



When Candidates Come Knocking, Put Construction on the Doorstep

Municipal candidates and parties are knocking on doors in neighbourhoods across the Lower Mainland.

When they arrive at yours, it is a rare opportunity to have a direct conversation with someone asking for your vote for them to make decisions that affect your work, your family and your community.

You do not need to be a policy expert or have a long list of statistics ready. You just need to ask the questions that matter.

For those who work in construction, those questions should start with the cost to build, the time to build and the people needed to build.

Cost to Build

Every new fee, tax and regulatory requirement adds to the cost of building. While many of these decisions may appear small on their own, together they can determine whether a project moves forward, gets delayed or is cancelled altogether.

Higher construction costs affect more than contractors and developers. They influence the cost of housing, infrastructure, commercial space and the public facilities our communities rely on.

When a candidate comes to your door, ask:

- What will you do to make building more affordable in our community?
- Will you review municipal fees, development charges and regulations to understand their combined impact on construction costs?
- How will you ensure new policies are developed with input from the construction industry?
- What will you do to make municipal procurement fair, open and competitive?

Time to Build

Time is money in construction.

Every month a project sits in an approval process adds cost and uncertainty. In many municipalities, projects must move through multiple departments, requirements can change along the way, and it is not always clear who is accountable when an application stalls.

Faster approvals do not mean lowering standards. They mean creating a process that is clear, coordinated and predictable.

Ask candidates:

- What specific steps will you take to make permitting and approvals faster and more predictable?
- How will you improve coordination between the municipal departments involved in project approvals?
- Who will be accountable when a project becomes stuck in the process?
- Will you bring construction professionals into the room when designing changes to the permitting system?

If a candidate promises to get more built, ask how they plan to move projects from announcement to construction.

People to Build

Every commitment to build housing, hospitals, schools and community infrastructure depends on having enough skilled people to do the work.

Construction already provides rewarding and well-paying careers for thousands of people across the Lower Mainland, but the industry is facing significant workforce pressures. Retirements, population growth and future project pipelines mean we need to introduce more young people, newcomers and underrepresented communities to careers in construction.

Municipal governments cannot solve the workforce challenge alone, but they can be part of the solution.

Ask candidates:

- How will you help connect residents with careers in construction?

- Will you work with school districts, industry and training organizations to introduce more young people to the trades?
- How will your municipality support newcomers and underrepresented groups entering the construction workforce?
- Will you partner with industry to ensure there are enough skilled workers to deliver the projects being promised?

It is easy to announce what you want to build. Candidates must also explain who will build it.

Make the Conversation Count

You may only have a few minutes at the door, so keep it simple. Ask one question connected to your experience and listen closely to the response. When candidates come knocking, make construction part of the conversation. Don't settle for a brochure, a handshake and a quick goodbye. Take a few minutes, ask a good question and make the conversation count.