

Saturday, Dec. 27: Fund transit, roads equally

Public transportation users pay twice — fares and tax

DECEMBER 24, 2014



VANCOUVER, B.C.: JANUARY 07, 2013 — Making their way out of the downtown commuters flow through Waterfront Station to board the seabus and sky train as the West Coast Express begins its journey Monday, January 07, 2013 in Vancouver, B.C. (Ian Lindsay / PNG staff photo) [PNG Merlin Archive]

Photograph by: Ian Lindsay, PNG

Living in a large city is expensive and Vancouver is no exception.

Well-planned cities like Tokyo, Paris and London built rail infrastructure to live in outside communities and commute by train. Most North American cities, including Vancouver, removed the rail service and enticed long-distance driving.

Burnaby had a rapid transit rail line along Highway 1, but the tracks were removed when the four-lane freeway was built. Highway 1 was enlarged twice without rebuilding the rail.

A commuter rail over the Port Mann Bridge connecting Vancouver, Burnaby, Surrey, Langley and Abbotsford, would have served these communities well without a sea of polluting cars.

Financing rail service remains a problem with our governments. Highways are backed by general revenue whereas public transportation must find its own funding by collecting rider's fees. In essence, rail commuters pay double: the transit fare and general income tax to support highways.

Governments should finance highways and public transport equally and ask each entity to rise their own funding. Getting people out of cars would lower travel cost and provide healthier and more livable cities.

ISIDOR BUCHMANN, Burnaby

Forgotten are the
gasoline and other
taxes! - cjk