

## MEET THE CANDIDATES

North Vancouver Chamber – Questions for Candidates – Municipal Election 2022  
(responses unedited)



### Clayton Welwood

Councillor Candidates – District of North Vancouver

I grew up in North Vancouver, and have lived in the Lynnmour neighbourhood with my wife and children for the past 9 years. I attended Trent University (BA, International Development) and Capilano University (Certificate, Business Admin), and work in the construction industry as a project manager. I recently served as Treasurer for the PAC at my children's school, and have served on the boards of various volunteer organizations over the years.

#### Investment in Public Transit

*Q1: If elected, what will you do to advance local, provincial and federal government commitments to transit infrastructure investments to, from and across North Vancouver?*

The forecast investments in public transit by all levels of government appear adequate relative to population growth. However, ridership is still low, and it's not uncommon to see empty busses roaming the north shore. As long as the marginal cost of a bus trip is higher than that in a private automobile, people will use their cars for most trips. The only way that changes is if we begin pricing the roads. A system of modest, but variable tolls at chokes points (the Burrard Inlet crossings, as well as on arterial north shore roads) will incentivize people to choose alternative forms of transportation during periods of peak congestion. Public transit is a major alternative, but not the only one. With road pricing, carpooling, ridesharing, cycling, and even private transit (for-profit coaches or minibuses) start to make more economic sense. If it's only fair that the users of a public good be the main ones to pay for it, road pricing prompts motorists to pay for the roads, and boosts the number of riders paying fares on public transit, hopefully reducing the burden on taxpayers.

#### Access to Primary Health Care

*Q2: If elected, what will you do, in the short and long term, to support better access to primary physical and mental health care (doctors, dentists, etc.) in North Vancouver?*

Healthcare is a provincial jurisdiction, and the BC government had better realize that an overhaul its Soviet-style system is long overdue. Once BC is in line with other developed nations in earth allowing some private delivery of essential medical care for all citizens, then municipalities can facilitate an attractive climate for medical facilities to set up. These could include streamlined permitting processes for the development and construction of new treatment centers, or property tax reductions for the offices of much needed general practitioners or specialists. Spaces for new clinics could be added to the list Community Amenity Contributions from developers. Once the spirit of free enterprise is allowed



some wiggle room in the growing medical industry, there will be plenty of innovation and job growth that municipal governments can facilitate if they are open-minded.

## **Rising Costs / Property Taxes**

*Q3 – Many businesses continue to feel the impact of the pandemic and need support to navigate the current environment, in particular seeking help to reduce their costs and to increase the pool of skilled workers from which to hire and train. If elected, what will you do to help reduce the burden of costs on business? What policies or programs will you introduce to reduce cost pressures and make North Vancouver a more tax-competitive jurisdiction for businesses?*

The rising cost of living is a result of federal fiscal and monetary policy. Until the yahoos in Ottawa stop spending like drunken sailors and take their fingers off the “print” button at the Bank of Canada, we can expect inflation to keep wreaking havoc with the household budgets of working and middle class Canadians. The fact that federal government takes about two thirds of all the taxes Canadians pay is grossly unjust; little remains for municipal governments. However, by reducing expenses municipal governments can keep the taxes on local businesses low. The best way to do this is to focus on core services to residents, and not increase budgets with efforts in areas that are already well funded by higher levels of government. The costs for development also need to be brought down by streamlining the approval process. This will help new commercial developments come to market faster and hopefully at prices that businesses are better able to afford.

## **Availability of Affordable Housing**

*Q4– Local governments play a central role in housing. If elected, what will you do to accelerate investments to increase the availability of affordable housing options for people and employees who live and work in North Vancouver?*

The first rule of affordable housing is don't tear down existing affordable housing. It's sad when long-term residents are displaced when their aging but intact dwellings have been demolished to make way for new condos they won't be able to afford. I used to think that increasing housing supply in general was the best way to address affordability, but I'm now skeptical. There's been a residential construction boom, but the type of housing most families want moves further out of financial reach. Why? Because Vancouver real estate is a great investment for wealthy people the world over, and homes simply can't be built fast enough to keep up with that demand. However, municipal governments can prioritize developments that are desired by the next generation of north shore families. Coach houses provide this without putting great strain on local infrastructure. The approval process for coach houses should be simplified; either with blanket rezoning across the District, or letting Community Associations handle the approval process if they wish. Townhouses are great too. On a per square foot basis, they're one of the most affordable types of housing to build, yet they provide most of what a small family wants out of a

home, at a price less than a detached house. The red tape needs to be reduced to the point that more developers can make profits from building low-rise housing instead of luxury towers. Building more of this “missing middle” will help more locals of modest means afford to live here.

### Local Government services – Support for Businesses

*Q5 – A municipal government’s processes can greatly affect the economics of doing business. If elected, what will you do to support more efficient transactions and timelines in support of businesses in North Vancouver?*

I’m aware that getting approvals for new real estate developments can be very lengthy, uncertain, and complex. I also know the building permit process for commercial construction suffers from the same problems. As noted above, such processes should be streamlined, and where possible, decentralized. I’d be interested in hearing more about the business community’s pain points regarding government processes as they relate to other aspects of conducting business in the District.

