



## **Mayors' Council welcomes Provincial partnership to recover and rebuild Metro Vancouver transit and transportation**

**June 26, 2020 (New Westminster, BC)** – The Mayors' Council on Regional Transportation, in a [submission to the BC Budget 2021 Consultation](#), welcomes the Government of B.C.'s commitment to support TransLink to maintain transit as an essential service during the pandemic, and to help TransLink rebuild its ridership and the regional economy after the pandemic ends.

Since the onset of COVID-19, TransLink has taken extraordinary measures to maintain services at normal levels – required to avoid overcrowding – despite mounting costs. With significantly reduced revenues from fares and fuel taxes, TransLink does not have the financial capacity to sustain the current level of service indefinitely.

Losses in 2020 and 2021 are currently projected between \$550 million and \$1.4 billion, depending on the trajectory of the pandemic and economic recovery. The Mayors' Council welcomes the Province's commitment, alongside the federal government and the region, to work with TransLink on a recovery plan to help resolve TransLink's COVID-19 related financial impacts.

“Public transit is critical to keeping our economy functioning, limiting congestion, reducing GHG emissions and ensuring mobility for people who can't afford other alternatives,” said Mayor Jonathan Cote, Chair of the Mayors' Council. “The Premier has been clear in his commitment to ensure transit service will be available to British Columbians as our economy reopens and our communities begin to recover, and that will require working in partnership with us to put TransLink on a more sustainable financial footing – now and into the future.”

In its submission to the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services, the Mayors' Council identifies a number of measures that could form part of the recovery strategy currently being developed by the Province, the Mayors' Council and TransLink. The Mayors' Council also wants to work with the Province on a longer-term rebuilding strategy so that TransLink can continue to play its part in keeping the region moving while the population and economy continue to grow into the future.

The Mayors' Council's recommendations to the Standing Committee focus on three priority actions:

1. That the Province commit, along with the Mayors' Council, to a set of principles for rebuilding regional transit and transportation, which include recognizing that transit is an essential service that requires unprecedented action by all levels of government.
2. Develop a multi-year recovery plan over the next several months, with participation by all levels of government, including the region, the federal government and the Province, to help resolve COVID-19 related financial impacts on TransLink.

3. Develop a *Provincial Rebuilding Strategy for B.C.'s Transit and Transportation Sector* in 2021 to support TransLink's efforts to rebuild transit ridership and provide mobility alternatives to support an economically competitive, sustainable and livable Metro Vancouver region.

"Metro Vancouver's public transit system has continued to perform a vital role in supporting essential functions of people's daily lives and making sure frontline workers can perform the jobs our communities rely on for health and safety," said Mayor Jack Froese, Vice-Chair of the Mayors' Council. "However, the Province must play a key role in working with TransLink to address the financial impacts brought on by this public health crisis. We need to keep working together on a recovery and rebuilding plan so TransLink can help this region and the province weather this crisis and rebuild into the future."

### **About the Mayors' Council on Regional Transportation**

The Mayors' Council is composed of representatives from each of the 21 municipalities within the transportation service region in Metro Vancouver, as well as Electoral Area 'A' and the Tsawwassen First Nation, and collectively represent the viewpoints and interests of the citizens of the region. The Mayors' Council is responsible for appointing the majority of members on the TransLink Board of Directors. It approves transportation plans prepared by TransLink, which deal with transportation service levels, major capital projects, regional funding and borrowing limits.

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