

MEET THE CANDIDATES

North Vancouver Chamber – Questions for Candidates – Municipal Election 2022



Tony Valente

Councillor Candidate – City of North Vancouver

Tony Valente is a current councillor in the City of North Van. He is a seasoned project and risk management leader, urban thinker, and community volunteer. Since 2010, Tony has given his time to his community — first by serving on his strata council, and subsequently on over 15 advisory and committee roles with both the District and City of North Vancouver. A graduate of both St. Thomas Aquinas Regional Secondary School and the University of British Columbia, Tony spent three years working in logistics and product management for Whirlpool in Milan, Italy and completed his MBA in strategic management and accounting from UBC’s Sauder School of Business. Through his work on large infrastructure projects for over a decade, Tony brings business and management skills to council.

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?

During the last term on council, we worked with TransLink to increase the number of Seabus sailings and implement the new RapidBus service. The city created dedicated bus lanes, which now move thousands of commuters across the North Shore and over to Vancouver. More recently, the City of North Vancouver, Squamish Nation, District of West Vancouver, Tsleil-Waututh Nation, and District of North Vancouver have formed “North Shore Connects.” They have successfully lobbied TransLink and senior levels of government to commit to bringing Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) forward within the next five years. The line will run from Park Royal to Metrotown in Burnaby. Getting a dedicated high-speed transit crossing from the North Shore to Vancouver will require significant federal as well as municipal and provincial funding. We need to strengthen the North Shore’s connections to the federal government through partnerships like “North Shore Connects” to act in a coordinated way with Translink and the province to lobby the federal government for infrastructure dollars.

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?

Although health care is a federal and provincial jurisdiction, there are things the city can do to increase access to primary healthcare. For example, we can incentivize developers to include primary care clinics, seniors care and daycare facilities in new developments. Incentives would increase the amount of purpose-built space for new clinics. However, the more significant challenge is staffing. The city can help retain health workers by incentivizing more affordable housing and subsidized housing directed



explicitly at health care professionals. Further, the city should investigate workforce housing models similar to those used in Whistler to support worker accommodations. I would also advocate to the province for fast-tracking licensing for qualified immigrants to practice as doctors here in BC. I support the expansion of paramedics, first responders and pharmacists scope of practice. In the longer term, the three North Shore municipalities, First Nations and the province can encourage Capilano University to provide a local nursing program and assistants' training to increase worker supply.

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?

Many small and family-run services businesses cannot find workers and struggle to pay sky-high property taxes. I will advocate for reform to the current (provincially regulated) business taxation regime, wherein businesses are currently taxed based on the highest and best use of land. I know current scenarios where tenant rent consists of more property tax than actual rent. That is not sustainable. Update: The province just announced that municipalities can now identify which types (or areas) of commercial properties are affected. The city can then choose to tax these properties at a reduced rate. We will look at this for the 2023 tax year with a view to relieving the tax burden. Housing affordability links to economic sustainability. Again, we need to think about and advance workforce housing to support people who work here to live here. The city can also do more to help small businesses and attract knowledge economy players by continuing to enhance transportation and housing options.

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?

In the last four years, the City has seen the most significant increase in rental units since the 1970s due to incentives for developers to build rentals over strata units. I will continue to support incentives for developers to produce purpose-built rental projects and to secure a percentage of those units at below-market rents. I will also continue to support increasing protections for long-time renters and city-lead help for people impacted by new buildings to relocate. We need to look at workforce housing to help more people working in our community live here. We haven't considered this seriously or determined

how the city could help. The city can also encourage more co-ops, social and co-housing by providing municipal tax breaks and tapping into federal and provincial government subsidy programs.

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?

An update to the Economic Development Strategy is underway. This new plan will consider changing global trends, including climate change and the re-localization of supply chains. The update will be critical to defining where the city goes next and will address the needs of large port industries, small businesses, and our many new home-based businesses. During this term, we looked at simplifying the process for construction permitting for new businesses. We must streamline the process, ensuring staff have the right tools, procedures, and focus areas when reviewing applications. We started this work with a post-Covid view to reducing processing times, and we need to keep on this to ensure new businesses can open their doors faster. I have made myself available to business owners stuck in the process, but we have more work to do at city hall.

