

# TRANSIT VISION 2040: SETTING COURSE FOR THE FUTURE



## VISION | 2040

**Transit Vision 2040** defines a future in which public transit maximizes its contribution to quality of life with benefits that support a vibrant and equitable society, a complete and compact community form, a dynamic and efficient economy, and a healthy natural environment. The Vision involves:

- 1. Putting transit at the centre of communities** through stronger government policy and decision-making frameworks, and better community planning and design.
- 2. Revolutionizing service** in all types of communities through expansion and innovation, so that transit systems can both encourage and serve growing demands as they keep pace with the changing face of cities and towns.
- 3. Focusing on customers** and accelerating the delivery of flexible, integrated transit services that meet the needs of an increasingly diverse and discriminating clientele.
- 4. Greening transit** to further reduce the industry's ecological footprint, improve energy efficiency and limit greenhouse gas emissions.
- 5. Ensuring financial health** through enhanced transit infrastructure and operating investments by all orders of government, more progressive approaches to generating revenue, and new efficiencies in service delivery.
- 6. Strengthening knowledge and practice** so that Canada's transit industry can more effectively respond to future opportunities and challenges.

*Download Transit Vision 2040 in its entirety from [www.cutaactu.ca](http://www.cutaactu.ca).*



Clockwise from top left: Winnipeg Transit, GO Transit, Grand River Transit, Société de transport de Montréal

For more than a century, public transit has contributed positively to the quality of life of Canadians and supported their need for access and mobility. Today, national transit ridership and investment are both at all-time highs, and transit is widely recognized as an important part of the solution to national challenges including economic prosperity, climate change, public health, safety and security.

Looking ahead, Canada's public transit industry faces pressures arising from the accelerating pace of change. Fast-approaching opportunities and challenges will drive major shifts in how the transit industry can meet the needs of Canadians, and in how society can offer transit the support it requires to succeed.

Recognizing that the future is something to be shaped and not simply responded to, CUTA has created **Transit Vision 2040**. This important new document sets a course for public transit to maximize its contribution to the quality of life in Canadian communities over the next three decades.

### Creating a vision for 2040

Transit Vision 2040 is based on an understanding of transit's role in supporting Canadian communities, an examination of the changes those communities are likely to experience, and an assessment of transit's potential to mitigate or reinforce changes and make communities more liveable, economically robust and environmentally healthy. While the vision takes a long-term view, it is intended to guide concrete short-term actions by CUTA, its members and other stakeholders.

Transit Vision 2040 integrates considerable input from a wide range of individuals and organizations. The project included workshops with CUTA's leaders and youth delegates, an online survey completed by some 650 individuals, and discussions with groups including the Canadian Institute of Planners, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the Transportation Association of Canada, and the Canadian Home Builders' Association. It also involved peer review by a panel of transportation experts, and interviews with over 20 Canadian thought leaders from a variety of disciplines. The American Public Transportation Association (APTA) and International Association of Public Transport (UITP) also provided advice, based on their own visioning processes.

## The reality of change

As the years unroll toward the vision's horizon of 2040, Canada's transit systems and the communities they serve must evolve together. Neither is sheltered from changes that affect the other, and both must address a number of key trends that include the following:

- **Accelerating urban growth and aging of the population** will increase the number of Canadians who rely on transit to get around, and these customers will also require a higher standard of accessibility and security.
- **Mounting congestion** will result from transportation system constraints, adding to transportation delays and costs experienced by individuals and business.
- **Smart growth and energy conservation goals** will lead cities to strengthen development in their cores while they intensify and diversify their suburbs.
- **Public support for environmental protection** will lead to more sustainable community design and greater willingness by individuals to travel differently, but will also heighten the need for transit systems to green their own operations.

More and more, public transit solutions will be called upon to help communities navigate these trends and enhance their economic competitiveness, environmental health and quality of life.



Durham Region Transit

## A vision grounded in action

The purpose of Transit Vision 2040 is not to describe an ideal future. Rather, it illustrates a strategic response to the profound challenges facing Canadian communities—meeting broad goals through actions that foresee both opportunities and obstacles. The vision includes 27 strategic directions grouped into six major themes, as presented below.

### 1. Putting transit at the centre of communities

#### Strategic directions

- Develop a national transit policy framework
- Strengthen transit's position as an investment in quality of life
- Fully integrate transit with community planning
- Fully integrate transit with community design

By 2040, a more transit-supportive social and political culture will enable Canadian communities to offer the context and resources that transit needs to fulfill its potential. Together, Canada's governments will develop a national transit policy framework that is integrated and consistent, that clarifies roles and responsibilities, and that sets meaningful objectives. This framework will benefit from stronger decision-making processes that integrate a "triple bottom line" perspective on transit's support for community objectives.

Success for transit will also require a more integrated approach to building vital, sustainable communities. Community plans will give primary consideration to transit's needs and benefits, and progressive development practices will give greater priority to the design of mutually supportive transit and land use systems.

### 2. Revolutionizing service

#### Strategic directions

- Expand regional rapid transit networks
- Emphasize transit priority solutions
- Enable a "quantum leap" in suburban transit
- Support the revitalization of urban cores
- Build service in smaller communities
- Ensure seamless coordination of operations and governance at all levels

By 2040, transit systems across Canada will have greatly improved the availability, frequency, reliability and speed of their services. Regional rapid transit networks will be expanded to boost capacity, efficiency and competitiveness. Transit priority solutions will help mitigate the effects of congestion on transit service.

In suburban communities, accelerated transit investment and progressive development practices will enable a "quantum leap" in the effectiveness of transit service. Urban cores will see renewal and upgrading of aging transit facilities, while smaller communities will establish formal transit services with support from provincial governments, local transportation providers and other partners. Of course, these improvements will require seamless coordination to bridge existing gaps in governance, planning and operations.

### 3. Focusing on customers

#### *Strategic directions*

- Accelerate a new customer orientation
- Focus on serving customers with mobility challenges
- Take a broad approach to mobility and expand choice
- Customize fares
- Enhance safety and security
- Provide information when, where and how customers want it

The transit industry knows that its success relies on its ability to meet the needs of each individual customer. It will need creativity and flexibility to satisfy an increasingly discriminating and diverse clientele.

In 2040, a growing number of seniors and persons with disabilities will be better served through greater integration of conventional and specialized transit services. Facilities and programs that enhance transit options for pedestrians, cyclists and car users will be extended. Transit systems will respond to technological and market opportunities by adopting flexible, customized fare products and strategies that maximize customer value as well as revenues. Enhanced safety and security, as well as timely, accurate and convenient access to customized information, will help transit passengers make the most of their experience.

### 4. Greening transit

#### *Strategic directions*

- Develop a greening strategy for the transit industry
- Develop an energy strategy for the transit industry
- Implement local greening and energy initiatives

In the coming 30 years, the transit industry will be challenged to provide maximum support for local and national sustainability while also minimizing its own ecological footprint. Success will require each transit system to meet environmental expectations without compromising performance objectives.

The transit industry will develop broad, forward-thinking strategies for greening and energy efficiency that address climate change and energy policy, research and development, technology, legislation, market conditions, financing and other sector-level concerns. Locally, individual transit systems will pursue improvements to procurement practices, materials management and waste disposal, as well as an accelerated transition to less-polluting and renewable energy sources for vehicle operation and other service areas.



Daimler Buses North America

### 5. Ensuring financial health

#### *Strategic directions*

- Establish suitable mechanisms for capital investment from senior governments
- Establish suitable performance-based mechanisms for operating funding from senior governments
- Maximize municipal government support for transit operating costs
- Use transportation pricing and alternative funding options more effectively
- Seek efficiency gains

Despite positive trends in provincial and federal government investment, over the next three decades communities will face a growing gap in transit infrastructure funding and serious constraints on their ability to pay for expanded transit operations.

To overcome these threats to transit's financial health by 2040, upper orders of government will establish predictable, reliable and adequate transit capital funding mechanisms, as well as performance-based operating funding mechanisms. Ideally, they will generate some of the enabling revenues through transportation pricing strategies that support greater ridership and create equity among travel modes. Local governments will maximize their own support for fast-growing transit operating costs, possibly generating the needed revenue through transportation pricing tools that motivate more sustainable travel behaviours through incentives and disincentives. Finally, transit systems will continue to seek efficiency improvements that reduce capital or operating costs.

### 6. Strengthening knowledge and practice

#### *Strategic directions*

- Develop human resource strategies for a more diverse and competitive workforce
- Develop transit resources for smaller communities
- Identify and disseminate current knowledge and practice within the transit industry and among its stakeholders

Many strategic directions within Transit Vision 2040 require transit industry members to collectively improve their capacity to understand challenges and find effective solutions.

Creative approaches to attracting and retaining skilled labour will be needed in an increasingly competitive labour market. National or regional programs that develop relevant tools and resources will help transit systems in smaller communities face their unique challenges. Many transit systems will benefit from centralized knowledge sharing in vital areas including technology, governance, transit-supportive development, innovative financing, alternative service delivery, and private sector roles in transit service development and delivery.



BC Transit

## Moving forward

**A quick start.** Short-term actions toward this vision will exploit immediate opportunities and start work toward critical, longer-term goals. A key priority for CUTA will be the creation of a monitoring and reporting plan for Transit Vision 2040 that outlines a framework for measuring progress toward key indicators.

**Transit ridership targets and implications.** The principal indicator of progress toward Transit Vision 2040 will be the number of annual transit trips per capita, measured both nationally and locally. The vision includes general targets for per-capita ridership growth for five groups of communities according to population (see Table 1). To reach these targets:

- **Major metropolitan areas** (2 million people or more) will need to focus on seamlessly integrating services and expanding their rapid transit and commuter rail services.
- **Large cities** (400,000 to 2 million people) will need to extend their rapid transit and transit priority systems.
- **Medium-sized cities** (150,000 to 400,000 people) **and small cities** (50,000 to 150,000 people) will improve overall service levels, implementing transit priority measures and some higher-order transit services.
- **Small and rural communities** (less than 50,000 people) will work with partners to increase basic levels of transit service, or to introduce transit service in communities that do not have it.

When overall population growth is factored in, these targets are equivalent to an 86% increase in national transit ridership, from 1.76 billion trips in 2007 to 3.28 billion trips in 2040. If current rates of transit operating cost-recovery from fares are maintained, this implies a corresponding 86% increase in government operating contributions, from \$2 billion in 2007 to \$3.7 billion in 2040 (2007 dollars).

## A call for leadership and action

Achievement of Transit Vision 2040 will require the full commitment of Canada's federal, provincial, territorial, regional and municipal governments in partnership with transit systems, suppliers and CUTA itself. The following points summarize the most vital areas of leadership for each stakeholder group:

- **Federal, provincial, territorial and regional governments** will have primary roles in shaping transit policy, coordination and investment, particularly with regard to governance, capital and operating funding mechanisms, rapid transit expansion and service growth in smaller communities.
- **Municipal governments** will play a leading role in coordinating transit and community development, expanding transit service and infrastructure, and ensuring supportive local funding.
- **Transit systems** will have an important role in improving all aspects of transit service delivery, and in implementing local greening and energy initiatives.
- **Transit suppliers** will play a supporting role in creating products and technologies that enhance customer service, notably fare and information systems, and in developing industry-wide strategies for greening and energy efficiency.
- **CUTA** will have a vital role in shaping national transit policy, in developing industry-wide greening and energy efficiency strategies, and in creating and sharing information that helps members fulfill their own mandates.

Together, these organizations will provide the leadership, knowledge, resources, innovation, determination and spirit of partnership that can make Transit Vision 2040 a reality, for the benefit of all Canadians.

**Table 1 Transit ridership targets for Transit Vision 2040**

Community group	Population range	Average annual transit trips per capita served		
		2007	Target for 2040	Increase
Group A: Major metropolitan areas	2 million or more	115	175 (similar to some Western European cities today)	50% overall or 1.2% annually
Group B: Large cities	400,000 to 2 million	80	120 (similar to current Group A)	50% overall or 1.2% annually
Group C: Medium-sized cities	150,000 to 400,000	49	85 (similar to current Group B)	75% overall or 1.7% annually
Group D: Small cities	50,000 to 150,000	25	50 (similar to current Group C)	100% overall or 2.1% annually
Group E: Small and rural communities (with transit)	Less than 50,000	15	30 (similar to current Group D)	100% overall or 2.1% annually
Group F: Small and rural communities (without transit)	Less than 50,000	n/a	Move to Group E when transit service begins	n/a

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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