

## TRANSIT

# Here come the service cuts

Plebiscite loss means funding sources for growing system frozen

**M**etro Vancouver mayors are warning commuters and transit users to brace for more service cuts, saying they have few options to expand transit across the region following the crushing defeat of a proposed 0.5 per cent sales tax increase.

TransLink now has the ability to generate funds through three main funding sources: property taxes, fares and gas tax revenue,

and a smaller Hydro levy and parking tax. But mayors argue a new main funding source is needed as those sources become maxed out.

The sales tax was expected to generate \$250 million annually to help fund a \$7.5-billion plan that would have included more buses, road improvements, a subway for Vancouver and light rail for Surrey. Mayors argue the plan is desperately needed to

handle another million people — and a potential three million more automobile trips per day — in the region by 2041.

Metro Vancouver has suggested several other funding sources, such as a vehicle levy or regional carbon tax, over the years, but has been stymied by the provincial government, which now requires all new funding sources to be affordable as well as go to a public referendum.