

Signing of Bi-Lateral Agreement on Public Transit Infrastructure

Funding – Key Messages

ANNOUNCEMENT:

- Today, B.C. is the first province to sign this historic funding agreement with the federal government – demonstrating again the province’s commitment to the economy, to transit, and to the environment.
- Our strong economy and prudent fiscal management has allowed B.C. to make this commitment and invest in projects that will benefit British Columbians in every region.
- B.C. will invest over \$300 million over the next three years for important transit and infrastructure projects in communities right across the province – leveraging nearly a billion dollars of investments.
- We will move forward immediately with projects like purchase of new SkyTrain and West Coast Express vehicles, a new SeaBus, and transit exchange improvements in the TransLink service region; and the purchase of new buses, technology improvements, and investments in Compressed Natural Gas technology, which burns cleaner and more cheaply, in the rest of B.C., with more exciting projects to come.

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY:

- Province of British Columbia is firmly committed to investments in transit, and to the creation of sustainable, affordable, accessible and livable, environmentally friendly communities for future generations.

MAYORS’ VISION:

- With a mutual commitment to Phase One investments, we are taking a critical step forward in realizing the Mayors’ Vision, and we are setting the stage to advance discussions respecting Phase Two transit investments and the funding commitments needed by all levels of government to support them.

PROVINCIAL CONTRIBUTION TO METRO TRANSIT:

- The Government of B.C. is committing \$246 million over the next three years to transit improvements in Metro Vancouver.
- This amounts to one-third of funding, which will be used to leverage the \$370 million, one-half cost-share commitment made by the Government of Canada as part of “phase one” of their infrastructure plan.

- Previously, we have always been committed to funding one-third of the cost of new rapid transit projects.
- This commitment is clearly laid out in the provincial transportation plan 'BC on the Move'
- On May 26th, we announced this new funding for immediate transit investments for the phase 1 expansion of regional transportation in Metro Vancouver; this will benefit the entire region.

PROVINCIAL CONTRIBUTION TO BC TRANSIT COMMUNITIES:

- The Government of B.C. is providing \$110 million over the next three years to BC Transit investments in communities outside metro Vancouver.
- This funding (33%), will be used to leverage the \$90 million, one half cost-share commitment made by the Government of Canada as part of "phase one" of their infrastructure plan.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Signing of provincial-federal agreement on Public Transit Infrastructure Fund

*Advice to Minister of Community, Sport and Cultural Development and
Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure*

Q1: What are you announcing today?

- Today, B.C. is the first province to sign an agreement with the federal government for phase one of the new Public Transit Infrastructure Fund.
- The Canada-British Columbia Provincial Transit Infrastructure Funding Agreement will provide \$774.3 million in federal and provincial dollars towards expanding and updating transit across British Columbia.
- This includes \$460.5 million in federal funds and \$313.8 million in provincial funding over the next three years.
- Federal transit funding will be allocated between TransLink (Lower Mainland) and BC Transit opportunities with \$370.5 million going to TransLink and the remaining \$90 million going to BC Transit.
- Provincial funding includes \$246 million for Metro Vancouver and \$67.8 million for BC Transit.
- Including local government contributions, total investment in transit for phase one of the Public Transit Infrastructure Fund will reach \$921 million.

Q2: What will the funding be used for?

- The PTIF will primarily support investments that meet immediate transit priorities outlined by Canada including: projects to repair and upgrade public transit, that support system optimization and efficiency, increase asset management capacity, and design and planning for future expansion of public transit systems.
- For example, in Metro Vancouver the funding will go towards the purchase of additional SkyTrain Cars, a West Coast Express locomotive, a new SeaBus, and upgrades to bus exchanges and SkyTrain stations.
- Design and planning for Rapid Transit South of Fraser and the Millennium Line Extension along Broadway will also be supported.
- In other parts of the province, we anticipate funding will go towards investments such as new transit depots and facility upgrades, the purchase of new cleaner burning buses, CNG enabled maintenance and operations facilities, transit technology, transit expansion such as handyDART and others.

Q3: Now that the agreement is signed, what happens?

- Many of these projects across British Columbia are ready to go, and will progress through the summer months and into the fall.
- Specific projects will be announced at a later date as they go to tender and construction starts.

Q4: When will projects get underway?

- Many of these projects across British Columbia are ready to go, and will progress through the summer months and the next three years.

Q5: How is funding allocated to each community?

- Transit in B.C. is unique in that we have two transit agencies providing all public transit services for the entire province. Funding is allocated between these two agencies, with \$370.5 million going to Translink and the remaining \$90 million going to BC Transit.
- The Mayor's Vision will guide investments in Metro Vancouver and BC Transit will work with its local government partners to advance key transit infrastructure projects outside Metro Vancouver.

Q6: How will British Columbians benefit?

- These investments in transit infrastructure will improve the safety, efficiency, and reliability of transit systems in cities and towns across B.C.
- Expansion and improvement of transit systems will help people get where they need to go in their communities, and create options for people to use alternate forms of transportation.

Q7: Are the Metro Region Mayors on board with this announcement?

- These projects have been identified with the Mayors' Council and TransLink to ensure the most benefit for transit users across the Metro Region.

Q8: How will Metro Region Mayors pay for their 17% share of Phase One?

- We understand that from their existing revenues sources, as well as other new sources within their control, they can cover the 17% share of Phase One.

Q9: Won't they be short on operational funding in later years of the plan?

- We recognize that Phase One projects will have financial implications for TransLink which may require additional revenue to support the later years of its ten year Investment Plan.

Q10: Are you talking with the Mayors about changes to the current TransLink governance model, as they have requested?

- At this time, we are focused on seizing the opportunity presented to us by the federal government, and ensuring that important transit improvement projects get underway as soon as possible.
- I believe the Mayors still need to work with the new authorities they have following the considerable changes the BC government made to TransLink governance in the spring of 2014.
- With the changes we made, the Mayors' Council has clear oversight of long-term planning and transportation priority setting, as well as its 10-year Investment Plans.
- I'm pleased that the chair and vice-chair of the Mayors' Council now participate on TransLink's Board and help guide its decisions.

Q11: There appear to be a lot of projects for the Lower Mainland but what about for the rest of B.C.?

- The agreement means the communities outside of the Lower Mainland will receive over \$180 million in new funding for transit capital projects. This is a significant amount of money and will address a number of very important capital priorities.
- The federal funding program allocated the funding to provinces based on ridership, which is higher in Metro Vancouver than the rest of the province – but that hasn't stopped us from working hard with all our partners.
- The Province of British Columbia is firmly committed to investments in transit, and to supporting the creation of sustainable affordable, accessible and liveable communities across B.C.
- BC Transit has a partnership relationship with local governments across the province and will be working closely with them to confirm priority infrastructure projects for this phase of funding.

Q12: What about "phase two" of federal funding and the rest of the Mayors' Vision?

Q&A – INSERT DATE

Advice to Minister

- The funding envelope and eligibility criteria have not yet been determined for federal Phase Two funding.
- We are engaged in active discussions with the Government of Canada and expect to have more information on Phase Two in the coming months.
- Our goal is to maximize federal investments in British Columbia in Phase Two.
- With a mutual commitment to Phase One investments, we take a critical step forward in realizing the Mayors' Vision, and we set the stage to advance discussions respecting Phase Two transit investments and the funding commitments needed by all levels of government to support them.

Q13: Is there a list of projects and what's on this list?

- The list of projects in Metro Vancouver has been finalized, in collaboration with TransLink and the Mayors' Council.
- The list of projects in the rest of B.C. will be subject to local government funding commitments, and will be announced at a later date.

Q14: What are Phase One projects?

- Phase One projects include the purchase of new SkyTrain and West Coast Express vehicles, a new SeaBus, and transit exchange improvements in the TransLink service region; and the purchase of new buses, including handyDART vehicles, technology improvements, investments in transit operating facilities, and Compressed Natural Gas technology, which burns cleaner and more cheaply, in the rest of B.C.

Q15: What are Phase Two projects?

- Phase Two of the PTIF will include major capital expenditures outlined in the Mayors' Vision, such as building on phase one investments to complete the extension of the Millennium Line along Broadway, and to build new rapid transit South of Fraser.
- These discussions are currently underway with the federal government, to determine the funding envelope, criteria, and cost-share provisions. Details are expected to be finalized in the coming months.

- BC Transit services will also be eligible for Phase Two funding. We will continue to work with the federal government to secure federal funding for future phases of transit services.

BC Transit specific questions:

Q16: How much funding is going to BC Transit?

- Of the \$460M going to British Columbia for public transit investments over the next three years, \$90M is going to BC Transit.

Q17: How will BC Transit allocate the funding?

- BC Transit manages transit service for communities across the province and has a strong working relationship with local government. Capital projects are outlined in local government's transit future plans.
- BC Transit regularly identifies capital funding and priority infrastructure projects with each local government on an ongoing basis.
- With the signing of this this agreement, BC Transit will begin meeting with local governments to secure their contributions for key transit infrastructure priorities in BC Transit-served communities across the province.
- In the past, local governments would have had to pay over 50% of the costs for capital upgrades. With the province and federal government share now being 83%, we anticipate that the communities will be fully supportive of these new capital projects.
- The province, federal government, BC Transit and local governments will announce the specific details of each project.

Q18: Will this funding be invested in community X (specific regional communities)?

- Every community served by BC Transit should see some benefit for this funding – whether it's through new buses or with new technology.
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83%, we anticipate that the communities will be fully supportive of these new capital projects.

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Q19: What types of BC Transit projects are you prioritizing?

- New infrastructure:
 - BC Transit will invest in new bus depots, maintenance yards and operations facilities, as well as in new CNG fuelling, stations in communities across the province.
- New buses:
 - BC Transit will work with local communities to invest in new and more efficient buses, including cleaner burning CNG-fueled and handyDART buses.
 - New buses will go to communities where the fleet is reaching their end of service-life – saving local communities in fuel and maintenance costs.
- New Technologies:
 - A portion of the money is earmarked for new technologies to make the fleet safer for drivers and passengers and to give BC Transit and local communities ridership information that will make them become even more efficient.
 - The new technologies will also make riding transit more convenient for the many British Columbians who use these services every day.

Q20: Will there be two phases of funding for BC Transit projects?

- Yes. The nearly \$160 million announced today is only the first phase of funding for BC Transit services.
- We will continue to work with the federal government to secure federal funding for future phases of transit services.

Q21: Will you approve Victoria Transit Commission's request to increase the gas tax to pay for priorities?

- Government recognizes the Victoria Regional Transit Commission's interests in providing transit service in the most viable way possible.
- The province has shown a strong commitment to fund transit across the province. We have increased our funding by nearly 50% over the last eight years and are adding nearly \$13 million in the next three years.
- And today we are announcing a joint agreement with the federal government to invest even more funding in BC Transit services.

Q&A – INSERT DATE

Advice to Minister

- I appreciate the work that Victoria Regional Transit Committee has done over the last few months to engage with the many municipalities in Greater Victoria on the gas tax.
- I met with the chair of the committee, Susan Brice, and she provided the results of her work and the feedback she's received from the local governments.
- We will look at the information she's provided, and will discuss with the Ministry of Finance, once VRTC has had an opportunity to meet with him.
- We will continue discussions with the Victoria Regional Transit Commission on how to best fund local transit.

Q22: Why didn't you need to get regional government approval for BC Transit funding before announcing this today?

- In Metro Vancouver, the mayors' council represents the larger metro area and has already identified and endorsed the projects and their share of the costs.
- BC Transit's long term capital plan has identified infrastructure priorities in communities served by BC Transit. Local governments need to obtain final approval of their contribution through their municipal budgeting process.
- In the past, local governments would have been responsible for over 50% of new capital projects.
- With the province and federal government share being 83% of the projects compared to the traditional 53%, we anticipate that the communities will be fully supportive of these new capital projects.
- Municipalities needed to know that funding was on the table

Q23: The bilateral agreement talks about incremental funding... what is that and are these projects incremental?

- Incremental funding means that the new funding is going to be invested in new projects that would not have gone forward today if we had not reached this agreement to add new federal or provincial dollars.
- However, the federal funding allowed us to bring more money to the table to invest in these new services, technologies and infrastructure today.

Q24: So do you mean that you would not have invested in the new technology or new buses without federal dollars?

- In the long term, we would have likely found funding for these important services.
- The federal funding allowed us to leverage our available dollars to move forward and invest in these new services, technologies and infrastructure today.

