



November 10, 2020

Honourable Chrystia Freeland
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance
and

Honourable Catherine McKenna
Minister of Infrastructure and Communities
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

Sent via e-mail: chrystia.freeland@canada.ca // infcm.infc@canada.ca

Deputy Prime Minister Freeland and Minister McKenna,

I would like to start by thanking the Government of Canada for working with the Province of B.C. to deliver Safe Restart funding to TransLink. This \$644 million in emergency relief funding ensures that we can continue running transit service at the levels our region requires to keep moving safely. This funding also buys us the time we need to work with senior governments on a longer-term solution to ongoing pandemic losses after the current phase of Safe Restart expires next year.

I am writing to ask that the Government of Canada to accelerate the launch of the promised Permanent Transit Fund (PTF) as a contribution to our COVID recovery strategy and to provide a predictable funding source to our long-term transportation plans.

As you may recall, the Mayors' Council welcomed the Liberal Party of Canada's 2019 election commitment to establish a PTF. In our [submission](#) to the 2020-21 federal budget, we joined the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) in calling on the federal government to establish a PTF of \$34 billion between 2028 and 2037. We estimated that such a Fund would deliver \$375 million annually to TransLink.

As a result of the pandemic, we will be aligning the next phase of our expansion strategy with the completion of our updated 30-year regional transportation strategy ([Transport 2050](#)) in late-2022. By then, we want to have in place a broadly supported and funded expansion plan to accommodate a growing population and economy in the region.

In the meantime, we have identified a limited set of achievable and economically, socially and environmentally important objectives:

1. Complete the COVID-19 Rebuilding Strategy to address the projected long-term losses facing TransLink once Safe Restart funding expires in late-2021. This will ensure that transit service continues to support our region's recovery and that ridership is rebuilt as the economy rebounds.

2. Build already approved and funded shovel-ready projects to avoid delay-related cost increases by working with the incoming provincial government to:
 - a. Build the Surrey-Langley SkyTrain as one single project all the way to Langley.
 - b. Deliver our Low Carbon Fleet Strategy as approved prior to the pandemic, so that bus procurement transitions to 100% ZEV starting in 2023 as planned.
3. Complete the project planning needed to support the development of our updated 30-year regional transportation plan to ensure that the next generation of key transit projects are ready to proceed once the region's economy has recovered.

Additional federal funding is needed to support these nearer-term objectives. TransLink's capacity to achieve these objectives on its own is limited given its pandemic-related financial challenges, and that more than 95% of TransLink's allocation of the Investing in Canadian Infrastructure Program (ICIP) has already been directed to current projects. The incoming provincial government committed to these priorities in their election platform and is a ready and willing partner. With a [pandemic recovery MOU](#) in place to govern how we work together on both near-term and longer-term recovery, both TransLink and the province are ready to get started immediately upon the government's swearing-in.

In the longer-term, a Permanent Transit Fund provides us with greater certainty that funding will be available for future projects to be confirmed in our long-term Transport 2050 plan. In the near-term, accelerating the launch of the promised Permanent Transit Fund will provide federal capital funds over the next 4-5 years to support our COVID recovery and match the commitments from the incoming provincial government to these already approved, shovel-ready capital projects:

State of Good Repair projects:

- Refurbishment and upgrades to transit fleet and systems: **\$965M**
- SkyTrain station and bus loop upgrades: **\$550M**

Transit expansion projects

- Surrey-Langley SkyTrain Phase Two (Fleetwood to Langley):¹ **\$1.6B**
- Low Carbon Fleet Strategy (Phase Two):² **\$450M**

Preparing for future growth:

- Project plans and studies to support Transport 2050 planning processes: **\$75M**

Affordable, reliable and accessible public transit is an essential service that is critical to the future of our communities. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, TransLink's ridership was growing faster than anywhere in North America as Metro Vancouver residents increasingly

¹ Phase One from King George Boulevard to Fleetwood is already funded through ICIP, provincial and regional contributions

² Phase One (years 1-3) funded by Gas Tax Fund, and regional contributions

turned to transit as a convenient, affordable and lower-emissions alternative to single occupancy vehicles. Our region has a track record as one which integrates land use and transportation planning decisions, follows a long-term, region-wide integrated transportation strategy that maximizes its investments and drives ridership growth, and delivers projects on time and on budget. In partnership with the Provincial and Federal governments, we have made significant progress in delivering the smart, sustained investments in transportation that our region has needed to support growth and limit GHG emissions.

Although the pandemic has reduced TransLink's ridership and revenues, this setback is temporary, and we must continue looking to the future knowing that transit will remain a critical component of our region's economy and quality of life. Continued long-term, predictable federal partnership is a key piece to our path ahead.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'J' followed by a horizontal line that tapers to the right.

Mayor Jonathan X. Côté
Chair

cc: Minister Selina Robinson, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and Minister
Responsible for TransLink
Members of the Mayors' Council and TransLink Board
Councillor Garth Frizzell, President, Federation of Canadian Municipalities
Marco D'Angelo, President & CEO, Canadian Urban Transit Association