

Saturday, Jan. 31: Best to invest in transit now

Cost to improve transit increases dramatically every year it is delayed

JANUARY 30, 2015



Among the projects to be funded by the proposed transit sales tax is surface light rail, similar to this line in Milan, to tie together Surrey's town centres and connecting with SkyTrain.

Photograph by: Handout Ric Ernst, PNG

TransLink's plan for the Lower Mainland is a world-class infrastructure that will enhance the quality of life, support economic growth, increase productivity and meet future demographic needs.

The cost to build and improve a transit system increases dramatically for every year it is delayed, so starting sooner makes good sense.

In this environment of low interest rates, more long-term TransLink debt and higher transit fares makes more sense than increasing the B.C. provincial sales tax by 0.5 percentage points to finance the plan. It is a more equitable way to fund this plan and most reasonable transit users would gladly pay higher fares for a much improved service.

PAT PETTMAN

Delta

Congestion is self-correcting

Traffic congestion is a hollow scare tactic by the Yes side of the transit plebiscite. Sure, congestion will

get worse, but it will correct itself. Combined with the fact that Vancouver is such an expensive place to live, people will be discouraged from living in Vancouver. Businesses and residents will relocate to less congestion-prone areas and routes if it is worthwhile. Perhaps, maybe some people will change their voting habits and if enough do, there will be more insightful politicians at all levels getting elected who will do the right things to improve transportation.

VINCENT LIZEE

Coquitlam

Outer 'burbs treated unfairly

I urge all Langley residents to vote no to the proposed transit tax. Unlike other Metro communities, we already pay our share of transit tax via the tolls on the two bridges in our area.

If you commute daily using one of our two bridges, the cost of the toll fees is \$120 to \$144 a month. This is in addition to fuel costs, vehicle maintenance and parking fees. Who can afford that? Big companies can write off travel expenses for tolls. The average commuter cannot.

There are eight bridges and one tunnel in the Metro area without tolls. The Sea to Sky Highway, which goes to those million-dollar ski chalets, is not tolled yet it cost us all lots of big bucks. In Langley we only get little benefit from bus service and there are no plans for an Evergreen Line on this side of the river. So I say vote no, Langley, to the proposed transit tax.

RAS GOSSE

Langley

In all of the hoopla about who is and who is not going to benefit out of this tax hike to fund the transit system, everybody forgot about two cities: Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows.

When the first recent toll bridge (Golden Ears) was put into operation, no one bothered to ask these two cities and Langley what we thought of having a toll bridge. They put it in and said pay to use it. Why was the idea of the addition of the 0.5 per cent not thought of then? I suppose the people of Vancouver and Surrey would not have wanted to partake of a system that was only subsidizing an area not in their vicinity.

Take a drive over to the Lougheed and see what the Port Mann tolls are doing to our area as far as traffic congestion is concerned. Drivers anywhere from Hope to Mission have been using this route to avoid the toll bridge. This artery has also become a popular trucking route.

All of these new additions do nothing for us in Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows. I hope people in these areas will vote appropriately.

YOGA NAIDU

Maple Ridge