

Brief: 2026 Municipal Election Campaign Proposals

This brief is intended to provide background information on the housing and climate asks MVA members will be taking action on and presenting to the Vancouver mayoral candidates with an ask for them to make a public commitment at the **Municipal Election Assembly on September 23rd**.

Housing Asks

1. Rezoning for faith, community, and non-profit owned housing development

The Ask

Prezone faith, community, and non-profit owned properties for non-profit housing development.

- MVA commits to convening a roundtable of faith, community, and non-profit leaders to work with city housing planners to co-develop a proposed policy that reflects the sector's current needs and challenges.

The Details

- Faith, community, and non-profit organizations have a long history of developing affordable housing and are continuing to build on this tradition. While technically possible and politically popular, redevelopment is slowed or stalled by zoning, permitting, and NIMBY political barriers at city levels. A rezoning process can cost \$500,000-\$1,000,000 and take an average of 18 months (although some projects take 2-3 years). All delays add costs to projects and result in higher rents for future residents.
- In conversation with faith leaders, Councillor Rebecca Bligh presented a motion to council titled "[Unlocking Community Potential: Collaborating with Faith-Based Groups for Affordable Housing and Social Impact in Vancouver](#)", unanimously approved by Council on [October 23, 2024](#). Staff have begun preliminary engagement with the faith sector and will be developing recommendations in the year ahead.
- The [Vancouver Social Housing Initiative](#) provides a possible template for what these regulatory changes could look like. The Initiative aimed to "pre-zone" large portions of Vancouver so that social housing projects that met certain eligibility criteria (including non-profit ownership, allowable height, and affordability) would be exempt from rezoning. It failed to be adopted by Council in December 2025, citing community opposition and the proposed 20-story height that would have been allowed in some areas. The policy could be amended or drawn from for new proposed regulatory changes.

Next Steps

- Recruit new faith, community, and non-profit leaders with an interest in winning zoning changes to join the campaign team
- Organize a roundtable of civil society leaders and city housing planners
- Train leaders in the sector on how to effectively work with Council and city staff to support a majority vote in favour of our policy proposal

2. Work with MVA to push the federal government for \$2 billion in funding for deeply affordable homes

The Ask

Working in partnership with MVA, ask the federal government to fund 4,000 homes for very-low to low-income households in the City of Vancouver by 2030. Attend an MVA assembly with federal decision makers a year from the municipal election to update on progress.

- MVA commits to organizing and turning out broad-based support for an action with federal decision makers.

The Details

- Any commitment for low-to-very-low-income housing from the City must come with a commitment of funding from the federal/provincial government to have *concrete* wins
- Carnegie Housing and the National Housing and Homelessness Coalition has calculated (based on Dr. Carolyn Whitzman and Priya Perwani's research papers from [Aug](#) and [Sept 2025](#)), that the Canadian government would need to invest \$47 billion yearly until 2040 to meet the national need for 50,000 shelter-rate units in Canada. Current calculations break that down to a target of 4,000 in Vancouver in the next four years.
- The deadline is set for 2030 because MVA leaders believe this funding will be safe from a change in government if it can be secured and set aside before the end of the next mayor's term.
- As part of the next mayor's commitment, we will also be seeking their leadership to champion motions calling for federal investments at the Union of BC Municipalities and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.
- Another key request would be to work with MVA to create a plan for spending secured funding and ensuring funds are properly earmarked for very low to low income households.

Next Steps

- Table talks in member organizations, connect our organizations to the leaders with stories that demonstrate the need for housing for low-to-very-low income households
- Explore municipal caucuses in surrounding municipalities to strengthen our claim to federal funding
- Power analysis of the federal cabinet to identify the key decision-makers that can say yes

Climate Asks

3. Improve transit and safety on Hastings St. by reducing traffic

The Ask

Pilot a new traffic pattern on Hastings Street in the Downtown East Side that limits through car traffic (Modeled on [Toronto's 2017 King Street Pilot](#)). Use the lanes freed up to add seating, trees, and public amenities. Assess after a year whether the pilot has had the desired impact.

The Details

- This stretch of Hastings is the most dangerous for pedestrians in BC. Tens of thousands of transit riders pass through each day, experiencing some of the city's worst congestion.
- Toronto's 2017 King Street Pilot reduced car volumes by 80%, which made a huge impact on both problems, created new public spaces, and reduced air and noise pollution. Transit ridership increased significantly after it became faster and more reliable.
- The King Street Pilot was an overwhelming success, and is now permanent. We want to replicate that success.
- There are two primary changes to achieve this: 1) Introduce traffic restrictions that limit cars from travelling for more than a block on Hastings, and 2) convert 2 of Hastings' 6 lanes into public space. Toronto added lounge chairs, trees, and art, but the DTES community can decide what should go into this pilot.

Next Steps

- Identify interest holders along the route (CUPE 3338, TSSU, SFU students, businesses, bus drivers, members of our member union locals who work in the area, neighbourhood residents, first responders, drivers etc.) who are connected to MVA member organizations and conduct neighbourhood listening + actions with them to build broad-based support, and identify leaders and impactful stories
- Work with these interest holders to co-create a vision of what these new public spaces could contain, and determine which blocks the Pilot should cover
- Identify the cost of implementation
- "Transit Talk!" Listening actions with bus riders along Hastings Street over the summer
- Power analysis of the City of Vancouver to identify key decision-makers and also which stakeholders in the area might influence their decision-making

4. Vancouver's first Youth Climate Corps Program

The Ask

Expand Vancouver's Tree Canopy by funding Vancouver's first [Youth Climate Corps](#). An initial amount of \$80,000 for six youth to be paid a living wage for six months of climate work would strengthen Vancouver's goal of moving from 25% uneven canopy coverage to 30% more equitable coverage by 2050.

- MVA's commitment:
 - Secure matching funding through Youth Climate Corps BC
 - Work with the City of Vancouver and Board of Parks and Recreation to identify a project connected to the implementation of the Urban Forest Strategy.
 - Identify youth from within MVA member organizations and encourage them to apply
 - Create opportunities for youth to remain connected to municipal climate leadership beyond the job program through their member institutions

The Details

- Listening in member organizations identified that extreme heat mitigation is a priority across our membership. Tree canopies are an important urban solution that also offer opportunities to advance neighbourhood equity, as the lowest coverage neighbourhoods are also home to the residents who are at greatest risk in extreme heat.
- The updated [2025 Urban Forest Strategy](#), developed by the City of Vancouver and Vancouver, provides a useful framework for determining the areas in most need of increased tree canopy coverage, as well as the people power and funding needed to implement this strategy.
- The Youth Climate Corps BC not only offers a way to resource municipal climate adaptation strategies. It does so while also addressing key pressures facing youth, including the cost of living, barriers to accessing jobs (which is only getting harder due to the Artificial Intelligence crunch), and eco-anxiety connected to an uncertain future.

Next Steps

- Neighbourhood mapping and listening exercises to better understand the impact of low canopy coverage in civil society organizations
- Research actions with City of Vancouver and Vancouver Park Board staff to further refine proposals on priority areas for canopy investments
- Training MVA leaders to meet with mayoral candidates to secure their commitments in advance of the election
- MVA member organizations to collaborate in developing a plan to provide a place for the youth completing the program to land (with jobs, community, other opportunities)