

Metro Vancouver transit referendum: Who voted yes, who voted no, and what will it mean for the region?

Despite their defeat, yes voters were more likely to say holding the transit plebiscite was a good idea

July 3, 2015 – Now what?

After a fractious 10-week campaign, Elections BC released the results of the Metro Vancouver transit plebiscite Thursday, revealing that almost [62 per cent of voters had said “No”](#) to the question: “Do you support a new 0.5% Metro Vancouver Congestion Improvement Tax, to be dedicated to the Mayors' Council transportation and transit plan?”

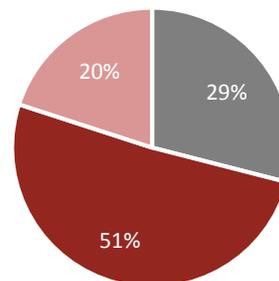
The result aligns with the findings of an Angus Reid Institute poll of Metro Vancouver residents conducted days after the voting period ended, in which 59 per cent said they had voted “No”.

It also shows a consistency on part of those opposed to the question going back to the beginning of the official campaign, when an earlier [Angus Reid Institute survey](#) showed voters leaning 61 per cent “No”.

Regional leaders are now left to come up with a new plan for the future of transportation in the Lower Mainland.

Why did the referendum fail? Who voted against it? And do they believe the “No” outcome is ultimately a good thing or a bad thing for the region’s future? The ARI poll provides some insights on these and other questions.

Do you think it was a good idea or a bad idea to have this Vancouver Transportation referendum in the first place? (Among those who voted)



■ Good idea ■ Bad idea ■ Not sure

METHODOLOGY:

The Angus Reid Institute conducted an online survey from June 1-3, 2015 among a representative randomized sample of 821 Metro Vancouver residents who are members of the [Angus Reid Forum](#). For comparison purposes only, a probability sample of this size would carry a margin of error of +/- 3.4 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding. The survey was self-commissioned and paid for by ARI. Detailed tables are found at the end of this release.

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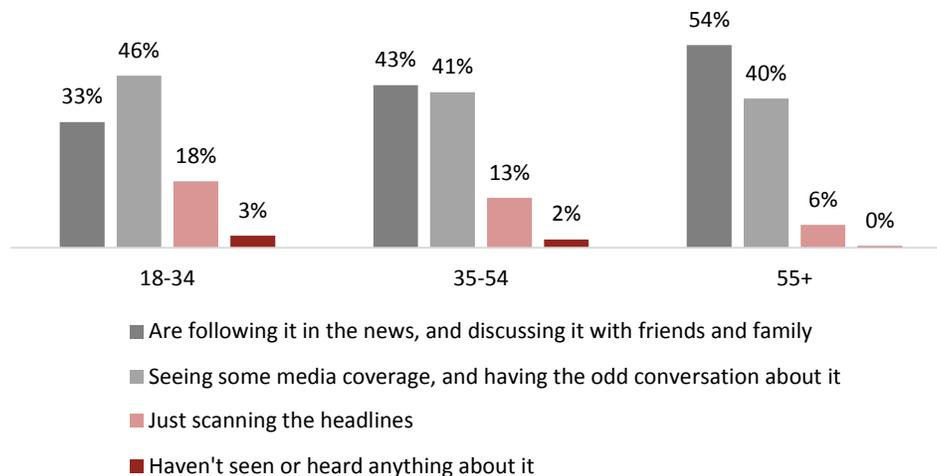
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Unprecedented awareness of transit vote

For months leading up to the 10-week campaign – and much of the campaign itself – the transit referendum dominated headlines in Metro Vancouver. Perhaps as a result, the Angus Reid Institute found unprecedented levels of awareness of the issue among residents of the region.

More than two-in-five metro residents surveyed (44%) reported that they were following the issue in the news and discussing it with friends and family, while another two-fifths (42%) saw some media coverage and had the odd conversation with friends. Added together, these two measures show a vast majority of Metro Vancouver residents (86%) paid a good deal of attention to the campaign.

How closely have you yourself been following this issue? (By age group)



Awareness of the transit referendum increased slightly as the campaign went on. When ARI asked how closely metro residents were following the issue in February, fewer than three-quarters of respondents (72%) chose one of the top two answers.

Was holding a referendum a good idea?

Though it ultimately turned out the way they wanted it to, most “No” voters would have preferred not to have seen a referendum on transit at all.

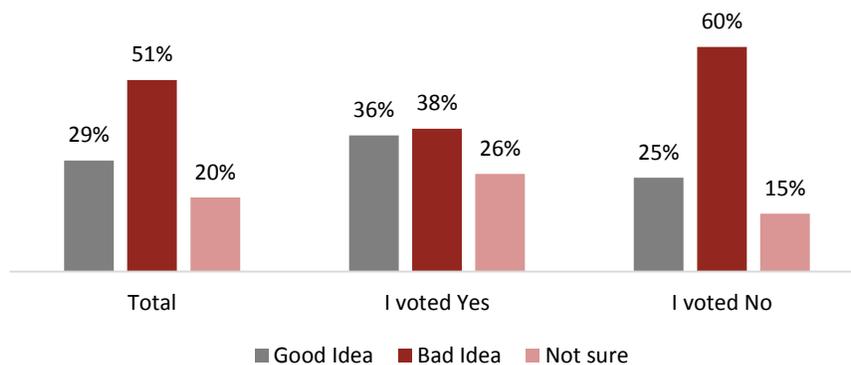
Asked if it was a good idea or a bad idea to hold the plebiscite in the first place, six-in-ten “No” voters (60%) chose the “bad idea” option.

“Yes” voters were more evenly split on the idea: 38 per cent said it was a bad one, 36 per cent said it was good, and a quarter (26%) were unsure.

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Overall, do you think it was a good idea or a bad idea to have this Vancouver Transportation referendum in the first place? (Among those who voted)



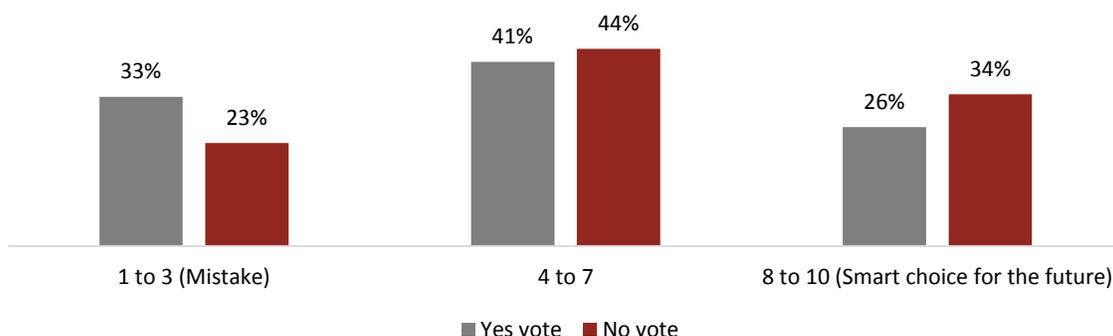
How will a “No” vote affect the region?

The Angus Reid Institute also asked voters to rank – on a scale from 1 to 10 – each of the possible outcomes of the transit referendum, with 1 being “a huge mistake” for the region’s future and 10 being “the smartest possible choice.”

Residents had a generally favourable view of the “No” outcome, with one-third (34%) choosing an 8, 9, or 10 on the scale. Another 44 per cent chose a number between 4 and 7. Relatively fewer people were inclined to say a “No” outcome would be a mistake for the region:

Opinions on each possible result in the transit referendum

1 = Huge mistake
10 = Smartest choice



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Predictably, “No” voters were more likely to think a “No” vote would be good for Metro Vancouver’s future and “Yes” voters were more likely to think the same of a “Yes” vote.

That said, it’s notable just how polarized a significant portion of each of these groups is on this question:

- Three-in-ten “No” voters (30%) indicated a “Yes side” win would be “a huge mistake” for the region’s future by choosing a 1 on the scale.
- A quarter of “No” voters (26%) said a “No side” win would be “the smartest possible choice” for the future by choosing the highest possible number (a 10).
- Similarly, more than a quarter (27%) of “Yes” voters chose a 1 on the “No side wins” scale.
- And another one-in-four (24%) chose a 10 on the “Yes side wins” scale.

Who are the voters?

The Angus Reid Institute survey identified some key differences between those who voted “Yes” and those who voted “No” in the transit referendum. These differences – and some similarities – are summarized in the table below:

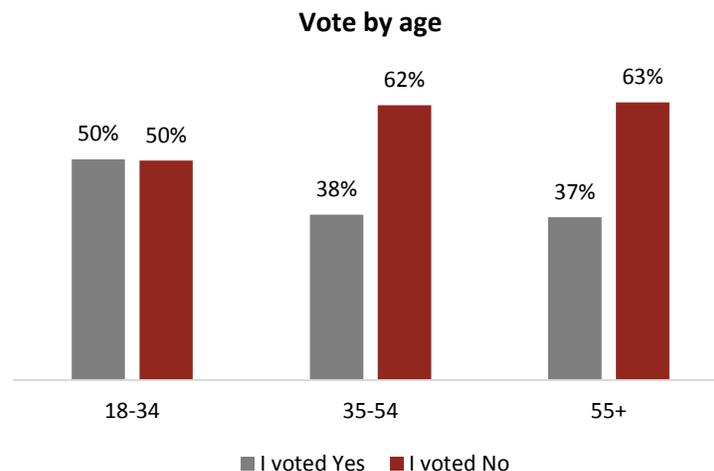
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Yes Voters			No Voters		
Take transit at least 2 – 3 times a week					
43%			19%		
Take transit every day					
17%			8%		
Drive every day					
25%			47%		
Commute 30 minutes or more					
35%			24%		
Commute 15 minutes or less					
44%			52%		
University education					
42%			31%		
Not knowing the outcome, think it was a GOOD idea to have this referendum					
36%			25%		
Not knowing the outcome, think it was a BAD idea to have this referendum					
38%			60%		
Following the issue closely, having discussions with friends and family about it					
48%			48%		
Age Breakdown					
Yes Voters			No Voters		
18-34	35-54	55+	18-34	35-54	55+
31%	35%	34%	21%	39%	40%

Profile of a “Yes” voter:

“Yes” voters tend to be younger – fully half (50%) of those between the ages of 18 and 34 who cast a ballot voted for the “Yes” side. This was the only age group in which voters were evenly split between the “Yes” and “No” camps:



Voters for the “Yes” side are also more likely to live in the City of Vancouver than “No” voters, and they’re somewhat more likely to have a university education.

Perhaps predictably, the “Yes” voter is more likely to take transit. The number of those saying they use transit a minimum of two or three times a week was more than double that of a “No” voter (43% - 19%). The same relationship holds for those who rely on transit as their primary mode of transport. 17 per cent of Yes voters take transit every day, compared to 8 per cent on the “No” side.

Though they do drive, “Yes” voters are considerably less likely than “No” voters to use cars as their primary mode of transportation. One-quarter (25%) drives every day, another quarter (25%) drives most days, and the other half (49%) drives less than two or three times a week, with 12 per cent not driving at all.

Profile of a “No” voter:

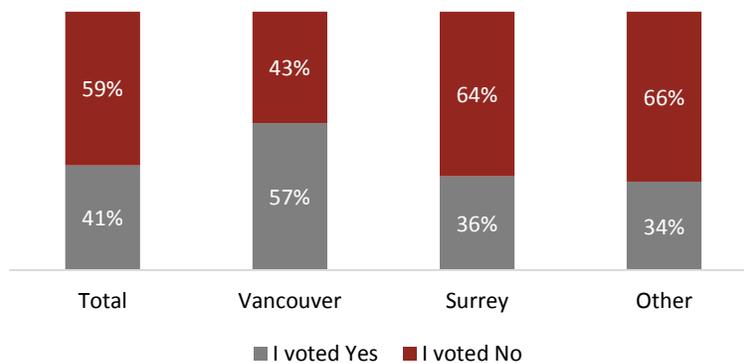
“No” voters tend to be older than the 18 to 34-year-old cohort. Both those between ages 35 and 54 and those aged 55 and older opposed the question at roughly the same rate (62% of those 35-54 and 63% of those 55 or older voted “No”).

They’re also more likely to come from outside the City of Vancouver. That city was the only one in the region where a majority of those surveyed said they had voted “Yes:”

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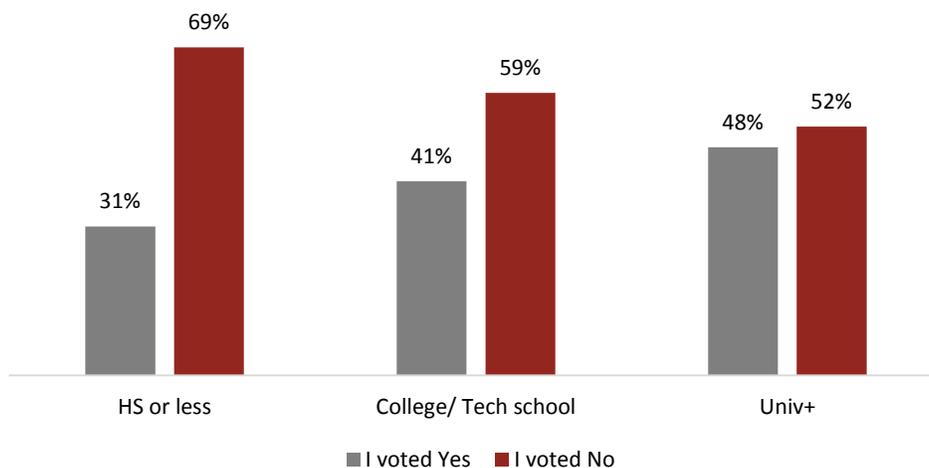
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Vote by region



“No” voters are also somewhat less likely to have a university degree than “Yes” voters, though a majority of each education-level group voted against the referendum:

Vote by education level



Chances are, the average “No” voter is not a regular transit user. Fewer than one-in-five (19%) take transit two or three times a week or more, and only 8 per cent take it every day.

The “No” voter is also slightly less likely to commute. Roughly one-third (34%) don’t commute at all, and more than half (52%) commute 15 minutes or less. This compares to 28 per cent of “Yes” voters who do not commute and 44 per cent whose commutes are 15 minutes or less.

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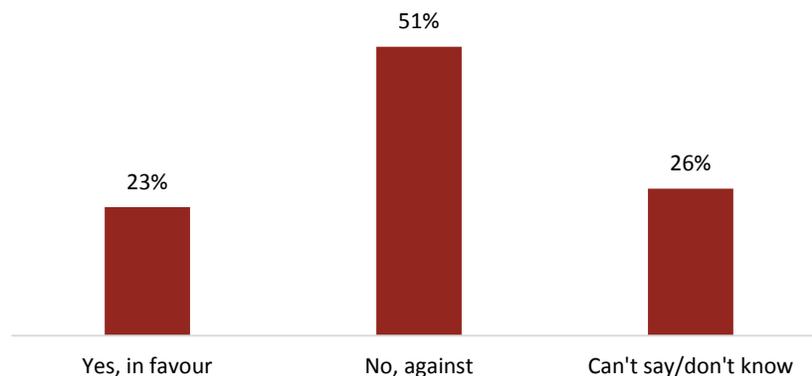
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Voters and non-voters agree on 'No' vote

According to Elections BC, [fewer than half of registered voters cast ballots](#) in the plebiscite, but responses to the Angus Reid Institute poll indicate a higher turnout wouldn't have necessarily changed the result.

Among non-voters, more than half (51%) said they would have voted against the referendum if they had cast a ballot. More were unsure (26%) than were certain they would have voted yes (23%).

Non-Voters, if you had voted, would you have voted:



Distaste for TransLink motivated 'No' voters

In February, six-in-ten (61%) of those leaning toward voting for the "No" side listed "TransLink cannot be trusted with the extra funds that will be raised with this tax" as one of the main reasons for their vote. No other option was selected by more than 45 per cent of respondents.

A separate survey question asking people for their overall views of TransLink found two-thirds (64%) expressing an overall negative view of the agency. Two-in-five (39%) said their overall opinion is "very negative, TransLink is very broken and needs a complete overhaul".

Only one-in-ten (12%) of the Metro Vancouver residents surveyed had a positive view of TransLink, including only one-in-three (30%) "Yes" supporters and almost none (4%) of those leaning to the "No" side.

*The **Angus Reid Institute (ARI)** was founded in October 2014 by pollster and sociologist, Dr. Angus Reid. ARI is a national, not-for-profit, non-partisan public opinion research organization established to advance education by commissioning, conducting and disseminating to the public accessible and impartial statistical data, research and policy analysis on economics, political science, philanthropy, public administration, domestic and international affairs and other socio-economic issues of importance to Canada and its world.*

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Did you vote "Yes" or "No" in the referendum? (VOTERS)						
(weighted sample size)	Total (712)	Gender		Age		
		Men (370)	Women (342)	18 – 34 (180)	35 – 54 (266)	55+ (266)
Yes	41%	42%	39%	50%	38%	37%
No	59%	58%	61%	50%	62%	63%

Did you vote "Yes" or "No" in the referendum? (VOTERS)				
(unweighted sample size)	Total (712)	Vancouver (216)	Surrey (145)	Other (460)
I voted yes	41%	57%	36%	34%
I voted no	59%	43%	64%	66%

Did you vote "Yes" or "No" in the referendum? (VOTERS)				
(unweighted sample size)	Total (712)	HS or less (205)	College/Tech School (253)	University+ (253)
I voted yes	41%	31%	41%	48%
I voted no	59%	69%	59%	52%

ARI polling comparison February 2015 vs June 2015		
(unweighted sample size)	February (vote intention) (950)	June (actual vote) (712)
Yes	27%	41%
No	62%	59%

**Suppose you had actually voted in this mail-in transportation referendum.
Would you have voted: (NON-VOTERS)**

(weighted sample size)	Total (109)
Yes, in favour	23%
No, against	51%
Can't say/don't know	26%

We want to ask people about the Metro Vancouver transportation referendum (or plebiscite). How closely have you yourself been following this issue? (ALL-RESPONDENTS)

(weighted sample size)	Total (821)	Gender		Age		
		Men (402)	Women (419)	18 – 34 (238)	35 – 54 (304)	55+ (279)
Are following it in the news, and discussing it with friends and family	44%	49%	39%	33%	43%	54%
Seeing some media coverage, and having the odd conversation about it	42%	38%	46%	46%	41%	40%
Just scanning the headlines	12%	11%	13%	18%	13%	6%
Haven't seen or heard anything about it	2%	2%	2%	3%	2%	0%

We want to ask people about the Metro Vancouver transportation referendum (or plebiscite). How closely have you yourself been following this issue? (VOTERS)

(weighted sample size)	Total (712)	Transit Referendum Vote	
		Yes (288)	No (424)
Are following it in the news, and discussing it with friends and family	48%	48%	48%
Seeing some media coverage, and having the odd conversation about it	41%	44%	39%
Just scanning the headlines	10%	6%	12%
Haven't seen or heard anything about it	1%	1%	1%

Overall, not knowing the outcome yet, do you think it was a good idea or a bad idea to have this Vancouver Transportation referendum in the first place? (VOTERS)

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(weighted sample size)	Total (712)	Transit Referendum Vote	
		Yes (288)	No (424)
Good idea	29%	36%	25%
Bad idea	51%	38%	60%
Not sure	20%	26%	15%

How often do you drive a car? (VOTERS)			
(weighted sample size)	Total (712)	Transit Referendum Vote	
		Yes (288)	No (424)
Every day/It's how you get around	38%	25%	47%
Most days	22%	25%	20%
2-3 times a week	16%	17%	15%
Once a week	6%	7%	5%
2-3 times a month	4%	6%	3%
Maybe once a month	2%	2%	2%
Less often than that	3%	6%	1%
Never	9%	11%	7%

How often do you take public transit? (VOTERS)			
(weighted sample size)	Total (712)	Transit Referendum Vote	
		Yes (288)	No (424)
Every day/It's how you get around	12%	17%	8%
Most days	10%	16%	6%
2-3 times a week	7%	10%	5%
Once a week	5%	7%	3%
2-3 times a month	7%	10%	5%

Maybe once a month	10%	9%	10%
Less often than that	34%	21%	42%
Never	15%	9%	20%

And, approximately how long does your commute (to school or work) typically take on average? (VOTERS)

(weighted sample size)	Total (712)	Transit Referendum Vote	
		Yes (288)	No (424)
Do not commute	31%	28%	34%
Less than 15 minutes	17%	16%	18%
15 to 30 minutes	23%	22%	23%
30 to 45 minutes	15%	16%	14%
45 minutes to an hour	8%	11%	6%
Over an hour	5%	8%	4%

**[Your own everyday transportation experience getting where you need to go]
Finally, we are interested in how people view the transportation situation overall -- in terms of how easy or hard it is to get around. (VOTERS)**

(weighted sample size)	Total (712)	Transit Referendum Vote	
		Yes (288)	No (424)
1 Very poor – painful to get around	4%	4%	5%
2	12%	11%	13%
3	28%	28%	28%
4	39%	43%	36%
5 Very good – easy to get around	17%	14%	18%

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[Transportation in general within your own community] Finally, we are interested in how people view the transportation situation overall -- in terms of how easy or hard it is to get around. (VOTERS)

(weighted sample size)	Total (712)	Transit Referendum Vote	
		Yes (288)	No (424)
1 Very poor – painful to get around	6%	4%	7%
2	13%	14%	13%
3	31%	32%	30%
4	37%	40%	36%
5 Very good – easy to get around	12%	10%	14%

[Transportation in general within the Metro Vancouver region] Finally, we are interested in how people view the transportation situation overall -- in terms of how easy or hard it is to get around. (VOTERS)

(weighted sample size)	Total (712)	Transit Referendum Vote	
		Yes (288)	No (424)
1 Very poor – painful to get around	9%	5%	12%
2	26%	33%	22%
3	40%	36%	43%
4	20%	22%	18%
5 Very good – easy to get around	4%	3%	5%

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