

PLATFORM: Meet the Candidates

North Vancouver Chamber Questions for Candidates
BC Election 2024



BOWINN MA

Candidate – North Vancouver-Lonsdale
BC NDP

Bio:

Bowinn Ma understands the challenges that working families and parents face because she is living them right now, and is dedicated to making life better for people in her community.

Twice-elected in 2017 and 2020, Bowinn Ma presently serves as Minister of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness. A Professional Engineer and working mother, she welcomed her daughter Azalea to the world in 2023, and was only the third BC cabinet minister to give birth while holding public office.

As a member of David Eby's BC NDP team, Bowinn has delivered real action for people living on the North Shore. She helped secure provincial funding for local housing projects, schools, health care facilities, child care spaces, and transportation infrastructure for transit and active transportation. Her collaborative work to develop a regional transportation strategy set the stage for a rapid transit concept to the North Shore, which has since been adopted by the TransLink Mayors Council as a priority for the region.

Bowinn knows we've come a long way in repairing the damage caused by John Rustad when he was in government, and that people in North Vancouver can't afford a return to his reckless cuts. It's why she and David Eby are focused on making sure people in North Vancouver-Lonsdale have a government that's on their side.



1. Reducing Property & Business Tax Costs on Business. Many small businesses are struggling and feeling the increasing burden of costs that government can control, such as provincial taxes, property tax assessments, and the Employee Health Tax. What would you do to help keep the costs for business down so they can survive and maintain the jobs and services they provide to our community?

We cut taxes for more small businesses by 20% from 2.5% to 2% and doubled the Employer Health Tax exemption, so that employers with payrolls of less than \$1 million pay no EHT. We're also cutting red tape to help small businesses focus on their operations and growth, while investing in the tourism, arts and culture amenities that are essential to so many communities.

We will help protect small business owners and reduce their costs when disputes with landlords arise. By expanding the online dispute resolution tribunal to include business-landlord disputes, we can help small business owners avoid the high cost of seeking resolution through the courts.

We'll reduce administrative burdens on small businesses by changing PST filing to quarterly from monthly.

We'll cut red tape for BC restaurants, wineries, breweries and distilleries by modernizing liquor laws and licensing, including a move to riskbased licensing that encourages good business practices throughout the industry. Modelled on the Ontario model, this will reduce administrative burdens on lower-risk establishments and strategically focus inspection and enforcement resources on those that pose a greater risk.

2. Funding Commitment to Rapid Transit. Many employees working in North Vancouver are not able to find reasonable transportation options to get them to work in North Vancouver or get across the community. Metro Vancouver mayors have agreed upon the rapid transportation priorities for the region, including the Metrotown-Park Royal connection. North Shore Connects also demonstrates the local unity on this issue. What will you commit to do to ensure these North Shore and regional transportation priorities receive sustainable provincial funding?

I fully support North Shore Connects. It is a continuation of the partnership that I initiated through the Integrated North Shore Transportation Planning Project (INSTPP), which led to the region's first ever rapid transit feasibility study and continues to guide regional transportation planning for all levels of government on the North Shore. A BC NDP government would deliver the Mayors Council's plan for rapid transit to the North Shore from Metrotown to Park Royal.

Public transit is a critical part of the BC NDP's plan for an affordable and connected province. Through our partnership with TransLink and the Mayors Council, the BC NDP is currently delivering the single largest investment in transit expansion in BC history. During the pandemic, when other



jurisdictions were allowing their transit systems to collapse due to low ridership, the BC NDP made the choice to backstop the system and enable it to continue providing pre-pandemic service through to the other side. It is because of this support that TransLink was among the top leaders in North America for post-pandemic ridership recovery rates. It will be necessary in the coming years to facilitate more use of public and active transit, and we can achieve this by ensuring it's affordable, convenient, and reliable.

Sustainable, affordable, and high-quality public transportation is a lifeline for British Columbians. We've been there for transit before, and we'll continue to do what it takes to future-proof our transportation system. We'll work with TransLink on a long-term sustainable solution for funding transit.

3. Primary Health Care. Many owners and staff of smaller businesses in North Vancouver are calling for improved access and availability of primary health care in their community. This issue is impacting the viability of their business as workers and employers lose time and money due to the delays and stress of attending to real personal or family primary medical needs. What will you do to improve primary health care access and availability in North Vancouver?

We're making big changes to train and attract more doctors to BC – and it's starting to pay off. We now have the fastest-growing nurse workforce in the country and have added 835 family doctors and registered 6,300 new nurses in British Columbia since February 2023, with more to come.

We'll train more doctors right here in BC by adding more medical school seats and delivering on our commitment to build BC's second medical school at Simon Fraser University in Surrey — the first new medical school in Western Canada in more than half a century.

We'll attract more family doctors and nurses to BC through our new agreements, which have positioned BC as a globally desirable place to practice.

We'll make sure out-of-province health care providers can work sooner by requiring BC's health regulatory colleges to provide provisional licences immediately to Canadian-trained providers and within six weeks for providers from approved jurisdictions, while we continue to improve processing times overall and provide more transparency on licensing timelines.

We're recruiting and training nurse practitioners. This year, we doubled the nurse practitioner program at UBC (making it the largest in Canada), and increased UVic's program by 33 percent.

We're working to train, retain and attract more nurses so that we meet our commitment to deliver nurse-to-patient ratios that support nurses and optimize the delivery of care to patients.

We're also providing recruitment and retention incentives, including loan forgiveness, in return for a long-term BC residency guarantee.



4. Affordable Housing for staff. Employees working in North Vancouver businesses and service organizations are not able to find affordable local housing options. Businesses are suffering as a result, with many choosing to move their business closer to where their employees can afford to live, or simply closing as a result. What would you do to ensure affordable housing investments are made quickly to support the needs of the community and the future of our local employers?

We've been making record investments into provincially-subsidized housing and cutting red tape to allow for the construction of more duplexes, triplexes, and townhomes and fast-track transit oriented development. Moving forward, our home construction plan includes:

- BC Builds is our new housing program that harnesses the power, expertise and funding power of the private sector, municipalities, community organizations, non-profits and government to identify and assemble land, speed up development timelines to get construction going faster, lower construction costs, and, ultimately, deliver more rental homes and homes for ownership that middle-income people who live and work in BC can afford.
- Fast-tracking BC's factory home construction to quickly deliver lower cost middle-class homes.
- Reducing the up-front costs of buying a home. Under this new program, homebuyers will pay 60% of their unit's price initially, with the remaining 40% due only when they sell — or after 25 years — and their equity in the home has grown.
- Cracking down on the inflated cost of buying a home by eliminating blind-bidding.
- Cracking down on people who use the housing market only to turn profits.
- Encouraging more people to rent their suites or home by providing small "mom and pop" landlords with the support and confidence they need to keep renting out their units through subsidized insurance that protects against unpaid rent and damages, offers legal advice and more.
- Protecting BC's existing stock of rental housing through the Rental Protection Fund that non-profits can use to buy and protect affordable rental housing for the long term.

5. Finding Skilled Staff. North Vancouver employers are still challenged to find skilled workers to fill many good jobs. Many talented residents in our community don't have the resources or training to pivot and fill good local jobs in health care, senior care, the trades, tech, engineering, and more. What would you do to ensure North Vancouver can train and connect skilled staff to local employers who need them?

Our plan for a growing, sustainable economy is dependent on fueling the talent, innovation, skill and determination of British Columbians across this province. We're working fast to meet BC's growing workforce demands – with a particular focus on critical sectors like health care, high value manufacturing, and new and expanding industries.

We will prepare more young people for the jobs of the future by doubling all apprenticeship training and ramping up opportunities for more young people by expanding introductory programs that give them a taste of working in the trades and put them on the path to full, sponsored apprenticeships.

In addition to the work already outlined regarding the recruitment and training of health care professionals (see Question 3), we will train, hire and keep more doctors, nurses and other health professionals with a practice-in-BC guarantee.

We will get out-of-province health care providers delivering care sooner by requiring BC's health regulatory colleges to provide provisional licences immediately to Canadian-trained providers and within six weeks for providers from approved jurisdictions, while we continue to improve processing times overall and provide more transparency on licensing timelines.

We will address regional shortages of critical health care professionals – like laboratory, imaging and cardiology technologists, psychologists and pharmacists — through targeted tuition assistance.

We will anticipate and meet the job demands for BC's newest and fastest-growing sector with a clean energy labour market strategy that will guide the recruiting, training and placement of workers able to build and operate complex clean energy projects and infrastructure.