

## Parties promise transportation fixes

### Liberals pledge \$20 billion to 'catalyze' local transit priorities

[Brent Richter](#) / North Shore News

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Liberal leader Justin Trudeau announces his party's plan to protect marine environments, at John Lawson Park Thursday. Earlier in the day, Trudeau unveiled his party's plan to invest in urban transportation infrastructure, including North Shore transit priorities like increased SeaBus service. photo Cindy Goodman, North Shore News

Federal parties are targeting North Shore voters where it counts — their ever-lengthening commutes.

Liberal Justin Trudeau was in Vancouver Thursday to announce that his government would put up \$20 billion over 10 years to guarantee sustainable funding for local transit priorities. His announcement named-dropped the Broadway subway, Surrey's light rail network and more frequent SeaBus service — all major proposals lost in the failed TransLink plebiscite.

North Vancouver Liberal candidate Jonathan Wilkinson said his party is planning to provide federal leadership and money to "catalyze" those projects back into existence.

"This is in line with what the Canadian Federation of Municipalities has been calling for, which is a federal commitment to stable, predictable funding over a long period of time that will allow us to ongoing planning of long-term projects," he said. "The plebiscite didn't pass and what we're doing is bringing new dollars to the table to ensure some of these projects that are critical will actually get done."

Municipalities would still have to come up with the standard one-third of the funding, under the Liberals' plan, Wilkinson said.

Those federal dollars will include \$50 million to replace and widen Highway 1's Lynn Creek bridge as a means to deal with the "intolerable congestion" on the Cut, Wilkinson said.

The Harper government already committed \$46 million to fund one-third of the cost of redesigning the three interchanges at the Ironworkers Memorial Second Narrows Crossing bridgehead but the Lynn Creek bridge isn't due to be replaced until 2025.

North Vancouver Conservative MP Andrew Saxton said his government already addressed the transportation funding issue head-on in the last term and in the last federal budget and that he's well aware of how bad traffic has gotten.

"That's why I fought hard to get this \$46 million in funding for these three interchanges, which will help to alleviate the traffic flow over the highway to and from Seymour," he said.

The Tories also put up gas tax money to fund the building of a new SeaBus, Saxton added.

And the Tories have set up the \$80-billion Building Canada Fund over 10 years and the 2015 Transit Fund, which would fund up to \$1 billion per year in transportation projects in major cities

"It's the longest and largest infrastructure investment made by any federal government in Canadian history," Saxton said.

As for the Lynn Creek bridge plan, Saxton said it's up to mayors and the province to decide which projects they want funded and Wilkinson's plan didn't come up.

The NDP's Burnaby North-Seymour candidate, Carol Baird Ellan, questioned how the Liberals are planning to pay for their transit plan.

"They're letting Harper's Conservative friends keep their billions in tax cuts. How are they going to do it? Are they going to raise the GST? That part's pretty vague," she said.

By contrast, the NDP is promising \$1.3 billion per year of "predictable funding for municipalities to make their own decisions and plan ahead," she said.

"It's a municipality's planning function to decide what they're going to do about transit issues but they need the funds to do it. That's something that Tom Mulcair's NDP government will do."

The Green Party's North Vancouver candidate Claire Martin said her party has already released its costed plan for how to fund needed infrastructure and that the Greens are offering a lot more than any other party.

In their platform released on Wednesday, the Greens pledged to set aside one per cent of the GST collected every year to go into an infrastructure bank, which can then be drawn on for projects of all types.

"The money that will set aside for transport... will become \$6.4 billion per year," Martin said. "When I look at a comparison with the Liberals, is about three times the amount the Liberals are putting in and it kicks in immediately as opposed to a plan that goes over a decade."

District of North Vancouver Mayor Richard Walton said he's pleased to see transportation issues on the agenda for all four parties, especially given that all have a focus on transit.

"Cities around the world that are coping well with significant growth have invested in significantly in transportation infrastructure," he said. "Apart from Beijing, nobody's trying to build roads and build their way out of future congestion. It's simply not possible to do that."

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