

Mayors' Council calls for federal Congestion Relief Fund

Metro Vancouver mayors launch pre-election campaign to push all federal parties to commit to permanent transportation fund

April 9, 2019 (Vancouver, B.C.) – The Mayors' Council on Regional Transportation released today its [federal election platform](#) that calls on all major national parties to commit to work in partnership with local and provincial leaders to cure congestion in Metro Vancouver. With ridership on transit growing at a North America-leading pace, and another one million more commuters coming over the next 20 years, the Mayors' Council is calling for permanent, sustained federal funding that will enable TransLink to accelerate completion of the current [10-Year Vision](#) and start building the new projects to be identified in the [Regional Transportation Strategy](#) under development.

The federal election platform is part of the Cure Congestion campaign, supported by a range of stakeholders from community, business, health, non-profit and the environment sectors, that asks Metro Vancouver voters to contact their MPs and local candidates to make congestion an issue in the upcoming federal election.

The Mayors' Council is joining municipalities nation-wide through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) in asking all federal parties to commit to creating a permanent, predictable, direct funding mechanism for modern public transit across Canada -- a *Congestion Relief Fund*. This federal fund would sustain the current trend in federal investments in transit infrastructure and, delivered on the basis of ridership, would deliver an estimated \$375 million annually to TransLink, starting in 2028. It would provide the federal funding share necessary to complete the remaining projects in the 10-Year Vision and begin building the new transit projects that will be identified in the update to the 30-Year Regional Transportation Strategy.

Residents support this approach – according to a [recent survey](#) by Mustel Group, twice as many residents would prefer the establishment of a permanent transit fund compared with the current project-based funding approach.

The Mayors' Council is embarking on a public outreach campaign, so residents can learn about the 10-Year Vision and future plans to improve transit, roads and active transportation infrastructure, and connect with their local candidates about the importance of such investments. Residents will be able to access tools to contact their MP and federal election candidates over the course of the campaign, on the Mayors' Council website, www.curecongestion.ca.

Regional stakeholder organizations supporting this campaign include: Better Transit and Transportation Coalition; BC Chamber of Commerce; North Vancouver Chamber of Commerce; BC Alliance for Healthy Living Society; David Suzuki Foundation; United Way of the Lower Mainland and Fraser Valley; University of British Columbia; Simon Fraser University; Kwantlen Student Association; AMS Student Society, UBC; and HUB Cycling.

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Mayors' Council Quotes

“The cure for congestion has never been closer and the region has made real progress in the past few years, thanks to a strong partnership between the federal, provincial and local governments. We need the next federal government to maintain and extend the momentum it has built over the past four years by making a long-term commitment to the transportation infrastructure our region desperately needs,” said Jonathan Cote, Chair of the Mayors' Council and Mayor of New Westminster.

“Our communities have seen the benefits of game-changing investments from successive federal governments that helped make it possible to build rapid transit projects like the Canada Line and Evergreen Line. Now with the 10-Year Vision underway, TransLink - with unprecedented federal and provincial support - is making historic increases to bus, SeaBus and SkyTrain service across the region. We need this progress to continue and so are asking Metro Vancouver voters to join us in making congestion a ‘top of mind’ issue this coming federal election,” said Jack Froese, Vice-Chair of the Mayors' Council and Mayor of Langley Township.

“The Cure Congestion campaign is about more than asking the federal government for money; we need Ottawa to work with local leaders in partnership to keep communities moving. With a Congestion Relief Fund, Metro Vancouver would have the long-term, predictable stream of federal funding that we need to continue making improvements to our transit system and roads, including projects like connecting UBC to Surrey and Langley by SkyTrain, electrifying our bus fleet and building the next generation of transit that we are working to identify now as part of the Regional Transportation Strategy update,” said Kennedy Stewart, Mayor of Vancouver.

“Metro Vancouver consistently ranks as one of the best regions in the world for quality of life, but residents and businesses continue to be frustrated by congestion on our roads and overcrowding on our transit system. We are at a tipping point. The pressures on our transportation system will only increase, so we need all levels of government to continue working together to deliver the expanded rapid transit, bus and Seabus service our region desperately needs,” said Doug McCallum, Mayor of Surrey.

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.