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NORTH VANCOUVER'S MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

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An electoral line through Lynn Valley?

A proposed new electoral map of the North Shore's three federal ridings would see some big changes – including the separation of east and west Lynn Valley into two separate constituencies and the annexation of Ambleside into the riding of North Vancouver.

The proposal is part of a review of all federal electoral districts undertaken every ten years that potentially alters riding boundaries to reflect the growth and redistribution of the population.

It's important and necessary work because it maintains fairness in the working of Canadian democracy by ensuring effective representation – with all ridings representing roughly similar numbers of citizens. But it's complex work and seldom geographically tidy.

Here in British Columbia, the task is being overseen by the independent and non-partisan Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for B.C. The 2021 census shows our province grew to over five-million people, from 4.4 million in 2011. The Commission's mandate is to redraw boundaries to divide the province into 43 ridings (an increase of one), each with about 116,000 people.

In a release earlier this month, the Commission explained the impact on the North Shore. “West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country (electoral district) has grown at a great pace. We are proposing reconfiguration of the three ridings of the North Shore by moving boundaries westward, and in Burnaby North—Seymour, northward.”

For North Vancouver, that means the current eastern boundary of the riding would move west from the Seymour River to a line from the top of Mountain Highway, south to Lynn Valley Road then down the Cut to the Ironworkers Memorial Bridge. The portion of Lynn Valley that is east of Mountain Highway and Lynn Valley Road would become part of the Burnaby-North Seymour riding.

The western boundary of the North Vancouver riding would be shifted further west from Capilano Road to 15th Street in West Vancouver, south of the Upper Levels Highway – essentially adding Ambleside.

Preliminary proposal

At this stage, the proposal is just that – a proposal. And the Commission is eager to hear what you think. Public hearings are slated for twenty-seven BC communities between June 6 and September 27. *In North Vancouver, the date is June 27th at the Pinnacle Hotel.*

Public hearings are an important part of the process because its more than just, in BC for example, drawing 43 areas on a map with roughly 116,000 people in each. The law that governs the process, the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act, recognizes that a number of factors are important to providing effective representation. It requires the Commission to consider “the community of interest or community of identity in, or the historical pattern of, an electoral district in the province.”

For residents of the neighborhoods of Lynn Valley and Ambleside concerned about the proposal, the fact that historical patterns, and communities of interest and identity, must be given considerable weight in the Commission's deliberations is meaningful.

Interests of affected communities

As the MP for North Vancouver, my goal is that the interests of the communities that are affected are met. On the North Shore, our neighbourhoods have strong identities. I want to make sure that, to the extent possible, this process enables communities to stay whole – recognizing that the Commission has a difficult job and a range of considerations to take into account.

These are currently just preliminary proposals. Any changes would not be implemented until April, 2024 at the earliest. The Commission's recommendations will also be thoroughly debated in Parliament before the process is complete.

Those wanting to make a presentation at the North Shore public hearing at the Pinnacle Hotel on June 27th are asked to send the Commission a notice no later than a week prior.

For more information about the proposed electoral boundary changes, maps, the public hearings or to make a presentation, check out redistribution2022.ca.

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