

## **THE CURE TO CONGESTION – THE NEED FOR RELIABLE TRANSPORTATION FUNDING**

### **Opening Statement**

Efficient transportation and quality education are the foundations of economic growth and business innovation. Without either, Canada will not be able to thrive in a globally competitive free market. The unreliability of transportation funding, increasing population, and congestion will lead to lower economic growth and stall economic growth.

### **Background**

Over one million new commuters are coming to the Lower Mainland region over the next 20 years. Investing in better, planned, sustainable funded transit and transportation infrastructure is key to reducing congestion, making life more affordable for Metro Vancouver residents, reducing impact on the environment, helping the province of British Columbia as a whole. The Metro Vancouver region is leading ridership growth in North America with more than a 20% increase in the number of people taking transit over the last three years.

The BC Government hopes to reduce the reliance on carbon-creating vehicles. Unfortunately having the same number of cars on the road that are electric will not be of great benefit to the business community (in fact, because operating costs for ZEVs are up to 70% lower than ICE vehicles, electrification of the private vehicle fleet may worsen congestion as people drive more). We need to ensure that our transportation infrastructure has adequate, long-term funding to keep up with population growth and innovations.

The Mayors' Council has advocated for a permanent federal transit fund – starting in 2027 – to help meet demand in the future. We can't wait another seven years to take the next steps in expanding Metro Vancouver's transit system. That's why the Mayors' Council is asking the federal government to make an immediate commitment to help us accelerate completion of the final phase of the 10-Year Vision.

The Mayors' Council is asking the federal government to renew its partnership with B.C. and regional leaders to quickly allocate funding to expedite completion of the 10-Year Vision and maintain the momentum on nation-leading transit expansion and ridership growth. Just by completing the 10-Year Vision<sup>1</sup>, road congestion can be reduced by up to 20 percent and save commuters as much as 30 minutes on their daily travels.

In order to understand the needs of a region, the Transport 2050 planning process should be supported regardless of political changes. This study will look at population patterns, public policy initiatives underway or planned, fiscal responsibilities, and other variables. Once the study is complete, it is assumed that the need for annual and long-term funding would become apparent.

A concerted effort with adequate levels of funding from the Federal Government will provide benefits to the region for generations. Half-measures and planning that changes with a change of government will only hurt our business community.

THE CHAMBER RECOMMENDS

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1 <https://tenyearvision.translink.ca/>

That the Federal Government:

1. In coordination with the Provincial Government, support the Transport 2050 planning process which integrate municipal and regional economic and populations growth plans into a long-term, region-wide regional transportation plan designed to reduce congestion, improve mobility, environment and quality of life and support a competitive economy over the next 30 years;
2. Establish a permanent Federal Congestion Relief Fund that provides:
  - a. Reliable, predictable funding over a minimum 10-year term; and
  - b. Funding for a study of the best technology implementation to relieve congestion.

**Submitted by the Surrey Board of Trade**