their postal code to be taken to their local riding page where they would find info such as:

- Riding ‘type’: Conservative swing ridings; safe non-Conservative ridings (those with little possibility of a Conservative candidate winning); and “historical or projected Conservative strongholds”
- Past results from the 2006, 2008, and 2011 elections, mapped onto new riding boundaries
- Results from our crowdfunded local polling in the key ridings where the Vote Together campaign was strongest
- Party positions on Leadnow community priorities - a strong democracy, a fair economy and a clean environment
- The most effective actions people could take to defeat the Harper Conservatives -- with opportunities for everyone, but different actions highlighted depending on where they lived. The website provided opportunities for voters living outside swing ridings to focus and channel their resources into the key ridings that would decide the election ridings. Opportunities for action included:
 - Joining a virtual phone team that allowed volunteers to talk to voters in Conservative Swing Ridings from anywhere in the country
 - Joining a local canvass team going door-to-door in Conservative Swing Ridings inviting people to sign the pledge and then later, to help get out the vote for recommended candidates
 - Crowdfunding for local polling, and/or donating to help sustain the campaign
 - In ridings where other organizations (like the Dogwood Initiative, Ecology Ottawa, and One Cowichan) shared our goals and had local teams, we invited supporters to join their campaigns as well

votetogether.ca at a glance

- 1.15 million visits (390,000 in the week before the election)
- 779,000 unique visitors
- 3.1 million page-views
- 1 minute 52 seconds average visit length
- 5,300 volunteer signups

Polling

A key part of the Vote Together strategy was crowdfunding for local polling to help voters understand the state of the local race in their riding. So much had changed since 2011 - and with 30 new ridings, new riding boundaries, and the media's focus on national polling, there was a strong need for more accurate, independent information.

We wanted to give voters the most reliable and up-to-date information possible, so the community could choose the best local candidate to defeat the Conservative in their riding.

In order to crowdfund for a local poll, each riding required a minimum of 500 pledge signers or a commitment to raise the full amount required to pay for the poll. This requirement was necessary to ensure that we had a enough voters united to execute the final stages of the strategy, and have the desired riding-level impact.

We raised over \$100,000 dollars from over 3000 individual donors to conduct our riding-level polling: which resulted in 57 polls (1-3 rounds/riding) of polling in 37 separate ridings. It was the most comprehensive, public local polling ever done by an independent group in Canada.

“Your riding poll close to the end of the campaign was the deciding factor in my vote. Thank you.”

- Fred, Kitchener Centre

The Candidate Recommendation Process

In the final weeks of the campaign, we ran a community-driven candidate recommendation process in 29 Conservative swing ridings, where pledge signers in each riding voted on whether they would like to formally unite behind a candidate.

Leadnow's direction is driven by our community, so while we provided local polling and information about the parties' positions on key issues, it was up to the vote pledge signers in each riding to decide whether to formally recommend one candidate as the best local candidate to defeat the Conservative.

The criteria and thresholds to formally recommend a candidate differed between 2-way and 3-way races. Here's how we ran the process in each:

2-way races:

1. We commissioned local riding-level polls in 37 ridings, and shared other public local polling conducted by reputable polling firms
2. Where a clear front-runner emerged, and the riding had at least 500 Vote Together pledgers, we ran a recommendation process.
3. We asked our community in each riding to vote on whether or not they wanted to recommend the leading candidate (the one best positioned to defeat Harper) in an online ballot.

In sum, 28 2-way race ridings met this criteria, resulting in formal recommendations for 12 NDP candidates and 16 Liberals.

See Appendix II of this report for a detailed breakdown of riding-level results.



3-way races:

In the case of a 3-way race (where the Conservatives, plus two opposition parties were competitive), we only ran the process where our campaign had a team working on the ground, which was able to mobilize the vote around the recommended candidate. The only riding that met this criteria was Vancouver Granville - one of our 11 target ridings. Here's what we did:

- First, we asked our community in Vancouver Granville whether they wanted to proceed to recommend a candidate to rally behind in this tight 3-way race.
- Next, we asked them to vote for which candidate they wanted to back, based on the latest available polling information and a comparison of party platforms, relating to the top-ranked priorities for the Leadnow community -- cooperation, strong democracy, fair economy, and clean environment.
- To move ahead with a recommendation, 3-way races had to meet certain thresholds: 55 percent support for the process, and 55 percent support for either candidate.

The Leadnow community in Vancouver Granville voted in favour of recommending a

“Our volunteers are getting out the vote this weekend with just about every tactic you can imagine. They are canvassing, they are phoning, they are flyering, they are texting.”

- Amara Possian, iPolitics, Oct. 17 2015

¹⁸ For the results of all 57 riding-level polls, visit: <http://www.votetogether.ca/localpolling/>

¹⁹ For the full list of recommended candidates, visit: <http://www.votetogether.ca/recommendations/>

candidate by 96 percent. 61 percent then voted to recommend Mira Oreck of the NDP.

For more information on the recommendation and result in Vancouver Granville, please see Appendix II.

Local teams and National call team

Leadnow mobilized volunteer time across the country to get out the vote for all recommended candidates in our 11 target ridings. Organizers and volunteers had been building blocks of voters in each of these ridings for months preceding Election day. Starting in mid-September, our National Call Team began re-engaging pledge signers, reminding them about the Vote Together process and how to vote.

Our local teams then started deploying an arsenal of tactics to get out the vote: canvassing door-to-door, phoning into swing ridings, delivering letters to key contacts, delivering thousands of flyers and texting Vote Together pledge signers. We also sent recorded voice messages announcing the result of our recommendation process to all the phone numbers listed in the phonebook for our 11 target ridings, and used Facebook advertisements to promote the recommended candidates. On Election day, we encouraged volunteers to get out the vote with the candidate’s campaign.

Through the course of the campaign, our local teams and National Call Team tracked voter intention by asking voters: “if the election were held tomorrow, who would you vote for?”. With this information we targeted voters for whom our recommended candidate was not their first choice, and used a tailored script to make sure they would follow through on their commitment to vote together for the candidate agreed upon by vote pledgers in their riding.

In non-target ridings where we ran a recommendation process but didn’t have a local team, we helped get out the vote for the recommended candidate by pushing out a social media ads, by contacting voters through our distributed phone bank, and by encouraging Leadnow supporters to volunteer on the candidate’s campaign.

APPENDIX II: RIDING-BY-RIDING REPORT

Riding	Pledge Signers	Total Conversations	Leadnow Recommended Candidate	2015 federal election winning candidate	Margin of Victory
Port Moody—Coquitlam (BC)	1,076	3,127	NDP	NDP	2,814

Of our target ridings, Port Moody-Coquitlam was unique because it was the only riding where a non-Conservative candidate was the incumbent. This new suburban riding shaped up to be a 2-way race between the NDP and Conservative candidate.

Our goal was to collect 1,000 vote pledges and we finished with 1,077 pledges. Over the course of the campaign, our team had at least 3,127 conversations and in the final stage we had 813 conversations. During the final stage of the campaign, the National Call Team provided support to the local team by having 515 phone conversations with

people in the riding.

The Port Moody-Coquitlam team is one of the first teams that formed with us. It is a strong team with around 15 highly engaged volunteers and around 50 during engagement peaks. Volunteers worked on our campaign for an average of 7 months, although three of the core team have been engaged for over a year. The bulk of volunteers (86 percent) live in the Port Moody-Coquitlam riding. On average, volunteers who participated in the survey rated their experience with Leadnow 9/10 and their experience with their organizer 10/10.

Vancouver Granville

Riding	Pledge Signers	Total Conversations	Leadnow Recommended Candidate	2015 federal election winning candidate	Margin of Victory
Vancouver Granville (BC)	5,432	16,790	NDP	Liberal	9,177

Vancouver Granville was Vote Together’s flagship riding where we piloted our distributed organizing model. As of October 2013, a paid staff member built and supported a well-trained network of volunteer leaders, who recruited, trained, and coordinated volunteers to canvass, phone bank, and enter data. These 453 volunteers had nearly 17,000 face-to-face or phone conversations with voters and recruited 3,651 of the riding’s 5,433 pledges through face to face conversations with local residents at their doorstep, at farmers markets and on busy street corners. We built a sophisticated, scalable, and sustainable local volunteer network that can now mobilize for longer term impact.



It turned out to be one of the more volatile races we targeted, and due to Vote Together’s history and momentum in the riding, we felt a responsibility to our community to follow through on running the recommendation process even though it looked like the NDP and Liberals could both defeat the Conservatives. Leadnow supporters voted to recommend Mira Oreck of the NDP, who ultimately finished a distant second when, on October 19th, Liberal candidate Jody Wilson-Raybould won with 43.9 percent of the vote. This particular riding presented unique challenges in campaign execution, as well as rich public lessons, particularly with respect to polling and candidate recommendations. We take these very seriously so we’ve undertaken a

detailed report here.

Vancouver Granville was a new riding in the 2015 election made up of parts of 4 former ridings: Vancouver Centre, Vancouver Quadra, Vancouver South, and Vancouver Kingsway. If the riding existed in 2011, the Conservatives would have won with less than 36 percent of the vote (or by 2,279 votes), and voter turnout would have been 58.6 percent. On October 19th, Liberal candidate Jody Wilson-Raybould won with 43.9 percent of the vote, with the NDP's Mira Oreck coming second with 26.9 percent, and voter turnout increasing by 10 percent overall.

Through community surveys, in-person volunteer debriefs, and internal analysis, we have begun evaluating and learning from the Vancouver Granville campaign and understanding the impact on our volunteers, vote pledgers, and Leadnow supporters.

Polling

Between August and a few days before the election, we commissioned three rounds of in-riding polling in Vancouver Granville. The first two rounds of polling in the riding showed a lead for the NDP candidate Mira Oreck and our last round of polling showed a statistical tie between the NDP and Liberals (2 percent apart, with a margin of error on the poll of 4 percent).

Other information presented conflicting analysis about the state of play in Vancouver Granville. First, the threehundredeight.com regional projections indicated the Liberals in the lead. We chose to focus on in-riding polling, as national projections are unreliable in predicting local results, and we believed our local polls would provide the best local information possible. Second, after our recommendation process was underway, and pledge signers had been sent their ballots, Friends of Canadian Broadcasting released a Mainstreet poll that showed the Liberal candidate well in the lead. The Mainstreet poll was in the field before our poll and because our poll was more recent, we decided to post the Mainstreet poll on the Vancouver Granville page of the Vote Together website, but not to adjust the recommendation process that was already underway.

It's difficult to know whether our poll, which suggested a statistical tie, was simply inaccurate, or whether it was conducted too early to capture the Liberal surge in the riding. What is clear is that the poll commissioned by Leadnow did not provide an accurate prediction of the electoral dynamics in Vancouver Granville.

Recommendation Process

Leadnow takes direction from our community and in all target ridings, followed the same recommendation process that ultimately left the decision in the hands of the local community - and specifically the Vote Together pledge signers who had committed to act based on the outcome. Participatory decision-making is in our organizational DNA and we felt a responsibility to follow through on letting everybody who pledged their vote make the final

²⁰ We began knocking on doors, talking to voters about the new Vancouver Granville riding in October 2013, and started signing people up for the Vote Together pledge in November 2014.

²¹ Our target was to collect between 5,000 and 6,000 vote pledges.

call about if they wanted to unite behind a candidate and if yes, which candidate. However, we should have advised the Leadnow community about how divisive the recommendation could be in the case of Vancouver Granville.

The process was designed to consider which candidates could win, and where they stood on the issues the Leadnow community cares about. If the polling, in a target riding where we had a local team, showed a 3-way race, where either the Liberal or NDP candidate could win, we would:

- Launch the recommendation process as close to the election as possible so vote pledgers could have the most up to date local information about the state of the race
- Ask pledge signers if we should we go ahead with a recommendation
- If yes, ask pledge signers which candidate should we back, based on both the available polling information and a comparison of party platforms on the top-ranked priorities for the Leadnow community -- cooperation, strong democracy, fair economy, and clean environment.

We launched this process as planned, and vote pledgers in Vancouver Granville voted to recommend Mira Oreck of the NDP. Over 2,000 vote pledgers in Vancouver Granville took part in the process:

- 96 percent of participants voted that we should proceed to make a recommendation
- 61 percent preferred NDP candidate Mira Oreck, and 39 percent preferred Jody Wilson-Raybould.

What we learned

- **We should have highlighted that the race presented a risky and divisive situation, and advised our community to vote against making a formal recommendation.** On the recommendation ballot we provided to vote pledgers, we included information from our final round of polling and information on the party's positions on the issues. We failed, however, to provide our community with adequate context and analysis to make an informed decision. Were we to do this again in Vancouver Granville, we would highlight the limitations and volatility of riding-level polling, and the risks involved in making a recommendation in a 3 way race -- where making the wrong call could lead to vote splitting or political fallout. Given the additional context and analysis, we would also advise our community to not recommend a candidate at all before asking them to make the ultimate decision.
- **Political ties, perceived or real, can impact our supporters' trust in the organization. We should have recognized accusations of bias were inevitable, and been more proactive and transparent in addressing them.** Throughout the campaign and depending on the riding, we were accused of being a front for the Liberals and the NDP. In Vancouver-Granville, there was some speculation that we recommended the NDP candidate because of her previous working relationship with Leadnow's Executive Director, Lyndsay Poaps. Lyndsay's relationship with Mira Oreck did not impact the recommendation process or outcome in any way however we could have more proactively clarified that it would have no bearing on the decision. As a member-driven organization, we take the responsibility of earning and keeping the trust of our community very seriously, and hope this report begins the process of open and transparent dialogue needed to regain trust with any supporters who felt misled through this campaign.
- **Our strategy relied too heavily on local polling, which was volatile and challenging to use as an accurate tool in Vancouver Granville.** Conducting riding-level polls that



include non-English speakers and cell-phone-only households is prohibitively expensive, and Vancouver Granville is a linguistically-diverse riding with a large proportion of cell-phone-only households. This meant that the results excluded significant demographics of the riding's population, which may have contributed to inaccuracies in the poll results.

- **We should have more clearly communicated the mechanics of our recommendation process earlier in the campaign.** Late in the campaign, some pledge signers expressed confusion or concern about the number of participants required to meet “quorum” in the recommendation process, and about the percentage of support from vote pledgers a candidate needed to win the Leadnow community’s recommendation. If we had clearly communicated the details of the process earlier we would have fostered greater trust with our community, and broader understanding of the campaign.
- **We should have clearly communicated the data requirements to participate in the recommendation process, and made more efforts to update and correct our data.** To ensure a secure process, we required an e-mail address and an accurate address and postal code for individuals to participate. As a result, individuals for whom we had no accurate street address or email were not able to access our recommendation process. Had we intentionally reached out to individuals with incomplete data early in the campaign, we could have included more people in our process.

- **The timing of the recommendation process had implications for the viability of the strategy.** We waited until the final week before the election to recommend a candidate to offer the most up-to-date state-of-play in the riding. As a result, we did not have a recommended candidate at the time of advanced polls, which caused a lot of frustration for voters who planned to vote early and expected guidance from Leadnow. Despite delaying the recommendation until the last week, it was still too early to capture the Liberal surge.

Conclusion

In Vancouver-Granville, an unprecedented number of people knocked on doors in the pouring rain, opened up their houses for community meetings, recruited their friends, worked the phones, and entered data. The scale of the field campaign in Vancouver Granville confirms a core assumption of our organizing model -- that training and empowering committed volunteers to take on leadership roles can help movements grow far beyond the constraints of traditional staff-driven models. The grassroots people power we built together will continue to have an impact well beyond this election, and by taking the time to learn from this campaign, we can move forward better organized, stronger, and more prepared to push for the long-term structural changes we need.

Failing to elect our recommended candidate in Vancouver Granville was a disappointment but we are thrilled that the Conservatives did not win the riding, and believe the Honourable Jody Wilson-Raybould is a strong Member of Parliament, Minister of Justice, and Attorney General of Canada.

We are committed to learning from this experience and can identify two key factors which played a role in the outcome. First, our strategy hinged on an assumption that in-riding polling could, at a minimum, identify the relative positioning of the parties, but in Vancouver Granville we got it wrong. Second, we launched our candidate recommendation process, without proactively addressing likely accusations of bias and without providing adequate analysis of the volatility of the race and the risks of recommending a candidate in that context.

While the electoral outcome did not reflect our recommendation, the incredible volunteer-led organizing infrastructure built through this campaign will be an essential part of the people-power we need to continue to campaign for long-term changes.

Calgary-Centre

Riding	Pledge Signers	Total Conversations	Leadnow Recommended Candidate	2015 federal election winning candidate	Margin of Victory
Calgary Centre (AB)	964	1,983	Liberal	Liberal	904

Working on the Vote Together campaign in Calgary-Centre, we set out to collect 1,000 vote pledges. By having around 2,679 conversations between February and October, we were able to collect 962 vote pledges. After building the bloc of voters, we shifted to re-engage pledge signers and to get out the vote, where we had another 428 conversations.

During this time, the National Call Team had an additional 318 conversations with pledgers in Calgary-Centre.

Calgary-Centre proved to be an very interesting place to organize. The urban riding had potential to be a 3-way race early on, but it turned into a 2-way race between the Liberal and Conservative candidates. The Leadnow model of organizing was unfamiliar to many, which posed challenges to build up the team and initiate regular outreach earlier in the campaign. The campaign was energized by the early writ drop, which motivated many new volunteers to get involved.

The core team of volunteers has remained relatively stable since February, with a range of 5 to 8 people engaged regularly. In the late summer, we had a group of 10 to 15 volunteers regularly engaged, which was boosted to around 30 people in the fall. On average average, volunteers

²³ After we launched our recommendation process, Mainstreet / Friends of Canadian Broadcasting released a poll that showed the Liberal candidate well in the lead. Since the Mainstreet poll was older than the Leadnow commissioned Environics poll that showed the NDP and Liberal candidates in a statistical tie, we added it to the Vancouver-Granville riding page and continued with the recommendation process. In hindsight, we should have paused the process, sent the information to vote pledge signers (actively highlighting the risk of getting it wrong, and the conflicting nature of the polls) and then let them continue with deciding whether or not, and who to recommend.

²⁴ As a political organization, staff at Leadnow maintain many relationships with individuals from all partisan backgrounds and different allied organizations. This type of relationship-building is essential to creating a broad-based movement to make progress on critical issues.

²⁵ The decision to recommend was made by vote pledgers in the riding, and we picked Vancouver-Granville as a target riding and began organizing on the ground long before either Mira Oreck won the NDP nomination, or Lyndsay Poaps was hired as Leadnow's Executive Director.



were engaged with the campaign for 6 months. No members of the core team lived in the riding, but were hugely motivated to ensure a non-Conservative MP was elected in a city that had not seen one in over 40 years. Of those who responded to the survey, they rated their experience with Leadnow a 9/10 and their experience with the staff organizer 10/10.

Saskatoon-University

Riding	Pledge Signers	Total Conversations	Leadnow Recommended Candidate	2015 federal election winning candidate	Margin of Victory
Saskatoon—University (SK)	568	904	NDP	Conservative	4,474

Saskatoon-University was a new riding in 2015, and the redistribution of boundaries saw that the riding shifted from containing both rural and urban areas to being entirely urban. The race shaped up to be a 2-way race between the Conservative party and the NDP.

In Saskatoon, we got to work much later in the game than in other ridings. The persistence and hard work of a few core volunteers over the summer established the foundation for us to pull in a large number new volunteers in the fall. To see a team develop so quickly and demonstrate such commitment to getting out to talk about the campaign, was very unique.

In Saskatoon-University, we set a pledge goal of 500, which we were able to surpass to reach 566. Between our first canvass in July to our last canvass in October, we were able to have approximately 1,335 conversations on the doorstep and out at festivals. When we pivoted from building a bloc of voters to re-engaging pledge signers and GOTV, we had 286 more conversations.

Our team started out quite small, with around four volunteers engaged over the summer. In September, we experienced a boost in volunteer interest, with around 15 to 20 new volunteers participating in the campaign until the election. Our team was made up of people from all three Saskatoon ridings, with just over half living in our target riding. Volunteers were engaged for an average of 2.37 months. Of those who responded to the volunteer survey, the volunteer experience received an average rating of 9/10 and the rating for the Leadnow organizer was 9.75/10.

Elmwood-Transcona

Riding	Pledge Signers	Total Conversations	Leadnow Recommended Candidate	2015 federal election winning candidate	Margin of Victory
Elmwood—Transcona (MB)	1,685	6,271	NDP	NDP	61

When the dust finally settled in Elmwood-Transcona, NDP candidate Daniel Blaikie had defeated Conservative incumbent Lawrence Toet by 61 votes - the narrowest margin of victory anywhere in the country.

The Elmwood-Transcona Team collected 1674 pledges in the riding, exceeding an the initial target of 1566, with 1384 (83 percent) coming from face-to-face conversations in the field. During the “get out the vote” phase of the campaign almost all these pledge signers were contacted a second time, with 1664 direct contacts made in the final week.

The canvass team in Elmwood Transcona looked to engage non-voters in this campaign by focusing efforts to lower-income polls with historically low turnout rates. Extra effort was made to contact pledge signers in these areas during the GOTV period. It’s possible that this focus contributed to the 10 percent increase in voter turnout in the riding from 2011.

In all, we had 130 volunteers, with a core organizing team of 10 people who met frequently and devoted between 5 and 15 hours a week to Vote Together. The number of active volunteers grew substantially in the final month of the campaign. According to the post-election feedback survey, the vast majority of volunteers had a positive experience working on the campaign. They felt included and respected and saw that their contributions were valued and important. Volunteers also understood how their work fit into the broader Vote Together strategy and many people are committed to getting involved with future Leadnow Campaigns.

Etobicoke-Lakeshore

Riding	Pledge Signers	Total Conversations	Leadnow Recommended Candidate	2015 federal election winning candidate	Margin of Victory
Etobicoke—Lakeshore (ON)	1,454	4,951	Liberal	Liberal	13,834

This race was won by our endorsed candidate, James Maloney, with approximately 54 percent of the vote over the Conservative incumbent Bernard Trottier, who finished with 32 percent.

The pledge target for Etobicoke-Lakeshore was set at 1442. The team collected 1411 pledges over approximately 10 months, from early December 2014 to October 2015. The team contacted 3437 people over that span of time, primarily via door to door canvassing and tabling at markets on the weekends. During the GOTV period from October 7th – 18th, we made direct contact with 1121 people again and dropped approximately 4000 flyers.

Etobicoke-Lakeshore is part of the city of Toronto, but is considered an ‘inner-ring suburb’, since it is not very accessible to downtown by transit and is seen as a distinct community. The riding was a two-way Liberal-Conservative race for most of the campaign, except for early in the campaign when the NDP had momentum.

“I felt welcomed, useful, valued, like a part of an effective, caring, smart, well-informed, sensible, important group of exceptional people.”
- Cara, Toronto

The Etobicoke team had a core team of highly committed members that made slow but steady progress over the ten months we worked there. We established a canvassing routine early on and stuck to it, although the events were not always attended by large numbers of people. The team was made up of a relatively high number of people who lived in the riding (about 40 percent) but also attracted volunteers from Mississauga, Oakville and Parkdale areas. The total number of people who engaged in the campaign at least once was 94, and many of them for 4-6 months.

On average, volunteers rated their experience volunteering with Leadnow 8.3/10, and their experience working with Leadnow staff 9/10. 95 percent said “yes” or “maybe” to volunteering with us again.

Eglinton-Lawrence

Riding	Pledge Signers	Total Conversations	Leadnow Recommended Candidate	2015 federal election winning candidate	Margin of Victory
Eglinton—Lawrence (ON)	1,613	5,668	Liberal	Liberal	5,893

When this team launched, the intended area of focus was Willowdale. We briefly changed course to Eglinton-Lawrence but switched back to Willowdale when it looked like Eve Adams would become the Liberal candidate in Eglinton-Lawrence. When she lost the nomination, we moved back into the riding and eventually endorsed Liberal Marco Mendicino, who won with 49 percent of the vote over Joe Oliver, who got 43 percent.

The pledge target for Eglinton-Lawrence was set at an ambitious 1599 and we ended up with 1569, almost entirely from door to door canvasses. It’s worth noting that we didn’t hold our first canvass in Eglinton-Lawrence until August 11th, so most of those pledges were collected in less than 2 months (though we did start off with about 169 online pledges). Over that period, the team made contact with 5258 people. During the GOTV period we directly contacted 1823 people in the riding and dropped approximately 8000 flyers.

Eglinton-Lawrence is a diverse and very wealthy area in north Toronto. The riding is traditionally Liberal. The riding was a two-way race, though the NDP did run a high profile candidate, former Saskatchewan finance minister Andrew Thomson.

This riding gained a lot of media attention because of the controversial nature of the Liberal nomination race during the winter and summer months, coupled with high profile of the Conservative incumbent, Finance Minister Joe Oliver. The Eglinton-Lawrence team was profiled several times by local and national media outlets. Our rapid success and impact was possible because a strong, well-trained core team had already formed during the early Willowdale days. Many volunteers were attracted to the campaign from downtown Toronto because it was the closest high-profile Conservative swing riding to downtown and was fairly accessible on transit. The vast majority (>80 percent) of people on the team were not from the riding. In the final stretch we had a true ‘hockey stick’ moment, with dozens of new volunteers coming out during the GOTV period. In total, the campaign attracted over 222 people to participate at least once. Most were engaged for 2 months or less.

On average, volunteers rated their experience volunteering with Leadnow 8.4/10 and rated their experience working with staff 9/10. 95 percent said “yes” or “maybe” to volunteering with us again.

Willowdale

Riding	Pledge Signers	Total Conversations	Leadnow Recommended Candidate	2015 federal election winning candidate	Margin of Victory
Willowdale (ON)	552	1,397	Liberal	Liberal	7,395

We also made a recommendation in Willowdale for the Liberal candidate Ali Ehsassi, who won with 53 percent of the vote over Chungsen Leung, who finished with 37 percent. The team here had a very difficult time getting momentum going. It was difficult to attract volunteers to the riding because of its distance from downtown and lack of interesting target. The riding is condo-heavy and very linguistically diverse, making it hard for the primarily English-speaking volunteers from out of riding to connect with as many voters. Like in Eglinton-Lawrence, the vast majority of our team was from out of riding. Once the decision was made to switch to Eglinton-Lawrence, the same group of people who organized in Willowdale essentially pivoted





to Eglinton-Lawrence. However, we did still organize regular weekly events there throughout the summer and fall to continue pledge collection.

Once we decided to pivot, we moved our pledge target down to 581. We ended up collecting 552 pledges. We contacted 1281 people (though this number may actually be much higher, since we did a lot of street canvassing here and contacts are not recorded as accurately on the street). During the GOTV period this riding was lower priority, but we managed to reconnect with 251 people and our National Call Team reached 123 more. We also dropped 700 flyers.

Approximately 40 people were engaged in the campaign while it was in Willowdale. Since they are the same team that worked in Eglinton-Lawrence, their satisfaction with volunteering and experience working with Leadnow staff can be found in the Eglinton-Lawrence section.

London North Centre

Riding	Pledge Signers	Total Conversations	Leadnow Recommended Candidate	2015 federal election winning candidate	Margin of Victory
London North Centre (ON)	1,149	2,791	Liberal	Liberal	9,742

In 2011, London North Centre was a textbook of how localized centre-left vote splitting that Vote Together was designed to prevent. 63 percent of London North Centre voters did not support Conservative incumbent in 2011. In that election many locals thought the Liberals were poised to win back their ridings, however, just enough votes shifted to the NDP during

the Orange Wave that swept Canada to send a Harper Conservative to Ottawa.

A small team of four concerned local voters formed in November of 2014 to discuss how a group like Leadnow could help them take action to prevent a local repeat of 2011. Although momentum was slow to grow over the winter and spring, more than 50 local volunteers took action with us in London North Centre between August and October 19th. Our original pledge target for London North Centre was 770 - a number we surpassed and promptly bumped to 1000 - due to the anticipated closeness of this local race.

By the end of the campaign we had collected 1147 pledges - or 148 percent of our original target. 424 of our pledges were collected at doorsteps. In the final week of the campaign, our volunteers communicated directly with 90 percent of our local pledge signers and ultimately chose to pivot resources into pulling vote in low turnout neighbourhoods.

The Conservatives targeted London North Centre and London West during the final week of the election in an unsuccessful last ditch effort to hold onto two of the city's three seats. Stephen Harper conducted two radio interviews in the city during October and hosted a massive rally. However, our own efforts, including bringing David Suzuki to town, helped counter their message of fear with one of people powered change.

Kitchener Centre

Riding	Pledge Signers	Total Conversations	Leadnow Recommended Candidate	2015 federal election winning candidate	Margin of Victory
Kitchener Centre (ON)	1,926	5,519	Liberal	Liberal	9,594

Our team in Kitchener Centre came together in late 2014. We set a team goal of collecting 1850 pledges and ultimately surpassed it after collecting 1921 pledges - the second highest number in the country. 1,141 of our pledges in Kitchener Centre were collected through door-to-door canvassing and at local festivals. The team also collected nearly a thousand additional pledges across Kitchener, Waterloo, Cambridge and Guelph.

Many of our volunteers came into Kitchener Centre from the closely connected riding of Waterloo. Most of our over one hundred active volunteers came to our campaign out of frustration with their lack of regionally reflective representation in the Harper Government. Although Kitchener-Waterloo region is Canada's major technology hub, the Conservative incumbents in the city were all policy lightweights and perennial backbenchers who, many local voters indicated, had failed to adequately represent this crucial region in Ottawa.

Kitchener Centre is an urban, progressive riding which is the Canadian home to tech giants including Google. University of Waterloo and Wilfred Laurier University are located in next door Waterloo - a less than 15 minute walk from downtown Kitchener. The region attracts engineers, students, academics and wide-range or white collar professionals - although some neighbourhoods still retain their historical blue-collar composition.

Our campaign in Kitchener went exceptionally well. Media tactics including Lemonade Stands to Stop Harper attended by CTV News, canvasses attended by the Globe and Mail and a well-attended speaker panel brought strong regional attention to the campaign.

However, it wasn't until the final week of the election that the Liberals emerged as the local frontrunner. Our polling in August and September showed a tight three-way race between the Liberals, NDP and Conservatives. The Liberals pulled ahead after Thanksgiving weekend and our team was able to build momentum around our community recommendation with about 850 phone calls, 277 doorstep conversations and close to 3000 flyer drops in final four days of the campaign alone.

Fredericton

Riding	Pledge Signers	Total Conversations	Leadnow Recommended Candidate	2015 federal election winning candidate	Margin of Victory
Fredericton (NB)	1,045	2,791	Liberal	Liberal	9,742

Our team in Fredericton formed during the winter of 2015 with an initial target of collecting about 1900 pledges - a number which was later reduced to 1050. Overall we collected 1043 pledges, narrowly missing our pledge target by just 7. Beginning in May a dedicated crew of 25 volunteers collected 665 pledges at doorsteps, through local phone banking and with a prominent weekly booth set up outside the Boyce Farmers Market along "Democracy Row".

At the start of 2014, Fredericton appeared to be an unlikely candidate for a successful Vote Together Campaign. Conservative incumbent Keith Ashfield was re-elected in 2011 with 47 percent of the vote and had served at various levels of local government for over a decade until that point. Fredericton is a unique mix of urban and rural which encompasses two First Nations, two universities and is home to a provincial legislature. Fredericton has a history of electing Red Tories and Blue Grits.

However, the 2014 New Brunswick Provincial Election exposed major weaknesses in the conservative organizing capacity throughout the province. The unexpected election of David Koon in South Fredericton, the province's first Green MLA, and a surge in NDP and Liberal support throughout the capital region turned what should have been a safe seat for Keith Ashfield into a legitimate four-way race.

Although our local polling in August and September showed the Liberals to be a strong frontrunner, all four parties targeted Fredericton as a pivotal region seat that they would need to pick up in order to form government. A perfect storm for vote splitting persisted since in September it appeared that the NDP were on the cusp of surging regionally and locally and in October the Greens appeared poised to rocket ahead. It wasn't until after our final round of polling that it became clear that Fredericton was a clear pickup for the Liberals.

Working under these circumstances was challenging for our team as all four local parties collectively maximized most of the city’s volunteer capacity. Neighbourhood by neighbourhood, our campaign was locally contentious as Green and NDP supporters expressed anxiety that the local Stop Harper vote was hampering the emergence of a citywide Orange or Green surge.

Honourable mentions

Edmonton-Griesbach

We had a team organizing in Edmonton-Griesbach from January to June of 2015. After getting some traction in February and March, the campaign came to a halt during the Alberta Provincial election. We lost many volunteers to the provincial campaign and following the victory of the NDP, we saw many volunteers shift to support the federal NDP candidate in our target riding. Despite the persistence and hardwork of our dedicated volunteers, we were unable to revive the campaign. In September, the team got to work once again, hosting an Ignite event as well as outreach activities to promote election awareness in both Edmonton-Griesbach and Edmonton-Centre.

Regina-Lewvan

In November 2014, we recruited volunteers to support a campaign in Regina-Lewvan. After some initial interest and organizing meetings, we were unable to get a team off the ground. We worked through early 2015 to the summer trying to recruit volunteers to kickstart the campaign, but were unsuccessful and therefore pivoted our focus in Saskatchewan to Saskatoon-University.





ABOUT

A virtual copy of this report is available at www.votetogether.ca/report.

The Vote Together campaign was a project of Leadnow and connected people who wanted change with the tools and information they needed to select, support, and unite behind the best local candidates to defeat the Harper Conservatives. To be a part of what comes next, visit www.leadnow.ca.

CONTACT

If you have any feedback that you would like to add, as a Leadnow supporter or observer of the Vote Together campaign, please get in touch at leadnow@leadnow.ca

If you are a reporter with a press inquiry, please email media@leadnow.ca or call us at **1-855-532-3609 ext. 4**.