

# north shore news

## TransLink plebiscite: Why you should vote No

Jane Seyd / North Shore News

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Photo file, North Shore News

*The North Shore News is publishing two stories focusing on the Yes and No campaigns in the TransLink plebiscite. Make sure to read both. Scroll to the bottom for a link to the Yes vote.*

Ever since the Mayors' Council announced plans to go ahead with a vote to fund new TransLink projects, West Vancouver Mayor Michael Smith has been an outspoken critic of the plan.

Smith says he doesn't oppose a regional transit system, but is fundamentally opposed to giving any more money to TransLink, which he describes as unaccountable. "I've always been able to look citizens in the eye and say 'I've spent your money as if it was mine,'" he said.

In the case of TransLink, Smith said he can't do that. "There's no control over it."

As the campaign over the vote has ramped up, events have "firmed up my opinion that voting No is essential," he said.

Smith says he's not a supporter of the Yes campaign, which he criticizes for spending \$6 million of public money to convince people of their cause. "I think they're overselling this thing," he said.

Most recently, Smith said he's been swamped with complaints from West Vancouver residents who've been receiving "robocalls" from the Yes campaign — including one from North Vancouver District Mayor Richard Walton. "Mayor Walton's call

really incensed a lot of citizens,” he said. “They don’t like to be told what to do by people outside West Vancouver.”

Smith said while “the community all agrees we need a good transit system for the region,” TransLink needs to do a better job with the money it has. It also “needs to be controlled by regional politicians who directly represent taxpayers,” he says.

Smith doesn’t believe that transit will simply be allowed to languish after a no vote. “If we vote No, the province will have to change the way TransLink is managed. The public will demand it,” he said.

Smith also worries if a 0.5 increase in sales tax is approved, it will remain permanently in place and may even be increased. “Governments are like drug addicts. Once they get their hooks into a new source of revenue, they never let go,” he said.

District of North Vancouver Coun. Roger Bassam is another local politician who is voting No.

Like Smith, Bassam said transit expansion is needed. But Bassam said he doesn’t think it’s right that TransLink has been tasked with building massive capital projects. “The province is responsible for that,” he said.

But under the TransLink system, accountability for who is responsible for what has become “extremely obscured,” he said.

Bassam said TransLink’s obsession with building large capital projects like the Vancouver tunnel and the Surrey light rail system — which make up most of the current expansion plan — mean huge amounts of money have to go towards paying debt costs every year — even if those projects fail to bring in anticipated revenues.

“The truth is in the numbers,” he said. “Down the road you could have a huge hole that you just funnel money into.”

Bassam said there is also relatively little in the expanded transit plan for the North Shore. “How many times have we been promised a third SeaBus?” he said. “All we’re getting is the transit we should already be getting.”

[Click here to see arguments from the Yes side. \(http://www.nsnews.com/news/yes-side-1.1799425\)](http://www.nsnews.com/news/yes-side-1.1799425)

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