



News from the Provincial Legislature

B.C. Provincial Election 2017 Update

The provincial general election campaign period is well underway, in advance of voting day on May 9, 2017. As expected, housing affordability is one of the main topics of conversation for party leaders and candidates during this election period right across the province.

As a non-partisan association, CHBA BC has contributed to the discussion in several ways outlined below but will not endorse any specific candidates or parties. CHBA BC is prepared to work collaboratively with whichever political party forms government post-election.

Provincial Election Housing Forum

CHBA BC collaborated with several other market housing associations to host a provincial election housing forum on April 12. This event brought together the "housing experts" from each of the three main parties – David Eby from the BC NDP, Rich Coleman from the BC Liberal Party and David Wong from the BC Green Party. It was an interesting panel discussion to kick off the campaign period and hear the parties' proposals first-hand.



Photo: David Eby, David Wong and Rich Coleman at the panel discussion in New Westminster on April 12, 2017.

The panelists commented on the Housing Stakeholders Position Paper during one section of the panel, which was created by all housing associations involved in the event. [View the paper here.](#)

All-Candidates Debates and Candidate Meetings

CHBA BC has been providing sample questions upon request by members for any all-candidates meetings. We encourage all members to share the [one-page policy overview](#) of housing issues during any candidate meetings, which is a great resource for any candidate on market housing topics.

Platform Analysis

Platform promises cover a wide range of issues, and the platform documents can be dozens of pages long. To make it easier for members, CHBA BC has compiled all of the platform proposals, that affect housing or your business, in one easy-to-read format. Prefer the full documents? Click on each party name below for the links.

[Click here to view the platform matrix.](#)

What are some of the main industry proposals? Below is a brief summary of some of the key policies related to housing for each of the three main parties running in the election.

[BC Green Party:](#)

- Introduce a sliding scale of rates for the property transfer tax (PTT) from 0% on the first \$200,000 to 12% on property value over \$3 million.
- Expand the foreign buyers tax across B.C., and increase the rate to 30% in addition to the PTT.
- Protect existing social housing by investing \$100 million per year in retrofits/renovations of older units.
- Use tools such as mobility pricing to generate funds for public transportation upgrades.

[BC New Democratic Party:](#)

- Fund 40% of the capital costs of projects, in partnership with all levels of government. Projects like Broadway SkyTrain and Surrey LRT will proceed.
- Initiate a 2% absentee speculators tax and direct the revenue into a Housing Affordability Fund.
- Build 114,000 rental and co-op homes over 10 years, that range from social housing to market rental.
- Provide renters with a rental home credit of \$400.

[BC Liberal Party:](#)

- Double the existing renovation tax credit for people with disabilities or seniors to \$20,000, and include secondary suites.
- Protect the ability of homeowners and businesses to use natural gas as an energy source across the province.
- Work constructively with the Mayor's Council to move forward on their 10year Vision for Metro Vancouver Transportation.
- Working with municipalities to speed up permitting and open up new opportunities for housing.



An update from CHBA BC's Government Relations Committee

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Election Battleground Areas

There are 87 seats up for grabs in the election, with two new seats added in 2015. A party needs a minimum of 44 seats to win a majority government.

Here are two areas to watch in this election:

South Vancouver Island: There are 15 ridings on the Island, and many are looking to see if the Green Party can elect more Island MLAs, as voters did in 2013 with the election of Green Party Leader Dr. Andrew Weaver in Oak Bay-Gordon Head. There's also the chance additional Green Party seats could hold the balance of power in a minority government scenario.

Ridings near the Port Mann Bridge: There are 6 ridings around the Port Mann Bridge, [all of which were decided](#) by a margin of less than 4% of the vote in the 2013 election. Some of the parties have made Port Mann-specific transit commitments, such as bridge tolling, to sway these voters.

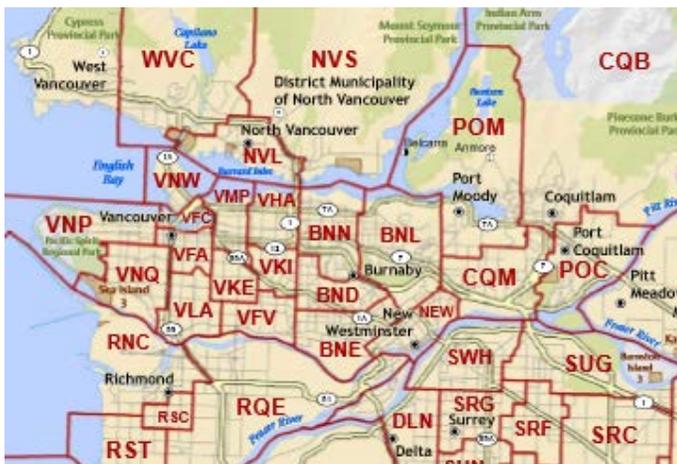


Image: Elections BC map of some riding boundaries around Vancouver.

Read the Vancouver Sun analysis of other battleground areas [using this link](#).

More Election Information

Learn how, where and when to vote using the [Elections BC website](#). Advance voting is available throughout the province from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. (local time) on April 29 and 30, and May 3, 4, 5 and 6. The same hours (8 a.m. to 8 p.m.) apply on general voting day, May 9.

You can also use this non-partisan website to find your local [candidate list](#), what [voter identification is needed](#) before you vote, and the general regulations for [time-off to vote](#) on voting day.

National Issues: Drywall Support Announced

Drywall costs were higher in Western and Northern Canada between Sept. 6, 2016 and Feb. 24, 2017, due to increased duties placed on drywall imported from the United States.

The Drywall Support Program, announced in February by the Federal Finance Minister, will be open for applications at 12:00 p.m. (noon) Mountain Daylight time on **Monday, May 1, 2017, and close Wednesday, May 31, 2017**. This relief program is for Western and Northern Canadian drywall contractors and builders who paid increased drywall costs due to the anti-dumping duty between September 6, 2016 and February 24, 2017, and residents of the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo whose homes were severely damaged or destroyed in the May 2016 wildfires. View [the new website](#) to see if you are eligible under this program.

This compensation program follows an unprecedented intervention by the government following CHBA's appeal, the Trade Tribunal's findings and recommendations that agreed with the Association's position, and the federal government's final decision to lower tariffs and commitment to compensate builders and contractors.

CHBA National estimates that intervention on this issue from the Association and industry saved over **\$330 million** (in new construction alone) in additional costs for Western Canadian builders, renovators and contractors. In B.C. alone, the savings amount to approximately **\$172 million**.

Residential Construction up 17% in 2016

New Statistics Canada data released on May 1 indicates that B.C.'s GDP rose 3.7% in 2016. Strong demand in the housing market, largely in the lower mainland, led to a 17% increase in residential construction. [Click here](#) to read more.

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