

abbotsfordtoday

ABBOTSFORD'S NEWS & OPINION MAGAZINE

ISSUE NUMBER 5 | OCTOBER 2020

The **Changing Faces** of Abbotsford Politics

Provincial Election Special Edition

ਇਲੈਕਸ਼ਨ ਕਵਰੇਜ

ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਵਿਚ ਸਾਡਾ ਇਲੈਕਸ਼ਨ ਸਰਵੇਖਣ ਦੇਖਣਾ ਨਾ ਭੁੱਲਣਾ। ਵਿਚਾਲੜੇ ਸਫੇ ਸਪੈਸ਼ਲ ਪੁਲ-ਆਉਟ ਹਨ ਤਾਂ ਜੋ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਸਾਡੀ ਕੋਈ ਵੀ ਇਲੈਕਸ਼ਨ ਭਵਿੱਖਬਾਣੀ ਮਿੱਸ ਨਾ ਕਰੋ।

PREET RAI, BC NDP

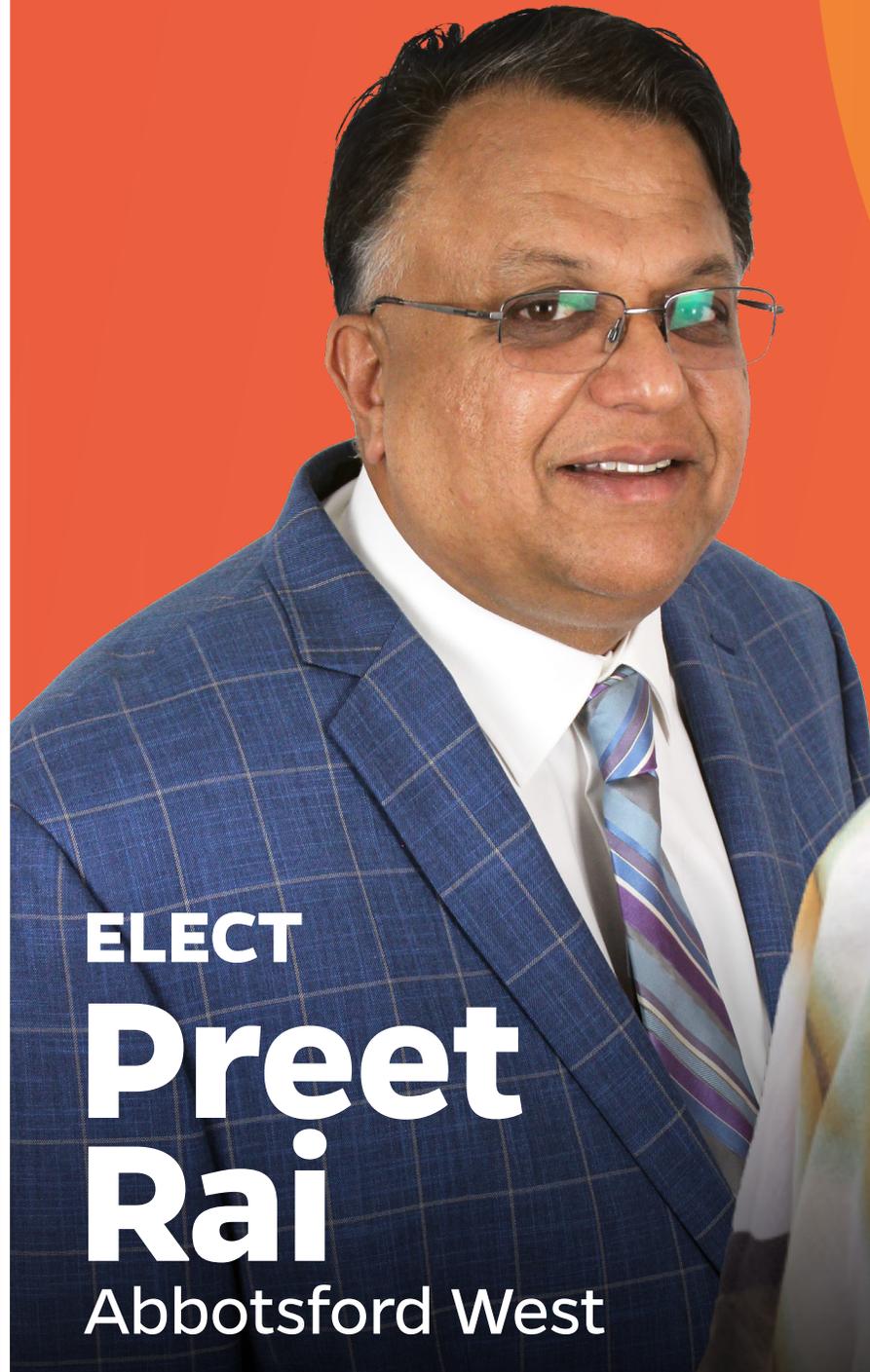
BRUCE BANMAN, BC LIBERAL

JOHN HORGAN'S ABBOTSFORD-MISSION TEAM

WORKING FOR YOU

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Is now the right time for an election?

The BC NDP called an election during the COVID 19 pandemic. They have been roundly criticized by the other parties for doing so. However, we're going to take a close look at whether this was a good decision or not. Plus, we'll break down all the major issues facing British Columbians and how your vote could drastically effect the future of Abbotsford.

On September 21st, 2020 BC Premier John Horgan called a snap election. BC became the second province to hold an election during the pandemic. New Brunswick went through the same process on September 14th.

This election call by John Horgan has been roundly criticized by all the other parties. This is to be expected and the comments have been quite heated. BC Liberal MLA Mike de Jong said, in a recent candidate's debate, that the NDP and candidate Preet Rai, should be "embarrassed" for putting British Columbians through an election now.

It is then fair to ask the question ... "If not now, when?"

The NDP could wait until next year when the election call would be mandatory. That makes sense, right? Only have an election when you must have one and the COVID 19 pandemic may be over by then.

But what if it is not?

What if we are still struggling with the pandemic and the economic fallout that goes along with it? British Columbians should have the option of deciding who will lead them through this crisis. Prior to this election, British Columbians had not made that decision. The current BC NDP party is a minority government and, as such, they have no real power to lead.

The act of calling an election to give a minority government a shot at majority leadership is quite common. A famous example is the United Kingdom's struggle with BREXIT. Election after election was called in the UK until the Conservatives achieved a majority upon which they could move forward with separation from the European Union.

The same principle applies here. The NDP are seeking approval from British Columbians on how they are managing COVID, but also on their plans for recovery moving forward.

What has the other parties upset is that the NDP have done a pretty darn good job. In that same candidate's debate, Mike de Jong said that if he were re-elected, he would work with the NDP government. Essentially, Mr. de Jong has already given up hope for his own party to win this election.

The fact is, we have an election during COVID 19. It is now our responsibility to examine all the issues that are important to British Columbians so that you can make a well-informed choice for the leadership of our province.

The Editor

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Abbotsford Today is published by R & D Media Inc.

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T The Changing Faces of Abbotsford Politics

We've always seemed to grow our own MLA's here in Abbotsford, but there is a real transformation going on with Abbotsford politics. In Abbotsford South, former Mayor Bruce Banman is set to make an entrance to provincial politics for the BC Libs. In Abbotsford West, Preet Rai, long time school board trustee is gaining ground on, and perhaps poised to upset, Mike de Jong for the BC NDP.

To be clear, we don't know what will happen when all the votes are counted on election day. What we do see is that there is a real appetite for change in Abbotsford.

It is our opinion that Abbotsford has been passed over for investment many times by former Liberal governments. Despite being a lock for all 3 seats being held by Liberals, the numbers separating the two parties have been getting closer over the years. This could very well be due to the fact that the Liberals have broken more promises than they have kept when it comes to bringing benefits to our community.

For example, we've been passed over funding for the Abbotsford Entertainment Centre, the Vye Road Overpass, the Abbotsford Regional Hospital Emergency Room, and the Abbotsford Courthouse.

But wait, those last 2 are under construction! Yes, because the BC NDP went ahead, or pushed ahead, those 2 projects.

So, we've been talking to local residents and they feel that their vote has been taken for granted. They believe there is now a good case to support an NDP candidate and insure they have representation in what will surely be the new NDP majority government.



That's where **Preet Rai** comes in. As an accountant and a school board trustee, Rai is already familiar with both the financial state of the province, and issues surrounding education. He would also give our community a South Asian presence that we have never had in our MLA's. Roughly 35% of our population is South Asian and we currently have 3 Caucasian MLA's.

Why this change in attitude among voters?

If you recall 3 years ago, the BC Liberals painted a post apocalyptic horror show for voters should they vote for the NDP. That worked here in Abbotsford as local voters installed the usual Liberal candidates. However, the NDP won a minority government, have worked with the other parties and none of the threats levied against them have come true. Instead, before COVID, they delivered 3 balanced budgets, reduced ICBC rates, broke ground on our new courthouse, started the expansion of the Abbotsford Regional Hospital Emergency Room and have handled the COVID 19 crisis as well as anywhere else in the world.

Don't get me wrong...could they do more and better? Sure, and those things are easy to cherry pick when you are in opposition. Governing is a different matter and the BC NDP have done pretty well.

Should Preet Rai upset Mike de Jong, it is our opinion that you would see the NDP invest in our community like the Liberals failed to for the past 2 decades. To get a foot hold in the Valley, while also getting a majority government mandate would be an incredibly positive turn of events for our community.

Let's be realistic...can he do it?

Well, if we knew that, we'd be making our wagers. What we do know is that the South Asian community is ready for a change. We do know that Mike de Jong didn't help himself out by being in on the Zoom call that saw sexist remarks being levied against NDP MLA Bowinn Ma. A man, in a tux, smoking a cigar and laughing at a sexist joke is an image he would surely like to erase from voter's memories come election day. The race between Preet Rai and Mike de Jong will be close indeed!



Now let's take a look at Abbotsford South.



• • • **Article Continued from page 4**

In Abbotsford South, we have a completely different story. Fighting against the “orange wave” in that district is former Mayor **Bruce Banman**. You may recall that this is the former riding of Daryl Plecas. After winning a hard-fought battle to be the candidate in this riding, Banman is now working to win his seat in the legislature.

Banman brings a unique skillset to the table. In his time as Abbotsford Mayor, he became the only mayor in our city’s history to promise, and deliver on, a 0% property tax increase. He also took on the challenge of resolving the Abbotsford Heat losses. It cost the city more than \$5 million to get out of the contract but doing so saved us many more millions down the road.

Banman also worked very well with other levels of government including our local School Board and the District of Mission. Our current mayor and council do not seem to have a good working relationship with these partners. Banman’s ability to communicate and work with groups on tough issues will mean good representation for Abbotsford when dealing with an NDP government.

He has had his boots on the ground for quite some time now. After his term as Mayor, Banman returned to politics to sit on City Council for the past 3 years. His day to day knowledge of what is important to the people of Abbotsford South will be a great asset in his campaign.

In February, as the Liberal riding candidate for Abbotsford South, Bruce already started advocating for Abbotsford residents by holding the Horgan government’s feet to the fire in areas such as:

- No \$400 annual renter’s rebate
- No \$10-a-day childcare
- A need for more affordable housing in our community, not just urban Vancouver
- Overcrowding at UFV
- And the issue that both parties seem to toss back and forth...a lack of leadership on Highway 1 improvements.

All these areas, along with a shortage of doctors and challenges facing our farmers need a champion and Banman has taken them up.

Let’s make the case for voting for the person instead of the party.

One thing is unreservedly true. Voting for a single party here in Abbotsford has never done us much good. It would be fair to say that we have

had at least as much investment under an NDP minority government than we have had under a Liberal one. So, what does that mean? Perhaps we should think about how we vote differently. Donald Trump has shown the world just how important it is to pay attention to who you’re voting for as much as the party he represents. While no candidate running in Canada approaches the negative impact of a Trump, we can learn from the example that it is OK to vote for the person instead of the party. This is particularly true when a party vote seems to be ineffective anyway.

We’ve highlighted just 2 candidates in this election issue. Whether they win or lose on October 24th, you can be sure both will be a part of the Abbotsford political landscape for many years to come.

On October 24th, we ask that you inform yourself, and vote for the person you feel will work for you. In other words, let’s hire someone to work for us in Victoria that is ready to work with the energy and enthusiasm that will see us through COVID 19 and beyond!



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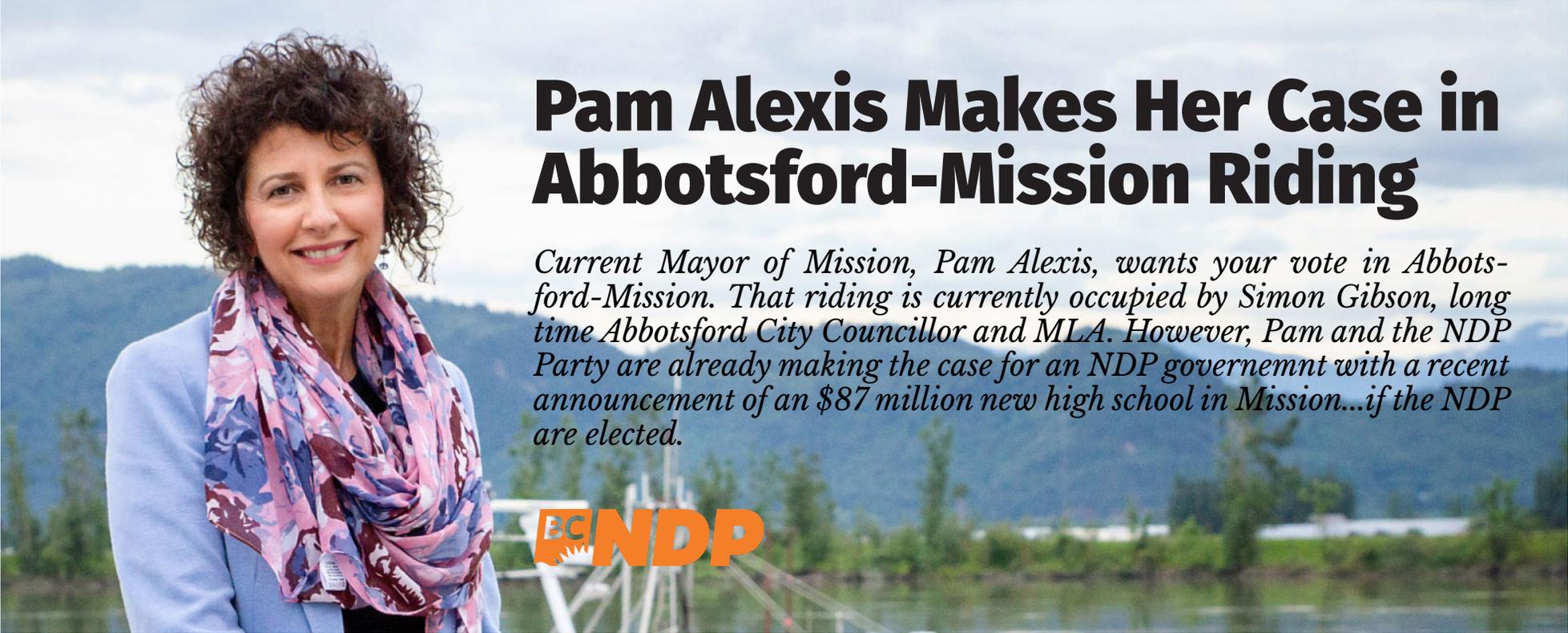
Dr. Bruce Banman

<https://www.bcliberals.com/team/bruce-banman/>

Preet Rai

<https://preetrai.bcndp.ca/>





Pam Alexis Makes Her Case in Abbotsford-Mission Riding

Current Mayor of Mission, Pam Alexis, wants your vote in Abbotsford-Mission. That riding is currently occupied by Simon Gibson, long time Abbotsford City Councillor and MLA. However, Pam and the NDP Party are already making the case for an NDP government with a recent announcement of an \$87 million new high school in Mission...if the NDP are elected.



We made the case in the column **“The Changing Faces of Abbotsford Politics”** that electing NDP candidates to represent Abbotsford would bring investment in our community from an NDP government. It would generate the kind of investment that we rarely received from the Liberal government despite having all 3 ridings dominated by Liberal MLAs.

This point was driven home when the BC NDP announced that Mission would get a new \$87 million high school if elected. Abbotsford-Mission candidate Pam Alexis and Maple Ridge-Mission candidate Bob D'eith made the announcement October 13th, 2020. The announcement was made at the site of the 70 year old École Mission Senior Secondary School, the district's only high school, highlighting the NDP claim that the BC Liberals had neglected education infrastructure.

Funding for the project will come out of the \$3 billion earmarked by the NDP for the Recovery Investment Fund, a fund that is designated to build infrastructure projects at the community level.

This project is just one of the 100 such building or upgrading projects that the NDP has undertaken throughout the provincial school system.

That's Mission. What about Abbotsford?

Think of why this announcement was made. Mission is a shared riding between Pam Alexis and Bob D'eith. D'eith is the MLA in Maple Ridge-Mission and took that riding in the last election by just one or two hundred votes. So, the NDP is pouring money into his riding, shared with Alexis, in order to shore up his seat.

The very same will happen here in Abbotsford should an upset occur with Preet Rai over Mike de Jong in Abbotsford West. Announcements will come and investments made. Investments that have rarely come while Simon Gibson or Mike de Jong have been in power. Even here in Abbotsford, the NDP have announced a new school for Eagle Mountain if they are elected. The Liberals? Nothing.

It is our opinion that this is why we are seeing more and more local politicians like Pam Alexis take the leap to provincial politics. They recognize that it is the province that is responsible for funding and managing huge issues in our society.

What they see is that municipalities have a very finite role to play in our daily lives. City Councils deal with property taxes, parking fees, water rates and take those funds to build roads and city facilities while voting on development applications and bylaws. Important work to be sure, but if you saw a real need in your community, like a school, the only way to get it built would be as part of the provincial government.

There is one unavoidable fact here.

The BC Liberals close schools. Between 2002 and 2017, Andrew Wilkinson and the BC Liberals closed more than 250 schools across the province. It is reasonable to say that the main reason our classrooms are overcrowded is because of the BC Liberals desire to close schools.

To be fair, perhaps they have seen the error in their ways. As part of their 2020 campaign, the Libs have announced major investment in schools if they are elected. However, the sentiment may already be “too little...too late”.



ELECT
LAURA-LYNN THOMPSON
ABBOTSFORD SOUTH



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- WIDENING HIGHWAY 1
- SUPPORTING INITIATIVES FOR THE HOMELESS
- IT'S TIME TO RESTART BC'S ECONOMY
- NO IDENTITY POLITICS, WE ARE ALL CANADIAN
- PARENTAL CHOICE WITH SCHOOL VOUCHERS
- REMOVE GENDER THEORY FROM SCHOOLS
- DEFUND SEX REASSIGNMENT SURGERIES
- CONSCIENCE RIGHTS / VACCINATION CHOICE

ON OCTOBER 24TH VOTE FOR LAURA-LYNN THOMPSON

AUTHORIZED BY LAURA-LYNN THOMPSON, FINANCIAL AGENT, 778-748-1409

Of COVID-19, Elections and What We Will Not See, Hear or Talk About

Perhaps the real effect of COVID 19 on our society is more than just a change in our behaviour and healthcare, it may also be a seed change in our politics...if we're willing to talk about it.

Of course Dr. Henry is not calling for making the wearing of masks mandatory, no government would ever take an action that would incur such a strong negative reaction among voters during an election campaign.

Although if humans were in action the intelligent, thinking species they proclaim themselves to be in word it would be unnecessary to make it mandatory. Because wearing masks and gloves and practicing social distancing are intelligent, thinking ways to behave.

Indeed, if our behaviours in response to COVID-19 had been intelligent and thinking, we could have minimized the negative economic and financial costs and consequences of COVID-19.

There will be negative economic and financial costs and consequences from COVID-19; you cannot disrupt the economy as severely as was done in response to COVID-19 and not have negative fallout; actions of the magnitude and duration taken in response to COVID-19 will result in costs and consequences that are significant and consequential.

While the exact timing of when the COVID-19 chickens come home to roost is not definitively known, John Horgan and the NDP calling an election a year early is evidence 1) the fallout from COVID-19 will start to manifest in significant ways before next October [2021] and that the costs and consequences will have serious and painful negative financial and economic impact.

The government was enjoying popularity because COVID-19 has created a political vacuum issuing the NDP government a 'free pass' on other matters, pushing other issues and the opposition Liberal party out of sight and out of mind. The sheer brainless stupidity of the behaviour of our neighbours to the south made other actions, even if less than thoughtful, look good.

In addition the massive deficit spending by both the federal and BC governments delays and serves to hide COVID-19's negative impact on the economy, the finances and financial future of Canadians.

Given the behaviour of voters, if you are the government and you want to win the next election you have to call the election now, before the economic and financial costs, consequences and pain begin to manifest and impact voters.

I am aware that as part of the campaign the parties all have trotted out plans and solutions for dealing with the economic fallout of COVID-19.

Examining the various plans and statements from the parties and their leaders on dealing with the economic and financial fallout of COVID-19 left me praying that the hyperbole was electioneering, not something they

believed; because if they believed what they were saying we will could turn the hole we are in as a result of COVID-19 from deep to bottomless.

I spoke to a friend about John Horgan and the NDP calling an election a year early to go to polls before voters discern the negative costs, effects and consequences and before the negative costs, effects and consequences begin to significantly impact voters.

Surprisingly he felt having a government in place with a mandate to deal with the negative effects, costs and consequences of COVID-19 before they begin to come home to roost was more important than the venal self interest that caused election to be called. Rather than having an election at a time when the negative effects, costs and consequences of COVID-19 were or had manifested.

His use of mandate says something about the nature of politics and election campaigns in recent decades.

Mandate: *authorization to act in a particular way on a public issue given by the electorate to its representative.*

Yes, the politicians and parties are speaking to the economic and financial consequences of COVID-19 and dealing with the negative effects, consequences and costs.

The problem lies in the serious, considerable omissions made by the politicians and parties when speaking about the negative economic and financial consequences of COVID-19.

Given the direct impact on the finances and standard of living of BC citizens and the impact on government finances and the resources the government will have to provide services to the citizens of BC, the financial and economic fallout of COVID-19 and managing the recovery from the costs and consequences are currently, and for the foreseeable future, the most important issues about their future that voters in British Columbia face.

In acting, through conscious omission, to deny voters in BC their right to give direction on dealing with the fallout from COVID-19 John Horgan and the NDP not only cannot get a valid mandate to deal with the fallout from COVID-19 may manage to commit election fraud by omission.

Of course the reality of BC politics, politicians and voter behaviour is that magnitude and effects of the fallout of COVID-19 are #1 on voters' list of subjects they do not want to see, hear or talk about.

James W. Breckenridge (www.jameswbreckenridge.ca/) is a writer, chartered accountant, and community advocate for homeless and addiction issues.



abbotsfordtoday



PREET RAI, BC NDP



BRUCE BANMAN, BC LIBERAL

ਕੀ ਇਹ ਸਮਾਂ ਇਲੈਕਸ਼ਨ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਠੀਕ ਹੈ?

ਬੀ ਸੀ ਐਨ ਡੀ ਪੀ ਨੇ ਮਹਾਮਾਰੀ ਕੋਵਿਡ-19 ਦੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਇਲੈਕਸ਼ਨ ਦਾ ਐਲਾਨ ਕਰ ਦਿਤਾ। ਸਭ ਪਾਰਟੀਆਂ ਵਲੋਂ ਅਜਿਹਾ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਲਗਾਤਾਰ ਨੁਕਤਾਚੀਨੀ ਹੋ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ। ਫਿਰ ਵੀ ਅਸੀਂ ਇਸ ਤੇ ਨਜ਼ਰਸਾਨੀ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਾਂ ਕਿ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਫੈਸਲਾ ਠੀਕ ਸੀ ਜਾਂ ਨਹੀਂ। ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਅਸੀਂ ਬਰਿਟਿਸ਼ ਕੋਲੰਬੀਆ ਦੇ ਨਿਵਾਸੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਮੁਖ ਮੁੱਦਿਆਂ ਤੇ ਵਾਰੀ ਸਿਰ ਚਰਚਾ ਕਰਾਂਗੇ ਤੇ ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਵੋਟ ਕਿਸ ਤਰਾਂ ਐਬਟਸਫੋਰਡ ਦੇ ਭਵਿੱਖ ਤੇ ਮਹਤਵਪੂਰਨ ਅਸਰ ਪਾਵੇਗੀ।

21 ਸਤੰਬਰ, 2020 ਨੂੰ ਬੀ ਸੀ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰੀਮੀਅਰ ਜੌਹਨ ਹੌਰਗਨ ਨੇ ਤੁਰਤ ਇਲੈਕਸ਼ਨ ਦਾ ਐਲਾਨ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ। ਮਹਾਮਾਰੀ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਇਲੈਕਸ਼ਨ ਕਰਵਾਣ ਵਾਲਾ ਬੀ ਸੀ ਦੂਜਾ ਸੂਬਾ ਬਣ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। 14 ਸਤੰਬਰ ਨੂੰ ਨਿਊ ਬਰਿਸ਼ਵਿਕ ਇਸੇ ਅਮਲ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਲੰਘਿਆ।

ਜੌਹਨ ਹੌਰਗਨ ਦੇ ਇਸ ਇਲੈਕਸ਼ਨ ਐਲਾਨ ਦੀ ਦੂਜੀਆਂ ਸਭ ਪਾਰਟੀਆਂ ਵਲੋਂ ਲਗਾਤਾਰ ਨੁਕਤਾਚੀਨੀ ਹੋ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਦੀ ਉਮੀਦ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਟਿੱਪਣੀਆਂ ਬਹੁਤ ਸਖਤ ਹਨ। ਬੀ ਸੀ ਲਿਬਰਲ ਦੇ ਐਮ ਐਲ ਏ ਮਾਇਕ ਡੀ ਯੌਂਗ ਨੇ ਇਕ ਉਮੀਦਵਾਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਬਹਿਸ ਵਿਚ ਕਿਹਾ ਕਿ ਐਨ ਡੀ ਪੀ ਤੇ ਇਸਦੇ ਉਮੀਦਵਾਰ ਪ੍ਰੀਤ ਰਾਏ ਨੂੰ ਬੀ ਸੀ ਵਾਸੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਇਲੈਕਸ਼ਨ ਵਿਚ ਪਾਉਣ ਲਈ "ਸ਼ਰਮ" ਆਉਣੀ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ।

ਤਾਂ ਇਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਇਹ ਸਵਾਲ ਵਾਜਿਬ ਹੈ.. "ਜੇ ਹੁਣ ਨਹੀਂ ਤਾਂ ਫਿਰ ਕਦੋਂ?"

ਜਵਾਬ ਸਿੱਧਾ ਹੈ। ਐਨ ਡੀ ਪੀ ਅਗਲੇ ਸਾਲ ਤਕ ਉਡੀਕ ਕਰਦੀ ਜਦੋਂ ਕਿ ਇਲੈਕਸ਼ਨ ਹੋਣੀ ਲਾਜ਼ਮੀ ਸੀ। ਇਹ ਸਹੀ ਲਗਦਾ ਹੈ, ਠੀਕ? ਇਲੈਕਸ਼ਨ ਉਦੋਂ ਹੀ ਕਰਵਾਓ ਜਦੋਂ ਇਹ ਹੋਣੀ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਉਦੋਂ ਤਕ ਕੋਵਿਡ 19 ਮਹਾਮਾਰੀ ਵੀ ਖਤਮ ਹੋ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ।

ਪਰ ਜੇ ਇਹ ਨਾ ਹੋਵੇ ਤਾਂ?

ਜੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਫਿਰ ਵੀ ਮਹਾਮਾਰੀ ਤੇ ਇਸ ਨਾਲ ਚਲਦੇ ਆਰਥਿਕ ਮੰਦਵਾਤੇ ਨਾਲ ਜੂਝ ਰਹੇ ਹੋਈਏ? ਬੀ ਸੀ ਵਾਸੀਆਂ ਕੋਲ ਉਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਇਹ ਫੈਸਲਾ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਮਰਜ਼ੀ ਹੋਵੇਗੀ ਕਿ ਇਸ ਸੰਕਟ ਸਮੇਂ ਕੌਣ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਅਗਵਾਈ ਕਰੇ। ਇਸ ਇਲੈਕਸ਼ਨ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਬੀ ਸੀ ਵਾਸੀਆਂ ਨੇ ਇਹ ਫੈਸਲਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੀਤਾ ਸੀ। ਬੀ ਸੀ ਐਨ ਡੀ ਪੀ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਘਟ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਦੀ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਇਸ ਕੋਲ ਅਗਵਾਈ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਅਸਲ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ।

ਘਟ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਵਲੋਂ ਬਹੁਗਿਣਤੀ ਹਾਸਲ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਮੌਕਾ ਲੈਣ ਲਈ ਇਲੈਕਸ਼ਨ ਦਾ ਐਲਾਨ ਕਰਨਾ ਆਮ ਹੀ ਗਲ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਸਿੱਧ ਮਿਸਾਲ ਇੰਗਲੈਂਡ ਦੀ ਬਰੈਕਸਿਟ ਮੁਦੇ ਤੇ ਜਦੋਂ ਜਹਿਦ ਹੈ। ਬਾਰ ਬਾਰ ਇਸ ਮੁਦੇ ਤੇ ਇਲੈਕਸ਼ਨ ਉਦੋਂ ਤਕ ਕਰਵਾਈ ਗਈ ਜਦੋਂ ਕਿ ਟੋਰੀ ਪਾਰਟੀ ਕੋਲ ਬਹੁਮਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋਇਆ ਤੇ ਉਹ ਯੂਰਪੀਨ ਯੂਨੀਅਨ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਨਿਕਲ ਨਹੀਂ ਗਏ।

ਇਥੇ ਵੀ ਇਹੀ ਗਲ ਲਾਗੂ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਐਨ ਡੀ ਪੀ ਬੀ ਸੀ ਨਿਵਾਸੀਆਂ ਕੋਲੋਂ ਕੋਵਿਡ 19 ਨਾਲ ਨਜਿੱਠਣ ਦੇ ਤਰੀਕੇ ਅਤੇ ਆਰਥਿਕ ਮੁੜ ਬਹਾਲੀ ਦੀ ਯੋਜਨਾ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਵਾਨਗੀ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ।

ਦੂਜੀਆਂ ਪਾਰਟੀਆਂ ਪ੍ਰੋਸ਼ਾਨ ਹਨ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਐਨ ਡੀ ਪੀ ਨੇ ਇਹ ਕੰਮ ਵਧੀਆ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ। ਉਸੇ ਉਮੀਦਵਾਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਬਹਿਸ ਵਿਚ ਮਾਇਕ ਡੀ ਯੌਂਗ ਨੇ ਕਿਹਾ ਕਿ ਜੇ ਉਹ ਦੁਬਾਰਾ ਜਿੱਤ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ ਤਾਂ ਉਹ ਐਨ ਡੀ ਪੀ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨਾਲ ਕੰਮ ਕਰਨਗੇ। ਅਸਲ ਵਿਚ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਡੀ ਯੌਂਗ ਨੇ ਇਸ ਇਲੈਕਸ਼ਨ ਵਿਚ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਪਾਰਟੀ ਦੀ ਜਿੱਤ ਦੀ ਉਮੀਦ ਛੱਡ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਹੈ।

ਸਚਾਈ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਅਸੀਂ ਕੋਵਿਡ 19 ਦੌਰਾਨ ਇਲੈਕਸ਼ਨ ਵਿਚ ਹਾਂ। ਇਹ ਸਾਡੀ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਬੀ ਸੀ ਨਿਵਾਸੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਸਾਰੇ ਅਹਿਮ ਮੁੱਦੇ ਵਿਚਾਰੀਏ ਤੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਸਾਡੇ ਸੂਬੇ ਦੀ ਲੀਡਰਸ਼ਿਪ ਬਾਰੇ ਸਮਝਦਾਰੀ ਨਾਲ ਫੈਸਲਾ ਕਰ ਸਕੋ।

ਐਡੀਟਰ





JHAJ

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- ◆ ਵਾਜ਼ਬ ਕੀਮਤ ਵਧੀਆਂ ਕੰਮ
- ◆ ਘਰ ਬਣਾਉਣ ਦਾ 20 ਸਾਲ ਦਾ ਤਜਰਬਾ
- ◆ ਪੁਰਾਣੇ ਘਰ ਢਾਹੁਣ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਐਸਬੈਸਟਸ ਟੈਸਟਿੰਗ ਵੀ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਾਂ
- ◆ ਮਿੰਨੀ ਐਕਸਕਾਵੇਸ਼ਨ ਦਾ ਸਾਰਾ ਕੰਮ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਾਂ

RAMANDEEP JHAJ

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ਐਬਟਸਫੋਰਡ ਸਿਆਸਤ ਦਾ ਬਦਲ ਰਿਹਾ ਮੁਹਾਂਦਰਾ

ਹਮੇਸ਼ਾ ਹੀ ਲਗਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਐਬਟਸਫੋਰਡ ਦੇ ਐਮ ਐਲ ਏ ਸਾਡੇ ਇਥੋਂ ਦੀ ਪੈਦਾਇਸ਼ ਹੀ ਹਨ, ਪਰ ਹੁਣ ਐਬਟਸਫੋਰਡ ਦੀ ਸਿਆਸਤ ਵਿਚ ਬੁਨਿਆਦੀ ਤਬਦੀਲੀ ਹੋ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ। ਐਬਟਸਫੋਰਡ ਸਾਊਥ ਵਿਚ ਸਾਬਕਾ ਮੇਅਰ ਬਰੂਸ ਬੈਨਮਨ ਬੀ ਸੀ ਦੀ ਲਿਬਰਲ ਸਿਆਸਤ ਵਿਚ ਦਾਖਲੇ ਲਈ ਤਿਆਰ ਹੀ ਹਨ। ਐਬਟਸਫੋਰਡ ਵੈਸਟ ਵਿਚ ਲਮੋਂ ਸਮੋਂ ਤੋਂ ਸਕੂਲ ਟਰਸਟੀ ਪ੍ਰੀਤ ਰਾਏ ਆਧਾਰ ਬਣਾ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ ਤੇ ਸ਼ਾਇਦ ਬੀ ਸੀ ਐਨ ਡੀ ਪੀ ਲਈ ਮਾਇਕ ਡੀ ਯੌਂਗ ਨੂੰ ਢਾਹ ਲਾਉਣ।



ਸਪਸ਼ਟ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਨਹੀਂ ਪਤਾ ਕਿ ਇਲੈਕਸ਼ਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਦਿਨ ਜਦੋਂ ਸਾਰੀਆਂ ਵੋਟਾਂ ਗਿਣੀਆਂ ਜਾਣਗੀਆਂ ਤਾਂ ਕੀ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ। ਪਰ ਅਸੀਂ ਦੇਖ ਰਹੇ ਹਾਂ ਕਿ ਐਬਟਸਫੋਰਡ ਤਬਦੀਲੀ ਚਾਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਸਾਡੀ ਰਾਇ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਪਹਿਲੀਆਂ ਲਿਬਰਲ ਸਰਕਾਰਾਂ ਵਲੋਂ ਕਈ ਵਾਰ ਇਥੇ ਨਿਵੇਸ਼ ਕਰਨ ਵੇਲੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਅਣਗੌਲਿਆਂ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਐਬਟਸਫੋਰਡ ਦੀਆਂ ਸਾਰੀਆਂ ਤਿਨੋਂ ਸੀਟਾਂ ਲਿਬਰਲ ਪਾਰਟੀ ਕੋਲ ਹੋਣ ਦੇ ਬਾਵਜੂਦ ਇਹ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਘਟ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਇਸ ਸਚਾਈ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਵੀ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸਾਡੀ ਕਮਿਊਨਿਟੀ ਨੂੰ ਫਾਇਦਾ ਪਹੁੰਚਾਣ ਦੇ ਜਿਨੇ ਵਾਢੇ ਕੀਤੇ ਗਏ ਉਸ ਤੋਂ ਜ਼ਿਆਦਾ ਤੋੜੇ ਗਏ ਹਨ।

ਮਿਸਾਲ ਦੇ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਐਬਟਸਫੋਰਡ ਐਂਟਰਟੇਨਮੈਂਟ ਸੈਂਟਰ, ਵਾਈ ਰੋਡ ਓਵਰਪਾਸ, ਐਬਟਸਫੋਰਡ ਰਿਜਨਲ ਹਸਪਤਾਲ ਐਮਰਜੈਂਸੀ ਰੂਮ ਤੇ ਐਬਟਸਫੋਰਡ ਕੋਰਟਹਾਊਸ ਦੀ ਫੰਡਿੰਗ ਵੇਲੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਅਣਗੌਲਿਆਂ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ

ਪਰ ਅਖੀਰਲੇ ਦੋ ਤਾਂ ਅਜੇ ਬਣ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ! ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਐਨ ਡੀ ਪੀ ਅਗੇ ਆਈ ਤੇ ਉਸਨੇ ਇਹ ਦੋ ਪ੍ਰਾਜੈਕਟ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਕਰ ਦਿਤੇ।

ਸੋ ਅਸੀਂ ਸਥਾਨਕ ਵੋਟਰਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਗਲਬਾਤ ਕੀਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਉਹ ਮਹਿਸੂਸ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਵੋਟ ਤਾਂ ਪੱਕੀ ਸਮਝੀ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ। ਉਹ ਸਮਝਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਹੁਣ ਮੌਕਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਐਨ ਡੀ ਪੀ ਦੇ ਉਮੀਦਵਾਰ ਦੀ ਮਦਦ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾਵੇ ਅਤੇ ਯਕੀਨੀ ਬਣਾਈਏ ਕਿ ਐਨ ਡੀ ਪੀ ਦੀ ਨਵੀਂ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਨੁਮਾਇੰਦਗੀ ਹੋਵੇ।

ਇਥੇ ਪ੍ਰੀਤ ਰਾਏ ਆਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਅਕਾਊਂਟੈਂਟ ਤੇ ਸਕੂਲ ਬੋਰਡ ਟਰਸਟੀ ਵਜੋਂ ਰਾਏ ਸੂਬੇ ਦੀ ਮਾਇਕ ਸਥਿਤੀ ਤੇ ਸਿਖਿਆ ਨਾਲ ਜੁੜੇ ਮਸਲਿਆਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਜਾਣਦਾ ਹੈ। ਉਸ ਨਾਲ ਐਮ ਐਲ ਏ ਵਿਚ ਸਾਡੇ ਸਾਊਥ ਏਸ਼ੀਅਨ ਭਾਈਚਾਰੇ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਮੂਲੀਅਤ ਵੀ ਹੋਵੇਗੀ ਜੋ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਸਾਡੇ ਐਮ ਐਲ ਏ ਵਿਚ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ। ਸਾਡੀ ਲਗਭਗ 35% ਆਬਾਦੀ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਹੁਣ ਸਾਡੇ ਤਿਨ ਐਮ ਐਲ ਏ ਕਾਕੋਸ਼ੀਅਨ ਹਨ।

ਵੋਟਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਰੁਝਾਨ ਵਿਚ ਇਹ ਤਬਦੀਲੀ ਕਿਉਂ ਹੈ?

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਚੇਤੇ ਕਰੋ ਤਾਂ ਅਜ ਤੋਂ 3 ਸਾਲ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਬੀ ਸੀ ਲਿਬਰਲ ਨੇ ਵੋਟਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਦਿਲ ਵਿਚ ਐਨ ਡੀ ਪੀ ਨੂੰ ਟਵੋਟਾਂ ਪਾਉਣ ਬਾਦ ਦੇ ਖਤਰਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਡਰਾਉਣੀ ਤਸਵੀਰ ਦਿਖਾਈ ਸੀ। ਉਸਦਾ ਅਸਰ ਐਬਟਸਫੋਰਡ ਵਿਚ ਹੋਇਆ ਤੇ ਸਥਾਨਕ ਵੋਟਰਾਂ ਨੇ ਰਵਾਇਤੀ ਲਿਬਰਲ ਉਮੀਦਵਾਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਜਿਤਾਇਆ। ਪਰ ਐਨ ਡੀ ਪੀ ਨੇ ਘਟ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਬਣਾ ਲਈ, ਦੂਜੀਆਂ ਪਾਰਟੀਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਮਿਲ ਕੇ ਕੰਮ ਕੀਤਾ ਤੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਜੋ ਵੀ ਖਤਰੇ ਦਸੇ ਸਨ ਕੋਈ ਵੀ ਸਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਾਬਤ ਹੋਏ। ਇਸ ਦੇ ਬਜਾਏ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਤੇ ਕੋਵਿਡ 19 ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ 3 ਸੰਤੁਲਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਬਜਟ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕੀਤੇ, ਆਈ ਸੀ ਬੀ ਸੀ ਦੇ ਰੋਟ ਘਟਾਏ, ਨਵੇਂ ਕੋਰਟਹਾਊਸ ਦੀ ਨੀਂਹ ਰੱਖੀ, ਐਬਟਸਫੋਰਡ ਰਿਜਨਲ ਹਸਪਤਾਲ ਐਮਰਜੈਂਸੀ ਰੂਮ ਦਾ ਵਿਸਥਾਰ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਕੀਤਾ ਤੇ ਸਾਰੀ ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਬਰਾਬਰ ਚੰਗੇ ਤਰੀਕੇ ਨਾਲ ਕੋਵਿਡ 19 ਨਾਲ ਨਜਿਠਿਆ।

ਮੈਨੂੰ ਗਲਤ ਨਾ ਸਮਝੋ..ਕੀ ਉਹ ਇਸਤੋਂ ਵਧੀਆ ਤੇ ਵਧ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੇ ਸੀ? ਬਿਲਕੁਲ ਤੇ ਇਹ ਗਲਾਂ ਕਰਨੀਆਂ ਸੌਖੀਆਂ ਹਨ ਜਦੋਂ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਵਿਰੋਧੀ ਧਿਰ ਵਿਚ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ। ਸਰਕਾਰ ਵਖਰੀ ਗਲ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਬੀ ਸੀ ਐਨ ਡੀ ਪੀ ਨੇ ਵਧੀਆ ਕੰਮ ਕਾਜ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ।

ਜੇ ਪ੍ਰੀਤ ਰਾਏ ਮਾਇਕ ਡੀ ਯੌਂਗ ਨੂੰ ਹਰਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ, ਸਾਡੀ ਰਾਇ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਦੇਖੋਗੇ ਕਿ ਐਨ ਡੀ ਪੀ ਸਾਡੀ ਕਮਿਊਨਿਟੀ ਵਿਚ ਨਿਵੇਸ਼ ਕਰੇਗੀ ਜੋ ਕਿ ਲਿਬਰਲ ਨੇ ਪਿਛਲੇ 20 ਸਾਲਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੀਤਾ। ਵਾਦੀ ਵਿਚ ਪਕੜ ਬਨਾਉਣ ਲਈ, ਤੇ ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਬਹੁਮਤ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਬਨਾਉਣ ਸਮੇਤ, ਸਾਡੀ ਕਮਿਊਨਿਟੀ ਲਈ ਹਾਂ ਪੱਖੀ ਕਦਮ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ।

ਹੁਣ ਜ਼ਮੀਨੀ ਹਕੀਕਤ ਵਲ ਆਈਏ..ਕੀ ਉਹ ਕਰ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ?

ਹੁਣ ਜੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਦੇ ਹੋਈਏ ਤਾਂ ਅਸੀਂ ਸ਼ਰਤਾਂ ਲਾ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਾਂ। ਅਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਦੇ ਹਾਂ ਕਿ ਸਾਊਥ ਏਸ਼ੀਅਨ ਕਮਿਊਨਿਟੀ ਬਦਲਾਓ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਅਸੀਂ ਜਾਣਦੇ ਹਾਂ ਕਿ ਮਾਇਕ ਡੀ ਯੌਂਗ ਨੇ ਜੂਮ ਕਾਲ ਤੇ ਜਾਂ ਕਿ ਐਨ ਡੀ ਪੀ ਐਮ ਐਲ ਏ ਬੋਇੰਨ ਮਾਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਕਾਮੂਕ ਟਿੱਪਣੀ ਨਾਲ ਅਪਣੀ ਕੋਈ ਮਦਦ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੀਤੀ। ਸਿਗਾਰ ਪੀ ਰਿਹਾ, ਸੂਟ ਬੁਟ ਵਾਲਾ ਤੇ ਕਾਮੂਕ ਮਖੌਲ ਤੇ ਹਸ ਰਹੇ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਦਾ ਇਮੇਜ ਉਹ ਇਲੈਕਸ਼ਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਦਿਨੀਂ ਵੋਟਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਦਿਮਾਗ ਤੋਂ ਮਿਟਾਉਣਾ ਚਾਹੇਗਾ। ਪ੍ਰੀਤ ਰਾਏ ਤੇ ਮਾਇਕ ਡੀ ਯੌਂਗ ਵਿਚ ਮੁਕਾਬਲਾ ਸਚਮੁਚ ਸਖਤ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ।

ਹੁਣ ਐਬਟਸਫੋਰਡ ਸਾਊਥ ਤੇ ਨਿਗਾਹ ਮਾਰਦੇ ਹਾਂ।





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ਐਬਟਸਫੋਰਡ ਸਾਊਥ ਬਿਲਕੁਲ ਵਖਰੀ ਕਹਾਣੀ ਹੈ। ਉਥੇ 'ਔਰੋਜ ਵੇਵ' ਦੇ ਖਿਲਾਫ ਸਾਬਕਾ ਮੇਅਰ ਬਰੂਸ ਬੈਨਮਨ ਲੜ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਯਾਦ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਇਲਾਕਾ ਡੇਰਿਲ ਪਲੇਕਾਸ ਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਇਲਾਕੇ ਵਿਚ ਚੋਣ ਉਮੀਦਵਾਰ ਬਣਨ ਲਈ ਸਖਤ ਲੜਾਈ ਜਿਤ ਕੇ, ਬੈਨਮਨ ਹੁਣ ਵਿਧਾਨ ਸਭਾ ਦੀ ਸੀਟ ਜਿਤਣ ਲਈ ਕੰਮ ਕਰ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ।

ਬੈਨਮਨ ਬਹੁਮੁਖੀ ਪ੍ਰਤਿਭਾ ਵਾਲਾ ਹੈ। ਐਬਟਸਫੋਰਡ ਦੇ ਮੇਅਰ ਹੋਣ ਵੇਲੇ, ਉਹ ਸਾਡੇ ਸ਼ਹਿਰ ਦੇ ਇਤਹਾਸ ਦਾ ਪਹਿਲਾ ਮੇਅਰ ਹੈ ਜਿਸਨੇ 0% ਪ੍ਰਾਪਰਟੀ ਟੈਕਸ ਵਾਧੇ ਦਾ ਵਾਅਦਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਤੇ ਨਿਭਾਇਆ। ਉਸਨੇ ਐਬਟਸਫੋਰਡ ਹੀਟ ਲੋਸ ਚੁਣੌਤੀ ਦਾ ਮਸਲਾ ਸੁਲਝਾਇਆ ਤੇ ਇਸ ਦਾ 5 ਮਿਲਿਅਨ ਖਰਚ ਕੇ ਕਈ ਬਿਲਿਅਨ ਦਾ ਆਉਣ ਵਾਲਾ ਖਰਚਾ ਬਚਾਇਆ।

ਬੈਨਮਨ ਨੇ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦੇ ਕਈ ਪਧਰਾਂ ਉਪਰ ਤੇ ਸਥਾਨਕ ਸਕੂਲ ਬੋਰਡ ਤੇ ਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਡਿਸਟਰਿਕਟ ਨਾਲ ਵੀ ਕੰਮ ਕੀਤਾ। ਸਾਡਾ ਮੌਜੂਦਾ ਮੇਅਰ ਤੇ ਕੌਂਸਲ ਦਾ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਚੰਗਾ ਰਾਬਤਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਰਖਦੇ। ਬੈਨਮਨ ਦੀ ਵਖ ਵਖ ਗਰੁਪਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਅਹਿਮ ਤੇ ਮੁਸ਼ਕਿਲ ਮੁਦਿਆਂ ਉਪਰ ਕੰਮ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਸਮਰਥਾ ਨਾਲ ਐਨ ਡੀ ਪੀ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨਾਲ ਗਲਬਾਤ ਐਬਟਸਫੋਰਡ ਲਈ ਫਾਇਦੇ ਮੰਦ ਨੁਮਾਇੰਦਗੀ ਹੋਵੇਗੀ।

ਉਹ ਕਾਫੀ ਦੇਰ ਤੋਂ ਜ਼ਮੀਨੀ ਪਦਰ ਤੇ ਹੈ। ਮੇਅਰ ਦੀ ਟਰਮ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਦ ਪਿਛਲੇ 3 ਸਾਲ ਤੋਂ ਸਿਟੀ ਕੌਂਸਲ ਵਿਚ ਹੈ। ਉਸਦੀ ਚੋਣ ਮੁਹਿਮ ਵਿਚ ਰੋਜ਼ਾਨਾ ਕੰਮ ਕਾਜ ਦਾ ਤਜਰਬਾ ਐਬਟਸਫੋਰਡ ਸਾਊਥ ਦੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਲਈ ਕੀ ਫਾਇਦੇ ਮੰਦ ਹੈ, ਲਈ ਕੰਮ ਆਵੇਗਾ।

ਫਰਵਰੀ ਵਿਚ ਬਰੂਸ ਨੇ ਹੋਰਗਨ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਲਈ ਐਬਟਸਫੋਰਡ ਦੇ ਵਾਸੀਆਂ ਲਈ ਹੇਠ ਲਿਖੇ ਮੁੱਦੇ ਉਠਾਏ:

- ਸਾਲਾਨਾ 400 ਡਾਲਰ ਕਿਰਾਏਦਾਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਛੋਟ ਨੂੰ ਨਾਂਹ
- ਡਾਲਰ 10 ਦਾ ਰੋਜ਼ਾਨਾ ਚਾਈਲਡ ਕੇਅਰ ਨੂੰ ਨਾਂਹ
- ਸਿਰਫ ਵੈਨਕੂਵਰ ਸ਼ਹਿਰ ਦੀ ਬਜਾਏ ਕਮਿਊਨਿਟੀ ਲਈ ਹੋਰ ਵਾਜਬ ਕੀਮਤ ਦੀ ਰਿਹਾਇਸ਼
- ਯੂਨਿਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਫਰੇਜ਼ਰ ਵੈਲੀ ਵਿਚ ਭੀੜ
- ਹਾਈਵੇ 1 ਦੀ ਬਿਹਤਰੀ ਜਿਸ ਤੇ ਦੋਨੋ ਪਾਰਟੀਆਂ ਇਕ ਦੂਜੇ ਤੇ ਦੂਸ਼ਣ ਲਾਉਂਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ

ਇਹਨਾਂ ਸਭ ਖੇਤਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ, ਡਾਕਟਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਕਮੀ ਤੇ ਕਿਸਾਨਾਂ ਦਿਆਂ ਮਸਲਿਆਂ ਲਈ ਮਸੀਹਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਬੈਨਮਨ ਨੇ ਇਹ ਮਸਲੇ ਚੁੱਕੇ ਹਨ।

ਅਸੀਂ ਹੁਣ ਪਾਰਟੀ ਦੀ ਜਗਾਹ ਤੇ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਵੋਟ ਪਾਉਣ ਦਾ ਮੁੱਦਾ ਬਣਾਈਏ।

ਬਿਨਾ ਸ਼ਕ ਇਕ ਗਲ ਸਚੀ ਹੈ। ਐਬਟਸਫੋਰਡ ਵਿਚ ਇੱਕੋ ਪਾਰਟੀ ਨੂੰ ਵੋਟ ਪਾਉਣ ਦਾ ਕੋਈ ਫਾਇਦਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋਇਆ। ਠੀਕ ਹੈ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਫਾਇਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਹਨ ਪਰ ਟਾਸ ਜਿਤਣ ਜਿਨੇ। ਇਹ ਕਹਿਣਾ ਸਹੀ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ ਕਿ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਜਿਨਾਂ ਨਿਵੇਸ਼ ਘਟ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਐਨ ਡੀ ਪੀ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਵੇਲੇ ਮਿਲਿਆ ਉਨਾਂ ਕੁ ਹੀ ਲਿਬਰਲ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਵੇਲੇ ਮਿਲਿਆ। ਸੋ ਇਸਦਾ ਕੀ ਮਤਲਬ ਹੋਇਆ। ਸ਼ਾਇਦ ਅਸੀਂ ਸੋਚੀਏ ਕਿ ਅਸੀਂ ਵਖਰੀ ਤਰਾਂ ਵੋਟ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਪਾਈਏ। ਡੋਨਾਲਡ ਟਰੰਪ ਨੇ ਦੁਨੀਆ ਨੂੰ ਦਿਖਾ ਦਿਤਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਵੀ ਉਨਾਂ ਹੀ ਅਹਿਮ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਅਸੀਂ ਕਿਸਨੂੰ ਵੋਟ ਪਾਈਏ ਜਿਨਾਂ ਕਿ ਕਿਹੜੀ ਪਾਰਟੀ ਦਾ ਨੁਮਾਇੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਭਾਵੇਂ ਕੈਨੇਡਾ ਵਿਚ ਚੋਣ ਲੜ ਰਹੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਉਮੀਦਵਾਰ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵ ਟਰੰਪ ਜਿਨਾਂ ਨਾਂਹ ਪੱਖੀ ਨਹੀਂ, ਪਰ ਅਸੀਂ ਇਸ ਮਿਸਾਲ ਤੋਂ ਸਿਖ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਾਂ ਕਿ ਪਾਰਟੀ ਦੀ ਜਗਾਹ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਵੋਟ ਪਾਉਣਾ ਵੀ ਠੀਕ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਉਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਹੋਰ ਵੀ ਠੀਕ ਹੈ ਜਦੋਂ ਪਾਰਟੀ ਵੋਟ ਬੇਅਸਰ ਮਹਿਸੂਸ ਹੋਵੇ।

ਅਸੀਂ ਇਸ ਇਲੈਕਸ਼ਨ ਮੁੱਦੇ ਵਿਚ ਕੇਵਲ ਦੋ ਉਮੀਦਵਾਰਾਂ ਤੇ ਚਾਨਣਾ ਪਾਇਆ ਹੈ। ਭਾਵੇਂ ਉਹ 24 ਅਕਤੂਬਰ ਨੂੰ ਜਿੱਤਣ ਜਾਂ ਹਾਰਨ, ਇਹ ਯਕੀਨੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਦੋਨੋ ਐਬਟਸਫੋਰਡ ਦੀ ਸਿਆਸਤ ਵਿਚ ਕਈ ਸਾਲਾਂ ਤਕ ਰਹਿਣਗੇ।

ਅਕਤੂਬਰ 24 ਨੂੰ ਅਸੀਂ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਹਾਂ ਕਿ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਹਾਸਲ ਕਰੋ ਤੇ ਉਸ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਵੋਟ ਪਾਓ ਜੋ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਲਗਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਤੁਹਾਡੇ ਲਈ ਕੰਮ ਕਰੇਗਾ। ਦੂਜੇ ਲਫਜ਼ਾਂ ਵਿਚ, ਵਿਕਟੋਰੀਆ ਵਿਚ ਉਹ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਕੰਮ ਤੇ ਰਖੀਏ ਜੋ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਜੋਸ਼ ਤੇ ਹੌਸਲੇ ਨਾਲ ਕੰਮ ਕਰੇ ਜਿਸ ਨਾਲ ਅਸੀਂ ਕੋਵਿਡ ਤੇ ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਪਾਰ ਲੰਘੀਏ।



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R

Passenger Rail in the Fraser Valley

To anyone that drives up and down Highway 1, you know that getting around is becoming harder and harder. It seems that everyone is working on a solution, but they all seem self-serving. Translink is focused on Skytrain, Surrey is focused on its own project, and no one seems to have a word to say about the rest of the Valley. That is, with the exception of those groups supporting passenger rail on the old Inter Urban Community Rail line.

by Vince Dimanno

There seems to be no motivation on the part of any politician, local or provincial, to deal in any effective way with the traffic issues in the Fraser Valley. Why is transit so hard to figure out in the lower mainland? Every solution we seem to think of will either take decades to develop, or so costly that the resulting tax or fee headaches just don't seem to make it worth it.

Yes, Skytrain is a gorgeous system, but it is the most expensive transit system ever conceived. Not just the raw dollar figures for the construction, but the act of building it destroys businesses and lives.

Now, there is a case for elevated rail in downtown urban cores. The argument, however, just cannot be translated to the sprawling distances of the Fraser Valley. When you apply the idea of Skytrain out here, you get a plan like the one being worked on in Surrey. This Skytrain project will pass through Green Timbers, destroying old growth forest, it will pass through the Serpentine flats, endangering wildlife and putting Agricultural Land at risk. All for \$3+ billion dollars!

There is an alternative. The Interurban Community Rail line was a fixture of travel for many years. It still exists and we can still convert it for passenger use. In total, there is nearly 100km of rail line connecting Chilliwack to Pattullo Bridge. However, proponents have been trying to forward work on revitalizing this asset for many, many years. It seems to fall on deaf ears. In this article, we are going to explore why.

Let's start by breaking down the facts. We'll give you both sides of the debate, but then we'll also give you our conclusions. You can decide for yourself, but if we are ever going to see a real transit solution for the 2 million people that will live in the Fraser Valley over the next 20 years, we need to put all options on the table.

Options are a good place to start. What are our options:

1. Widen Highway 1

Sure, we all have a car and we need to get around so why not widen Highway 1? The problem is that it is no solution at all. This plan involves adding only a single HOV lane that won't reach Abbotsford until 2050!

2. Wait for Skytrain

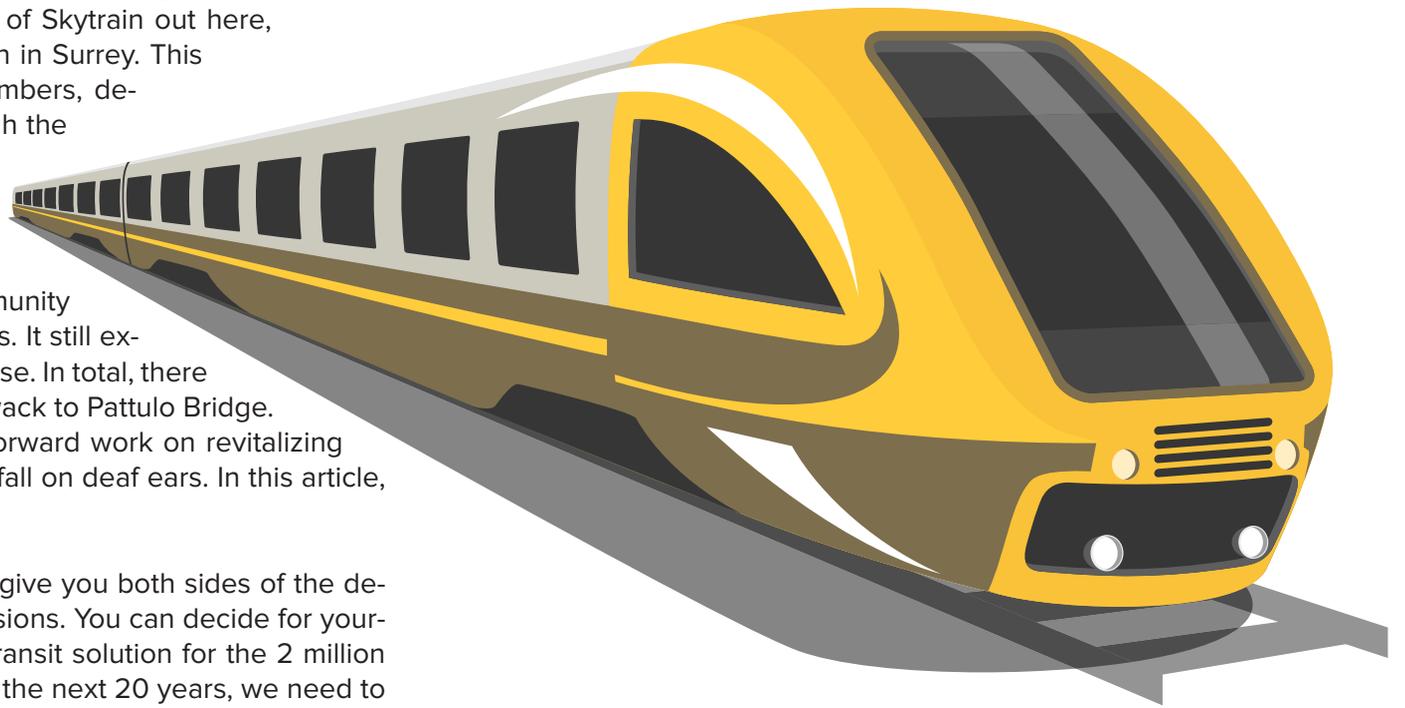
You'll need to put this one in your will. Firstly, we aren't part of the GVRD, and unless we join up with them and start paying them all the taxes and fees they collect, we are NEVER getting Skytrain.

3. Express Buses on Highway 1

The solution to traffic issues on Highway 1 is not to put more vehicles on it. If you create an HOV lane and put buses on it, you haven't widened the highway at all. This will not get anyone out of their car. It will simply give bus riders more options.

4. The Inter Urban Community Rail Line

99kms of rail from Surrey to Chilliwack. Upgradeable to passenger standards that will connect the entire Fraser Valley for one-tenth of the cost of the 16kms of Skytrain being considered in Surrey. Isn't this a "no-brainer"? I thought so. Most people think so, except 2 groups... Translink and politicians.



I've really struggled to figure out why this is so. Politicians are always looking for a big win, and Translink really needs a way to undertake a project that is less costly, not more. At least, that is what I think, but that is not the way politicians and Translink think.

in my research, I read many reports, press releases and studies. I then tried to boil it down to an easy-to-digest list of facts. I've put that into a list on the next page.

• • • **Article Continued from page 7**

- ✔ 99km of track from Chilliwack to Surrey serving more than 1.2 million.
- ✔ Serving 16 communities, 14 post-secondary institutions, First Nations, industrial parks, the Abbotsford international Airport, and the University of the Fraser Valley.
- ✔ Cost of \$1.2 billion for 99km of rail compared to \$3 billion for only 16km of SkyTrain.
- ✔ 90 minute ride time to Surrey SkyTrain from Chilliwack. 30 minute ride time from Langley to Surrey SkyTrain. Effectively, the same as by car resulting in an option that will actually get people to switch. Buses do not.

During a provincial election, where parties make promises of all kinds, transportation in the Fraser Valley is almost completely ignored. Even if the NDP keeps their promise to fast-track the Hwy 1 expansion, it may simply be to push through the HOV lane. That won't help us at all.

Hydrogen powered light rail is a big win. It is clean, cheap, efficient and more! Do you know that a former CP Rail executive sits on the Translink Board and considers the interurban line "dealt with". They have done no proper study, heard from no stakeholder and listened to no presentations. They undertook one survey where they asked people if they wanted Skytrain and they said yes, but they didn't ask if they would like 99km of community rail system for a fraction of the price of a 16km Skytrain route. Just like the Translink studies...biased!

You need to get involved. You must take action and you can't sit and wait for politicians to do the right thing. Or do you think Translink will make a good choice? Folks, it is too late for that. It is all about "saving face". From Translink to the Provincial Government, they have all said no to rail for so long, they can't change their mind now. You have to change it for them.

The rail line is financially viable. The hydrogen powered rail cars are environmentally friendly. The route is great for construction and to insure new development opportunities. The project is well thought out with support from independent studies and a Master Agreement in place with CP Rail reserving the tracks for passenger use.

Finally, there simply is no alternative plan for connecting the Valley. It takes a project this big and the Inter Urban Community Rail Line gives us a head start. Now is the time to fight for it!



SUPPORT THE SOUTH FRASER COMMUNITY RAIL PROJECT

Send a message to the Translink Mayor's Council:
mayorscouncil@translink.ca

Send a message to the Translink Board of Directors:
board@translink.ca

Visit the South Fraser Community Rail Society web site:
https://southfrasercommunityrail.ca

View video on the Inter Urban Proposed Development:
https://youtu.be/zunLMJY_-al



VIEW THE INTER URBAN COMMUNITY RAIL ROUTE MAP

<http://maps.nicholsonroad.com/bcer/>



LIGHT RAIL FACTS AND STATISTICS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Melbourne's Tramway Network		250km
Light Rail Mileage in the US		2,045 miles
Investment in Light Rail	Asia	\$920 billion
	Middle East	\$145 billion
	North America	\$110 billion

Canada is ranked number 32 in the world with passengers carried by rail each year. That means that 31 countries have committed to rail as an efficient way of moving people. For example, Australia, number 10 on the list moves 709 million passengers per year. Canada? Only 84 million passengers and we are more sprawling, and more appropriate application of rail transportation.

Paris, one single city, will add 200kms and 72 new stations to its rail network between now and 2030.

In a 2018 McKinsey Report (<https://www.mckinsey.com>), residents surveyed globally were "very satisfied" with the development of rail in their region. They were "very unsatisfied" with their roadway development. Finally, respondents rank rail as the most efficient system out of all available public transportation systems in their region.

Countries with the highest public transit use include Kenya, Russia, Venezuela, Ukraine and the Philippines where they enjoy more than 56% of their populations using the provided services.

In a 2017 NatGeo Survey, 48% of Canadians said they have never taken public transportation. The global average is 16%. When asked why, the number one response was lack of availability/choice with 32% saying that no alternative to driving a car was possible in their region.

The number one ranked city in the world for public transportation is Berlin. Germany was the first country in the world to adopt hydrogen train technology (a Canadian technology) and is now building out their network with the exact same train technology that the South Fraser Community Rail Society proposes for the Inter Urban line.

Seniors in Long Term Care Facilities Are More Vulnerable Than We Think

The COVID 19 pandemic has shown us just how vulnerable and under-served our seniors living in long term care facilities really are. That is only half the story. Yes, we know they need more staff and more funding, but the seniors that live in these facilities need far more than just that. In this column, we explore what our seniors really need, and we also recount the story of the personal experience of one family as their elderly father moved through the seniors care system here in Abbotsford. What they experienced will shock you!

We've all heard the stories about the struggles of our seniors in Long Term Care Homes (LTCH). Hit hard with a lack of funding, staff that work at multiple facilities and the incredible impact of COVID 19.

These stories have dominated the media. In doing so, two very important issues facing our seniors have been overlooked.

Isolation

In response to the COVID 19 pandemic, long term care facilities went on lockdown. While this seems a reasonable response during a pandemic, it has dire consequences for our seniors. Essentially, it removes a huge portion of their support system.



In most long term care homes, family members make up a large portion of the care that a resident receives. They look after feeding, personal care, cleaning and socializing for seniors. Family members fill the gaps left empty by a shortage of staff members.

In the BC Centre for Disease Control policy document (June 30, 2020) called "**Infection Prevention and Control Requirements for COVID-19 in Long Term Care and Seniors' Assisted Living**" family members that provide these services are called "**Essential Visitors**".

These visits were effectively stopped at many facilities resulting in the images we are familiar with of family members attempting to communicate with their loved ones through windows.

Nearly every COVID infection in LTCHs across the country were traced back to staff members, not the family members that came to visit and provide essential services to their loved ones.

So, seniors received less essential services and were forced to rely on staff that did not exist. This isolation contributed to the accelerated death of many seniors. Separated from family giving them care, and then isolated at the end of their life. This created a scenario of compounding unintended consequences.

Was the lock down in seniors facilities necessary? The answer to that is likely yes, but in doing so it meant that seniors were left with only staff. Staff that could go home, go to Costco, go to a bar, or go anywhere they wanted, just like the family members that were now barred from visiting.

Wait...it gets much worse.

In addition, to staff exposure and the problems that come along with under-staffed facilities, this situation also amplified LTCH facilities that were being operated poorly. I don't mean that these facilities cleaned poorly or served residents bad food. No, I mean these operators engaged in systemic and long term...

Elder Abuse

Seniors First BC produces a document that outlines exactly what constitutes "**Abuse of Older Adults**". It is broken down into 7 major areas:

1. Physical Abuse
2. Psychological or Emotional Abuse
3. Financial Abuse or Exploitation
4. Sexual Abuse
5. Medication Abuse
6. Violation of Civil/Human Rights
7. Neglect/Self Neglect



In each of these areas, a "continuum" is outlined for each form of abuse. Remove family members as care givers from long term care facilities and you can literally walk through these lists of abuses and it reads like "**A Day In the Life of a Senior in Long Term Care**".

Let's look at some examples.

It is considered psychologically abusive if they are kept in silence, isolated, given no choice of care, food, or even bathroom visits. It is considered neglectful if a senior experiences a lack of hygiene and attention, has a poorly maintained living environment, or is abandoned or confined.

You are probably thinking that these "abuses" are a necessary evil during a pandemic. Not according to the BC Centre for Disease Control. Their guidelines never removed Essential Visits from their policy. However, it did leave the power to determine if a visit was essential up to Health Authorities and Facility Staff. The decisions those two groups made give us insight into the systemic elder abuse in our system.

We are going to illustrate this to you by following one family's experience as their father moved through the system. Their story starts at Abbotsford Regional Hospital. Read it carefully because you may see your parent or grandparent going through the same thing. **Their story starts on the next page...**

One family's story...

Experiences like this always seem to start the same way. In the beginning it was nothing really. And then things got out of hand. For this Abbotsford family, their father was sent to Abbotsford Regional Hospital to have minor issues checked out. ARH records show that he was admitted with nothing serious. "Nothing serious" turned into a 23 day stay.

Because of COVID regulations, it took 4 days before a family member was allowed to see him. During that time, he was deprived of his usual medications, his walker and even his glasses. In those 4 days, he complained about those items and was written up as uncooperative and aggressive. However, once family was allowed in to see him, and he was given those things, he was no longer in pain and so no longer complained.

Due to the perception that his attitude was aggressive, when all he really wanted was his glasses and his stool softener, he was treated roughly. For example, one visit resulted in the discovery of wounds on the top and bottom of the father's feet. How did they get there? They were the result of staff pulling and pushing the hospital table away and toward him without giving him the courtesy of allowing him to move his legs. The wounds were so bad they needed treatment, treatment that only came when family demanded it.

Family was present when a nurse, wanting to return the father to his bed from a chair, refused to wait while he prepared to stand up and simply yanked him up by the arm. When he resisted to protect himself from the pain, the nurse accused him of being aggressive.

Was this treatment the same from all staff at ARH? No, this loved one also had great nurses and care-aids, but all it takes is one abuser to seriously damage our loved ones.

But I told you at the beginning that this story was about someone who moved through the system. This gentleman's next stop was Menno Place.

Despite being tested twice for COVID while at ARH (negative both times) and the nurse and nurse manager telling Menno Place that he didn't need to do so, Menno Place demanded a 14 day quarantine period. If a family member came to help him with his needs, they would also be required to stay in his apartment and quarantine for 14 days. Illogically, in order to get groceries and laundry, a "Registered Visitor" could come and go as long as they didn't go into his apartment. Passing items in the hallway was deemed safe.

Much of this can be blamed on the fact that the BC Government has guidelines for Long Term Care facilities but not for Independent Living Facilities. So, Menno Place applied the Long Term Care guidelines.

When quarantine ended, nursing and other services could once again begin. However, rough treatment again began. This time, the family took pictures of the bruising and damage done to their father. In order to insure his safety, they began daily visits and constant observation.

It then became time for one more move.

The next stop for our family was Elim Village in Surrey, BC. Once again, upon arrival, he was put into 14 day isolation. During this time, he was denied all communication with his family. Despite many requests and then demands, the nurses at this facility would not even take this family's father a telephone.

We die slowly...from a lack of love, connection and hugs.

The family attempted to visit their Dad on day 3 of what can only be called his incarceration. They found out their Dad was on the first floor and what room he was in. They went to his window and knocked on it. Their Dad was confused and thought they were in the hallway. Eventually staff come and opened the blinds but were very angry at the family for knocking on the window. There were told they could not be there and must leave.



Staff said that no one is allowed in. Their father fought for the right to see his daughter. He said, "Then why are you all allowed in here anytime? What's the difference between you and my daughter?" They had no answer. He continued, "All you workers, you come to work, you go to all the rooms here, then you go home, you go to Costco, you get gas, you have families, and you come back to work. Why can you come in here all the time, and my daughter can't?"

It fell on deaf ears. Not only did they shut the blinds, but they kept them shut every day. **Incarceration.**

After he had been at Elim for 17 days the family attempted another visit through window. Staff saw this and closed the blinds telling them that if they didn't leave, the police would be called. One staff said that they had been blacklisted because of their previous behaviour. Is it criminal to try and have a conversation through a window with your loved one? Multiple people were visiting the resident of an adjacent room with seemingly no restrictions. Fine for them, but if I talk through the window its criminal?

On their last visit, they observe their father in his room with no entertainment, no books, no Bible, no TV, no phone...just sitting there, deteriorating with nothing to do and not allowed to communicate with family. If this is not elder abuse, then what is?

I started this column by calling the elder abuse "systemic". This family's story is certainly an anecdote, but because the treatment they have received was based on staff essentially "blacklisting" them, one can only imagine how many families have gone through the same thing and are too scared to speak up. Afraid of how their loved ones may suffer if they complain.

This is a bi-partisan political issue. The degradation of our system for seniors spans many governments. Both are now promising to put more money into long term care facilities, but it will take more than money to insure that care is consistent, unbiased and is of a quality we want our loved ones to experience. Are there politicians that will hold our system to account?

Submissions now being accepted for the Fraser Valley Music Awards

CIVL-FM is now accepting submissions until October 19th for the 5th annual Fraser Valley Music Awards at the brand new website launched October 9th!

While CIVL has been working over the past year with our sister-station CJRU 1280 AM at Ryerson University in Toronto to rebuild both of our websites by early 2021, this new FVMA platform is the first step towards a revitalized CIVL.ca, and a sneak peak of what new CIVL and CJRU websites may resemble somewhat in the future.

Though the FVMA platform functionality will be limited as we begin this 5th season of Fraser Valley Music Awards, as nominees are announced, and adjudication starts to take place, this website will begin to develop into what CIVL hopes to eventually be a comprehensive archive of local artists.

When fvma.civil.ca is complete, visitors will be able to browse through the different years, categories and nominees of the awards throughout the years, and each artist will have their own dedicated page that presents biographical data, media content, and other means for fans to connect with their work. In the meantime, the functionality of this site will allow artists to apply online in a more streamlined and aesthetically pleasing environment, as well as easier and clearer access to rules and regulations, guidelines, and other details essential to the submission process. Finally, this will be the first year where FVMA judges will log in and complete their adjudications completely through this platform. Explore the web site at fvma.civil.ca to enter, or for more information.

In addition to the bestowed awards that CIVL and the adjudicators have presented at past Fraser Valley Music Awards, such as recognizing excellence by women, identifying queer and Indigenous artists, and working in solidarity with our local partners like Black Connections, this year a new category for recognizing excellence by BIMPOC (Bi-racial, Indigenous, mixed-racial, and people of colour) artists will be bestowed to an eligible nominee.



Financial Folly

James R. Coggins, local writer and historian gives us his take on the state of our Federal Finances. Thinking of government finances in terms of household income and debt may not be comparing apples to apples, but it will give you a grasp of the numbers like you've never had before!

Imagine that you earn \$33,000 a year. It is a moderate income. But you like to spend money, and so you habitually spend about \$2,000 more each year than you bring in income. Five years ago, you were \$50,000 in debt. As a result of your recent overspending, you are now \$60,000 in debt.

But then, this year, you get sick, and you cannot work as much. Your income drops below \$30,000. You have some additional expenses in order to deal with the effects of the sickness, but you decide to respond to the situation by spending more than \$70,000 this year. That is \$40,000 more than your income this year. In fact, it is considerably more than twice your income for the year. You are not sure of the exact amount because you have been too busy to make a household budget for the year.

As a result, your debt has risen to well over \$100,000. Interest rates have been very low in recent years, but you have still been spending \$2,000 or more every year just to pay the interest on your debt. Now, even though interest rates have dropped even lower, you have doubled your debt, and that means you might soon be paying much more just to cover the interest. If interest rates rise to what they were a couple of years ago, your interest payments could consume 15% to 20% of your income. If interest rates rise even more, the interest charges would consume an even larger portion of your income. You are in a very vulnerable position.

Already, your bank is becoming hesitant to lend you more money, and if it does, it might charge you a higher interest rate. You could turn to other lenders, but they would charge you even more. If that happens, you would likely be unable to pay all of your bills. You could lose your car or be evicted from your residence. You could be facing serious suffering. And there would be no easy way out.

Even worse, included in your current spending are some long-range commitments. You have made agreements to continue to spend at levels higher than your income even beyond this year. And you are even making plans to do some additional spending. As a result, it will be very difficult for you to lower your spending to a level even close to the level of your income, let alone making any effort to pay off your accumulated debt. You are in deep financial trouble.

You might ask: What kind of incompetent idiot would practice such an irresponsible approach to financial management?

The Canadian government under Justin Trudeau, of course. Except that instead of an annual income of \$33,000, the government had an annual income of \$330 billion. And instead of spending \$40,000 more than its income this year, the government is spending an estimated \$400 billion more than its income, more than twice as much as it is bringing in. And instead of a debt of over \$100,000, the government has accumulated a debt of over \$1 trillion. But the ratios and the incredible level of mismanagement are the same.



James R. Coggins (www.coggins.ca) is a writer, editor and historian from Abbotsford, BC



BC Urban Mayors' Caucus Sends Letters to Provincial Party Leaders

On October 5th, the Caucus of BC Urban Mayor's sent a letter to the Provincial Party Leaders. It asked them to address 4 key areas that affect our cities. Abbotsford's Mayor Henry Braun was a co-signer of that letter so we'd like to break it down for you here.

The letter sent to Party Leaders asked each to address and commit to work with urban Mayors in 4 key areas, as outlined in their **2020 Blueprint for BC's Urban Future**. Each area puts forth a "To Do" list that will see city mayors and the Province partner to fulfill areas of immediate and long term need. Those areas include:

Mental Health, Substance Use and Treatment

We call on all parties to commit to:

1. Immediately expand the availability of the full range of substance use and mental health treatment and recovery options in our communities for both youth and adults, including appropriate facilities for those with complex needs. We need treatment on demand so people get it when they need it. We need action in months, not years.
2. Make the recent public health order regarding expanding the number of health professionals authorized to prescribe safer pharmaceutical alternatives to the toxic drug supply permanent and urge all relevant regulatory colleges to scale up access to safer pharmaceutical alternatives for people at risk across B.C.
3. While reviewing changes to the Police Act, consider alternative approaches for responding to mental health and substance use calls in the community on a 24/7 basis.

Affordable Housing

We call on all parties to commit to:

1. Accelerate investments to affordable, supportive and social housing on a priority basis, and simplify the funding application process.
2. Continue to ensure there is a regulatory and taxation climate that prioritizes housing for people who live and work in our cities, rather than housing as an investment.
3. Ensure there is a rental housing

Public Transit

We call on all parties to commit to:

1. Complete the financial recovery of the projected long-term losses facing TransLink, BC Transit and BC Ferries once the recently announced Safe Restart operating funding expires in late-2021, so that service levels are maintained, allowing ridership to quickly bounce back through the pandemic and the economic recovery period.
2. Redesign the transit funding model that has relied too heavily on regressive transit fares and local property taxes to one that is more resilient and equitable.
3. Prepare for a quick return to the transit expansion our cities will need to maintain competitiveness by ensuring that current planning processes are not paused due to the pandemic. Investments in planning studies and developing business cases now will ensure future service expansion and capital investments are ready to go in the rebuilding stage.
4. Make the investments required over the coming decade to support BC Transit and TransLink's ambitious low-carbon fleet plans.

A New Fiscal Relationship

We call on all parties to commit to:

1. Convene an implementation committee comprised of local and provincial government officials to revisit and implement relevant recommendations in the Union of B.C. Municipalities report, Strong Fiscal Futures: A Blueprint for Strengthening BC Local Government's Finance System.
2. Pursue municipal finance reform to provide municipalities with a broader range of sustainable, predictable and reliable funding tools in order to address increasing financial pressures related to a growing asset base, aging infrastructure, climate change, housing challenges and the opioid crisis as per the recommendation from the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services.

HOW WE SEE IT

There are many points in the Mayor's 2020 Blueprint that we agree with. However, there are two things that trouble us. The first is that their call to action on transit does not mention anything other than for the Province to continue with their current course of action. That course is not sustainable financially, and it will come too late to help most of the cities that have signed on to these letters.

The second is the desire to create a new fiscal relationship NOT tied to property tax. This could be a very scary proposition for taxpayers. Property Tax is punitive and regressive, and also not related in any way to the cost of delivering services. However, any "fair" tax like a simple head tax, or an equal distribution of taxes based on the cost of city services would result in huge decreases in city revenues. Abbotsford alone has built up more than \$200 million in surplus from a property tax rate compounded by increasing property values. We will watch this closely!

What's Online!

Stories, articles, columns and your letters appear online every single day. Visit often and enjoy all the content, including the items noted below!



Interviews

In the last week before the election, we are going to interview on Zoom as many of the local candidates as we can. Get to know the personalities behind the politics in these one-on-one conversations. Visit our home page starting Tuesday, October 20th and we'll post them as soon as they are ready to go!



Entertainment

Visit our home page for events and activities that you can enjoy while staying safe. All of these postings are COVID friendly ways to get you through social distancing with stay at home activities.



News

Get the in-depth facts on the stories in the news that effect your life. We cut through the headlines get to the real issues, in print, online, by podcast and live stream.

Next Issue

Our next issue is already in production and we've got lots of great articles ready for you. We dig deep into the issues that you need to know more about, including:



Election Wrap Up

We'll break down the results of the Provincial election and tell you what it means to the future of Abbotsford. We'll cover results from around the province and we'll feature interviews with our local MLA winners.



Alternatives to Hwy 1

In this issue we took a hard look at the Inter Urban rail line as an alternative to Hwy 1. We also touched on how people are dealing with transportation challenges around the world. Next issue, we'll go in depth on some of these solutions.



Public Education and COVID 19

The kids are still in school. Is anyone as surprised as we are that they haven't been sent home yet? We'll explore what Abbotsford School District is doing to keep our kids in school and how they match up with other districts.

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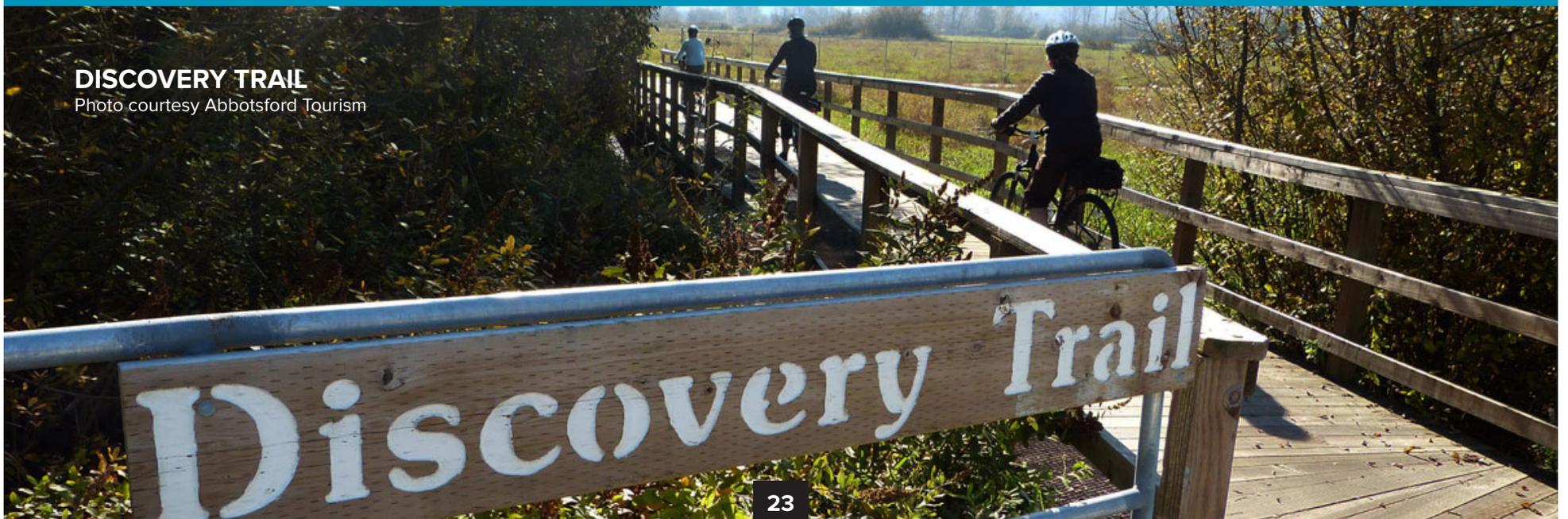
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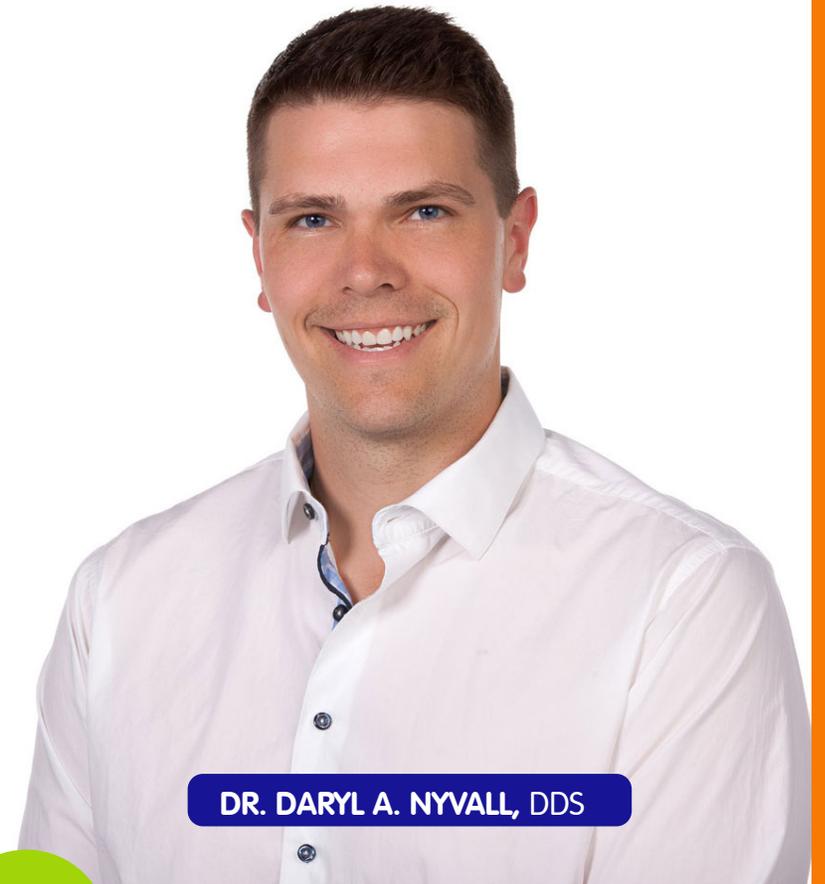
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