

Backgrounder: B.C. Green Party Transportation Strategy

British Columbia is a growing province. The 2016 census showed an increase of 5.6% increase in B.C.'s population from 2011, and 6.5% in the Lower Mainland. Cities like Surrey (10.6%) and Langley (12.6%) grew at much higher rates than the national average.

As we grow, we need a comprehensive strategy that will make B.C. affordable and liveable for all British Columbians. Creating a plan and investing in transit is key to ensuring that British Columbians can continue to enjoy a high quality of life, that we are limiting our emissions in order to protect our air and our environment, that we are prepared for how we will move goods in the emerging economy, and that life is affordable for everyone.

Transportation planners in B.C. face several challenges, including urban sprawl, geography, and fragmented planning mandates. And they must address multiple objectives, such as congestion reduction, energy conservation and emissions reduction, improving the livability of communities, solving parking problems, traffic safety and public health, inter-city travel, and the movement of goods.

The B.C. Green Party's transportation policy has three primary goals:

1. **Affordability:** To increase affordable and accessible transportation options.
2. **Sustainability:** To decarbonize the transportation sector.
3. **Efficiency:** To transport people and goods in a cost-effective manner.

Affordability

Transportation is the second highest household expense after housing, and private vehicles are the biggest contributor.

Providing frequent, affordable public transit is an important way to support low income households. Providing public transport for dispersed communities is relatively expensive, thus initiatives that promote densification support the development of more cost effective public transit. Our housing initiatives call for a comprehensive rethink of zoning to ensure that it is

consistent with government objectives such as the provision of affordable housing. Issues for consideration include densification, especially along transit corridors.

1. A B.C. Green government will provide an additional \$25 million per year of funding for public transit to address frequency of service and affordable fares.

2. A B.C. Green government will invest an additional \$152 million in capital expenditures to fully match the federal contribution of \$460 million for public transit infrastructure.

Results

- More frequent and affordable public transit service.
- Improved public transit infrastructure across B.C.
- The availability of a viable, affordable alternative to private vehicle ownership and use.

Background

- In June 2016, it was announced that the Government of Canada is providing \$460 million under the new Public Transit Infrastructure Fund, and British Columbia is providing \$308 million to help shorten commute times, cut air pollution, and strengthen communities in the province.
- Combined with contributions from municipalities, more than \$900 million will be going toward public transit across the province.
- As part of the bilateral agreement with British Columbia, the following projects have been identified for funding. This represents the full allocation for the province under this new fund. Details regarding specific funding allocations to be announced at tender of each project.
- Metro Vancouver TransLink Phase 1 of *Investing in Canada* includes:
 - The purchase of additional SkyTrain vehicles for the Expo, Millennium, and Canada Lines
 - A new West Coast Express locomotive
 - A new SeaBus
 - Upgrades to SkyTrain stations

- Design and planning for Rapid Transit South of Fraser and the Millennium Line Extension along Broadway
- BC Transit Phase 1 of *Investing in Canada* includes:
 - Investments in new bus depots, maintenance yards and operations facilities, as well as in new compressed natural gas (CNG) fueling stations, in communities across the province.
 - New and more efficient buses, including cleaner burning CNG-fueled buses, and new buses for handyDART service expansion.
 - New technologies to make the fleet safer for drivers and passengers and to give BC Transit and local communities' ridership information that will make them become even more efficient.

3. A B.C. Green government will use tools such as mobility pricing to manage congestion and generate funds for public transportation upgrades.

Background

- There are a number of road pricing systems that are in use throughout the world. Examples of systems in use include corridor schemes, area schemes, and full network pricing.
- Corridor Schemes charge a set fee for using a road, bridge, or tunnel with the general objective of paying for the piece of infrastructure. Examples of a corridor scheme include Highway 407 in Toronto and the Port Mann and Golden Ears Bridges in Metro Vancouver.
- Area Schemes charge a fee for driving into or within a specified area, often within urban centres. Examples of successful area schemes include Singapore and London. This is also referred to as a cordon scheme, or sometimes as a congestion charge.
- Full Network Pricing envisions a fee for the use of roads over the entire transportation network, typically measured in terms of distance traveled.
- Mobility pricing for B.C.'s urban centres would both raise vital funds for transportation infrastructure and manage traffic demand to alleviate congestion.
- In 2016, the B.C. Chamber of Commerce's province-wide membership passed a policy calling for the implementation of urban mobility pricing as a foundation for sustainable transportation funding.

Sustainability

The transportation sector produces 37% of greenhouse gas emissions, as well as particulate matter (particles of soot and metals), hydrocarbons, nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, and hazardous air pollutants (toxics), all of which are hazardous to human health, can contaminate soils, and cause physical damage to infrastructure. Any attempt to deal seriously with climate change and air pollution must address the transportation sector. The B.C. Green Party's plan is designed to transition the province to a low carbon economy, and sustainable transportation is a key piece of this plan.

Existing planning by the Ministry of Transportation is heavily focused on roads and bridges, with greenhouse gas emissions reductions and pollution control as an afterthought. The B.C. Green Party's transportation plan puts sustainability as a primary consideration for planning.

4. A B.C. Green government will promote investment in clean transportation initiatives and technology that creates jobs and economic activity without increasing greenhouse gas emissions.

5. A B.C. Green government will promote choices with a lower carbon footprint. Initiatives will include transportation demand management strategies to reduce driving and encourage modal switching.

Background

- Possible demand management initiatives include:
 - Zero Emissions Vehicle mandate to ensure a growing supply of electric vehicles;
 - Incentives to purchase low or no emission vehicles;
 - Distance-based insurance and transferable licence plates, where the second vehicle is zero emissions vehicle;
 - Congestion and road pricing policies, and other initiatives that favour low or zero emission vehicles. Examples of initiatives that may be considered include: tolls for gasoline or diesel vehicles; free parking for electric vehicles; and half price ferry fares for electric vehicles;
 - Expanded network of charging facilities to enable long distance travel;
 - Investment in walking and biking infrastructure;
 - Support for ride sharing, car sharing and other cooperative transportation initiatives;
 - Charging and safe storage facilities for electric bicycles;

- Ensuring road configurations and commuter routes are friendly for pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists;
- Mandatory emissions testing for heavy-duty and commercial vehicles;
- Support for improved efficiency of freight and commercial transport management.

6. A B.C. Green Government will develop criteria for sustainability analysis of transportation investments, which will include consideration of cumulative impacts.

Results

- Reduced greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector.
- Transportation planning that includes sustainability as a primary consideration, enabling B.C. to accommodate our growing population and meet our greenhouse gas reduction targets.
- More integrated criteria for analysis of transportation investments that include consideration of cumulative impacts.

Background

- Decisions regarding transportation investments are often made with consideration of solving a specific problem, such as congestion or safety at a particular location.
- Assessing the costs and benefits of a wider range of considerations and prioritizing other values may result in different investment decisions. Examples for consideration include:
 - Emissions of greenhouse gases and other criteria pollutants;
 - Land use impacts;
 - Noise;
 - Ecosystem impacts;
 - Community impacts.
- Many of these factors are currently considered in current planning for roads, but are usually addressed in mitigation plans, rather than being costed against the preferred project.

Efficiency

Getting goods to market and people to their destinations in a cost-effective manner is very important for B.C.'s ability to succeed in the emerging economy. Taking into account the costs and benefits of various transportation options and investments will promote the adoption of the most efficient solutions that provide the greatest benefit to communities and British Columbians as a whole. Integrated planning, designed to achieve a range of social and economic goals, is essential to maximizing the efficiency of the system.

7. A B.C. Green Government will develop a new 10-year, integrated transportation plan focused on affordable, clean transportation for British Columbians.

Results

- Upgrading infrastructure in the context of integrated regional plans that prioritize affordable and clean transportation

Background

- In 2015, the BC Provincial government released its 10-year transportation plan entitled "BC On The Move".
- The plan heavily emphasizes roads and bridges. This plan needs to be reviewed from the perspective of increasing the availability of affordable, clean transportation.

8. A B.C. Green Government will empower Greater Vancouver mayors to implement a regional green transportation plan.

- A B.C. Green Government will support the Mayors Council's 10-year plan to upgrade Metro Vancouver's transportation system.
- A B.C. Green Government would suspend work on the Massey Tunnel replacement pending a comprehensive and transparent review of alternatives, in cooperation with the Mayors' Council.
- A B.C. Green Government would work with Metro Vancouver Mayors to develop and implement a rational tolling system to manage congestion; to amortize the cost of the Port Mann and Golden Ears bridges; and to finance the region's share of the Mayor's plan.
- A B.C. Green Government will match Federal funding for the Mayors Council's plan.

Results

- A livable and more affordable Greater Vancouver region.
- Partnership with regional Mayors and empowerment of Mayors to implement the 10-year transportation plan.
- Accommodation of expected population growth to 2040 holding greenhouse gas emissions from transportation at current levels.

Background:

- The Mayors' Council, representing 21 Mayors, the Tsawwassen First Nation and the UBC endowment lands have developed a 10-year investment plan designed to accommodate population growth in the region for the next 30 years.
- The B.C. Liberal government approach to this plan has been a tale of delay, obstruction and a needless referendum which was bound to fail.
- Just before the writ dropped for the 2017 election, the B.C. Liberal government announced that they would match Federal funding at 40% for the Broadway Subway and the Surrey/Langley Light Rapid Transit. The B.C. NDP previously made a similar commitment.
- In addition, the Provincial Government announced the George Massey tunnel replacement project, which all but one Metro Vancouver Mayor oppose.
- The Provincial Government imposed tolls on the Golden Ears and Port Mann Bridges, and applies a tolling policy which states that tolls would only be applied on new bridges and roads, and only where there are free alternatives.
- As a result, drivers travel out of their way to avoid the tolls, clogging alternative crossings, and the Port Mann and Golden Ears bridges are losing money.
- The B.C. Liberals recently announced that they would put an annual cap of \$500 on annual toll charges for the Golden Ears and Port Mann Bridges, and the B.C. NDP announced that they would remove the tolls altogether. Neither party discussed these promises with the Mayors before they were made.

9. A B.C. Green Government will work with local governments to address funding for community and regional transportation infrastructure.

- This would include consideration of matching funding and integrated joint planning, as well as traffic pricing and other funding mechanisms.

Results

- Empowerment of local communities

- Livable and affordable communities with reduced greenhouse gas emissions

10. A B.C. Green Government will bring B.C. Ferries back into Government as a crown corporation, and will conduct a full review of B.C. Ferries operations.

Results

- An unambiguous mandate for B.C. Ferries to provide a public service in the best interests of British Columbians.
- A process that creates a clear definition of the role of B.C. Ferries in B.C.'s transportation network.

Background

- There have been many calls to bring B.C. Ferries back into government.
- In 2015, Independent Delta South MLA Vicki Huntington introduced a petition in the legislature with 20,000 signatures, urging the government to reclaim the quasi-private ferry corporation into the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, to help reduce costs and fares.
- BC Ferries is struggling with low ridership, rising costs, and a \$3-billion, 12-year plan to upgrade terminals and replace aging ships.
- The ferry service used to be a ministry function in the early 1970s. After that, it was a government-run Crown corporation, before the B.C. Liberal government decided in 2002 to turn it into a private company that received an annual taxpayer subsidy.
- B.C. Ferries is supposed to run like a private corporation, but it is fettered by the provincial government's constraints.