

PLEBISCITE

Mistrust of TransLink runs deep

Both Yes and No voters agree: transit authority needs reform

TIFFANY CRAWFORD AND
MATTHEW ROBINSON
VANCOUVER SUN

Mistrust of TransLink was key to the No side's win in Metro Vancouver's transit referendum, and the whole idea of a plebiscite was a bad one from the start, according to a pair of new polls.

An Insights West survey, released Friday, suggests three in four No voters (76 per cent) said they did not have confidence in TransLink to implement transportation projects properly. More than half (53 per cent) did not trust the mayors to make the best funding decisions.

The numbers were consistent among age groups and municipalities of Metro Vancouver, and 46 per cent of those respondents said they voted No to send a message to TransLink that they are unhappy with its performance. Only 21 per cent of No voters said they considered voting Yes briefly but changed their minds.

Yet the poll shows that Yes voters also have concerns about the way TransLink is run, with 62 per cent of all respondents agreeing reforming the region's transit authority should be a top priority.

"This is an issue where Yes and No voters are in agreement," Mario Canseco, vice-president of public affairs at Insights West, said in a statement. "Three in five residents believe that major changes are required at TransLink before we start to figure out



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More than half of Metro Vancouver residents who voted No in the recent transit referendum did not trust the mayors to make the best funding decisions, an Angus Reid public opinion poll says.

how the transportation projects are going to be funded."

Meanwhile, an Angus Reid public opinion poll, also released Friday, suggests only 29 per cent of Metro Vancouver residents think the idea of asking them to vote on the tax was a good idea. Slightly more than half of residents thought it was a bad idea.

Angus Reid also found some

distinct differences between survey respondents who voted Yes and No. Yes voters were far more likely than No voters to regularly ride transit. About 43 per cent of them use public transportation at least two or three times a week and another 17 per cent take transit daily.

Those who voted against the new tax were more likely to live

outside Vancouver and drive on a daily basis. While respondents under the age of 35 were split on the question, those 35 and older were more likely to vote No.

The likelihood of voting Yes increased with voters' level of education and the duration of their daily commute, according to the Angus Reid survey.

Insights West asked

respondents, who were questioned before the results were announced, who they would blame if the Yes side was defeated, and more than half pointed the finger at TransLink. Very few residents (17 per cent) believe the No campaign organizers were at fault, and even fewer placed the blame on Premier Christy Clark (14 per cent) or the mayors who supported the Yes side (seven per cent.)

While the No side was motivated by a dislike of TransLink, the majority of Yes side voters (72 per cent) said they believe the 0.5 per cent tax would have been the best way to deal with future transit problems.

More than half of Yes voters (56 per cent) also felt the plebiscite addresses the traffic, services and roads problems we have in the Lower Mainland, and 43 per cent thought having annual independent audits and public reporting would promote transparency.

The Insights West results are based on an online poll of 1,128 adult residents of Metro Vancouver that was conducted from June 5 to June 10, and June 28 to July 1. The margin of error is plus or minus 2.9 per cent, 19 times out of 20.

The Angus Reid results are based on an online survey of 821 Metro residents conducted from June 1 to 3. The margin of error is plus or minus 3.4 per cent, 19 times out of 20.

tcrawford@vancouverjournal.com
mrobinson@vancouverjournal.com

23. Why isn't property tax being used to fund the Mayors' Council plan?

Property tax is the principal source of revenue for the services and infrastructure provided by municipalities. If TransLink's tax on property were increased by more than the rate currently permitted, it would make it all that more difficult to collect adequate revenues for municipal needs. Moreover, mayors are keenly aware that there is strong resistance to paying more property tax which, in the case of renters, is generally passed on as part of the rent). For these reasons, mayors are adamantly opposed to allowing more property tax to be used to fund public transit.

24. If the plan were funded with property tax, how much would a homeowner pay?

The amount depends on the assessed value of the property and would increase over time. Initially, the approximate amount for properties of various values would be:

Assessed Value	Tax
\$ 500,000	\$ 131
750,000	197
1,000,000	263
2,000,000	526

These amounts have been derived as follows. For 2014, TransLink anticipated collecting \$305 million from its current property tax. In order to raise an additional \$250 million from property tax – the regional contribution required towards the Mayors' Council plan – the tax rate would have to be increased by 82%. For residential properties, the 2014 TransLink tax rate was 0.3206 per \$1,000 of assessed value (a slightly higher rate may show on your tax bill, to include the cost of collection). Eighty-two percent of this rate is 0.2629 per \$1,000 of assessed value.

Source: http://www.mariaharris.ca/Plebiscite_FAQs.shtml -cjk