

MEET THE CANDIDATES

North Vancouver Chamber – Questions for Candidates – Municipal Election 2022



Jeremy Cato

Councillor Candidate – City of North Vancouver

I have owned where I live since 2008, and I live in Lower Lonsdale. I have had a long career as an award-winning business journalist, an educator, writer and broadcaster. I was a writer and columnist for The Globe and Mail for more than two decades and co-created and hosted the CTV/BNN program Car/Business. I have taught a variety of business courses at BCIT and VPC. I've raised a family in North Vancouver. I'm an avid cyclist, an enthusiastic skier, a mediocre golfer, a film buff, I have a particular interest in electric vehicles (EVs) to reduce GHG emissions, drive innovation and transform our economy.

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?

I have been a loud, persistent advocate for transit infrastructure and services for the North Shore – and if elected, I will have a bigger megaphone. Before the end of my term, I vow to do everything in my power to secure from the provincial and federal governments the billions in transit funding commitments needed to bring real rapid transit here. The Ironworkers' Memorial Second Narrows Bridge was the last major transportation infrastructure project on the North Shore; work there began in 1957. We are the only large population centre without light rail service in all of Metro Vancouver. It's time for us on the North Shore to get our fair share of transit billions. For more, follow the link to this video: <https://youtu.be/59S2AlaCnsk>. The world's best transportation systems are grounded in clean, efficient, convenient, reliable, safe, robust and sustainable light rail. Light rail eases gridlock, supports housing affordability, and acts to address climate change. It has now become essential for a growing, thriving North Shore. A last thought: it's a mistake to put housing and transit in individual silos. I completely understand and support initiatives that recognize that housing and transit are intertwined.

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?

Health care is a provincial matter of jurisdiction. What local governments are empowered to do is to provide a liveable community that supports physical and mental health. In that vein, I am a champion for green spaces and am a proponent of the 3-30-300 rule: everyone should be able to see at least three substantial trees out their window; a 30% green canopy cover in CNV; and a substantial park within 300 metres of every single resident. We can also make CNV the most attractive place for doctors, dentists,



nurse practitioners and other health care providers to work and live. The health professions I talk to are worried about the cost of office space, and the ability to hire support staff in a city with a housing affordability challenge. Local elected officials, must push provincial and federal representatives to completely re-think health care. I recently met with local MLA Bowinn Ma on this very subject. I suggested that the provincial government must not continue nibbling at our systemic problems. We must reinvent health care completely, bottom to top, using successful, comprehensive health care systems from around the world as our model. Here is a place to start:
<https://www.usnews.com/news/best-countries/slideshows/countries-with-the-most-well-developed-public-health-care-system> .

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 current CNV mayor and council approved to a nearly 4% tax increase in 2022. That's on top of nearly 4% last year and 4.4% two years before that. Over 10 years, annual 4% tax increases become a 50% tax increase. Property taxes are a drag on businesses struggling with inflation, surging interest rates and a looming recession. They also drive up the cost of housing. Mayor and council approved a \$4 million jump in new spending this year. Most is paid for by a big tax increase. But CNV's finance director estimates that rapid growth and development will bring in an additional \$800,000. As well, CNV is expecting an additional \$710,00 in new revenue. So, \$1.5 million in new revenue was available without any tax increase. If elected, I will champion 0% tax increases in CNV. I would direct CNV's administration leadership to bring forward detailed plans to find efficiencies and cost savings that deliver tax relief for residents and businesses. As well, I will champion inclusive smart development, something I call a community-up development process that creates a mix of affordable housing options. For more on my position, here is a video link: https://youtu.be/un_Yex6b_CU .

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?

We live in development chaos. The incoherent approach to bulldozing and building is not delivering the housing we need. We can do better by moving to smarter development that treats housing as homes, not investments. A better approach to development will limit disruption, engage the community, and

preserve our green spaces and heritage sites. A smart development model can be found in the Grandview-Woodland Community Plan in Vancouver. Go here: <https://youtu.be/EZa1JR8mPpc>. This approach builds from the community up, and is the product of genuine engagement. My four-pillar plan to guide CNV in the direction of this model: First, far more robust and transparent development approval process. Second, all new developments must conform with the neighborhood character and culture, and be supported by infrastructure, including high-quality rapid transit – light rail. Third, creative affordable housing solutions. For instance, we could use part of the City's \$633 million in accumulated surpluses to support rent-to-own initiatives – so folks will have the stability of ownership in their own community. And new developments should be a mix of market and below-market options – perhaps as high as a 50-50% mix. Fourth, local development decisions are made locally – not in Victoria, not in Ottawa. For more: <https://youtu.be/59S2AlaCnsk> .

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?

The World Economic Forum commissioned JLL to determine the world's best-run cities. This research provides a useful guide to defines a successful city: <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/10/worlds-best-run-cities-jll/> A great city fosters innovation for businesses and individuals. CNV has an opportunity to host small- to medium-size tech start-ups and engineering and consulting firms. Fostering innovation should be a central pillar in the reinvention of the ICBC building which will be abandoned in 3-5 years. Second, infrastructure. We need infrastructure that supports growth and efficiencies. We need real rapid transit to, from and within the North Shore. And we need the highest levels of digital connectivity. Third, vision and adaptability. CNV's Economic Development Strategy is woefully inadequate. As for governance and transparency, too many decisions by mayor and council are debated and voted on in private sessions. I will bring the highest levels of transparency and engagement to council. Affordability: Yes, we need to strive for 0% tax increases and real rapid transit to support housing affordability and address climate change. Brand-building: CNV needs to earn a global reputation for liveability. We want the world to know that CNV is a place where innovation is valued and promoted and creativity is fostered.

