

Burnaby Civic Election 2014 Candidate Questionnaire

Name: Dan Johnston

Running for: Councillor

Biography:

I was first elected to City Council 1993 after serving on Burnaby's Parks Commission. It was in my role as Chair of the Commission that I further developed my longstanding passion for environmental initiatives and refined my goal to serve the community and help make Burnaby the green heart of the lower mainland. I was re-elected in 1996, 1999, 2002, 2005, 2008 and most recently in 2011. A Burnaby resident since 1961, I live with my wife and university age son in the Lakeview-Mayview neighbourhood. I am Chartered Professional Accountant (CPA, CGA).

I am proud of the numerous, innovative environmental initiatives brought forward by Burnaby City Council that now serve as models for cities and regions in the lower mainland and beyond. My efforts to make the dredging of Burnaby Lake a reality included ensuring the process was environmentally sustainable.

Over the years, I have played a significant role on Council with my oversight of a number of important City projects, including the Eileen Dailly Pool, the Shadbolt Centre for the Arts, Riverway Golf Course, Fire Hall No. 7 and the Tommy Douglas Library.

I have been influential in the development of Burnaby's Youth Policy, which gives young people a voice in decisions affecting them and was also instrumental in introducing the Burnaby Recreation Credit program that provides improved access to recreation services for the financially disadvantaged.

What skills would you bring to the office if you are elected and how would those be of use in your role?

I have been able to combine my professional training and my many years of experience as a Councillor to ensure that Burnaby is fiscally prudent and financially strong. As a result, Burnaby has been able to maintain one of the lowest tax rate increases in the area. Consistent and prudent financial management and oversight has resulted in Burnaby being in a very strong financial position with growing reserves. Wise decision making for now and in the future has allowed the City to build quality public facilities without having to borrow from traditional financial markets – a strategy that benefits Burnaby's citizens of today and tomorrow.

If elected, what will be your top goals for your coming term in office?

Keeping rates of taxation low for Burnaby citizens without sacrificing City's financial security (reserves). Ensuring growth remains in our Town Centers and in accordance with our adopted Community Plans. Identifying further opportunities for inclusion into City and developer projects such as green energy, a lower carbon footprint, reusable building materials and better neighbourhood amenities such as bike and pedestrian

paths.

What strategies do you think the City of Burnaby should adopt to foster the growth and success of our local businesses?

The City should continue to work with the Burnaby Business community to build an environment where Burnaby Businesses are valued as an integral part of the City's economy and community. This means keeping regulation to a minimum while protecting the public interest, ensuring equitable rates of taxation and an open door policy between members of the Business Community and the City of Burnaby Mayor and Council.

If elected, what will you do to ensure the City of Burnaby is seen as being "open for business?"

The Burnaby Citizens Association Council will continue to work with the Board of Trade to identify opportunities for Burnaby businesses both within the City and beyond. This means welcoming delegations from outside the city and participating in events beyond the City's borders, with the intent of welcoming new investors and convincing them that they will love operating in Burnaby as much as we do.

We will also continue to implement the City's recent Economic Development plan, our Social Sustainability plan and our soon to be finalized Environmental Sustainability plan. Together the three documents offer great possibilities for new and existing investors within Burnaby.

How would you propose the City of Burnaby manage its continued densification and the development of its 4 town centres?

We are committed to upholding the Regional Growth Plan and our City of Burnaby Official Community plans. These plans, which have had input from citizens and businesses in Burnaby, set out where and how Burnaby can densify. They restrict the bulk of the City's density to the City's four town centres, thereby preserving our single family neighbourhoods. Our official community plans also address the infrastructure and amenities (recreational, social etc) which are necessary within our town centres to achieve a balance, so that Burnaby is a great place to work, live and play.

The efficient movement of goods and services is important to local businesses. What do you see as the major transportation issues facing Burnaby and what do you think are some solutions?

The impact of recent and future growth does impact the efficiency of transportation in the City. The fact that we are a conduit between the suburbs to the east and downtown Vancouver, means that we get more than our share of commuter traffic. We have initiated a city wide review of our Transportation plan during the coming year. We recognize that we need to update how businesses and residents get around the city. We also are also making improvements in our pedestrian and bicycle networks. Throughout this process we plan to seek input from residents and business.

The Inter-Municipal Business License (IMBL) Pilot Project is currently underway with an end date of December 2015. Do you support making Inter-Municipal Business Licenses permanently available for the construction industry? Do you support expanding the Inter-Municipal Business License program to include other sectors?

Yes, we would be open to discussing with you and other parties relevant to this project the feasibility of expanding the program to include other sectors in addition to the existing construction industry participants. This review would include a review of the business case of program expansion, together with other aspects of the pilot program performance.

What do you see as the role of the City of Burnaby in supporting the development of Burnaby's key sectors and industries?

The role of the City of Burnaby should be to work collectively with the business community, labour and other organizations such as the Burnaby Board of Trade to foster a business climate which is welcoming, politically stable and which operates within a triple bottom line of Economic, Social and Environmental Sustainability. We need to recognize the unique differences and similarities of our key sectors and industries and work to accentuate our advantages in order to maximize Burnaby's leadership position. We are particularly targeting growth in the high tech and green industry sector along with other knowledge-based businesses.