

EDITORIAL: Round and round

North Shore News

October 7, 2015 12:00 AM

The Lower Mainland's mayors, bless their hearts, are making another go of raising money for more TransLink infrastructure.

This time, they're looking into road pricing, a system of tolls based on distance driven, or on bridge or highway use.

But TransLink's newly appointed government master Peter Fassbender says that too will have to win the support of voters in yet another TransLink referendum.

Let's not go down this road again.

That another referendum would fail is a given. The first one never had a faint hope of passing, despite a stupid amount of money being spent to promote the Yes vote. It was an expensive, time-consuming mess.

Fewer than half of the ballots were returned and a clear majority of those were marked No. Even those who agreed we need better transit infrastructure proudly voted No because they wanted to "send a message" about their dissatisfaction with how the government allows TransLink to operate without accountability.

And the mayors chose a 0.5-per cent sales tax the first time around because their research told them that's what had the best chance of passing. Road pricing is far more complicated and harder to sell.

You've got to admire the steely resolve our government has shown to maintain the status quo, even though the status quo is working to the satisfaction of pretty much no one.

It's time to read between the lines to see what Fassbender is really saying: Transit service is as good as it's going to get in the Lower Mainland, TransLink is as transparent and accountable as it's going to be, and, until there's a new government in Victoria, don't expect either of those things to change.

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