



# Liberal Jonathan Wilkinson

NORTH VANCOUVER

February 18, 2015

## Living in a Traffic Field of Dreams

“Build it and they will come.”

That famous line from the film *Field of Dreams* applies to the widening of Highway 1 between the Port Mann and the Ironworkers Memorial bridges. And it highlights the reality that we’re living in a field of dreams if we truly believe we can build ourselves out of our current congestion nightmare - and why investment in public transit is key.

Predictably, motorists have flocked to use the extra lanes. The problem for the North Shore, however, is the widened traffic funnel ends at the Ironworkers Bridge. Traffic engineers familiar with the Highway 1 project tell me, “We’ve just moved the bottleneck to the Second Narrows.”

### Like a root canal

It’s no coincidence that “the Cut” has become a regular topic of North Shore conversation akin to a root canal ever since the Highway 1 project was completed.

I welcome planned projects like the Highway 1 at Mountain Highway Interchange - scheduled for completion in 2018. It will enhance safety but won’t make much of a dent in overall congestion, traffic engineers tell me.

We need to further upgrade our road network, to be sure. Enhancements, for example, are needed to the Ironworkers’ merge lanes which were built to a standard that is obsolete. Longer acceleration lanes are required to more effectively and safely merge vehicles into traffic. But here again,

at the end of the day, that will only enable more vehicles onto the highway – worsening congestion.

### “Eat your vegetables”

I realize that advocating for more and better public transit can sound like your mother telling you to eat your vegetables. But how many more kilometers of asphalt do we need to realize your mother was sometimes right?

There is no single silver bullet. While improved public transit is key, it alone will not fully solve our congestion issues. Solutions will require many levers that may include a focus on how we might shift traffic volumes away from peak times – given that 21 hours a day our bridges have adequate capacity.

Justin Trudeau has stated that Canadian cities are the engines of Canadian economic growth and that a Liberal government will increase investment in municipal infrastructure with transit being a key priority.

But there’s a broader question here: What do Canadians envision their cities will be in the 21st century? And transportation is a key part of that.

I am looking forward to being part of a federal Liberal government that will lead a national conversation about how our cities can best make the difficult transition toward a balanced and sustainable urban transportation model.

Because if we build it – they will come.

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