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TransLink mismanages money 2

I will say no to a 0.5 percentage point increase in sales tax. TransLink hasn't proved itself capable of managing the money and system it oversees. Too many transit police and executives earn in the six digit figures while most who use the system on a daily basis make much less. It irks me to see bonuses awarded to executives at TransLink — for what?

TransLink claims to be broke, yet it contemplates spending \$4 million to sway the Yes vote!

I expect once again my property taxes will increase as will levies on my Hydro bill. Meanwhile I am a 10-minute drive away from the B.C. Ferry terminal, but if I want to use transit to get there, well, forget it. Connections from my home are non-existent. A recent bus trip to Burnaby for a medical appointment took over two hours by public transit. I'd love to be proven wrong, but I see no incentive to vote Yes for an increase in sales tax. Why not use the existing fuel tax to fund TransLink? JEAN WIGHTMAN South Delta

TransLink's cost per revenue passenger is a full one-third higher than cities like Edmonton, Calgary and Toronto. Should not the public find out why before approving a new tax?

Part of the answer is unpleasant for both the Liberals and the NDP — it's SkyTrain and light metro and the high costs and subsidies associated with them — as both political parties have forced SkyTrain and light metro onto the region. In 1993, the GVRD revealed that the original SkyTrain line from Vancouver to new Westminster was subsidized at \$157 million in 1991. This subsidy has increased with each new SkyTrain or light-metro line opened. By comparison, the total operating costs of Tri-Met in Portland, Ore., including their first Max light rail line in 1993, was \$114 million.

Now TransLink wants to build a \$3-billion subway under Broadway to appease Vision Vancouver's desire for a vanity project to make Vancouver a world-class city, despite the fact that subways are poor in attracting ridership, but good at bankrupting transit authorities. That the majority of regional mayors support this financial nonsense only confirms P.T. Barnum's observation: "There is a sucker born every minute." It seems, unlike the Yes side, the No side are not suckers.

D. M. JOHNSTON Delta

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