

# north shore news

## Distinct visions in city mayor's race

### Transit, density, amalgamation all part of three-way contest

[Brent Richter](#) / North Shore News

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Anyone who says that all politicians are the same isn't paying attention.

Three distinct candidates are vying for the job of mayor in the City of North Vancouver. Incumbent Darrell Mussatto is seeking a fourth term. Retired businessman and political newcomer Kerry Morris is seeking to unseat him and amalgamation proponent George Pringle is taking another run.

Mussatto is running on a message of moving the city forward, making the city's transportation network and public spaces his priorities. Part of the next mayor's job will be to see the TransLink funding referendum pass, which he is committed to, said Mussatto.

"I think it's critical that we support the referendum so that we can have this tremendous opportunity to improve public transit. We can't just build our way out of it. We need public transit," he said.

Mussatto also highlighted completion of the Spirit Trail and green necklace.

"If we separate the bicycle paths from the roadway, we get winners and winners. The car drivers are happier, the cyclists are happier," he said.

Mussatto also wants to follow through on completing the vision for the city-owned Shipyards site, developed with the input from more than 1,000 residents. Mussatto said that could mean the same success as the Friday Night Markets every night.

For rebuilding the Harry Jerome Recreation Centre, Mussatto said he'd scale back the size and include one residential tower on Lonsdale Avenue to offset the cost. Under his leadership, the city has been setting aside money each year for the project, he added.

Though he's taken political heat for accepting campaign donations from developers, Mussatto said he stands by his conscience because his first priority is what's best for the city.

"I've been doing that for 21 years and I'll continue to do that ...I don't do deals. I just show leadership," he said. "I want to say 'This is the type of person I am. These are my core values and this is what you're voting for - positive leadership.'" Morris, meanwhile, brings a different set of priorities that his campaign characterizes as being targeted for the people who live here now.

Morris said the scale and pace of development density "has driven the vast majority of our population apoplectic. It has as a byproduct a traffic jam at every corner."

Morris said previous councils have failed to expand the city's road capacity when building new condos. To remedy that, Morris said he'd pursue an integrated traffic management plan for the entire North Shore.

Also top of mind for Morris is ensuring the school district does not sell the Lucas Centre and Cloverley school to developers.

Morris said the city should buy the land instead.

"Everyone wants to keep those lands for public use," he said. "Buy them or lease them, either way, we have sufficient funds in our parks fund today to buy both.. ." Morris said he wouldn't support the existing plan for the Shipyards site or its \$30 million to \$50 million cost. He'd prefer to keep the space open for festivals and concerts.

Whether or not he'd support the TransLink funding referendum would come down to how it proposes to raise money and from whom, he said.

When it comes to affordable housing, Morris said the city needs to protect its existing rental stock from redevelopment. "I encourage some economic barriers that slow that pace by upping the bar and making those developers have to take care of the people whose lives are being destroyed while (the developers') economic fortune is being made," he said.

He'd also support the creation of a not-for-profit housing authority for young families and seniors with the stipulation that it be funded by senior levels of government, not city taxpayer dollars.

Pringle said voters shouldn't have any confusion about his priorities as he's taken the step of forming a political party: Amalgamate North Van.

"I don't believe in secret slates. I like to put my intention straight on the ballot and my party name on the ballot so people can see what I stand for," he said.

"If elected mayor, I would move a motion at the first council meeting, and inform the district, to create a citizens' assembly to create a detailed amalgamation plan," he said While an amalgamation plan is worked on, Pringle said he would put a moratorium on any development over six storeys.

Pringle said no previous attempt at amalgamation has actually followed the provincially mandated process, which he is committed to starting.

"They certainly haven't said 'We want the citizens to design North Van, right now from Day 1.'"

Pringle said the District of North Vancouver's municipal hall could be sold off with revenues used to reduce taxes or it could be converted into meeting space for the North Shore's various cultural groups.

Pringle said the city suffers from a dearth of transparency, so he would cut back the number of meetings held behind closed doors and make the city-owned Lonsdale Energy Corporation into a city department, making it subject to Freedom of Information requests.

He'd also stop council from passing motions on things out of the city's jurisdiction like affordable housing. What little effect a city can have on affordable housing should be reserved for people with disabilities and seniors, he said.

Mussatto, Morris and Pringle are set to debate Sunday at Centennial Theatre at 2 p.m.

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