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Ballot ballet

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There's no more sacred or noble exercise a citizen can perform than casting a ballot.

Except when they don't bother to do it. That's the case with roughly 80 per cent of North Shore residents who have received their TransLink plebiscite ballot package and promptly done nothing with it, according to numbers released as we hit the half-way point of the voting period.

The point of a mail-in ballot was that it was supposed to be the most convenient way legally possible for someone to cast a vote. No finding your polling station. No waiting in line. Just mark your X, mash the envelopes together and push them in one of those red boxes at the side of the road.

Transportation Minister Todd Stone said the question of whether we should have a new source of funding for transportation expansion was simply too important to be left up to elected leaders. Either he's badly misread the public's desire or his government was simply trying to wiggle its way out of a political no-win situation.

We've argued since the beginning that putting this to a referendum was a bad idea. When it comes to matters of public policy, there are few things more complex than a transportation system.

By now, everyone should be more than familiar with the arguments for and against. Second only to the absurd cost of real estate, it's probably the hottest topic in the Lower Mainland. (The less said about the Canucks, the better).

One thing's for sure. With numbers this low, it only takes a handful of ballots to swing the outcome.

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