



Better Transit and Transportation Coalition

for our economy, our environment and your quality of life

“Yes” coalition calls on voters to support Metro Vancouver transportation improvements

The Better Transit and Transportation Coalition — the biggest, most diverse coalition in B.C. history — highlights opportunity for Metro Vancouver to determine its transportation future

VANCOUVER, January 29, 2015 — Victory for the “Yes” vote in Metro Vancouver’s upcoming transportation referendum will benefit people from all walks of life, according to the broad-based Better Transit and Transportation Coalition, which calls the referendum “one of the most important decisions facing our region for the next generation.”

The BTTC, the largest and most diverse coalition of its kind in B.C., is backing the Metro Vancouver Mayors’ Council Plan to expand transportation options, cut traffic congestion, reduce pollution, improve the health of our communities and strengthen the local economy. The plan is also accountable in that independent auditing and public reporting requirements will ensure money raised is spent on the proposed projects.

The BTTC has come together from incredibly diverse backgrounds to become a formal non-profit society with a common purpose, appointing four co-chairs representing business, labour, environment and student groups, among others. All are encouraging Metro Vancouver residents to vote “Yes” in the binding plebiscite mail-in ballot, which takes place from mid-March through the end of May.

“The plan will make our regional and provincial economy more competitive by dramatically improving the movement of goods, services and people,” says coalition co-chair and Vancouver Board of Trade president and CEO Iain Black.

Improvements in the plan include better service on existing SkyTrain and bus routes, light rail transit in Surrey and Langley, Broadway Corridor rapid transit, replacement of the Pattullo Bridge and 11 new B-Line routes throughout the region.

“Saying ‘Yes’ to these vital projects is the most important step we can take to show we care for the environment and to improve our quality of life,” says coalition co-chair and David Suzuki Foundation CEO Peter Robinson.

The Mayors’ Council Plan will cut traffic congestion by 20 per cent, shortening commute times by an average of 20 to 30 minutes per day, and give 70 per cent of Metro Vancouver residents more frequent transit service. It also addresses Metro Vancouver’s future transit needs as the region prepares for one million more residents by 2040.



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“Better transit and transportation benefits workers in a real way by making it easier and faster for them to get to and from their jobs and to spend more time with their families instead of wasting precious time on long commutes and traffic gridlock,” says Gavin McGarrigle, coalition co-chair and Unifor’s B.C. Area director.

The plan will be funded by a 0.5 per cent regional Congestion Improvement Tax. This funding method will be fair to everyone, including visitors and tourists. It is affordable — on average 34 cents a day per household — or \$125 a year.

“Students rely on transit,” says Bahareh Jokar, coalition co-chair and VP External at the Alma Mater Society of the University of British Columbia. “A stronger transit system will help thousands of students across Metro Vancouver advance their education, while building a better region for generations to come.”

The BTTC will work throughout the Lower Mainland with speeches, public appearances, editorial boards, digital media efforts and other ways to help ensure Metro Vancouver voters understand the benefits of expanded transportation options.

The BTTC is inviting the media and supporters of the “Yes” vote in Metro Vancouver’s upcoming transit and transportation referendum to a campaign event:

Time: 12 noon, registration at 11:30 a.m.

Date: Thursday, February 5

Location: SFU, Segal Building, 500 Granville Street, Vancouver, B.C.

About the BTTC:

The Better Transit and Transportation Coalition is a new coalition — the biggest, most diverse ever in B.C. — supporting the Metro Vancouver Mayors’ Council Plan to dramatically improve transit and transportation in our region. The BTTC has more than 65 organizational supporters representing more than 250,000 Metro Vancouver residents, including organizations from business, labour, environment, student, community, health and other groups. Learn more at the BTTC’s new website: www.Bettertransit.info Follow us on Twitter [@voteyestransit](https://twitter.com/voteyestransit) and Facebook [BetterTransitInfo](https://www.facebook.com/BetterTransitInfo)

Better Transit and Transportation Coalition co-chair bios:

Iain Black is president and CEO of the Vancouver Board of Trade. He has been in this role since 2011, leading the organization through fundamental transformation and returning it to increased membership growth, financial health and relevance in the public and business



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domain. He joined the board after serving six years as an elected MLA and cabinet minister for the government of British Columbia, where his various responsibilities included three cabinet posts encompassing economic development, labour and small business.

Bahareh Jokar is a fifth-year political science student and vice-president external affairs of the Alma Mater Society of UBC Vancouver. She sits as the chair of Get on Board BC and vice-chair of the Alliance of BC Students. Her work focuses on advocating for student issues to different levels of government, while ensuring that students are informed and engaged during elections. Metro Vancouver is home to upwards of 100,000 students.

Gavin McGarrigle is the B.C. Area Director for Unifor and a vice-president and officer at the B.C. Federation of Labour. McGarrigle has represented workers and bargained agreements in many industries, including transit and transportation, with Vancouver's container truckers, and in aerospace and hospitality. Unifor is Canada's newest union and largest in the private sector, with more than 305,000 members across the country, working in every major sector of the Canadian economy. The B.C. Federation of Labour represents close to 500,000 members throughout British Columbia and includes many unions representing transit workers, including COPE Local 378, CUPE and BCGEU.

Peter Robinson is the chief executive officer of the David Suzuki Foundation, a non-profit science and education organization working to address some of Canada's most pressing environmental challenges. He brings to this position a diverse background spanning four decades in business, government and the non-profit sectors. Robinson began his career working as a park ranger in wilderness areas throughout British Columbia, where he was decorated for bravery by the Governor General of Canada. After his park career, he worked at BC Housing, a provincial crown corporation, eventually becoming its CEO. Immediately prior to his appointment as CEO of the David Suzuki Foundation, he was the CEO of Mountain Equipment Co-op.

For media information, please contact:

Theresa Beer, David Suzuki Foundation, 778-874-3396, tbeer@davidsuzuki.org

Rob MacKay-Dunn, The Vancouver Board of Trade, 604-640-5454, rmackay-dunn@boardoftrade.com