

BUILDING SUCCESS: FEDERAL TRANSIT INVESTMENTS ACROSS CANADA



Lethbridge Transit

Lethbridge Transit is one of the many small transit systems that are modernizing and expanding their fleets with the help of federal funding

Canadian transit systems are celebrating a renewed partnership with all levels of government—municipal, provincial and federal. Leadership and financial commitments by the Government of Canada have been especially important role in motivating complementary investments by provinces and municipalities. They have also raised the public profile of transit, and confirmed its vital role in preserving and enhancing Canada's quality of life.

This surge of support for transit reaches back to 2002, when federal infrastructure programs announced a number of major transit investments. Those programs have now evolved to include the Canada Strategic Infrastructure Fund, the Highways and Border Infrastructure Fund, and the Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund.

In 2005, the federal government launched the New Deal for Cities and Communities—a commitment to transfer billions of dollars in gas tax revenues for environmentally sustainable municipal infrastructure, including transit. Through the federal Gas Tax Fund, those revenues are now helping to build transit infrastructure wherever provinces and cities have made it their priority.

¹ Canadian Urban Transit Association, *Transit Infrastructure Needs for the Period 2006-2010*, 2006 (available at www.cutaactu.ca)

In both 2005 and 2006, short-term funds were approved to support transit capital investments by the federal government. The Public Transit Fund and Public Transit Capital Trust will channel \$1.3 billion to local transit systems through provinces and territories, for use in expanding or renewing rapid transit lines, transit stations, rolling stock and transit technologies.

Other federal initiatives are also enabling the success of Canada's transit systems. The Transit-Secure Program will contribute \$80 million over two years to enhance critical security in passenger rail and urban transit security operations. The \$40-million Urban Transportation Showcase Program supports multimodal demonstration projects, with six transit-supportive showcases underway. The Green Municipal Fund, a \$550-million federal endowment through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, has supported a number of transit projects. Finally, the new tax credit for transit passes represents another form of federal government support for transit systems.

Despite these advances, critical needs persist. Canadian transit systems report the need for \$20.7 billion to fund infrastructure expansion, replacement and renewal needs over 2006-2010.¹ The ability of transit systems to meet increasing demands is at risk. With national transit ridership on the rise—growing more than 10% from 2001 to 2005—there is a clear need for greater investment.

This issue paper highlights some of the many ways in which federal funding is making a difference to Canadian transit systems. Still, Canada remains the only OECD nation without a federal policy of predictable long-term support for transit. This situation can only be remedied through a permanent Government of Canada program to invest directly transit operations, infrastructure expansion and renewal.

Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island

Historic city launches its first transit service

In May 2005, Charlottetown announced the creation of a public transit system through a ten-year partnership with a local company. The following year, agreements were reached to transfer \$1.95 million of federal gas taxes to the city for the acquisition of five new trolley-style buses, passenger shelters and signage.

In its first full year of operation, Charlottetown Transit's ridership exceeded 100,000 passengers—40% higher than projected. Charlottetown expects the new system will enhance local tourism, attract more post-secondary students, offer affordable and accessible transportation to senior, and give all residents a new way to reduce air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.



City of Charlottetown

Saint John, New Brunswick

Express service brings transit to the suburbs

With federal government support through the Public Transit Capital Trust, Saint John Transit will implement the Commuter Express (Comex) bus rapid transit service by fall 2007. For the first time, residents of several adjacent suburbs will be able to take transit into town.



Saint John Transit

Halifax, Nova Scotia

MetroLink showcases federal partnership

In partnership with Transport Canada's Urban Transportation Showcase Program, Halifax Regional Municipality has implemented a new premium transit service.

MetroLink is a limited-stop service with transit priority lanes and signals in two major corridors extending from downtown to Sackville and Portland Hills. Twenty new low-floor buses were acquired with air conditioning, upholstered seats, bike racks and other amenities. Two new transit terminals with free Park & Ride lots were also constructed—both were filled within weeks of opening, and have since been expanded.

Key project goals have been met or exceeded, with new transit riders making up 24% of passengers in the Portland Hills corridor and 28% of passengers in the Sackville corridor. MetroLink has also won several awards, including a Canadian Public Relations Society Award for the launch and branding campaign.



Halifax Regional Municipality

Greater Moncton, New Brunswick

New buses spark transit system renewal

Codiac Transit has purchased four new air-conditioned, low-floor buses with the help of federal infrastructure funds. The buses, expected to arrive as part of a larger order in June 2007, will enable the addition of four new transit routes in the area's main travel corridors. This change is just the start of a major route restructuring that will improve service throughout the community.



City of Moncton

Fredericton, New Brunswick

Fleet renewal keeps Fredericton on the move

Fredericton Transit will receive \$1.9 million from the federal Public Transit Fund to enable the acquisition of 15 new low-floor buses, including one for specialized transit service. The purchase will reduce the average age of the city's bus fleet from nearly 16 years to 10 years.



City of Fredericton

Greater Montreal, Quebec

Park-and-ride project brings carpoolers to transit

With \$365,000 from Transport Canada's Strategic Highway Infrastructure Program, the Agence métropolitaine de transport (AMT) has demonstrated an innovative approach to modal integration by implementing reserved spaces for carpool vehicles at its park-and-ride lots.

The project promotes transit use and also encourages carpooling as an alternative to single-occupant vehicle commuting. The value of a reserved parking space as an incentive is demonstrated by the fact that most of the AMT's park-and-ride lots are more than 90% full on a regular basis.



Agence métropolitaine de transport

Greater Montreal, Quebec

Modernizing Montreal's Metro and specialized transit service

Since 2001, the Société de transport de Montréal (STM) has received federal support for three vital projects. First, federal infrastructure funds have covered one-third of the cost of an ambitious \$311 million program to modernize Montreal's Metro system. Projects to enhance safety and reliability of the Metro, which opened in 1966, have included a new control centre and escalators, and upgraded communication systems and power systems.

The federal Transit-Secure program has also committed over \$11 million to help the STM improve the Metro's vital security systems. Projects will include access control, image analysis, risk evaluation, security planning, and employee and public education.

Finally, in 2003 the agency implemented an advanced scheduling system for specialized transit to replace an older system that was unable to keep up with growing demand. It received \$2.7 million in federal infrastructure financing and additional funds from the province. Between 2003 and 2006, the new system enabled a 35% increase in passenger volumes, a 10% reduction in cost per trip, and greater customer satisfaction.



Société de transport de Montréal

Toronto, Ontario

Rapid transit networks grow in Toronto

The Toronto Transit Commission is undertaking a number of vital projects with financial contributions from the Canadian Strategic Infrastructure Fund, Province of Ontario and City of Toronto:

- Streetcar tracks on St. Clair Avenue and Fleet Street
- Bus rapid transit facilities from Downsview Station on the Spadina Subway line to York University, and on Yonge Street from Finch Avenue to Steeles Avenue
- The acquisition of 78 subway cars and 222 diesel-electric hybrid buses



Toronto Transit Commission

Hamilton, Ontario

Hamilton acquires its first hybrid buses

An allocation of \$6 million from the Gas Tax Fund let the City of Hamilton buy 12 diesel-electric hybrid buses (five standard and seven articulated) in 2006–2007. This purchase would otherwise not have been possible due to reserve funding constraints.

The articulated buses will be used to increase capacity on the BeeLine express serving McMaster University as part of Hamilton Street Railway's emerging bus rapid transit system. Residents were invited to design a distinctive paint scheme for the seven articulated hybrid buses, and the winning design by local artist David Kuruc was selected from 51 entries



City of Hamilton/David Kuruc

Niagara Region, Ontario

New specialized transit service bridges the gap

With assistance from the federal Gas Tax Fund, Niagara Region introduced Niagara Specialized Transit in late 2006. This new inter-municipal service bridges the Region's five local transit systems to help eligible residents travel between municipalities or to Hamilton for medical appointments. Driving factors included the consolidation of health services and the limited access of individuals to regional employment, education, shopping, social and recreational opportunities. Federal funds were used to purchase five lift-equipped buses operated by Red Cross Niagara. More than 300 applications were received in the first two months of the new service.



Niagara Region

Greater Toronto, Ontario

GO Transit focuses on commuter rail improvements

The eight-year, \$1 billion GO Transit Rail Improvement Program is supported by the Canada Strategic Infrastructure Fund as well as provincial and local governments. It will enable the extension of GO Transit commuter rail service around the GTA to support quality of life, economic growth and environmental objectives.

The program's 12 projects focus on improving rail infrastructure capacity, including:

- Adding or upgrading track and structures on the existing GO Transit rail network
- Extending rail service to Barrie
- Upgrading stations with platform extensions, tunnels and accessibility improvements
- Replacing Union Station's train control system
- Building rail-rail and rail-road grade separations
- Adding or upgrading train storage sites

All projects are expected to be underway or complete by the end of 2007.



GO Transit

St. Catharines, Ontario

Keeping an eye on transit in St. Catharines

With assistance from the federal Gas Tax Fund, St. Catharines Transit is installing a video surveillance system on its fleet of 60 conventional buses.



St. Catharines Transit

Windsor, Ontario

Public-private partnership builds a new terminal

Transit Windsor is redeveloping its downtown transit terminal through a partnership involving federal, provincial and local governments and Greyhound Canada. The federal Gas Tax Fund was essential to covering the project's total cost of \$7.2 million. The new terminal, scheduled to open in mid-2007, will have 12 platforms for Transit Windsor and four for Greyhound.



Transit Windsor

York Region, Ontario

Viva gives transit a big boost in York

With funding from the Canadian Strategic Infrastructure Fund, York Region Transit launched the Viva bus rapid transit service in September 2005 through an innovative public-private partnership. A year later, the system's transit ridership had increased by more than 30%.

The first phase of Viva uses queue jump lanes and transit signal priority strategies to provide fast, comfortable transit service. Fully accessible vehicles feature air-ride suspension, high-back seats and onboard television, while real-time electronic displays at stations show passengers when future arrivals are due. The project received the prestigious American Public Transportation Association Innovation Award.

Viva is serving as a catalyst for transit-oriented development and the creation of new "transit villages" across York Region, with new developments underway along the system.



York Region Rapid Transit Corporation

Region of Waterloo, Ontario

iXpress helps build transit ridership

As part of Transport Canada's Urban Transportation Showcase Program, the Region of Waterloo launched iXpress in September 2005. By the end of its first year, the fast, limited-stop bus route carried 4,700 riders each day, helping Grand River Transit achieve the second-highest rate of ridership growth in the country.

The iXpress travels a direct route that links universities, downtowns and shopping centres in Waterloo and Cambridge. The service includes transit priority measures and improved pedestrian and cycling access, with future enhancements to include web-based trip planning and real-time arrival information.



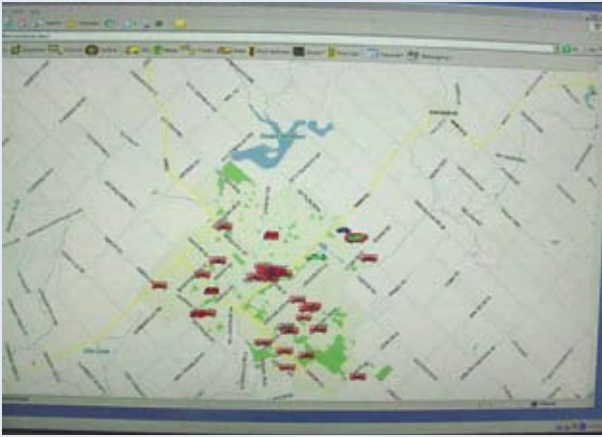
Region of Waterloo

Guelph, Ontario

Tracking buses with advanced technology

In a project funded through Transport Canada's Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Plan, Guelph Transit is rolling out a new system to track the real-time location of every vehicle in its fleet of 60 buses.

The use of global positioning system (GPS) technology will let Guelph Transit provide "next bus" arrival information to customers using the Web, email, text message alerts, an interactive voice response telephone system, and digital signage at key stops.



City of Guelph

North Bay, Ontario

New transit terminal supports downtown revitalization

For over two decades, North Bay's main transit terminal has been an outdoor platform that was originally intended to be temporary. The Federal Gas Tax Fund, in conjunction with provincial funding, has allowed the City to build a new downtown transit terminal. When it opens in March 2007, the terminal will improve customer service, help increase ridership and complement activities in the city's new Community Waterfront Park.



North Bay Transit

Winnipeg, Manitoba

Winnipeg unveils a major transit strategy

In February 2006, the City of Winnipeg adopted a transit improvement strategy involving several major corridors. The federal government is a major contributor to the strategy through its Public Transit Capital Trust, Gas Tax Fund, Urban Transportation Showcase Program, and Green Municipal Fund. Other funding partners include the Province of Manitoba.

Projects in each corridor will be tailored to improve transit's speed, reliability, comfort, convenience and accessibility. Some of the key elements over 2006-2012 include:

- New clean diesel and diesel-electric hybrid buses, with articulated vehicles in busy corridors
- Expanded park-and-ride facilities and upgraded stops & stations
- Fleet-wide automated vehicle location and real-time schedule information
- Reserved bus lanes, queue jumps and traffic signal priority measures



Winnipeg Transit

Regina, Saskatchewan

New buses update Regina's fleet

Regina Transit is updating its fleet with federal funding. The system regularly replaces four buses each year, but in 2006 a federal grant enabled the purchase of 10 new buses.



City of Regina

Edmonton, Alberta

Federal funds enable light rail extension and improved security

Edmonton is extending its groundbreaking LRT system to serve the community's growing needs. Following the first phase of the South LRT Extension that opened in early 2006, new LRT services are scheduled to reach South Campus in 2009 and Century Park in 2010. The University to South Campus extension is funded through the Infrastructure Canada–Alberta Program, with \$8.6 million provided by each of the federal, provincial and municipal governments. The South campus to Century Park extension is being funded with \$110 million from the Gas Tax Fund.

Almost \$21 million from the Gas Tax Fund is also being used to refurbish older LRT vehicles, enabling another 15 to 20 years of service. Body corrosion, mechanical wear, obsolete systems and other age-related deficiencies are affecting the fleet and posing public safety concerns.

Through the first round of the Transit-Secure Contribution Program, Edmonton Transit System has received \$2.2 million in funding approval for several projects including upgrades to its closed-circuit video monitoring systems, card access controls to critical areas, and LRT portal intrusion detection.



Edmonton Transit System

Calgary, Alberta

Transit renewal and expansion serves Calgary's booming economy

More than \$64 million in federal funding will help Calgary Transit proceed with several projects in 2007–2008. About \$9 million will go toward the purchase of seven new CTrain light rail cars, while \$23 million will enable the acquisition of regular buses and community shuttles. Over \$15 million is allocated for enhancement of the CTrain corridor along downtown's 7 Avenue, and \$6 million will go to bus and CTrain vehicle refurbishment. Another \$9 million will allow enable life-cycle rehabilitation over the next two years.



Calgary Transit

Lethbridge, Alberta

Making transit accessible in Lethbridge

In 2006, Lethbridge became the first small city in Alberta to take advantage of the Gas Tax Fund by purchasing eight new low-floor buses. The \$2.9 million contribution enabled Lethbridge Transit to accelerate its accessibility program by a decade and offer 100% accessible transit service. Local residents with mobility challenges now have better access to community transportation.

Kamloops, British Columbia

New exchange improves service in Kamloops

In late 2006, the City of Kamloops opened its new Lansdowne Transit Exchange. The project was made possible through a constructive partnership between the three orders of governments, including \$725,000 from the federal Public Transit Fund.

Upgrades to this important transit hub included an increase in the number of stops from seven to nine, improved circulation for buses, a transit priority signal, a small office and washroom for bus operators, and a larger walking and boarding area with improved lighting, benches, shelters and landscaping. The design of the exchange complements an adjacent \$30-million redevelopment project.



Kamloops Transit System

Greater Vancouver, British Columbia

Canada Line and fleet upgrade support ridership growth

The Canada Strategic Infrastructure Fund has committed \$450 million to the Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority (GVTA) for the Canada Line. This 19.5-km rapid transit route, which will connect downtown Vancouver to Vancouver International Airport and central Richmond, is under construction and scheduled to open in 2009. It will be fully integrated with other GVTA services including SkyTrain, SeaBus,

West Coast Express and buses, and is expected to carry more than 100,000 passengers a day.

In early 2006, the GVTA indicated that it would direct its federal gas tax funding for 2005–2015 to transit investments exclusively. Over the first two years, the GVTA committed \$74 million to modernize and expand its fleet through the purchase of 225 buses powered by compressed natural gas and new generation “clean diesel” engines. The new buses will carry up to 25 million passengers annually, helping to meet growing regional transportation demands.



Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority

The Canadian Urban Transit Association (CUTA) is the voice of Canada's public transit industry. For additional information including research reports, industry updates, news bulletins and more, please contact us or visit our website.



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