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lowdown !

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North Shore News

November 12, 2014 12:00 AM

We have to hand it to everyone.

Over the last few weeks, we've seen members of the community, fellow news media and even the election candidates themselves do a good job of holding prospective council members' feet to the fire.

Before anyone gets elected, they will have been grilled over what their plans are for affordable housing, improvements to our transit system and where they stand on Kinder Morgan's proposal to vastly increase oil tanker traffic in Burrard Inlet.

The trouble is, our new council members will have precious little say in these matters of provincial and federal jurisdiction.

Our current crisis in affordable housing stems largely from the federal government shirking its responsibilities.

TransLink operates at the whim of an unelected board with the province holding the purse strings.

And much as some candidates are prepared to put up a good fight over pipelines, the National Energy Board and federal minister alone can decide whether they get built.

But municipalities are the governments closest to the citizens and so they find themselves asked to step in and deal with issues they don't have the power or money to address.

We have two MPs and four MLAs, none of whom are currently being asked to stand in front of a hostile crowd and explain why transit funding, affordable housing and environmental protection aren't on their to-do list.

After Nov. 15, we encourage you to start asking them.

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