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## TRANSIT PLEBISCITE

# Changes to ballot keep voters guessing

Language is clearer but fewer details are included on projects and rationale

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The ballot for the upcoming plebiscite for transportation funding in Metro Vancouver has seen a raft of changes since it was first introduced last month.

And that may be partly to blame for the confusion out there as Metro Vancouver residents consider whether to vote Yes or No for a 0.5-per-cent increase in the provincial sales tax, said Mario Canseco, a pollster with Insights West.

The proposed tax, dubbed the congestion improvement tax, would only apply to Metro Vancouver and would be used to help fund a \$7.5-billion transportation plan that includes more buses, a new Vancouver subway and light rail for Surrey. Other funds would come from the provincial and federal governments.

The changes on the ballot, which was constructed originally by the mayors' council and then altered by the provincial government, include clearer language but remove some of specifics about individual projects that will benefit from the congestion tax.

## CHANGES TO THE PLEBISCITE BALLOT

### TRANSPORTATION AND TRANSIT REFERENDUM

Cut Congestion • Better Service • More Buses and Rapid Transit

One million more people will live and work in Metro Vancouver by 2040. The region's mayors worked together to develop a plan to reduce congestion on roads and bridges and to provide more transit to communities across the region.

The Mayors' Transportation and Transit Plan will:

- Add more bus service to crowded routes and add new routes in growing areas
- Increase service on SkyTrain, Canada Line, SeaBus, and West Coast Express
- Add 11 new B-Line rapid bus routes, with fast and frequent service connecting town centres
- Maintain and upgrade the region's major roads
- Build a new, earthquake-ready Pattullo Bridge
- Build light rail transit connecting Surrey Centre with Guildford, Newton, and Langley
- Extend the Millennium Line tunnelled along Broadway in Vancouver
- Improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists

Revenues raised through this referendum, together with Provincial and Federal contributions, will be dedicated to the Plan. Revenues and expenditures will be subject to annual independent audits and public reporting.

Do you support a one half percentage point (0.5%) increase to the Provincial Sales Tax in Metro Vancouver, dedicated to the Mayors' Transportation and Transit Plan, with independent audits and public reporting?

YES

NO

**HEADING:** The new ballot calls it a "Metro Vancouver transportation and transit plebiscite," not a "transportation and transit referendum." This stipulates the tax only applies to Metro Vancouver. Meanwhile, a plebiscite, which is non-binding, is being held because the vote is being conducted by the South Coast British Columbian Transportation Authority Act, which governs TransLink, and not the Referendum Act.

**WORDING:** The main wording is tightened up to remove the rationale for the plebiscite. For instance, the ballot removes the line that states "one million more people will live and work in Metro Vancouver by 2040" and that the plan is needed to reduce congestion on roads and bridges.

**PROJECTS:** Clarifies the overall plan with more succinct wording. The new ballot takes out references to "11 new B-Line rapid bus routes" for a more generic statement that the funding "will add bus service and new B-Line rapid bus routes." It also states new "rapid transit" for Surrey and Vancouver rather than citing a subway and light rail.

**EXPLANATION:** The new ballot is clearer than the original in stipulating the tax will be called a Metro Vancouver congestion improvement tax and dedicated to the majority of goods and services in the region.

**BALLOT QUESTION:** The approved question does not include the line "with independent audits and public reporting."

### METRO VANCOUVER TRANSPORTATION & TRANSIT PLEBISCITE

The region's mayors have developed a Transportation and Transit Plan called *Regional Transportation Investments – a Vision for Metro Vancouver*. The Mayors' Transportation and Transit Plan will:

- Add bus service and new B-Line rapid bus routes
- Increase service on SkyTrain, Canada Line, SeaBus, and West Coast Express
- Maintain and upgrade the region's major roads
- Build a new Pattullo Bridge
- Build rapid transit connecting Surrey Centre with Guildford, Newton, and Langley
- Build rapid transit along Broadway in Vancouver
- Extend the region's cycling and pedestrian pathway networks

A new Metro Vancouver Congestion Improvement Tax would be applied as a 0.5% sales tax on the majority of goods and services that are subject to the Provincial Sales Tax and are sold or delivered in the region. More detail can be found at: [www.websteaddress.ca](http://www.websteaddress.ca).

Revenues would be dedicated to the Mayors' Transportation and Transit Plan. Revenues and expenditures would be subject to annual independent audits and public reporting.

Do you support a new 0.5% Metro Vancouver Congestion Improvement Tax, to be dedicated to the Mayors' Transportation and Transit Plan?

YES

NO