

Building Bridges: A new political party in the DNV



Ash Amlani



Mathew Bond



Carleen Thomas



Devon Bruce

BARRY RUEGER

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There are two reasons why Building Bridges chose this year to launch a new political party in the District of North Vancouver. The first and most obvious is that in a town where incumbency almost always equals re-election the retirements of Richard Watson, Doug Mackay-Dunn, and Roger Bassam opened up the field.

When Council members run time after time, it can be hard for newcomers to overcome the advantages of name recognition, healthy campaign funds, and a basement full of campaign signs.

The second reason for the launch of this new party is disaffection with the status quo, says Ash Amlani, who is the party's mayoral candidate. "We're tired of seeing the same old same old and we know that the challenges we face won't be solved by voting for more of the same."

The slate includes two experienced local politicians, incumbent DNV councillor

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Mathew Bond and long-time Tsleil-Waututh council member Carleen Thomas. Bond is a transportation engineer, avid biker, and devoted family man. Thomas is an educator and has served for sixteen years on the Tsleil-Waututh band council. Both Bond and Thomas want to see a lot more affordable and rental housing in the District.

Joining them is political newcomer Sameer Parekh, a marketing manager at BCAA. Along with the overall Building Bridges platform, he supports the Maplewood Innovation District and the housing

that it would deliver. Running for School Board is Devon Bruce, who describes himself as a "dedicated professional in special education with over a decade of varied experience in the field."

Much of the Building Bridges platform echoes the incumbents running again this year, with housing and transportation topping the list. "We need to make sure that people who work in North Vancouver can afford to live here," Amlani says. She describes a generation of young people who are "frustrated with the inability to stay in the region." Helping those people means more density, and more purpose-built rental stock. The group also sees improved transit service and bike infrastructure as essential to serving the local population and reducing traffic congestion.

The North Shore sometimes has a reputation for being insular, or resistant to change, and there is a part of the population which is vocal in its opposition to population growth. Building Bridges wants voters to look beyond their own neighbourhoods.



Sameer Parekh

"There's a global demand for change," says Amlani. "Information moves quickly, global capital moves quickly, work styles have evolved. People are looking for government that is able to respond to those changes, that can be resilient."