

# Free advice for Peter, Gregor

**24 hours' columnists never get political pundit fatigue no matter how many elections they pontificate on – so we decided to ask Tieleman, Airton, Tsakumis and King for their free advice to Vancouver mayoralty candidates Gregor Robertson of Vision Vancouver and Peter Ladner of the Non-Partisan Association. Will they take our advice – or ignore it and win anyway? For the complete package of advice, go to 24 hours' municipal election website at [24voteforme.ca](http://24voteforme.ca).**

**Non-Partisan Association mayoralty candidate Peter Ladner wins if ...** the Vancouver election turnout is



Bill Tieleman

low due to voter fatigue or just disinterest. The NPA is one of Canada's most successful political parties because Vancouver doesn't have a ward or constituency system and because the wealthier part of town votes in disproportionately higher numbers than the rest of the city. That means a low turnout is the NPA's big advantage. Ladner also wins if voters really don't care about homelessness or think he and the NPA have done enough about it for a city government and believe it is instead a provincial and federal responsibility.

**Vision Vancouver mayoralty candidate Gregor Robertson wins if ...** The election turnout is moderate to high and voters are fed up with increasing homelessness and an NPA government that doesn't seem to be able to make any progress on the city's biggest issue. The mayoralty nomination race between Robertson and Coun. Raymond Louie and a hotly contested council nomination race made Vision the largest civic party in Canada with 16,000 members. And a recent debate on homelessness drew 1,000 citizens. That may indicate voters are motivated for change and that Robertson's plan to end homelessness by 2015 – however difficult – is what they want.

Tieleman was the communications director to former premier Glen Clark.

**Non-Partisan Association mayoralty candidate Peter Ladner wins if ...** he can maintain the traditional



Erin Airton

base of the NPA on the West Side and continue to build on the gains that the party made during the last two elections on the East with young families and with ethnic Chinese voters. He has managed to attract good candidates and the mixture of experience and diversity should play well with voters. The results in Vancouver South show that voters are volatile, and Ladner will need to continue to articulate the balance between a strong civic government and one that doesn't cost an arm and leg to operate.

**Vision Vancouver mayoralty candidate Gregor Robertson wins if ...** he can get his amalgamated Vision/COPE vote to show up on election day. The biggest risk of Vision is, that in the race to city hall, it tramples one of the strongest franchises in municipal politics – COPE. Instead of re-building within an existing base, Robertson chose to step outside of it and voters tend to not reward that approach – ask anyone on the right side of the spectrum during our own years in the wilderness due to vote splitting. At the end of the day, the Conservatives ended up the Conservatives because of the importance of a well-known and respected name brand.

Airton formerly worked with the B.C. Liberal Party and federal Conservatives.

**Non-Partisan Association mayoralty candidate Peter Ladner wins if ...** he can pull off three feats. First, he



Ian King

has to hold on to Sam Sullivan's 2005 coalition, where voters from Vancouver's ethnic communities were united with the NPA's familiar West Side base. Second, he has to peel away enough moderate and green-minded voters who may be looking to Robertson as a fresh start. Third, Ladner can't excite too many strong feelings about Robertson among those who may or may not vote. Better to leave them indifferent – because if they do come out to vote, they probably won't go NPA.

**Vision Vancouver mayoralty candidate Gregor Robertson wins if ...** the city's southeastern polls flip to his side. The NPA owns the West Side south of 16th and newer parts of downtown; Vision has the northeast, Fairview, Kits and the West End.

Sam Sullivan connected with middle-class voters in Collingwood, Fraserview, Killarney and Kensington in 2005; those votes put him over the top.

None of this was traditional NPA turf. Sullivan's ethnic outreach and East-Side background brought those neighbourhoods inside. With Sully out, they're up for grabs. Robertson isn't well connected there, but Vision council candidates Kerry Jang and Kashmir Dhaliwal are.

King writes on regional politics for Vancouver 24 hours.

**Non-Partisan Association mayoralty candidate Peter Ladner wins if ...** there is a low voter turnout and he



Alex Tsakumis

can continue to expose weaknesses in Gregor's initiatives: In the last month Gregor's messaging is all over the map. Also, in the West End as in Fairview slopes, there are pockets of hardliner Vision support that by Nov. 15 will have gone to the polls thrice. It is an understatement to suggest that they are fatigued. And most of that new support for Vision is young, who are typically tough to get out on election day. Combine that with greater fatigue across the city, and a lower turnout always favours the NPA. Peter's economic message is resonating with the public. His experience is showing.

**Vision Vancouver mayoralty candidate Gregor Robertson wins if ...** he can change his narrative and embrace the middle again. His dance with the devil (COPE) has not helped erase in the minds of the public that Vision may have to pander to special interests in left-wing quarters. He started this campaign 22 points ahead of Peter. Gregor now trails Peter by three points, a stunning turnaround. Gregor needs to be able to counter-punch effectively in the debates. Thus far, he has shown a surprising, glass jaw. Peter has been hammering him with great precision, and Gregor has been hopeless in his replies. Astonishing.

Tsakumis was a political advisor to former premier Bill Vander Zalm.