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- The Vancouver Sun
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Yes side plans town hall meetings, media blitz

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Final costs, sources of funding remain unknown

“If people don’t like what’s happening now, they’re going to be more up set with sitting in traffic in the years to come.

GREG MOORE PORT COQUITLAM MAYOR

The Yes side in Metro Vancouver’s transportation plebiscite will hold town hall meetings and advertise on bus stops and billboards, but no one knows just yet how much the campaign will cost.



ARLEN

REDEKOP/PNG Port Coquitlam Mayor Greg Moore, left, and Vancouver Mayor Gregor Robertson outline the mayors’ council plans to promote the proposed transportation tax at a media conference Monday inside Waterfront Station.

The mayors’ council previously estimated they could spend as much as \$4 million on the Yes campaign, but whether it will cost more or less than that remains uncertain. What is known, however, is that there is no cap on spending for either campaign.

Port Coquitlam Mayor Greg Moore said Monday the Yes side will be able to tap into a \$1-million advertising budget from TransLink, which is reserved for the mayors' council, and potentially more from the transportation authority if needed.

Funds are also expected to come from supporters, including the cities of Vancouver and Surrey and New Westminster, but how much they will contribute hasn't yet been worked out, Vancouver Mayor Gregor Robertson said.

Cities like Port Coquitlam will also offer in-kind donations, such as advertising on city bus stops and billboards, while a complementary Yes coalition, comprised of students, business, labour and environmental groups and dubbed the Better Transportation and Transit Coalition, will help get the word out through social media such as Facebook and Twitter or through student billboards, business storefronts and union sites. It will also potentially raise money for advertising.

"There will be a variety of sources to fund the Yes side," said Robertson, chairman of the mayors' council. "This is so important for our future. We want to put our money where our mouth is."

The campaign is expected to educate Metro Vancouver residents on the benefits of a proposed 0.5 per cent "congestion improvement tax," which is aimed at generating \$250 million annually for transportation expansion across the region, ahead of a plebiscite this spring.

Metro Vancouver residents will receive mail-in ballots in mid-March and have until May 29 to vote on the tax, which will be harmonized with the provincial sales tax and will help pay for a \$7.5-billion transportation plan that includes more buses, better improved SkyTrain, SeaBus and West Coast Express services, a new subway for Vancouver and light rail for Surrey over 10 years. The rest is to come from the province and Ottawa.

Metro mayors argue the tax will cost the average household \$125 per year, or 35 cents per day, and is desperately needed to provide better roads, transit and services such as Handy Dart to serve another million people, and potentially 600,000 more vehicles, in the region by 2040. There is no expiry date for the tax, which will be used to operate the system after the 10 years is up, Moore said.

The Yes campaign will target individual communities to let residents know exactly what they will get in return for supporting the tax — and what will happen if they don't, Moore said.

He noted the growth will affect every community, big and small, with 52,000 more people expected to live in Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows, and similar growth to hit the North Shore.

"If people don't like what's happening now, they're going to be more upset with sitting in traffic in the years to come. You'll be living with that in the next decade as your 35-minute commute becomes 55 minutes."

But the Yes side acknowledges it will have a tough sell ahead, with the No side arguing that TransLink — the region's transportation authority responsible for all transit, as well as some roads and bridges — should not be trusted with any more public funds, citing high executive salaries, Compass card delays and SkyTrain breakdowns.

Robertson argued Monday that the money will be held in a dedicated fund by the provincial government — not TransLink — and audited annually to ensure it is being spent on specific transit projects in the mayors' plan. As well, he said he and Surrey Mayor Linda Hepner will keep a close eye on TransLink's finances as they sit as members of the TransLink board. This is the first time the mayors will sit on TransLink, which has typically been run by a private board that makes decisions in secret.

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03 February 2015

07:00

"There will be a variety of sources to fund the Yes side," said Robertson, chairman of the mayors' council. "This is so important for our future. We want to put our money where our mouth is."

Robertson calls it 'our money'. Of course, our money is your money Mr. Moonbeam. Was it useful? [Yes](#) |

[No](#) | [Report abuse](#)

[Shogun19](#)

03 February 2015

07:34

If you have this much money to throw into advertising, how about putting it INTO transit. THAT is where the money you took from us in taxes, levies etc is SUPPOSED to go. No wonder no one wants to trust this bunch with access to more of our money.

Was it useful? [Yes](#) | [No](#) | [Report abuse](#)

[WaskesiuT](#)

03 February 2015

07:57

Headlines will be:

Bullshit Flying; Taxpayers Paying

Was it useful? [Yes](#) | [No](#) | [Report abuse](#)

[DirtyHarry](#)

03 February 2015

07:59

"If people don't like what's happening now, they're going to be more up set with sitting in traffic in the years to come." Well Mr. Moore I'll take that chance. Your scare tactics aren't that scary as taking the bus or public transit takes longer now in any event. Vote NO. Was it useful? [Yes](#) | [No](#) | [Report abuse](#)



[GMan](#)

03 February 2015

08:01

I wish I had unlimited access to money to advertise my empire building.

Yet another reason to vote no. These mayors have no respect for other people's money. All they are interested in is building monuments to themselves like the crippled subway.

Was it useful? [Yes](#) | [No](#) | [Report abuse](#)



[Normie :-\)](#)

03 February 2015

08:03

I was HOPING that Moonbeam would have been kicked out by now and that the blockade of Vancouver's streets (because that's what it is) would be in progress of being dismantled. Was it useful? [Yes](#) | [No](#) | [Report abuse](#)

Moore of Correlieu Secondary School Troy Moore

03 February 2015

08:11

"Robertson argued Monday that the money will be held in a dedicated fund by the provincial government — not TransLink — and audited annually to ensure it is being spent on specific transit projects in the mayors’ plan"

because the government has become trustworthy with money all of a sudden?

Was it useful? [Yes](#) | [No](#) | [Report abuse](#)

[tug](#)

03 February 2015

08:23

Just watching the yes side spend money on their campaign should be enough to alienate the voter. Was it useful? [Yes](#) | [No](#) | [Report abuse](#)



[Den - Ladner](#)

03 February 2015

09:02

The more I read from the yes side and the more money they spend to get my vote the more I want to vote NO. Raise the fares, increase cost of advertising on buses, sell bonds to those who want to invest their money. I am not willing to spend more money when I do not have sufficient access to transit nor have I used it since the days of the street cars. Vancouver should be concerned about the Canada Line. We will find out just how good transit is when they have to service all the new condo owners along the Cambie route starting at Marine Drive. More money from taxpayers will not solve the money problem at Translink. You really need more money from users and they are the ones creating the additional needs. Toll all the bridges so there is a balanced low rate like \$1 each way. Do the numbers crunch and lets have a look. Put your hands back in your pockets as there is no more coming from here.