



October 7, 2020

Andrew Wilkinson, Leader  
B.C. Liberal Party  
PO Box 28131 West Pender St PO,  
Vancouver, BC V6C3T7

Sent via e-mail: [andrew.wilkinson@bcliberals.com](mailto:andrew.wilkinson@bcliberals.com) // [contact@bcliberals.com](mailto:contact@bcliberals.com)

Dear Mr. Wilkinson:

On behalf of the Mayors' Council on Regional Transportation, I am writing to share our priorities for working in partnership with the next Government of British Columbia and to seek your party's commitment to investing in public transit in Metro Vancouver as we confront the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and as our economy moves towards recovery.

In this provincial election, the Mayors' Council is seeking commitments from all parties to build upon the transit recovery planning already underway and to ensure TransLink is in a position to deliver the additional service that will be needed to support our growing population in the coming decades. In the first two weeks of this election campaign, we have seen parties recognize the importance of investing in transit and we welcome the policy commitments included in party platforms to date.

When Metro Vancouver residents cast their ballots in the B.C. general election on October 24<sup>th</sup>, we believe they need to know what each of the provincial parties will do to support the recovery and resiliency of our transit system, and their plans to keep our region moving. We invite the BC Liberal Party to respond to the questions included below, and we will share these with Mayors' Council members and with the public on our website, [mayorscouncil.ca](http://mayorscouncil.ca).

### **Background**

The Mayors' Council is the collective voice of Metro Vancouver residents on transit and transportation. Our members include representatives from each of the 21 municipalities in TransLink's service area, as well as the Tsawwassen First Nation and Electoral Area 'A'. We are responsible for approving TransLink's transportation plans, identifying local funding and working with other levels of government to make those plans a reality.

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## COVID Recovery and Rebuilding

Although the pandemic has cut 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. The fundamentals of our region have not changed: transit demand will return, and continued transit expansion, like the Surrey-Langley SkyTrain, will be required to serve a growing population.

For TransLink to continue delivering the services and mobility Metro Vancouver will need as our economy recovers, the region will need the support of the Provincial Government more than ever before. The first step toward recovery is underway now, with the federal-provincial Safe Restart funding agreement addressing TransLink's pandemic-related financial losses in 2020 and 2021. The next step will be to finalize the COVID-19 Rebuilding Strategy to address the projected long-term losses still facing TransLink once the Safe Restart funding expires in late 2021. This strategy will ensure service levels are maintained throughout the pandemic, ridership can be quickly rebuilt and that TransLink's existing, regressive revenue sources like transit fares and property taxes are not unfairly burdened.

The strategy must also enable TransLink to continue planning for transit expansion, active transportation and new mobility concepts so the next generation of projects are ready to proceed once the region's economy has recovered. Continued expansion of transit services will be needed to ensure Metro Vancouver's post-pandemic economy will remain competitive with cities across North America and around the world, and the region's GHG emissions from transportation meet national and global reduction targets.

## Completing the Phase Two Plan of the 10-Year Vision

If it were not for COVID-19, TransLink would be getting ready to implement the final projects in the Phase Two Plan of the 10-Year Vision. It is critical that the next Provincial Government work with the Mayors' Council to ensure that our shovel-ready projects – such as the Surrey-Langley SkyTrain project and the next stages of the Low-Carbon Fleet Strategy – are not delayed.

A total of \$500 million has already been committed by the Federal Government to extend SkyTrain from King George Station to 166 Street in Fleetwood. It is imperative that we move forward with this project to serve one of the fastest growing communities in our region, and not walk away from this 40% federal contribution. With TransLink resources currently focused on maintaining service during the pandemic, the next Provincial Government will need to work with TransLink to finalize the funding for the project costs in order to move the extension forward to procurement as soon as possible.

We can't afford to delay the Surrey-Langley SkyTrain project and the long-term benefits it will bring, including:

- 3,000 direct jobs annually during project construction in just Stage 1 to Fleetwood. Once in operation, the value of enhanced economic productivity over the life of the project is estimated at \$255 million.
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- Stage 1 of the project alone is forecasted to serve 62,000 average weekday boardings in 2035. Nearly 20,000 person-trips will be made by transit that would otherwise take place by car, increasing the sustainable mode share in the South of Fraser region by 1 percentage point.

By working with the Mayors' Council and Federal Government to put the Phase Two Plan of the 10-Year Vision back on track, the Province can ensure this critical infrastructure is delivered for South of Fraser communities and to support regional connectivity across Metro Vancouver.

### **Modernizing TransLink's governance model**

Under the *South Coast British Columbia Transportation Authority Act*, TransLink has a governance structure that includes the Mayors' Council on Regional Transportation and an independent Board of Directors. In 2016, the Mayors' Council asked the Provincial Government to put TransLink decision-making back in the hands of local governments who are directly accountable to Metro Vancouver voters. In the 2017 election, the BC NDP committed to work with the mayors to develop a new governance model. The previous government removed the referendum requirement – a positive step – but more is needed. With the current structure in place since 2008, it is time to update this model to ensure the governance of TransLink is responsive to the local communities it serves.

### **Commitments needed from the next Provincial Government**

The Mayors' Council is asking all parties to respond to the following questions:

1. Do you agree that public transit is an essential service, and that continued investment in transit service is necessary to support economic recovery, to ensure equitable access to transportation for all citizens, to limit road congestion, and to reduce GHG emissions associated with single-occupancy vehicles?
2. Will you work with the Mayors' Council and TransLink to complete the COVID-19 Rebuilding Strategy to address the projected long-term losses facing TransLink once the recently announced Safe Restart funding expires in late-2021? This strategy will ensure service levels are maintained throughout the pandemic, ridership can be quickly rebuilt and that TransLink's existing, regressive revenue sources like transit fares and property taxes are not unfairly burdened.
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4. Will you ensure that the project studies and planning processes needed to support the Transport 2050 planning process are not paused due to the pandemic so that the next generation of transit projects are ready to proceed once the region's economy has recovered, making way for a quick return to the post-pandemic transit expansion our cities need in order to maintain competitiveness?
5. Do you support working with the Mayors' Council to review and improve the TransLink governance model?

**Let's keep Metro Vancouver moving**

There is a lot at stake in this election. Metro Vancouver's public transit system continues 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. The next Provincial Government must play a key role in working with TransLink to address the financial impacts brought on by the COVID-19 crisis and ensuring the region's transportation system is ready to support future economic recovery and a return to growth.

As mayors and community leaders responsible for setting priorities for what the region needs from the transit and transportation system, we are asking political parties aspiring to form the next Provincial Government to clarify their commitments to public transit. Please submit your response to the above questions to Mike Buda, Executive Director of the Mayors' Council, at [mayorscouncil@translink.ca](mailto:mayorscouncil@translink.ca) by Friday, October 16 at 12 noon.

Thank you for your consideration, and we look forward to hearing back from you soon.

Sincerely,



Mayor Jonathan X. Cote  
Chair

**cc:** Members of the Mayors' Council

October 7, 2020

Sonia Furstenau, Leader  
B.C. Green Party  
PO Box 8088 STN Central  
Victoria, BC V8W 3R7

Sent via e-mail: [votefurstenau@bcgreens.ca](mailto:votefurstenau@bcgreens.ca) // [info@bcgreens.ca](mailto:info@bcgreens.ca)

Dear Ms. Furstenau:

On behalf of the Mayors' Council on Regional Transportation, I am writing to share our priorities for working in partnership with the next Government of British Columbia and to seek your party's commitment to investing in public transit in Metro Vancouver as we confront the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and as our economy moves towards recovery.

In this provincial election, the Mayors' Council is seeking commitments from all parties to build upon the transit recovery planning already underway and to ensure TransLink is in a position to deliver the additional service that will be needed to support our growing population in the coming decades. In the first two weeks of this election campaign, we have seen parties recognize the importance of investing in transit and we welcome the policy commitments included in party platforms to date.

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The strategy must also enable TransLink to continue planning for transit expansion, active transportation and new mobility concepts so the next generation of projects are ready to proceed once the region's economy has recovered. Continued expansion of transit services will be needed to ensure Metro Vancouver's post-pandemic economy will remain competitive with cities across North America and around the world, and the region's GHG emissions from transportation meet national and global reduction targets.

## Completing the Phase Two Plan of the 10-Year Vision

If it were not for COVID-19, TransLink would be getting ready to implement the final projects in the Phase Two Plan of the 10-Year Vision. It is critical that the next Provincial Government work with the Mayors' Council to ensure that our shovel-ready projects – such as the Surrey-Langley SkyTrain project and the next stages of the Low-Carbon Fleet Strategy – are not delayed.

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We can't afford to delay the Surrey-Langley SkyTrain project and the long-term benefits it will bring, including:

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- Stage 1 of the project alone is forecasted to serve 62,000 average weekday boardings in 2035. Nearly 20,000 person-trips will be made by transit that would otherwise take place by car, increasing the sustainable mode share in the South of Fraser region by 1 percentage point.

By working with the Mayors' Council and Federal Government to put the Phase Two Plan of the 10-Year Vision back on track, the Province can ensure this critical infrastructure is delivered for South of Fraser communities and to support regional connectivity across Metro Vancouver.

### **Modernizing TransLink's governance model**

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### **Commitments needed from the next Provincial Government**

The Mayors' Council is asking all parties to respond to the following questions:

1. Do you agree that public transit is an essential service, and that continued investment in transit service is necessary to support economic recovery, to ensure equitable access to transportation for all citizens, to limit road congestion, and to reduce GHG emissions associated with single-occupancy vehicles?
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4. Will you ensure that the project studies and planning processes needed to support the Transport 2050 planning process are not paused due to the pandemic so that the next generation of transit projects are ready to proceed once the region's economy has recovered, making way for a quick return to the post-pandemic transit expansion our cities need in order to maintain competitiveness?
5. Do you support working with the Mayors' Council to review and improve the TransLink governance model?

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There is a lot at stake in this election. Metro Vancouver's public transit system continues 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. The next Provincial Government must play a key role in working with TransLink to address the financial impacts brought on by the COVID-19 crisis and ensuring the region's transportation system is ready to support future economic recovery and a return to growth.

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Sincerely,



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Chair

cc: Members of the Mayors' Council



October 7, 2020

Premier John Horgan, Leader  
B.C. New Democratic Party  
#320 - 34 West 7th Ave  
Vancouver, BC V5Y 1L6

Sent via e-mail: [langfordjuandefuca@bcndp.ca](mailto:langfordjuandefuca@bcndp.ca) // [contact@bcndp.ca](mailto:contact@bcndp.ca)

Dear Premier Horgan:

On behalf of the Mayors' Council on Regional Transportation, I am writing to share our priorities for working in partnership with the next Government of British Columbia and to seek your party's commitment to investing in public transit in Metro Vancouver as we confront the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and as our economy moves towards recovery.

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