



## Jonathan Wilkinson

NORTH VANCOUVER'S MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

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# A worthy read you won't find on the bestseller's list

We find a seat amid the morning rush at the Starbucks on 3rd and Lonsdale. It's across from my constituency office. I'm grateful for the first coffee of the day. I'm with a friend who's just asked about the "Post-Budget Town Hall" meeting coming up that night at the City library. The same City library which in January played host to an overflow crowd when we held a meeting to listen to what people in North Vancouver said mattered most to them, their families, and their neighbours.

### Closing the loop

Part of my role as Member of Parliament for North Vancouver was to deliver that mail to Ottawa where our government was in the process of piecing together its first budget - informed by similar conversations around the country. Three months later, I was back home to close the loop on that conversation and report the results.

"Are you nervous about the meeting?" my friend asked. I answered I was looking forward to it, actually. "The folks that come out tonight will likely see themselves in this little book... That they've been heard... That this is a government, I believe, that's doing what it said it would do."

The little book in question, that I placed on the table, is the main budget document - titled Growing the Middle Class. It's the size of a large paperback. And though it's unlikely to ever find itself on the Bestsellers' List, it says as much as anything you've read so far about what this government is all about.

"It is likely a safe bet that few people in North Vancouver will have the time or inclination to read all 269 pages," I said as I offered my copy to my now wary friend. "But the first 7 pages cover the entire story - the Table of Contents."

If you're as skeptical as my friend was, I invite you to take a look at this book for yourself: <http://www.budget.gc.ca/2016/docs/plan/budget2016-en.pdf>.

### Largest single project

In the 2016 budget North Vancouver landed the largest single project announced: a commitment of \$212 million dollars to fund the federal portion of a new North Vancouver

Wastewater Treatment Plant. Without that federal help, the City and District mayors had warned, local citizens would be on the hook for significant local tax increases.

In addition, the 2016 Budget recognizes that municipalities don't have the tax base to shoulder a third of the cost of major infrastructure programs as has been required in the past. So the Federal Government is upping its share to 50% leaving municipalities to come up with 17%.

Beyond infrastructure, North Vancouver will also benefit from the Budget's investments in research, development and innovation. It's intended to enable the more rapid growth of tech enterprises of all sizes - many of which already call North Vancouver home.

As a former clean tech CEO, you might understand why I'm excited about that focus of the budget.

### Social policy innovation

But I'm also a father. And that's why, if I had to pick the element of Budget 2016 that speaks to my heart it would be the new Canada Child Benefit. I believe it represents the most significant social policy innovation in a generation. It means 300,000 fewer Canadian children will be living in poverty in the coming year than the year before.



I was very proud to be your Member of Parliament at that post-budget community meeting at the City library the other night. Thank-you for that continuing privilege.

*Sponsored by the Electoral District Association of North Vancouver, Liberal Party of Canada.*

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