



# MAYORS' COUNCIL

*On Regional Transportation*



**2019 FEDERAL ELECTION**

# VOTERS' GUIDE

October 16, 2019

Let's Keep Metro Vancouver Moving  
**CureCongestion.ca**

Metro Vancouver has seen historic increases in transit service over the past few years – thanks to strong partnerships with the provincial and federal governments – and yet we can't keep up with growing demand from the public. With one million more people coming to our region in the next 20 years, expanding our transit system is absolutely critical if we're going to protect our environment and quality of life, and keep our economy growing.

When Metro Vancouver residents cast their ballots in the October 21 federal election, they need to know what each of the federal parties will do to address traffic congestion and overcrowding on public transit. The Mayors' Council on Regional Transportation – through the Cure Congestion campaign – has been **calling for federal parties to commit to a permanent transit fund**, so that we can keep up with ridership growth and plan ahead for the new transit services our region will need in the future.

A permanent transit fund would enable TransLink to complete the 10-Year Vision and accelerate future projects that will add more capacity to our transit system across the entire region, including:

- **Extending SkyTrain from Surrey to Langley in one phase**
- **Extending SkyTrain all the way to UBC**
- **Adding all 5 rapid bus lines that are part of the Phase Three Plan of the 10-Year Vision**
- **Rapid transit on King George Boulevard**
- **A gondola to Burnaby Mountain**
- **Accelerating electrification of our bus fleet**
- **Moving up the next round of planning and technical work to 2022 for new transit projects to be identified in our Transport 2050 plan**

Continued expansion of public transit is one of the most powerful things we can do to reduce our GHG emissions, and is critical to Canada meeting its climate change commitments. Governments need to keep investing in transit to keep our economy moving, and to improve access to affordable housing options for residents across the region.

You can learn more about our campaign and the benefits of permanent federal funding for transit in our 2019 Federal Election Platform at [www.curecongestion.ca](http://www.curecongestion.ca).

## Why “Cure Congestion”?

*Imagine if the one million new residents coming to our region over the next 20 years bring with them as many cars as Metro Vancouverites own today. There could be more than 600,000 new vehicles trying to find space on our already crowded streets. If the next federal government fails to provide sustained funding alongside provincial and regional governments, our transit system will become severely overcrowded and traffic on our roads will get worse. **That's why in this election, public transit matters!***

# WHERE DO PARTIES STAND ON THE INTRODUCTION OF A PERMANENT FUND FOR TRANSIT?

## **CONSERVATIVE PARTY**

*Platform Commitment? NO*

The Conservatives have committed to proceed with already planned infrastructure projects, including transit, however currently allocated funding would be extended from 12 to 15 years. The party says it will streamline existing federal infrastructure funding programs and prioritise for approval those projects that reduce commute times.

By including a promise in its platform to fund two new multi-billion-dollar subway extension projects in Toronto, the Conservative Party has shown a welcome willingness to invest in public transportation, however, they have not indicated whether they would dedicate any new investments to public transit in Metro Vancouver. They have however promised funding for the Massey Tunnel Replacement Project. While a federal commitment to upgrade this busy crossing is welcome, the Massey Tunnel does not fall under the responsibility of the Mayors' Council as it is not part of TransLink's mandate.

The Conservatives have committed to reintroducing a transit tax credit similar to the one ended in 2017, aimed at making it more affordable for people to take transit. The Green Public Transit Tax Credit would apply to monthly and weekly passes, and some electronic fare cards.

## **GREEN PARTY**

*Platform Commitment? YES*

The Green Party has committed to introducing a permanent, dedicated federal public transit fund of \$3.4 billion annually starting in 2028, once the existing transit funding program expires. This matches the request from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and the Mayors' Council for permanent funding to expand transit service in Metro Vancouver and other Canadian cities.

The Green Party has also committed to double overall funding to municipalities, and make changes to the Canada Infrastructure Bank to reduce interest rates to municipalities on loans for infrastructure projects. On active transportation, the Green Party has pledged to create a national cycling and walking infrastructure fund to help support zero emissions active transportation.

## **LIBERAL PARTY**

*Platform Commitment? YES*

The Liberal Party will make the federal commitment to fund public transit permanent, including a promise to ensure funding keeps up with the rising cost of construction over time. The party's platform specifies an additional \$3 billion more per year in stable, predictable funding for cities' transit needs, on top of transfers through the federal Gas Tax Fund. This pledge is consistent with the request from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and the Mayors' Council for permanent funding to expand transit service in Metro Vancouver and other Canadian cities.

## **NDP**

*Platform Commitment? YES*

The NDP has committed to introducing a permanent, direct, allocation-based funding mechanism for public transit, however the party has not provided a specific annual dollar amount. The NDP's platform includes investments in zero-emission transit vehicles as well as a commitment to supporting active transportation options and developing a National Cycling strategy.

# WHERE DO PARTIES STAND ON THE ELECTRIFICATION OF BUSES?

In 2017, the Mayors' Council and TransLink set aggressive targets to cut GHG emissions by 80% from TransLink's operations as its contribution to the Government of Canada's national and international climate change strategy. TransLink has begun converting its bus fleet to emission-free battery electric buses, with the transition accelerating early in the next decade. This transition is dependent on senior government funding so that investments in electrification do not compete with expanding the transit network and reducing reliance on the private automobile.

While not originally included as an ask in the Cure Congestion platform, electrification of TransLink's bus fleet is a priority for the Mayors' Council and is likely to be an issue of interest to voters in this federal election.

## CONSERVATIVE PARTY

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The Conservatives have committed to proceed with already planned infrastructure projects, including public transit, but have made no specific commitments to supporting electrification or other zero-emission strategies for public transit.

## GREEN PARTY

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In its platform, the Green Party announced a hard target of reaching zero-emissions for any ground-level public transit in Canada by 2040. While they have not specified how much they would invest in electrification of transit fleets, the Greens have said: "federal transfers to municipalities will be institutionalized through the creation of a Municipal Fund... that will ensure a doubling of current funding for transit and other urban infrastructure."

## LIBERAL PARTY

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The Liberal platform pledges to "help communities transition to using more zero-emission vehicles," in part by requiring that new federal investments in public transit are used to support zero-emission buses and rail systems starting in 2023. The Liberals are committing \$160 million in 2020-2021, growing to \$180 million per year from 2021 through 2024, for "electrifying transit and transportation" which includes public transit as well as initiatives designed to encourage electric vehicles for personal and commercial use.

## NDP

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As part of its commitment to supporting the expansion of transit, the NDP says it will "ensure that federal transit funding flows with an emphasis on scaling up low-carbon transit projects, like zero-emissions buses and electric trains." The party has stated a goal of electrifying transit and other municipal vehicle fleets by 2030. The NDP's fiscal plan provides for \$1.45 billion annually from 2020/21 through 2023/24 for "clean transit and transportation."

# CURE CONGESTION QUESTIONNAIRE

As mayors and community leaders responsible for setting priorities for what the region needs from the transit and transportation system, we asked the four main political parties aspiring to form the next federal government to respond to four questions. Below are the responses we received, unedited.

**1. Do you agree that reducing congestion in Metro Vancouver — for the benefit of the region’s people, economy, health and environment — should be a priority for the next federal government?**

**CONSERVATIVE**

Yes, to get Canadians home to their family faster at the end of the workday, a new Conservative government will prioritize infrastructure projects that shorten commute times.

[Click here to read a letter to Mayors provided by the Conservative Party.](#)

**GREEN**

Yes. Reducing congestion and improving public transit in Metro Vancouver and other municipalities is a top priority for the Green Party. As noted, reductions in traffic congestion equate to better health outcomes, greater economic activity and less carbon emissions.

**LIBERAL**

The Liberal Party agrees that reducing congestion in Metro Vancouver - as well as in other major Canadian metropolitan areas - should be a priority for the next federal government. Not only is congestion bad for the environment, every minute spent stuck behind the wheel in traffic is another minute away from friends and family.

Investing in public transit infrastructure helps build sustainable communities, encourage economic growth and strengthen the middle class. By working with other orders of government, we have made significant progress and delivered concrete results for all Canadians, which we will continue to do if re-elected. Our government also created the Canada Infrastructure Bank, to help leverage the private sector to make transformative investments in the public interest.

**NDP**

New Democrats are committed to making the future better for everyone, and investments in public transit and infrastructure can help create a fairer, equitable, and affordable country for everyone.

New Democrats agree that reducing congestion in Metro Vancouver is essential for the region. Municipalities across the country are making historic investments in public transit systems to improve quality of life, and we believe it's time that municipalities have a federal partner to help make those systems reliable and environmentally friendly. That is why a New Democrat government will create a permanent, direct, allocation-based funding mechanism to modernize and expand public transit in communities across Canada.

## 2. Do you support accelerating completion of the 10-Year Vision?

### CONSERVATIVE

We support providing sustainable and predictable infrastructure funding to ensure that important projects actually get built.

We especially support infrastructure projects that will reduce commute times for Canadians, such as improved transit systems and improving important roads.

[Click here to read a letter to Mayors provided by the Conservative Party.](#)

### GREEN

Yes. The 10-Year Vision for Metro Vancouver includes many public transit and infrastructure updates aligns well with the Green Party's vision for Canada. In this vision, it is easy and safe to bike and walk around our cities, thanks to programs that fund municipal active transportation networks, and efficient bus and rail service have been restored to rural and remote communities, who no longer feel abandoned by government.

### LIBERAL

Our Party supports accelerated completion of the 10-Year Vision, and as a government, we have shown our support through significant federal investments in Metro Vancouver infrastructure.

In May of this year, our Liberal government announced nearly \$500 million invested towards Phase Two of the 10-Year Vision. Together with the BC Government and Translink, this investment will help to strengthen the backbone of the Lower Mainland's public transit system. By investing in public transportation, we are reducing the number of vehicles on the road and helping to build a more sustainable future for Vancouver, the Lower Mainland and Canada.

### NDP

New Democrats believe that Canadians should be able to count on the federal government to invest in infrastructure to make a real difference. Investments in Vancouver's public transportation affects more than just transportation times – a reliable transportation system helps Vancouver residents improve their quality of life, allowing them to spend more time with their families, choose more affordable housing options, and support a cleaner environment.

Residents in Vancouver shouldn't have to wait for a government that doesn't make transit a priority. That is why a New Democrat government will create a permanent, direct, allocation-based funding mechanism to modernize and expand public transit in communities across Canada.

By using Community Benefit Agreements, New Democrats can help Vancouver build the infrastructure it needs while creating good jobs without the delays that previous governments have created through the privatization of public infrastructure.

**3. If elected, will you establish a new Congestion Relief Fund - a permanent, predictable federal fund that can be invested alongside local and provincial government commitments and guarantees Metro Vancouver the transportation funding needed for our most urgent congestion-fighting transit and road investments?**

**CONSERVATIVE**

We will prioritize infrastructure spending for projects that reduce commute times for Canadians, so reducing congestion aligns with one of our priorities.

Click here to read a letter to Mayors provided by the Conservative Party.

**GREEN**

Yes. Successive governments have skirted the issue of ensuring municipalities are properly consulted and funded to fulfill their responsibilities. No one wants to reopen the Constitution, but it is time to give the municipal order of government the tools and support required to provide the fundamental services relied on by the vast majority of Canadians.

With only 10 cents out of every tax dollar flowing to the municipal order of government, vast inequities in our governance structures and financial stability have been created. If these responsibilities are downloaded to municipalities, then revenue sharing agreements need to be reviewed to ensure that they have the funds to successfully fulfill those responsibilities.

A Green government will:  
 --Institutionalize federal transfers to municipalities through the creation of a Municipal Fund, renaming the Gas Tax funds, which were delinked from gas tax revenue years ago.  
 --Ensure a doubling of current funding to ensure predictable and reliable funding to municipalities.  
 --Answer the Federation

**LIBERAL**

Yes. The Liberal Party is committed to predictable funding for infrastructure from the federal government, which is why over the last four years, through the Investing in Canada Plan, our Liberal government made available over \$180 billion for infrastructure projects for a 12-year period.

The Plan provides a single, consolidated strategic framework to guide the delivery of all federal infrastructure funding programs, in predictable and focused manner. In the most recent federal budget, we also provided a one time top up to the Gas Tax Fund, bringing it to \$2.2 billion. This investment in short-term priorities across the country, which will in turn will leave a lasting legacy of vital public infrastructure in communities across Canada.

To date, more than 48,000 projects have been approved across the country. We have invested in over 3,600 new buses providing Canadian commuters with more than 100,000 additional seats and invested in repairs and refurbishments for more than 4,900 existing buses to increase comfort and reliability for transit riders.

**NDP**

New Democrats understand that getting Vancouver moving is critical to the economy and quality of life. In the New Deal for People, New Democrats commit to put in place a permanent, direct, allocation-based funding mechanism for public transit across Canada. This includes working with residents of Vancouver, Indigenous governments, and the governments of British Columbia and Vancouver.

Better commutes also include promoting smart community planning and supporting active transportation options. Following the example of other countries, New Democrats believe we can foster a cycling culture in Canada by making Canada a cycling nation. Through a National Cycling strategy, we can develop more cycling options that are safer for cyclists, reduce carbon emissions, and ease congestion.

of Canadian Municipalities' and Vancouver Mayor's Council's call for a permanent, dedicated federal public transit fund of \$3.4B annually starting in 2028, once the existing transit funding program expires.  
 --Allocate one per cent of GST to housing and other municipal infrastructure on an ongoing basis to provide a consistent baseline of funding.  
 --Make changes to the Canada Infrastructure Bank to reduce interest rates to municipalities on loans for infrastructure projects.

**4. Do you agree there is an important role for the federal government to play as a partner, providing sustained funding to local governments, to support transit and transportation improvements that keep Canadians and the economy moving?**

**CONSERVATIVE**

Yes, which is exactly why our previous Conservative government doubled and made the Gas Tax Fund permanent.

[Click here to read a letter to Mayors provided by the Conservative Party.](#)

**GREEN**

Yes. It is time to create a mechanism with a seat at the table for municipal governments. A Green government will support the model of collaborative federalism.

Greens will create a Council of Canadian Governments, based on the one in use in Australia. The Council of Canadian Governments will work to set higher order policy priorities, with the goal of all orders of government using tax dollars wisely, through policy coherence, to tackle the issues that Canadians find most pressing, such as climate change and public safety. At the table will be the federal government, provincial governments, representatives of Big City Mayors and smaller

**LIBERAL**

Liberals know that successful, confident countries invest in their own future. Federal investments in infrastructure are vital to creating middle class jobs today and sustained economic growth for years to come.

Every dollar spent on public infrastructure grows and makes our economy more competitive, while also creating jobs, strengthening our cities and communities, and improving our health, well-being, and quality of life. That is why we will invest in public transit in order to strengthen our middle class, grow our economy, and ensure Canadians can spend less time commuting, and more quality time with

**NDP**

Public transit is essential to keeping Canada, Vancouver and the economy moving. New Democrats believe that if we make the right choices now, we can create good jobs and build the vehicles and transit infrastructure that residents of Vancouver rely on daily.

A New Democrat government will create a permanent, direct, allocation-based funding mechanism to modernize and expand public transit in communities across Canada.

New Democrats will modernize and expand public transit in communities across the country, with an emphasis on low-carbon transit projects like



and rural municipalities as well as Indigenous - First Nations, Métis and Inuit governments. The creation of a Council of Canadian Governments and new federal tax transfers will ensure the federal government is a key partner in supporting municipal needs.

their families. We know that an economy that can't move its people will never reach its full potential.

zero-emission buses and electric trains, with an end goal of electrifying transit and other municipal fleets by 2030. New Democrats believe in expanding rural and remote bus routes and passenger rail service to keep Canadians safe regardless of where they live.

Where possible, New Democrats will work in partnership with municipalities to move towards fare-free transit.

Cure Congestion is a non-partisan campaign by the Mayors' Council on Regional Transportation, with the goal of informing federal parties and local voters about the importance of sustained funding to expand our public transit system in Metro Vancouver. Launched in Spring 2019, the campaign has the support of a variety of community stakeholders including the Better Transit & Transportation Coalition, major universities and colleges, student associations, business associations, active transportation groups, health organizations and environmental groups.

This guide is intended as a reference for voters to understand the positions of the four main federal parties, in response to the priorities set out in the Mayors' Council's Cure Congestion federal election platform, which is available on our website at [www.curecongestion.ca](http://www.curecongestion.ca). The Mayors' Council is not endorsing any political party or candidate in this election. It's up to each voter to decide which candidate best represents their views on the issues that matter most to them.



# MAYORS' COUNCIL

*On Regional Transportation*

*"The 2019 federal election is Metro Vancouver's opportunity to tell Ottawa we need more investment in transportation and transit. A Congestion Relief Fund will get Metro Vancouver the new transportation infrastructure we need to make commutes quicker and easier for people and businesses. Let's keep moving forward. Let's make life better for people and keep the region growing and prospering by reducing congestion on our transit system and roads."*

Jonathan X. Cote, Mayor of New Westminster  
Chair, Mayors' Council on Regional Transportation



*The Mayors' Council is composed of representatives from each of the 21 municipalities within the transportation service region, as well as Electoral Area 'A' and the Tsawwassen First Nation, and collectively represent the viewpoints and interests of the citizens of the region.*

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**CONGESTION RELIEF IS CLOSER THAN EVER.  
TELL THE FEDERAL PARTIES TO GET ON BOARD!**

**CURECONGESTION.CA**

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