



Mayors' Council on Regional Transportation

B.C. Election 2020 – Voters' Guide

When Metro Vancouver residents cast their ballots in the 2020 B.C. general election, they need to know what each of the provincial parties will do to support the recovery and resiliency of our transit system, and their plans to keep our region moving.

In this provincial election, the Mayors' Council is seeking commitments from all parties to investing in public transit in Metro Vancouver as we confront the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and as our economy moves towards recovery.

We sent [letters to the leaders](#) of the three political parties represented in the B.C. Legislature prior to this election – the BC Green Party, BC Liberal Party and BC NDP – asking for their support to build upon the transit recovery planning already underway and to ensure TransLink is in a position to deliver the additional service that will be needed to support our growing population in the coming decades.

Affordable, reliable and accessible public transit is an essential service that is critical to the future of our communities – economically, socially and environmentally. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, TransLink's ridership was growing faster than anywhere in North America as Metro Vancouver residents increasingly turned to transit as a convenient, affordable and lower-emissions alternative to single occupancy vehicles. In partnership with the Provincial and Federal governments, we have made significant progress in delivering the smart, sustained investments in transportation that our region has needed to support growth and limit GHG emissions.

Although the pandemic has reduced TransLink's ridership and revenues, this setback is temporary, and we must continue looking to the future knowing that transit will remain a critical component of our region's economy and quality of life.

This voters' guide includes responses to five questions posed by the Mayors' Council to the three main parties. The following pages summarize their responses, and copies of their full responses are included at the end of the document.

For more information and background about the Mayors' Council and our priorities for regional transit and transportation, please visit www.mayorscouncil.ca.

Mayors' Council questions for B.C. political parties

1. Do you agree that public transit is an essential service, and that continued investment in transit service is necessary to support economic recovery, to ensure equitable access to transportation for all citizens, to limit road congestion, and to reduce GHG emissions associated with single-occupancy vehicles?

		
<p>Yes, we absolutely agree that transit is an essential service and that continued investment is necessary to support a variety of goals. Addressing our transportation needs through high quality public transit is one of the most important steps we can take to establish livable and affordable communities. Public transit has a significant impact on people's quality of life, by enabling them to be more connected to their community and able to get around easily. It's also critical for making our cities more sustainable and meeting our climate commitments. Public transit, combined with a greater emphasis on active transportation and walkable communities, can help us make our cities more attractive places to live, work and play. Nobody wants to be stuck in their car for long daily commutes, but they need a reliable alternative that meets their needs to get around more easily.</p>	<p><i>The BC Liberal Party did not respond to the question. Their letter states: "We are committed to transit as a priority under a BC Liberal government."</i></p>	<p>Transit is absolutely essential to supporting our economic recovery and growth, as well as to meeting our CleanBC goals for emission reductions. That is why we made the largest provincial investment ever made to provide more than \$2 billion to support the delivery of Phase 2 of the Mayors' Council's 10-Year Vision, including the extension of the SkyTrain along Broadway and the new Surrey-Langley SkyTrain. As we move forward with our recovery, we need to continue to build upon the investments we have made in our first term and ensure that transit expansion is supported across the province, including in the Lower Mainland, as we work to improve connections for all residents, including those in growing regions like the Fraser Valley and the North Shore.</p> <p>And we need to ensure that transit is accessible and affordable to more people, which is why a re-elected BC NDP government would make transit free for all children up to age 12, to ensure that more families are able to make the decision to use transit to get to where they need to go.</p>

2. Will you work with the Mayors' Council and TransLink to complete the COVID-19 Rebuilding Strategy to address the projected long-term losses facing TransLink once the recently announced Safe Restart funding expires in late-2021? This strategy will ensure service levels are maintained throughout the pandemic, ridership can be quickly rebuilt and that TransLink's existing, regressive revenue sources like transit fares and property taxes are not unfairly burdened.

		
<p>Yes, one of our top priorities is to ensure that the projected long-term losses facing TransLink are dealt with so that service levels are maintained, allowing ridership to quickly bounce back through the recovery period. Before COVID-19, we saw ridership growing at significant rates, as many residents were starting to choose transit over a single-occupancy vehicle. We recognize that COVID has dealt a temporary but significant blow to the finances of TransLink. We cannot let our transit infrastructure be compromised by the pandemic - instead we need to double down on these investments.</p>	<p><i>The BC Liberal Party did not respond to the question.</i></p>	<p>Yes. Public transit is an essential part of the strength of our economy, and is critical for our economic recovery. That is why John Horgan advocated to the federal government and his fellow premiers to bring federal dollars to the table to support the operations of transit agencies in the context of the pandemic. Through these efforts we were able to secure more than \$1 billion in financial support for transit authorities in B.C., of which more than \$600 million has been provided to TransLink. In the months and years ahead there is still more work to do to continue to ensure our transit agencies are able to continue to provide the services that people count on, and that our economic growth depends on, and we will continue to work closely with TransLink, and our other transit authorities, to tackle those challenges together.</p>

3. Will you commit to keeping the Phase Two Plan of the 10-Year Vision on track by providing the necessary support to TransLink to:
- finalize funding for the first stage of the Surrey-Langley SkyTrain project from King George Station to 166 Street in Fleetwood so the project can move forward to procurement as quickly as possible; and,
 - make the investments required to support the roll-out of TransLink’s Low Carbon Fleet Strategy, including the purchase of battery electric buses and other capital investments that will reduce GHG emissions from TransLink’s bus fleet by 44% by 2030?

		
<p>Yes, we are committed to keeping the 10-year Vision on track through finalizing funding for the Surrey-Langley SkyTrain and through the low-carbon fleet strategy. In our platform we have committed to prioritizing investments in electrifying our transit systems, including partnering with the federal government to accelerate support for TransLink’s efforts to electrify their bus fleets. We recognize the crucial role that electrification of our transportation system will play in enabling us to meet our climate commitments. There will also be significant benefits of cleaner air and quieter streets.</p>	<p><i>The BC Liberal Party did not respond to the question. Their letter states:</i> “Our platform commits to continuing TransLink expansion to go where the population is growing in Metro Vancouver — including south of the Fraser, the Fraser Valley, and North Vancouver.”</p>	<p>Yes, we are committed to working with TransLink on both of these important initiatives. As announced last week, a BC NDP government will take over the delivery of the Surrey-Langley SkyTrain and complete the entire project (both stages) from Surrey to Langley. We share the region’s view on the importance of this project for residents south of the Fraser, and are committed to ensuring that it gets built. On the Low Carbon Fleet Strategy, we are equally committed to supporting TransLink’s work in this area as part of our CleanBC strategy to put B.C. on a path to net-zero emissions by 2050. We are committing \$200 million in funding to support the move towards a net-zero emission bus fleet across the province, powered by electrification, hydrogen fuel cell technologies, and other zero-emissions technologies, and we are committed to supporting TransLink’s work with this funding.</p>

4. Will you ensure that the project studies and planning processes needed to support the Transport 2050 planning process are not paused due to the pandemic so that the next generation of transit projects are ready to proceed once the region’s economy has recovered, making way for a quick return to the post-pandemic transit expansion our cities need in order to maintain competitiveness?

		
<p>We are committed to ensuring that the next generation of transit projects proceeds as planned to meet the needs of our growing cities. The impact of COVID-19 on our transit systems is temporary and doesn’t change the fundamentals behind the need to continue to expand our transit systems: to respond to a growing population, meet our GHG reduction targets, improve affordability, and make our cities more attractive places to live. We would support moving forward with the planning stage now, to make sure we stay on track for future expansion. The BC Greens are also committed to developing climate and sustainability criteria, including consideration of cumulative impacts, and applying them to all future infrastructure. This way we can help ensure transit and active transportation projects are prioritized and supported, and that we don’t simply continue to build more highways and infrastructure for single occupancy vehicles without considering the bigger picture.</p>	<p><i>The BC Liberal Party did not respond to the question. Their letter states:</i> “The BC Liberals understand the critical importance of working with the federal government and local governments to secure transit infrastructure as part of our economic recovery. Transit infrastructure creates jobs, gets people moving, and helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions. As we face this unprecedented pandemic, it is crucial that we come together to meet the challenges ahead. A BC Liberal government will work with the Mayors’ Council and the federal government to maximize the impact of our historic infrastructure plan.”</p>	<p>Our government has been pleased to work closely with TransLink over the past few years to deliver on the investments already planned, and to plan for the next round of expansion as part of Transport 2050. A re-elected BC NDP government is committed to continuing to expand transit options for people in growing areas of the province, including working with you to look at how to provide increased connections within the TransLink network for people living in the Fraser Valley and the Sea-to-Sky region, and expanded West Coast Express service, to provide more access to commuter rail. We will also continue to work with you on planning and development of future clean transit projects that will have long-lasting economic benefits, like high-speed transit links for the North Shore and the expansion of rail up the Fraser Valley. Like you, we know that investing in this infrastructure will have multiple benefits for the region – bringing cleaner transit for residents and more construction jobs for BC workers.</p>

5. Do you support working with the Mayors' Council to review and improve the TransLink governance model? (See the [letter to parties](#) for more information).

		
<p>We will work with the Mayors' Council to review the governance model for TransLink, and to redesign the transit funding model in partnership, towards establishing an equitable, stable long-term funding model that isn't overly reliant on regressive fares and property taxes. We need to work together and have an honest conversation with British Columbians about how we fund our transit infrastructure, especially as we move to electric vehicles and towards encouraging public transit or active transportation use over single family vehicles, which impacts existing revenue sources like the fuel tax. Mobility pricing is one idea that needs to be seriously considered as we plan for the future.</p>	<p><i>The BC Liberal Party did not respond to the question.</i></p>	<p>We are always open to opportunities to improve how we work to deliver the services that people count on, including looking at how critical services like transit are overseen and delivered. A re-elected BC NDP government would be happy to talk about challenges with the current model, and your ideas for how it could be improved to better deliver the services that people in the region count on.</p>

October 15, 2020

Dear Mayors' Council on Regional Transportation,

Thank you for your letter and questions. Below you will find more information on how commitments in our 2020 platform will respond to the important issues you raised.

1. Do you agree that public transit is an essential service, and that continued investment in transit service is necessary to support economic recovery, to ensure equitable access to transportation for all citizens, to limit road congestion, and to reduce GHG emissions associated with single-occupancy vehicles?

Transit is absolutely essential to supporting our economic recovery and growth, as well as to meeting our CleanBC goals for emission reductions. That is why we made the largest provincial investment ever made to provide more than \$2 billion to support the delivery of Phase 2 of the Mayors' Council's 10-Year Vision, including the extension of the SkyTrain along Broadway and the new Surrey-Langley SkyTrain.

As we move forward with our recovery, we need to continue to build upon the investments we have made in our first term and ensure that transit expansion is supported across the province, including in the Lower Mainland, as we work to improve connections for all residents, including those in growing regions like the Fraser Valley and the North Shore.

And we need to ensure that transit is accessible and affordable to more people, which is why a re-elected BC NDP government would make transit free for all children up to age 12, to ensure that more families are able to make the decision to use transit to get to where they need to go.

2. Will you work with the Mayors' Council and TransLink to complete the COVID-19 Rebuilding Strategy to address the projected long-term losses facing TransLink once the recently announced Safe Restart funding expires in late-2021? This strategy will ensure service levels are maintained throughout the pandemic, ridership can be quickly rebuilt and that TransLink's existing, regressive revenue sources like transit fares and property taxes are not unfairly burdened.

Yes. Public transit is an essential part of the strength of our economy, and is critical for our economic recovery. That is why John Horgan advocated to the federal government and his fellow premiers to bring federal dollars to the table to support the operations of transit agencies in the context of the pandemic. Through these efforts we were able to secure more than \$1 billion in financial support for transit authorities in B.C., of which more than \$600 million has been provided to TransLink. In the months and years ahead there is still more work to do to continue to ensure our transit agencies are able to continue to provide the services that people count on, and that our economic growth depends on, and we will continue to work closely with TransLink, and our other transit authorities, to tackle those challenges together.

3. Will you commit to keeping the Phase Two Plan of the 10-Year Vision on track by providing the necessary support to TransLink to:

- finalize funding for the first stage of the Surrey-Langley SkyTrain project from King George Station to 166 Street in Fleetwood so the project can move forward to procurement as quickly as possible; and,

- **make the investments required to support the roll-out of TransLink’s Low Carbon Fleet Strategy, including the purchase of battery electric buses and other capital investments that will reduce GHG emissions from TransLink’s bus fleet by 44% by 2030?**

Yes, we are committed to working with TransLink on both of these important initiatives. As announced last week, a BC NDP government will take over the delivery of the Surrey-Langley SkyTrain and complete the entire project (both stages) from Surrey to Langley. We share the region’s view on the importance of this project for residents south of the Fraser, and are committed to ensuring that it gets built.

On the Low Carbon Fleet Strategy, we are equally committed to supporting TransLink’s work in this area as part of our CleanBC strategy to put B.C. on a path to net-zero emissions by 2050. We are committing \$200 million in funding to support the move towards a net-zero emission bus fleet across the province, powered by electrification, hydrogen fuel cell technologies, and other zero-emissions technologies, and we are committed to supporting TransLink’s work with this funding.

4. Will you ensure that the project studies and planning processes needed to support the Transport 2050 planning process are not paused due to the pandemic so that the next generation of transit projects are ready to proceed once the region’s economy has recovered, making way for a quick return to the post-pandemic transit expansion our cities need in order to maintain competitiveness?

Our government has been pleased to work closely with TransLink over the past few years to deliver on the investments already planned, and to plan for the next round of expansion as part of Transport 2050. A re-elected BC NDP government is committed to continuing to expand transit options for people in growing areas of the province, including working with you to look at how to provide increased connections within the TransLink network for people living in the Fraser Valley and the Sea-to-Sky region, and expanded West Coast Express service, to provide more access to commuter rail. We will also continue to work with you on planning and development of future clean transit projects that will have long-lasting economic benefits, like high-speed transit links for the North Shore and the expansion of rail up the Fraser Valley. Like you, we know that investing in this infrastructure will have multiple benefits for the region – bringing cleaner transit for residents and more construction jobs for BC workers.

5. Do you support working with the Mayors’ Council to review and improve the TransLink governance model?

We are always open to opportunities to improve how we work to deliver the services that people count on, including looking at how critical services like transit are overseen and delivered. A re-elected BC NDP government would be happy to talk about challenges with the current model, and your ideas for how it could be improved to better deliver the services that people in the region count on.



**Restore Confidence.
Rebuild BC.**

October 16, 2020

Mayors' Council on Regional Transportation
Sent via email: mayorscouncil@translink.ca

Dear Mayor Côté,

Thank you for your letter, dated October 7, 2020, regarding the BC Liberal Party's commitments to public transit in the Metro Vancouver region. I am pleased to respond.

COVID-19 has had devastating impacts on public transit, and it will require bold action to restore confidence and rebuild B.C. We are committed to transit as a priority under a BC Liberal government. Our platform commits to continuing TransLink expansion to go where the population is growing in Metro Vancouver — including south of the Fraser, the Fraser Valley, and North Vancouver.

Investments that enable future service expansion and capital investments should not be paused as a result of the pandemic. Our infrastructure plan includes improving roads, public transit, and clean transportation infrastructure in order to reduce congestion and improve travel for transit user and drivers alike.

Our plan will invest \$8 billion in additional infrastructure spending to meet growing demands and create over 35,000 direct and indirect jobs. This three-year commitment represents a 35 per cent increase over current capital spending commitments and will be the biggest infrastructure investment in B.C. history with a total investment of \$30.9 billion over three years.

Unfortunately, John Horgan and the NDP's infrastructure plan will lock out 85 per cent of the construction workforce from participating on public projects through Community Benefits Agreements (CBAs). But instead of benefitting our communities, these agreements benefit NDP insiders and donors. We also know that CBAs quickly drive up project costs, meaning the public gets less transit for more money. The BC Liberals believe in equal opportunity to participate on public construction projects and respecting taxpayer funds.

The BC Liberals understand the critical importance of working with the federal government and local governments to secure transit infrastructure as part of our economic recovery. Transit infrastructure creates jobs, gets people moving, and helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions. As we face this unprecedented pandemic, it is crucial that we come together to meet the challenges ahead. A BC Liberal government will work with the Mayor's council and the federal government to maximize the impact of our historic infrastructure plan.

Sincerely,

Andrew Wilkinson



October 15th, 2020

Thank you for your inquiry into where the B.C. Greens stand on supporting TransLink and transit in our province. Please find our response detailed below.

Sincerely,
Sonia Furstenau
Leader, B.C. Green Party
B.C. Green Candidate for Cowichan Valley

1. Do you agree that public transit is an essential service, and that continued investment in transit service is necessary to support economic recovery, to ensure equitable access to transportation for all citizens, to limit road congestion, and to reduce GHG emissions associated with single-occupancy vehicles?

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Yes, one of our top priorities is to ensure that the projected long-term losses facing TransLink are dealt with so that service levels are maintained, allowing ridership to quickly bounce back through the recovery period. Before COVID-19, we saw ridership growing at significant rates, as many residents were starting to choose transit over a single-occupancy vehicle. We recognize that COVID has dealt a temporary but significant blow to the finances of TransLink. We cannot let our transit infrastructure be compromised by the pandemic - instead we need to double down on these investments.

3. Will you commit to keeping the Phase Two Plan of the 10-Year Vision on track by providing the necessary support to TransLink to:

- **finalize funding for the first stage of the Surrey-Langley SkyTrain project from King George Station to 166 Street in Fleetwood so the project can move forward to procurement as quickly as possible; and,**
- **make the investments required to support the roll-out of TransLink's Low Carbon Fleet Strategy, including the purchase of battery electric buses and other capital investments that will reduce GHG emissions from TransLink's bus fleet by 44% by 2030?**

Yes, we are committed to keeping the 10-year vision on track through finalizing funding for the Surrey-Langley SkyTrain and through the low-carbon fleet strategy. In our platform we have committed to prioritizing investments in electrifying our transit systems, including partnering with the federal government to accelerate support for Translink's efforts to electrify their bus fleets. We recognize the crucial role that electrification of our transportation system will play in enabling us to meet our climate commitments. There will also be significant benefits of cleaner air and quieter streets.

4. Will you ensure that the project studies and planning processes needed to support the Transport 2050 planning process are not paused due to the pandemic so that the next generation of transit projects are ready to proceed once the region's economy has recovered, making way for a quick return to the post-pandemic transit expansion our cities need in order to maintain competitiveness?

We are committed to ensuring that the next generation of transit projects proceeds as planned to meet the needs of our growing cities. The impact of COVID-19 on our transit systems is temporary and doesn't change the fundamentals behind the need to continue to expand our transit systems: to respond to a growing population, meet our GHG reduction targets, improve affordability, and make our cities more attractive places to live. We would support moving forward with the planning stage now, to make sure we stay on track for future expansion.

The BC Greens are also committed to developing climate and sustainability criteria, including consideration of cumulative impacts, and applying them to all future infrastructure. This way we can help ensure transit and active transportation projects are prioritized and supported, and that we don't simply continue to build more highways and infrastructure for single occupancy vehicles without considering the bigger picture.

5. Do you support working with the Mayors' Council to review and improve the TransLink governance model?

We will work with the Mayors' Council to review the governance model for Translink, and to redesign the transit funding model in partnership, towards establishing an equitable, stable



long-term funding model that isn't overly reliant on regressive fares and property taxes. We need to work together and have an honest conversation with British Columbians about how we fund our transit infrastructure, especially as we move to electric vehicles and towards encouraging public transit or active transportation use over single family vehicles, which impacts existing revenue sources like the fuel tax. Mobility pricing is one idea that needs to be seriously considered as we plan for the future.