

## PLATFORM: Meet the Candidates

North Vancouver Chamber Questions for Candidates  
BC Election 2024



### SARA EFTEKHAR

Candidate – West Vancouver-Capilano  
BC NDP

#### Sara Eftekhar Bio:

Sara Eftekhar was born in Iran, but left with her family to find safety and freedom when she was eight years old. She found it, on the North Shore, and has lived there ever since. As an active volunteer, and as nurse practitioner, she has seen the challenges faced by her community firsthand. For years, she has worked to make her community stronger, playing a crucial role in establishing forensic nursing services at Lions Gate Hospital, advocating for free prescription contraception, and developing the North Shore's first gender-based violence projects. Sara is committed to delivering quality healthcare, improving safety for women and gender-diverse people, and ensuring every resident has a voice and strong advocate in the legislature.

**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?**

Small businesses are the foundation of our communities and economy - and they've been through a lot. We are taking action to help small businesses with costs and support



them so they can succeed. We've doubled the exemption threshold for the Employer Health Tax - a big break for small- and medium-sized business and now 90% of businesses pay no EHT. We've cut the small business tax rate and keeping it 20% lower than when John Rustad was in government. If elected, we will continue to cut red tape for small businesses to help them focus on their operations and growth. Rustad promised small businesses a tax cut, only to change his mind and leave small businesses high and dry. He hiked MSP and ICBC to pay for tax breaks to the wealthiest and big corporations. That hurt a lot of small businesses.

**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?**

Our communities on the North Shore are growing, and our transportation infrastructure needs to grow with them, so people can get to work and get around and spend more time with their families. David Eby and our BC NDP team are taking action to deliver rapid transit to the North Shore from Park Royal to Metrotown which will alleviate congestion on two bridges and help commuters get where they need to go more quickly - meaning more time to spend with your family. As work happens on the new Bus Rapid Transit, the BC NDP will move forward on work on a future expansion of rapid transit to light rail or SkyTrain, in consultation with the Mayors' Council, communities, and First Nations. We also commit to making immediate improvements to buses, by extending the R2 RapidBus to Metrotown. John Rustad and his BC Conservatives would cut public transit and he has promised to fund transit projects before and then didn't get it done. It took a BC NDP government to fund these projects. He did it once, and he'll do it again.

**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?**

As a Nurse Practitioner with over 10 years of experience in healthcare I am deeply connected to this issue. We want B.C. to be a place where healthcare is always there when you need it. The BC NDP have connected 248,000 people to a family doctor or nurse practitioner since July 2023 - with 160,000 more matched in the next six months. With this pace, we will make sure everyone who wants a family doctor or nurse practitioner gets one by the end of 2025. We've added 128 spaces to the UBC medical school and are building a new medical school in Surrey to train the next generation of doctors. We've broken the barriers to bring internationally trained healthcare workers off the sidelines and over 900 internationally trained doctors (family doctors and specialists) have been licensed to practice here in the past year. Furthermore, the BC NDP have opened 38 new Urgent and



Primary Care Centres, like the one on Esplanade, and have enabled pharmacists to prescribe certain medications including birth control so people get faster access to the care they need. John Rustad and his BC Conservatives plan on cutting \$4.1 billion out of healthcare and that is a risk we cannot afford.

**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?**

Everyone should be able to afford a home and build a good life here. That's why the BC NDP has an Action Plan experts say will create 300,000 additional middle-class homes. He's tackling housing costs by taking on speculators, cutting red tape and breaking down barriers to construction. We're using public land to build more middle-class housing. We're reducing the up-front costs of buying a home for tens of thousands of first-time buyers. With our plan, buyers pay only 60% of their unit's price initially; the remaining 40% is due only when they sell - or after 25 years - and their equity in the home has grown. We're also encouraging municipalities to get more market rental housing built with an infrastructure fund tied to housing starts. We're committed to waiving provincial property taxes for new purpose-built rental projects and we plan on building more homes and prioritizing new housing around transit stations. John Rustad has a 20-year record of defending the status quo on housing and was part of a government that ignored the growing housing crisis as prices spiralled out of reach for people.

**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?**

The BC NDP want the North Shore to be a place where everyone can find a good-paying job and that small businesses get the workers they need. We've delivered more skills training, more housing and more available, lower cost child care to help parents return to work. We're building an economy with higher paying jobs and training people for them including new supports to cover tuition like the BC Access Grant and thousands more training seats in high demand careers, like emergency medical responder, education, firefighting, and construction. Looking forward, we are committed to doubling all apprenticeship training. We will continue to grow our health care sector by training, hiring and retaining more doctors, nurses and other health professionals - with incentives in return for a practice-in-BC guarantee. We also plan on training the workers needed to build complex clean-energy projects. John Rustad's BC Conservatives would deliver an economy that works for the top 2% - and no one else. We can't afford the risk.