

Burnaby Civic Election 2014 Candidate Questionnaire

Name: Nick Volkow

Running for: Councillor

Biography:

I have been a Burnaby resident since 1983. My wife and I were raising three young children in the city when I was inspired to serve my community and work towards helping to provide more opportunities for youth to gather and play in safe, supporting environments. I stepped forward to serve on the Burnaby Parks Commission.

My ten years on the Parks Commission resulted in numerous benefits for the city's youth. The award-winning Bonsor Park Metro Youth Park facility and the Confederation Skate Park, that became a model for community involvement as youth who would be using the park participated in its design, were results of my contributions. I was elected to Burnaby City Council in 1996 and have been re-elected 5 times, most recently in 2011.

I'm committed to making Burnaby a great place to live, work and play. I've focused a great deal of my energy on transportation safety. My efforts have contributed to enhanced opportunities for both pedestrians and cyclists in Burnaby. Projects such as the Central Valley Greenway – the 24-kilometre cycling and walking path that runs from Vancouver to New Westminster through Burnaby, along with three new pedestrian overpasses – have provided citizens with vital links to parks, shopping, worksites and major transit hubs.

My active involvement over the past 12 years in promoting and supporting the Burnaby Blues and Roots Festival at Deer Lake Park has brought a significant entertainment option for Burnaby's citizens and an opportunity to promote the city and its tourism industry.

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

My ten years on the Parks Commission and my 18 years as a Burnaby City Councillor have given me a wealth of experience and in-depth knowledge of the City. I know how to work with people and how to help them navigate their way through civic processes.

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

My top goals will be to stop the Kinder Morgan expansion, continue my work on the transportation challenges we face in the city and pressure senior levels of government to work with us on affordable housing options.

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.