

**Media Release: March 17, 2015**

## **Transit Plebiscite raises concerns and questions from neighbourhoods about Broadway plans**

The Coalition of Vancouver Neighbourhoods (CVN) strongly supports improved public transit; however, CVN has not taken a yes or no position on the transit plebiscite. There are many concerns about the proposal in general that the public needs to be informed on.

In the lead-up to the Transit Plebiscite, there has been much public debate about increasing taxes and the problems with TransLink. However, there has been little discussion about some of the details of the proposed transportation package, and its implications for massive development, especially along the Broadway corridor. Before the public can determine whether to vote yes or no, this discussion needs to take place so that voters can make an informed choice.

In a recent BC Supreme Court decision, it was ruled that the public should be provided all relevant information, presented concisely and intelligibly, in order to enable informed public input.

In particular, we call on the City to more clearly, explicitly and fully inform the public about plans for the Broadway corridor to facilitate comprehensive public discussion about these proposals. In order to find out what is really proposed for the Broadway Corridor, one must wade through a maze of links and many reports. The facts are not being clearly set out for the average person to be informed.

The Coalition of Vancouver Neighbourhoods is concerned that voters are being asked to make a hugely important decision about the future of transit in Vancouver based on inadequate and confusing information. In its Principles and Goals document CVN states, “... *a goal of the planning process must be to ensure that all pertinent information is readily available to all concerned. To this end, the planning process must:*

- *Include detailed and accurate information on projected and actual impacts of major development projects and other significant planning decisions or policy changes*
- *Ensure that information provided to the public is timely, accurate, detailed, and complete.”*

The information provided in the lead-up to the Transit Plebiscite relating to the Broadway corridor clearly does not meet these goals, and has not led to a full public discussion of these key issues.

See the attachment for further details of the Coalition of Vancouver Neighbourhoods' concerns.

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Coalition of Vancouver Neighbourhoods website: [coalitionvan.ca](http://coalitionvan.ca)

**See Appendix attached.**

## Appendix

### Concerns about the Transit Plebiscite

1. **Scale of development along Broadway Corridor:** It has been stated in city documents that if a subway were approved, development along the Broadway Corridor would be similar to the Oakridge and South Cambie areas of the Cambie Corridor. The City's KPMG report gives Oakridge and Cambie/Marine as examples of development scale for the Broadway Corridor. Oakridge mall includes 11 towers of up to 45 storeys in height. This is out of scale and character with the local area plans along the Broadway Corridor. Will Broadway be lined with tall towers?
2. **Frequent Transit Development Area (FTDA):** The Broadway Corridor is proposed as a future Frequent Transit Development Area from 4th Ave. to 16th Ave., Commercial Dr. to UBC. This is a regional designation that gives TransLink and Metro Vancouver influence on land use decisions. Will this lead to Metrotown scale development in the entire Broadway Corridor that overrides local area plans and neighbourhood character? Will local influence in land use decisions be diminished even further?
3. **Using development to fund transit:** Even if the sales tax increase is approved for transit, it will cover only a portion of the proposed costs. The federal and provincial governments have yet to commit to their portion. *Transportation 2040* identifies development as a possible funding source for transit. Will development be used to fund transit, with or without the sales tax funding? Will this not lead to a loss of civic amenities such as parks, community centres, libraries, daycare, etc.? These are supposed to be funded by development charges, such as DCLs & CACs. Should transit, which is not a civic responsibility, be funded by these development charges? Will this type of transit funding result in large density bonuses above what is allowed under local plans?
4. **Development preceding transit:** If development precedes transit completion, there will be more people without adequate transit, which will make congestion even worse than it is today. The first phase to Arbutus is part of the initial 10-year plan, so it could be a decade before it is operating. The City and TransLink anticipate a phase 2 from Arbutus to UBC in a second 10-year plan. The Jericho Lands, west of Alma, have been identified for transit-oriented development. However, if development of the Jericho Lands is underway now, and the public transit to support it will not be available until the second phase, further increased congestion is inevitable. Is this going to be like the Evergreen Line where there was increased congestion during 20 years of development before the transit got built?
5. **Choice of technology:** The subway has been pre-selected for this plebiscite without allowing public input on other options, such as Light Rail Transit, Rapid Buses, etc. Although TransLink did do some consultation on the various transit options, the public has not been given an opportunity to choose. What is the level of support from current Broadway businesses and affected neighbourhoods for various transit options and where is that published?
6. **Broadway transit: above or below ground?** TransLink shows the proposed SkyTrain route from VCC to Arbutus, but it doesn't show what locations are above grade and what are below grade as a tunnel. What exactly is proposed?
7. **Bored tunnel or cut & cover:** The City says they are opposed to cut and cover, but there is no guarantee the subway portion will be a bored tunnel. Is a bored tunnel priced in the budget? Will this be a situation like the Canada Line where the initial design called for a bored tunnel and a contract change allowed cut and cover to save costs?
8. **Transit service for the whole city:** Vancouver, designed for streetcars before the automobile age, is a grid of arterials. Anyone in the City is within a 5 to 10 minute walk from an arterial. If most of the funding is put into just the Broadway Corridor, how will the rest of city get equally improved transit service? While some new B-lines are being added, not enough improvements are identified to better the transit across the city.