

north shore news

EDITORIAL: Rabid transit

North Shore News

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It's been a rough week for those of us who take transit.

First we learned TransLink's Compass Card system is so far behind schedule it should be renamed the Sundial.

Then we had two malfunctions that crippled the SkyTrain system. You can't blame the people left waiting for a bus for hours for pondering a switch to a car.

The trouble is, the roads to work are already largely clogged, and vacant parking spots are always in short supply.

A cursory look over the numbers in TransLink's 2013 bus service performance review released last week shows ridership is down on most of the North Shore's bus routes over the last three years. There could be any number of reasons for this. Higher home prices mean more affluent buyers who are more likely to drive. Higher fares may also be putting people off.

The takeaway from this is taking transit is becoming less desirable precisely when it needs to become more desirable.

Nearly every discussion that happens in the North Shore's three council chambers is coloured by the fact that people are getting fed up with North Shore traffic. We've run out of room and money for more roads, so that leaves us looking to other modes of transport.

Yet, the most we can get from our transportation minister is a promise that any investment in our transit system can be scuttled if voters don't approve it by way of a referendum.

Having an efficient, dependable way to move people and goods around the Lower Mainland isn't a nice-to-have, like a stadium roof. It's crucial to the economy and, just as important, our collective sanity.

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The North Shore already donates plenty of taxes/fees to fund a decent transit system for the North Shore. The problem is, these monies are spent elsewhere. Endorsing a referendum will only exacerbate this inequity. - cjk