

OCTOBER 27, 2008

## Fair Tax Coalition launches civic election newsletter

Welcome to the first edition of *The Civic Election Report*. Our goal is to keep Vancouver business owners informed about the latest news from the campaign trail.

Earlier this year, the majority on Vancouver city council voted to shift one per cent of taxes from the commercial property class to the residential property class annually over five years.

City council's decision was based on a recommendation by the city's Property Tax Policy Review Commission, a panel of leading tax experts. It recognized the tax inequity paid by businesses.

But each year's tax shift must be approved by city council. The coalition believes the tax shift is an important first step in correcting the unfair tax inequity. ***Vancouver has one of the highest business-to-resident tax ratios in Canada (5.08 to 1).***

We encourage you to forward this newsletter to friends and colleagues and make them aware of the Vancouver Fair Tax Coalition and the issues during the 2008 civic election.

## Both Vision Vancouver and NPA support 1% tax shift

In response to a Vancouver Fair Tax Coalition survey, candidates from the Vancouver Non-Partisan Association (NPA) and Vision Vancouver said they all support the one per cent tax shift.

City council candidates David Cadman and Ellen Woodsworth from the ***Coalition of***

***Progressive Electors (COPE) said they do not support the tax shift.***

COPE states: "(We) oppose any further tax shift from business to residential property owners."

There is one difference between the NPA and Vision, though: ***The NPA favors implementing the tax shift annually for the next four years while Vision pledges its support for only the next three.***

In a written statement, Vision explained: "Vision Vancouver is committed to a 1% tax shift every year of our mandate (three years). We are not committing to a five-year period as the term of office is for three years only."

Also, Vision Vancouver's decision to support the tax shift is a surprising turnaround given the voting record of its incumbent councillors – Heather Deal, George Chow, Tim Stevenson, and Raymond Louie – who have previously voted against it the past three years.

The eight-question survey was sent to the 22 candidates running for city council from Vision Vancouver, COPE, and the NPA.

You can review the survey responses on our website, [www.fairtaxcoalition.com](http://www.fairtaxcoalition.com).

## Mayoral candidates focus on small business employers

During the mayoral debate at Science World on Oct. 8, Gregor Robertson and Peter Ladner agreed that a tax shift would benefit Vancouver's small businesses, which need all the help they can get in today's tough economic times.

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The debate was hosted by the *Vancouver Courier* newspaper and co-sponsored by the Vancouver Fair Tax Coalition and the Kitsilano Chamber of Commerce.

Robertson, the Vision Vancouver mayoral candidate, said: "I do support the tax shift from business to residential property taxpayers. I've been very clear about this throughout my mayoral campaign and now as the leader of Vision Vancouver. That is our position as a party," he told the audience of about 200 people.

NPA's Ladner stated: championing for the tax shift was not an easy decision because it meant higher taxes for some residents. But despite the political consequences, Ladner threw his support behind the tax shift anyway because "it was the right thing to do."

"We had to protect our small businesses particularly, protect the neighbourhoods that were vulnerable if businesses left, and it was something that we needed to do to keep our city internationally competitive and business friendly," Ladner said.

"If we don't have very strong businesses in this city, we don't have jobs and we don't have an affordable city."

Ladner said the NPA would tackle the problem of increasing taxes by curbing spending at city hall: "I am prepared to keep the tax shift going and my caucus is united and supports that position. It's something that we brought in – we've been ridiculed for it by members of Vision and COPE – but we are for it and we're going to weather the storm."

## Your opinion counts

**The Vancouver Fair Tax Coalition wants to hear from our city's business owners.**

Please take a few minutes to participate in a short survey. The coalition will post the results afterwards on our website.

To access the survey, visit this link:  
<http://tinyurl.com/6hw4sm>

## *Did you know?*

*An annual one per cent tax shift over five years will result in the average homeowner, with a property assessed at \$700,000, paying an extra \$180 in property taxes in total. That's the equivalent of \$36 per year or \$3 per month – the cost of a large coffee.*

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*City spending is out-stripping Vancouver's population growth and the rate of inflation. According to the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, **Vancouver's spending growth is 35.8%, while its combined population and inflation growth is 17.4%.** At this rate, the city's sustainability is at risk.*

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*Vancouver's business owners are speaking out about taxation. Watch this video clip and listen to what they are saying:*

<http://www.youtube.com/user/VanFairTax>

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