

# Santos secures second term in Point Douglas

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Melissa Martin



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Vivian Santos is headed back to city hall for her second term as the councillor for Point Douglas.

The incumbent comfortably held off challenges from businessman Moe El Tassi and former real estate broker Joe Pereira.

In a victory speech to her supporters Wednesday night, Santos said it had been a “challenging” four years, especially as the COVID-19 pandemic made it difficult to hold in-person community events. As a result, some constituents felt she hadn’t been visible enough during that time, Santos said, vowing to focus her second term on building those connections.

“Moving forward, my reassurances to you, the residents of Point Douglas: I will not let that happen again,” she said, after celebrating with supporters at her headquarters in the Meadows West neighbourhood. “I will be more readily available. I have plans to open a constituency office, so that I will be more accessible within the community.”



MELISSA MARTIN / WINNIPEG FREE PRESS  
Vivian Santos celebrates her return to council.

Santos also pledged to “continue and finish” projects she’d started, including investing in area playgrounds and building a new gym at Tyndall Park Community Centre. For her second term, she plans to advocate for \$1 public transit fare, the creation of more affordable and low-barrier housing, and solutions for garbage problems plaguing public spaces.

“We heard it loud and clear from thousands of community members: they want to see investments in community services, in the environment, and in the arts,” Santos said. “They want what I want: a balanced budget. But citizens are asking for more than a fiscally balanced budget. They’re asking for a socially balanced budget.”

Santos was born in Portage la Prairie, the daughter of a single mother who had immigrated from Taiwan, and grew up in Winnipeg. Prior to running for office, she worked as a staff member for then-mayor Brian Bowman, and executive assistant to then-Point Douglas councillor Mike Pagtakhan.

When Pagtakhan didn't run in 2018, Santos ran for, and comfortably won, the vacant seat.

“I will be more readily available. I have plans to open a constituency office, so that I will be more accessible within the community.”—Vivian Santos

Her first term was not always smooth sailing.

In 2020, Santos was forced to resign from the Winnipeg Police Board after failing a background check, reportedly due to a family friendship with a man allegedly involved in the drug trade. The next year, she was booted from her role as acting deputy mayor, due to her status as the only unvaccinated city councillor.

Those issues didn't come up at the doorsteps in her ward during the campaign, Santos said.

“When I was out door-knocking, nobody actually mentioned anything,” she said. “They saw my face, they knew who I was, and they supported me right away. So that felt very, very good.”

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Melissa Martin reports and opines for the Winnipeg Free Press.

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History

Updated on Wednesday, October 26, 2022 9:46 PM CDT: Adds comments, reaction from campaign headquarters.

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