



# Liberal Jonathan Wilkinson

NORTH VANCOUVER

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## North Van Traffic Gridlock Requires Action Blueprint

The other day I was in a doctor's office where an elderly couple was upset about the time of their next appointment. It was scheduled for 3:30 in the afternoon. They were anxious to change it to an earlier time – because, they said, they were concerned about dealing with the volume of traffic over the Second Narrows at that time of day. That snapshot of a moment is a sign of our grid-locked times.

Long eastbound lineups down the Cut are no longer confined to rush hour. Many days, Marine Drive could be re-named Marine Parking Lot. Getting from point A to point B within North Vancouver or over town has never been more difficult than it is today.

### North Van Has Own Challenges

Much is made of Metro Vancouver's dubious claim to fame as second only to Los Angeles as having the worst traffic congestion in North America. But often lost in the discussion is the fact that North Vancouver has a unique and growing traffic challenge thanks to our geography, history and patterns of development.

It's more than irritating. Traffic congestion has a negative impact on every aspect of North Shore life, from the economy to the environment.

This coming March, residents across the Lower Mainland will be asked to vote for a 0.5% increase in BC's Provincial Sales Tax to fund \$7.5 billion in new transit projects over the next 10 years.

### Referendum Just A Start

I will be voting "Yes" to the referendum question and commend the mayors, and especially North Vancouver District Mayor Richard Walton, for their work on the transit funding proposal. But adding a Seabus and more bus lines on the

North Shore, as proposed, is just a start at addressing our own growing problem. Successful or not, the outcome of the referendum will not, on its own, come close to solving North Shore congestion.

What's required is the start of a comprehensive discussion which leads to an action blueprint that coordinates the complex multitude of elements at play here – from density planning to transit to roads and bridges.

What's required is a boldness of vision with no sacred cows that are off-limits to consideration. That means reviewing the adequacy of two bridges and the possible need for rapid transit to the North Shore.

### Ottawa Must Play Central Role

Some may argue that this is not a federal issue. I disagree. Given the scope and scale of the issues at hand, the federal government must be at the table with funding and to play a facilitative role bringing the key players together to thoroughly weigh all reasonable options.

Liberal Party of Canada policy strongly supports cities as economic drivers and federal investment in civic infrastructure is key to making the economy grow.

As your Liberal candidate for North Vancouver in the upcoming federal election, I pledge to take a leadership role in bringing residents, politicians, community groups and businesses together to develop and discuss options and to forge a plan that will work to unsnarl our traffic problem and provide a sustainable solution for the future.

The status quo – waiting in a line-up that is just getting longer – clearly isn't working.

Next week in this space, more on why I'm running for Parliament.

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