

PLATFORM: Meet the Candidates

North Vancouver Chamber – Questions for Candidates – Federal Election 2021



LES JICKLING

Candidate – North Vancouver
CONSERVATIVE PARTY OF CANADA

Please note that these responses from each Candidate to questions posed by the North Vancouver Chamber are complete and unedited.

Les Jickling is an independent consultant and former healthcare executive who spent many years in the technology and biotechnology sectors. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Political Science and Master's degree in Business Administration. Throughout his life he has been active in the community with various athletic and service organizations.

Les lives in the Edgemont area of North Vancouver with his wife Michelle, son Benjamin and dog Max. His favourite ways to relax on the weekend are hiking the Grouse Grind or enjoying many of the North Shore's excellent trails.

ECONOMIC RECOVERY FROM COVID-19

Q: What will you do to support economic recovery from COVID-19 in the hardest hit employers, business sectors and members of our community in North Vancouver?

COVID-19 has been devastating for Canadians who have lost loved ones, lost jobs, been tested financially, emotionally and mentally. Hot spots in North Vancouver were particularly hard hit by the pandemic and it has been a tough time for many.

I will work hard for businesses and members of our community recovering from the pandemic. The first step is getting our community healthy. Vaccines are our best protection and we must continue to follow public health measures. The next step is to ensure that our residents are mentally healthy. A Conservative government under Erin O'Toole will make historic investments in mental health increasing federal health transfer payments to 6% annually and injecting \$60 billion dollars over 10 years into public health and investing another \$150 million in charities and non-profits delivering mental health programming.

Canada's Recovery Plan calls for heavy investment in innovation, nurturing early stage companies and providing the tools and supports for existing companies to flourish. Our Job Surge plan will pay 25% of the salary of newly hired employees and up to 50% if that employee has been out of work for more than



6 months. A 5% tax-credit will be offered to businesses investing in new capital equipment. Loans of up to \$200,000 will be made available with up to 25% of the loan being forgiven. Private investments in small business up to \$100,000 will be encouraged by offering a 25% tax-credit. Funds have also been earmarked to get women back into the workplace who have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic.

EASE OF DOING BUSINESS (regulations, taxes, supply chain, access to capital).

Q: If elected, what would you within your role as the federally elected official to help remove these barriers and support our local business and employment sector?

In my view, the Conservative Party has always been supportive of small business by creating the conditions under which entrepreneurs can create new ventures and helping existing companies flourish. As someone that has worked for 26 years in leadership roles in highly regulated industries such as telecommunications and healthcare, I am acutely aware of how well-intentioned restrictions can sometimes pose unnecessary impediments. We sometimes refer to these barriers as red-tape. With respect to red-tape reduction, the Conservative platform has many specific measures to eliminate barriers so that businesses across the country can flourish. When our businesses flourish, we see an increase in economic activity, a surge in employment, we get our people back to work and we increase our national revenue without adding any new taxes.

A Conservative government will appoint a minister for red-tape reduction to identify areas where unnecessary regulation can be eliminated. We will implement an office of regulatory best practices to ensure that steps are implemented in a measured, reasonable and thoughtful manner. We will implement a fast track certification process to allow products to be brought into Canada that have already been approved in comparable jurisdictions. We will take steps to overhaul the tax system to make it simpler, fairer, making Canada more competitive. We will also work to reduce unnecessary inter-provincial trade barriers.

CLIMATE CHANGE/ENVIRONMENT.

Q: What is your personal position on climate change, and your party's commitment on the most important steps that need to be taken to address climate change and the environment?

I have listened to the concerns of the residents of North Vancouver and a recurring theme has been climate change and what steps a Conservative government will take to address this challenge.

Let me begin by stating that climate change is real, climate change is human-caused and climate change is a priority for me and for our leader Erin O'Toole. Specific details on the Conservative climate plan can be found in Canada's Recovery Plan. There are 5 main pillars in the Conservative climate plan but in broad strokes our plan calls for investments in green technology solutions, including alternative forms of energy such as wind, solar, renewable gas and hydrogen as well as addressing emissions.



The Conservative climate plan would provide tax incentives for zero-emission vehicles including electric cars and the proliferation of EV charging stations. BC has had the fastest adoption of electric vehicles in Canada and we see that trend accelerating on the North Shore. Our plan will also invest in many natural climate solutions, carbon capture, clean buildings, tighter regulations for industrial emitters and cross-border carbon tariffs.

The Conservative climate plan will build a greener future while adding jobs and driving economic activity. The Conservative climate plan has been validated by Canada's preeminent environmental consulting firm Navius Research, who have confirmed our plan will get us to our Paris 2030 targets. I am committed to meeting our Paris agreement and we have a plan that has been validated to get us there.

STAFF – ATTRACTION & RETENTION OF SKILLED STAFF.

Q: What is your position on this, and what steps would you take to get the underemployed back into the work force and support the social and economic potential this holds for our community?

On thousands of doorsteps across the riding of North Vancouver I have listened to the concerns of business professionals and small business owners. One of the most prevalent concerns is that at a time when national unemployment is high, hovering around 7.5%, they just cannot find the people they need to work in their businesses. I know this is a key concern for many residents of North Vancouver and is a top priority for me.

The first thing we need to do is create the conditions for businesses to flourish by incenting employers to hire back employees and winding down in a responsible and compassionate manner some of the individual supports so that it is attractive for employees to go back to work. We also must be mindful of other variables such as family commitments, childcare and home schooling that have disproportionately impacted women. The Conservative plan has money earmarked specifically for women's employment measures including funds available to start home-based businesses.

The Job Surge plan under the Conservative platform offers incentives to small businesses by paying 25% of the salary of newly hired employees and up to 50% if that person has been out of work for 6 months or more. An initiative to examine foreign credentialing would also be explored to allow skilled workers to be recognized for their skills. Funding will be made available for training and retraining programs so that prospective employees can pursue new and more fulfilling occupations. I am committed to supporting small businesses by creating the environment for small businesses to flourish and getting Canadians back to work.

TRANSPORTATION.

Q: What would you do to ensure public transportation investments are made that provide better access to and across the North Shore to support the needs of North Vancouver, but also ensure the future of our local employers and the regional, provincial and national interests they support?



Let me begin by stating that we have a transportation issue on the North Shore. Anyone who has attempted to commute across the riding during peak hours knows this is a source of intense frustration for many residents of North Vancouver. Even bicycle commuters are negatively impacted by traffic congestion and bridge closures.

In conversation with our District Mayor I learned some relief will soon be felt in the area of the Lower-Lynn interchange. This may place the spotlight on other areas that will then need improvements. It is a crucial piece of the puzzle that impacts quality of life on the North Shore and we have the opportunity with serious enhancements to drive economic activity, reduce emissions and more efficiently move workers to and from the North Shore. This is a key component not only of the housing strategy but also in the quest to find and attract key talent.

Canada's Recovery Plan calls for significant investments in infrastructure that in addition to tackling transportation woes, can also provide a source of jobs and economic activity. I am personally committed to fighting for infrastructure projects on the North Shore as is our leader, Erin O'Toole. The Conservative government is committed to building world-class public transit and transportation networks to connect people and communities.

HOUSING.

Q: Do you support additional housing in North Vancouver? In what form and density should it take, and what would you do to ensure active and urgent federal support for these housing challenges in North Vancouver?

A top concern for North Vancouver residents is affordable housing. Canada is in an affordable housing crisis and nowhere is it more acutely felt than right here on the North shore. In the last year we have seen property values skyrocket, climbing in some cases 15-20% which has had a cascading impact on the price of rental stock. This has driven many young families off of the North Shore. The acceleration in housing has been caused by a multitude of factors including low interest rates, government stimulus, 3.7% inflation, property flipping, money laundering, foreign speculation and a lack of housing supply.

I am committed to affordable housing in North Vancouver and the Conservative platform has many meaningful planks to address affordable housing. Under a Conservative government we will build 1 million new homes across the country in the next three years. We will invest in infrastructure and transportation to connect homes with the places where people work. We will allocate 15% of the 37,000 unused or under-used Federal buildings to create affordable housing units. We will Incent developers to invest in rental units by offering attractive tax credits. We will root out the corruption that leads to inflation of real-estate prices. We will revisit qualification criteria to eliminate unnecessary roadblocks for mortgages. Conservatives will tackle affordable housing without taxing the equity in people's homes.

