

## B.C. General Election 2005 Survey of Small Business Priorities of Local Candidates for Mayor

### VANCOUVER (page 1 of 3)

**The following candidates did not supply responses in time for publication:**

John Landry Gray  
 Peter Raymond Haskell  
 Malcolm G. MacLeod  
 Ian W. Simpson  
 Austin Spencer  
 Darrell Zimmerman  
 Arthur Crossman

<b>SURVEY QUESTION</b> <i>Background Information Appears Before Each Question</i>	<b>JIM GREEN</b> <i>Running for Mayor</i>	<b>SAM SULLIVAN</b> <i>Running for Mayor</i>	<b>JAMES GREEN</b> <i>Running for Mayor</i>	<b>MIKE HANSEN</b> <i>Running for Mayor</i>
<p><b>Taxation</b>                      In most British Columbia municipalities, the property tax rate is higher for business properties than residential properties, even though businesses don't use more services. In some cases, the business rate is as much as five times more than the residential rate. This is identified as the top tax concern of small and medium-sized business in B.C.</p>				
<p>1. Do you consider the property tax gap in your municipality to be a concern? If so, what measures would you take to reduce it if elected? If not, why not?</p>	<p>The ratio of business to residential taxes is too high in Vancouver, a problem that emerged during the last 20 years. Vision Vancouver incumbents moved to shift .5 percent to resident from commercial in 2004. If elected, we will work with the Board of Trade and other stakeholders to find an equitable solution.</p>	<p>We have the highest ratio of commercial to residential tax in Canada, thanks in part to the fact that the last council reduced commercial property tax by only .5% in 3 years. If elected, I will continue to do as I have always done, and vote for a 1% per year shift in taxes from commercial to residential property. The impacts on residential taxes can be minimized by better fiscal management.</p>	<p>The property tax for businesses is a great concern and it must be reduced... Form a task force of all stakeholders to recommend to council ways to reduce this tax. ...Recommend to council an immediate and legislated scale of decrease in property taxes for business over the next three years to bring these taxes in line with residential taxes. Develop new revenue generators that will give the city</p>	<p>Yes. I would seek other sources of tax revenue to compensate.</p>

			other sources of revenue thus allowing the city to decrease these taxes.	
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**Government Spending**

Many voters question why public sector employees receive higher wages and non-wage benefits relative to their private sector counterparts. At the local level, British Columbia’s public workers earn a 13.4 per cent premium over the private sector in wages alone. Over 66 per cent of small businesses support a public sector wage freeze in an effort to reduce public spending and reduce the public-private wage gap.

2. Do you support bringing local government wages back in line with private sector wage levels? What other measures will you take to ensure that local government spending is controlled?	We support good labour relations and stability in the provision of city-services, providing that this is within our city’s budget. We believe good management is key in achieving savings – in many instances, city staff are paid less than professionals in the private sector, and we have serious challenges maintaining qualified workers in many departments as it is.	I don’t believe that public sector wages should be too far out of line with the private sector. I will keep a close eye on all of our expenditures, and make sure we get value for money in all departments.	I will sit down with an mediator, the unions at city hall and private sector unions, representatives from the business community and attempt to bring these wages more in line. I will not take any action to cause union strikes or unrest in this regard but will make my best efforts to bring all wages in line, over time.	Yes. The political "old boys club" has spent our money like it was theirs, we must stop the "deficit financing policies" and dismantle the "old boys club" for good.
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**New Federal Money**

The federal government is directing new funds to the municipalities in the form of GST rebates and gas tax levies. These moneys are in addition to property taxes and other revenue currently collected by the municipalities. A recent survey of CFIB members in British Columbia showed that two-thirds of members (67 per cent) support restricting “New Deal” federal or provincial funding to municipalities to core infrastructure projects such as roads, sewers, water treatment, and public transit.

3. If elected, what would be your spending priorities for any new federal funds such as GST rebates?	We have agreed with the view that gas tax revenues should flow to Translink for transportation infrastructure investments, including more buses, rapid transit, and improved regional road networks.	I think that GST rebates should be focused on capital infrastructure development.	To hire new police officers and open more community police stations. The infrastructure would be next inline after we have 300 to 500 new police officers and a community police stations in each	Yes, roads, sewers, water treatment and public transit. What has been forgotten is the disrepair of the Cities sidewalks. Most important of all we need centers across the City to serve those residents that live on the streets, those
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	The GST rebate is a separate matter and is included in city revenues, thus reducing taxes.		Vancouver community. I will establish a city auditor general and initiate a Business Advisory Council and put an any to any frivolous spending Lastly we will submit a three year business plan each year I am in office.	with nutrition, mental and other health problems. This will keep the streets and sidewalks safe for Citizens and visitors.
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### Regulation

Regulatory compliance can be as costly to business as paying taxes. Businesses want more accountability in this area from all levels of government.

4. Will you commit to measuring the regulatory burden at the local level, reducing the burden by revoking obsolete regulations, simplifying existing regulations, and forming mutual recognition agreements for permits and licenses conferred in neighboring municipalities?	We have promised two significant changes to reduce red tape. One would reduce regulation of the entertainment industry. Under the NPA it was illegal to even dance in restaurants. We have also proposed a Small Builders' Quick Approval Plan to slash permit and license approval times for small builders. A Vision Vancouver city council will continue to take an active role in reducing red tape and eliminating obsolete regulations.	I will review the regulatory burden on small businesses and eliminate all unnecessary regulations; I will also look for ways to harmonize regulations with other municipalities.	This tradition of too much red tape and meaningless regulations at city hall and city hall being an enemy of the business community will come to and end with me as mayor. My Task Force on this will come up with actions to change this and make city hall a cooperative partner in doing business in this city.	Businesses must be consulted as to whether the new or old regulations are up to date with the times.
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### Government Customer Service

Voters elect local representation, and taxpayers pay the salaries of both elected officials and civil servants. Yet when they call their local government with questions or concerns, taxpayers are sometimes treated with disrespect, ignored, or given the run around.

5. If elected, would you commit to benchmarking	The short answer is yes. Some specific actions we	The private sector regularly benchmarks	I will set the tone as the mayor and will ensure all	I'm appalled at the way "public servants" treat their
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<p>the current standards of customer service in your municipality and working to improve the attitude of your council and staff?</p>	<p>have promised include increasing the transparency of the permit and license approval process through introducing an internet-based tracking system allowing applicants to keep in touch with city officials throughout the process. We also plan to streamline the scheduling of inspections.</p>	<p>performance, and I believe that the same principles should be applied to customer service performance within municipal government.</p>	<p>departments understand our number goal is to serve the public in a cooperative, responsive and polite manner. I will initiate the employee of the month and other rewards for the best in customer. I must also say that we have numerous employees who treat the public well and we can and will build on this.</p>	<p>employers "the tax payers" with disrespect, ignored or given the run around. This will change when Mike Hansen is Mayor.</p>
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**Crime**

Large and small communities across the province are facing increased challenges as a result of crime. Rising costs including insurance premiums, additional safety measures including alarms and cameras, and replacing damaged property have a significant impact on a small business's bottom line. Criminal and suspicious behaviour in local neighbourhoods makes customers reevaluate their shopping decisions, and small businesses reconsider their choice of locale. Empty storefronts and abandoned streets further encourage criminal activity, and the cycle continues.

<p>6. If elected, what will your strategies be to reduce crime in your municipality?</p>	<p>We have announced a three-part program on crime, including 50 additional officers by 2006, a reduction in the priority 1 response times to six minutes from the current 13 minutes, and an increase in the share of the department's sworn officers on patrol above the current level of 511 officers, which is fewer patrol officers than the 622 deployed on patrol 10 years ago before NPA cuts.</p>	<p>We are committed to adding 100 new police positions to Vancouver's streets over the next two years, and to having more police on patrol in our neighborhoods. I will also bring in a new Public Safety Commissioner to coordinate resources for crime reduction.</p>	<p>I will set up a Vancouver Public Safety Foundation, raise \$100,000,000 to fund 300 to 500 new police officers and to fund the opening of community police substations in all communities and a Cops on the Beat Program. As mayor I will focus crime reduction on the entire city all communities and protecting law abiding citizen first</p>	<p>I will lobby Victoria and Ottawa to make gun related crimes , a life in prison offence, with ON chance of parole. Health Canada regulated drugs be given to the addicts to stop them from committing crimes to buy drugs.</p>
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### Small Business

Small- and medium-sized businesses are the largest employers in British Columbia, being responsible for over 58 per cent of the jobs in the province. Encouraging small businesses to start up and grow in your municipality provides jobs and helps to build a healthy community.

<p>7. What other measures and policies not mentioned above will you promote to help small- and medium-sized businesses grow?</p>	<p>We supported, over NPA opposition, a lengthy study of how zoning impacts business and job creation. Findings of the study should help develop strategies to expand business and protect existing businesses.</p>	<p>I will work to create a stable investment climate with low commercial taxes, to encourage small business development.</p>	<p>City wide Small and Medium Sizes Business Trade Fairs and Celebration Days, A City wide Small Business Discount Card, City Hall Recognition Events for Small and Medium Business Owners, Marketing Support through the city website and newsletters and reduction of business licenses and business property taxes. I will establish a City Small and Medium Sized Business Advisory Council to Establish and Implement these and other strategies.</p>	<p>A transparent and expeditions permit and licencing department.</p>
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