

Service Plan 2010/11 - 2012/13





Honourable Shirley Bond

Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure & Minister Responsible for BC Transit

On behalf of the Board of Directors of British Columbia Transit ("BC Transit"), I am pleased to provide our Service Plan for 2010/11 – 2012/13.

This Service Plan presents the goals and priorities that will guide BC Transit in the delivery of transit services and programs for the three year period. This plan is aligned with the longer term objectives set by the *Provincial Transit Plan*. Included in the plan is a discussion of the primary issues, opportunities and risks that will challenge the corporation. Furthermore, this plan outlines the actions that will be taken and the resource commitments that will be made to ensure that transit services meet provincial and local government priorities and are delivered in an effective and efficient manner.

The 2010/11 – 2012/13 BC Transit Service Plan was prepared under the Board's direction in accordance with the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act* and is in accordance with the government's budget. The Board is accountable for the contents of the Plan, including the selection of performance measures and targets. The Plan is consistent with the Provincial Government's strategic priorities and fiscal plan. The Board is confident that the financial and performance information contained in this plan can be achieved in the coming years.

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Kevin Mahoney

Chair, Board of Directors

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1 Organizational Overview

BC Transit is the Provincial Crown agency charged with coordinating the delivery of public transportation throughout British Columbia outside Metro Vancouver. In partnership with local government, the corporation's mandate includes planning, administering agreements, marketing, fleet management and contracting for the operations of transit services. According to the *British Columbia Transit Act* (Section 3.1) BC Transit is to:

"... plan, acquire, construct or cause to be constructed public passenger transportation systems and rail systems that support regional growth strategies, official community plans, and the economic development of transit service areas", [and] "to provide for the maintenance and operation of those systems."

This Service Plan describes the transit improvement program to be undertaken in the next three years in response to Shareholder's direction. The plan describes how BC Transit, in conjunction with its partners, will continue to support and advance environmentally-friendly transit technologies, including the continued operation of the recently deployed demonstration fleet of hydrogen fuel cell buses in regular transit operations.

The scope of BC Transit's program in 2010/11 is as follows:

- 57 local government partners, the Victoria Regional Transit Commission and regional hospital districts
- contracts with 27 private management companies and 14 non-profit agencies
- over 50 million passengers carried annually
- more than 1.5 million people served in B.C.
- 81 transit systems conventional, custom and paratransit
- fleet of 1,043 conventional and double-deck buses, minibuses and vans
- \$294 million annual operating budget

2 Corporate Governance

The Corporation is governed by a seven member Board of Directors appointed by the Province according to the *BC Transit Act*. The Act requires four of the Board members to be municipally-elected representatives. The Board of Directors, through the Chair, reports to the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure (designated as the Minister Responsible for BC Transit). The Board is governed according to the *Province of B.C.'s Best Practices Guidelines*, as described in the checklist of the corporation's practices:

http://www.bctransit.com/corporate/pdf/12_areas_gov_practice.pdf

BC Transit's *Annual Report* contains additional information regarding governance practices and the Corporation's Board and senior officers, as well as details of past corporate performance:

http://www.bctransit.com/corporate/general_info/annual_reports.cfm

With respect to budget development, estimates are approved by BC Transit's Board and forwarded to the Minister Responsible for review and presentation to Treasury Board. Local funding requirements are submitted for the endorsement of the appropriate local government partner and for approval by BC Transit's Board. Provincial funding is provided through the public transportation sub-vote of the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure. This Service Plan and the public transportation budget were tabled in the legislature in March 2, 2010.

3 Strategic Context

BC Transit services link communities, businesses and lifestyles across the province with cost-effective, sustainable public transit. There are four key strategic areas where BC Transit services contribute to government objectives:

- 1. To support the government in achieving the goals of its climate change initiative.
- 2. To support rural and First Nations communities by linking communities, businesses and services.
- 3. To increase mobility for the aging population and provide improved public transportation to support aging in place.
- 4. To contribute to the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the province's communities through efficient and effective public transit.

During the past year, BC Transit has adopted a strategic plan establishing the vision, mission, values and strategic goals needed to accomplish the objectives of government.

Summary of the Strategic Plan

Our Vision:

To be a leader of integrated transportation solutions connecting people and communities to a more sustainable future.

Our Mission:

Through the strength of our people and partners, we provide safe, effective, customer-focused transportation solutions that link communities, businesses, and lifestyles.

Our Values:

- Safety We will ensure and improve the safety and security of our employees, customers and assets.
- Customer Service We will work with our customers to meet and exceed their needs and expectations.
- Sustainability We will measure, improve and be accountable to our environmental, financial, and social results.
- Integrity As stewards of public resources, we will use our assets prudently and be honest, professional and respectful in our communications and conduct.
- Innovation We will develop new opportunities and ways of doing business and will work to continuously improve the value and quality of our services.
- Collaboration We will cultivate strong partnerships, recognize communities' complex needs and create services and opportunities that promote healthy communities and enable choice and connection with other types of travel.

Strategic Plan Priorites



Although demand for transit service in the province is projected to grow, this growth will not occur at the high rate seen in the last two years. This is due to a number of factors including the economic slowdown, fewer tourists and lower fuel prices. To meet our objective of increasing ridership, we will alter our services to provide characteristics known to attract additional riders. This will include changes to our physical and technical infrastructure to provide sufficient capacity to handle increased future operations. These changes will also enhance the management of transit fleet operations, security and customer information, focusing on areas of our system where we anticipate growth to occur more rapidly.

During this service planning period, BC Transit will be incorporating expansions made in recent years into our regular service, while continuing to work on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of those services.

Throughout the service planning period, BC Transit will focus on developing long-term master plans for transit services and identifying strategies that support sustainability and transportation goals in the communities we serve. Rapid transit planning initiatives will form a key part of these master plans in Victoria and Kelowna. Detailed operational reviews of major services will also be undertaken to identify cost reduction and ridership enhancement programs.

Service levels will continue to grow over the next three years but at a more modest level than in the recent past. Transit system ridership also will continue to increase modestly as services are reviewed and revised. BC Transit fully intends to make use of slowing demand to be better positioned to efficiently manage the growth that is anticipated to occur once the general economy strengthens.

BC Transit also feels that continued investment in transit service in an economic downturn acts as a mitigating measure in the municipalities we serve, as transit service by its nature is labour intensive thus providing a "human infrastructure" stimulus. BC Transit programs and services span the province covering many small urban and rural areas where the linkage between communities, services and businesses is critically important to their financial well-being.

The discussion that follows summarizes the key issues, risks, trends and opportunities expected during the coming three years.

Provincial Transit Plan and Climate Action Initiatives

The key document guiding BC Transit development plans is the *Provincial Transit Plan* announced in January 2008. This document, which supports the *Provincial Transit Plan* and climate action initiatives, calls for significant expansion of transit in communities across the province and to double transit ridership.

To achieve these objectives, BC Transit will need to invest in new services, new physical and technical infrastructure and seek to take a more significant role in influencing and integrating transportation solutions within the communities we serve. In addition, long-term master plans will be developed for all the transit systems throughout the province to chart the course for transit expansion aimed at achieving provincial goals.

The hydrogen fuel cell bus fleet demonstration project is now active in Whistler. This demonstration project is a major initiative in support of provincial climate change initiatives. Over the next five years, we will work with our partners to assess the operational viability of the world's largest fleet of fuel cell buses to be operated in regular transit service.

Growing Demand

Throughout the province, BC Transit services previously experienced strong increases in demand. In 2008/09, ridership increased by approximately seven per cent. However, with the downturn in the economy, ridership growth has now slowed in 2009/10 to a more modest two to three per cent. Although ridership growth is slower, in many communities the need to connect with regionalized services is increasing pressure on transit services. Reductions in local school transportation and growing enrollments at colleges also are contributing to ridership growth.

For the coming years, it is anticipated that ridership growth will continue to exceed the rate of population growth. It is also expected that operational reviews will identify opportunities to enhance ridership within the funding provided by this Service Plan. Ridership growth in the order of two per cent per year is targeted for the next few years.

Economic Uncertainty and Financial Capacity

BC Transit will be working closely with the province and its municipal partners to ensure that funding available for public transit is invested to best achieve the outcomes desired by the province and local governments.

BC Transit will also be working closely with its local partners to monitor transit system performance. Prudent financial management practices will be used to control costs and ensure performance is maintained in the top 25 per cent of comparable transit property performance. Strategic purchasing practices will also be explored and implemented to minimize the risk of commodity fluctuations. Operational reviews will be conducted to improve the efficiency of transit operations and to enhance ridership. Emphasis will be on preparing long-range plans so that as the economy returns to full capacity, transit systems will be well situated to expand and meet the goals of the province.

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Goals, Objectives, Key Strategies, and Performance

Goal 1

Develop Financial Sustainability

In order to meet the demand and expectations for transit now and in the future, we need to secure the long-term viability of transit by systematically renewing and revising our revenue sources, structures and internal processes.

Objective 1.1 Ensure an affordable public transportation system

- Strategy 1.1.1 Rigorously manage controllable costs and apply appropriate purchasing strategies to manage commodity-related cost volatility and benchmarking performance against our peers in the Canadian transit industry.
- Strategy 1.1.2 Work with provincial and local governments to develop an appropriate stable, long-term funding strategy for public transit improvement in B.C.
- Strategy 1.1.3 Work with the Canadian Urban Transit Association, Federation of Canadian Municipalities, Transportation Association of Canada and others to encourage the adoption of a national transit strategy with predictable long-term federal funding and support for the transit industry.
- Strategy 1.1.4 Assist local governments in successful applications to federal funding programs for transit related improvements.
- Strategy 1.1.5 Assess and develop programs for the enhancement of revenue both from passengers and from commercial use of BC Transit assets.
- Strategy 1.1.6 Improve system monitoring and related communications to operating companies and local partners to mitigate cost volatility, maximize efficiencies, and increase our performance, safety and customer satisfaction.

Support and Shape Livable Communities

In order to make the most of public transportation spending, we need to encourage transit-supportive community planning and development that will make it easier to get around by walking, cycling and using transit.

Objective 2.1 Plan for the effective growth in public transit

- Strategy 2.1.1 Implement rapid bus in Kelowna by completing a regional master plan, with associated technical studies and utilizing new bus/high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes in year one and continuing improvement in future years.
- Strategy 2.1.2 Implement rapid transit in Victoria by completing a regional master plan and technology assessment on the preferred alignment in year one and commencing implementation in year two.
- Strategy 2.1.3 Increase integration with other green travel to enhance transportation options and make it easier for pedestrians, cyclists and regional travelers to link to our services.
- Strategy 2.1.4 Influence land use development patterns by improving processes to help communities develop pedestrian-focused neighbourhoods that increase the effectiveness and efficiency of public transportation.
- Strategy 2.1.5 Through the master planning process, identify and establish priority corridors for transit to make travel more attractive and reliable, and reduce congestion impacts.

Change the Perception of Transit

In order to build public support for our business and attract new customers, we need to increase our advocacy and target transit messaging in new ways.

- Objective 3.1 Build increased support for public transportation initiatives
 - Strategy 3.1.1 Work with businesses, major employers, health authorities and other public institutions to develop partnerships throughout the province to expand sources of support for transit program delivery through corporate social responsibility programs.
 - Strategy 3.1.2 Work with businesses, major employers, health authorities and other public and private institutions, to encourage greater use of public transit:
 - Implement U-PASS at all universities and colleges in larger communities.
 - Increase the number of persons on ProPASS programs by three per cent per year by targeting major employers in Victoria and larger communities.
- Objective 3.2 Ensure that BC Transit's environmental leadership is recognized as a strength of BC Transit
 - Strategy 3.2.1 Ensure that all new facilities are LEEDS compliant.
 - Strategy 3.2.2 Promote the lessons learned from the Hydrogen Fuel Cell Bus Fleet Demonstration project in Whistler.
 - Strategy 3.2.3 Reduce the emissions of GHG and other pollutants from transit vehicles by including environmental assessments as part of all vehicle purchase decisions.

Deliver Operational Excellence

The core of our business is developing and delivering safe, reliable, easy-to-use services that continuously improve through active engagement with our employees, customers, and partners.

Objective 4.1 Ensure a safe public transit system

- Strategy 4.1.1 Develop and implement a corporate safety management system in year one and reduce incident rates by 2.5 per cent in years two and three.
- Develop and implement a strategic fleet inspection Strategy 4.1.2 plan in year one with implementation of specific program recommendations in year two and three to increase fleet reliability.
- Strategy 4.1.3 Complete a security assessment master plan and develop an implementation plan in year one with implementation commencing in years two and three.

Objective 4.2 Ensure a reliable public transportation system

- Strategy 2.2.1 Develop a corporate transit operational support program to review transit schedule procedures in year one and implement program recommendations in years two and three.
- Strategy 4.2.2 Develop corporate maintenance support programs and standards in year one and implement specific recommendations in years two and three targeted to reduce costs and increase reliability.

Objective 4.3 Ensure an effective public transportation system

- Strategy 4.3.1 Target service expansions to identified markets and ensure rides per capita continues to increase.
- Strategy 4.3.2 Develop 25-year transit master plans with local regions and municipalities for Victoria and all larger municipalities by year two, and remaining conventional transit regions by year three.
- Strategy 4.3.3 Increase ridership by improving transit information infrastructure through rebuilding the BC Transit website and information services by year two.
- Strategy 4.3.5 Invest in infrastructure needed to support expansion and to provide safe, reliable, effective and convenient service to customers:
- Build new garages in Kamloops and Vernon and an expanded rebuilt garage in Nanaimo by year three,
- Complete a master planning process initiated in 2009/10 for Victoria facilities by year one, and commence construction in year two for completion by 2014.
- Complete a master plan for technical infrastructure initiated in 2009/10 and commence implementation in year two.

Strengthen our People and Partnerships

Our success depends on creating an adaptable, socially responsible organization that lives its values, develops its existing employees and partnerships and attracts new people and opportunities.

Objective 5.1 Successfully attract the best employees

- Strategy 5.1.1 Increase human resources communications to attract new employees.
- Strategy 5.1.2 Invest in staff development to encourage continuous learning and contribution to transit programs.

Objective 5.2 Strengthen existing partnerships

- Strategy 5.2.1 Improve communications with local governments, including program information, monitoring, planning and land use support information.
- Strategy 5.2.2 Improve communications and support of operating companies to achieve continuous improvement in the safety, reliability, efficiency and effectiveness of local operations.

4. Goals, Objectives, Key Strategies, and Performance continued

Performance Projections

Performance measures used in this Service Plan are those universally adopted by the North American transit industry. Industry-wide standard indicators (see terms below) are used to track BC Transit's achievement of strategic goals. Ridership estimates are based on statistically valid counting methodologies used throughout the industry.

BC Transit benchmarks its performance against transit statistics collected and published by the Canadian Urban Transit Association. Victoria Regional Transit System performance is compared against transit systems of municipalities with populations between 150,000 and 400,000. Transit performance in regional centres is compared with transit performance in municipalities with population of comparable size. Conventional transit systems and custom transit (those dealing with special needs travel) are reviewed separately.

These standard benchmark comparisons are documented in BC Transit's Annual Report at the end of each fiscal year. Figures for 2008/09 are available in the most recently published report:

http://www.bctransit.com/corporate/general info/pdf/2008 2009 Annual Report.pdf

Explanation of Statistics and Performance Measures Used

Statistics include operational outputs and transit service area statistics. These factors, when used in a ratio, indicate commonly compared industry standard performance measures.

Passengers represent transit riders who have made a one-way trip using transit service. (Passengers who use a transfer and board more than one bus to complete a trip are only counted once.)

Operating cost includes all transit expenditures with the exception of debt servicing.

Operating revenues include passenger and advertising revenue. It excludes provincial grants, property tax and fuel tax revenue.

Population is for the defined transit service area.

Cost recovery reflects annual operating revenue divided by annual operating cost. This ratio indicates the proportion of costs recovered from operating revenue. Fares are established by the local partners. A strong cost recovery is desirable, as it reduces the subsidy from the taxpayer. This factor, however, is a municipal policy decision.

Operating cost per passenger reflects annual operating cost divided by annual passengers carried. This ratio indicates the efficiency of transit expenditures directed toward passengers carried. Consistent or decreasing cost per passenger indicates that ridership is growing faster than costs.

Passengers per capita reflect annual passengers carried divided by service area population. This is a measure of market share and the effectiveness of services in transit markets. Increasing rides per capita reflects a transit system that is providing greater transportation benefit to the community.

BC Transit Corporate Performance Measures (all locations, all services)

	2008/2009 Actual	2009/10 Target	2010/11 Projection	2011/12 Projection	2012/13 Projection
Service Effectiveness					
Revenue passengers (thousands)	47,576	49,534	51,814	52,709	53,287
Rides / capita	31.1	32.1	33.3	33.6	33.6
Cost Effiency					
Operating cost recovery	35.2%	34.1%	31.5%	29.7%	28.4%
Operating cost per revenue passenger	\$3.56	\$3.74	\$3.89	\$4.12	\$4.32

5 Shareholders Letter of Expectations

The Shareholder's Letter of Expectations between the shareholder and the corporation is an agreement on the respective roles and responsibilities of each, and serves as the basis of agreement on corporate mandate including high level performance expectations, public policy issues and strategic priorities.

Government has provided the following direction to BC Transit:

In support of customer needs, government priorities, and for the benefit of communities and taxpayers, BC Transit is directed to:

- plan, acquire, construct or cause to be constructed public passenger transportation systems and rail transit systems that support regional growth strategies, official community plans and the economic development of the transit service areas
- provide for the maintenance and operation of those systems
- with the approval of the minister, pursue commercial opportunities and undertake or enter into commercial ventures in respect to those systems and the authority's assets and resources
- ensure that the Corporation's priorities reflect government's goals of building a strong economy, job
 creation, infrastructure and, private sector investment, First nations reconciliation, and climate
 action initiatives
- for Corporations subject to the *Public Sector Employers Act*, ensure the Corporations' membership in the Crown Corporation Employers' Association is in good standing
- comply with government's requirement that lobbyists not be engaged to act on behalf of the Corporation in its dealings with government

In addition, the Shareholder directs the Corporation to take the following specific actions:

- provide advice and support to the Shareholder in the development and implementation of transit funding strategies
- provide advice and support to the Shareholder on transit services and technologies that support government's environmental and climate change objectives
- align actions and activities to be consistent with the intent of the Provincial Transit Plan; and ensure annual expenses do not exceed annual revenues
- continue undertaking business evaluations to maximize efficiencies and expand ridership opportunities.

6 Summary Financial Outlook

Assumptions, Risk Factors and Sensitivities

Significant risks and inflationary factors associated with the projection for the forecast period:

- This service plan is based on a multi-year projection of operating and capital funding. However, both the local and provincial funding partners confirm budgets annually. Consequently, only the current year's funding levels are committed. Subsequent years' funding will be impacted by prevailing economic conditions.
- The single largest forecast financial risk is fuel cost. Fuel price volatility remains high and is anticipated to escalate with the recovery of the global economy. BC Transit has implemented a fuel price risk management program to mitigate the risk of fuel price volatility. The program includes entering into fixed price supply agreements on a portion of our fuel consumption to contain the cost volatility as well as researching potential joint procurement with other large volume bulk purchasers to mitigate risk.
- Ridership decrease and resulting revenue decline is also a considerable risk in a period of low economic
 activity. This risk is borne by local government funding partners. Continued ridership increase beyond
 the funding capacity of BC Transit and its funding partners to respond with improved service is also a
 significant risk.
- The cost of fleet maintenance support has increased significantly over the past five years. Maintenance
 costs for running repairs, major component overhauls and mid-life tune-ups are largely attributable
 to the age of the fleet, increasing costs of parts and the technological complexity of newer vehicles.
 Maintenance costs may also fluctuate due to volatility in foreign exchange as most parts originate from
 American or European suppliers.
- BC Transit is primarily insured through the Transportation Property and Casualty Company Inc. (TPCC).
 BC Transit has a 10 per cent interest in TPCC and TransLink, through the South Coast British Columbia Transportation Authority, owning the remaining 90 per cent interest. The shareholders retain reserves for those risks that are retained within the TPCC. In recent years, there has been a substantial draw on BC Transit's reserves within the TPCC due to the increased incidence of fleet damage claims.
 Consequently, there is a significant risk that there could be a substantial increase in premiums and/or deductibles.
- Changes in taxation legislation and interpretation may have a financial impact. The Province of British
 Columbia announced that they plan to harmonize provincial sales tax with the federal goods and
 services tax regime, effective July 1, 2010. Harmonized sales tax (HST) standardizes and integrates
 the collection of formerly separate provincial sales taxes and the federal goods and services tax (GST).
 BC Transit has established a project team and expects to dedicate significant resources to transition
 numerous systems and processes to accommodate the change.

Table 2 presents the financial risk to BC Transit from a one per cent change in the cost of selected factors. For example, a one per cent increase in fuel prices above budgeted levels will increase BC Transit costs by \$240,000 per year.

BC Transit's financial forecast for the Service Plan period is summarized in Table 3.

Table 2

BC Transit Corporate 2010/11

Risk Factors and Sensitivities

Risk Factor (1% change)		Financial Risk	Provincial Share*	
Interest Rates (new issues)	\$	394,000	\$ 161,500	
Currency exchange	\$	428,000	\$ 77,000	
Fuel	\$	240,000	\$ 98,400	
Maintenance Labour Costs	\$	214,000	\$ 87,800	
Maintenance Parts Pricing	\$	198,000	\$ 81,000	
Benefits (employees)	\$	120,000	\$ 49,300	
Property Maintenance & Lease	\$	77,000	\$ 31,700	
Insurance	\$	34,000	\$ 13,900	

^{*} Provincial Share of total risk varies by type and location of service.

Table 3
BC Transit 2010/11 - 2012/13 Forecast¹

(Figures in thousands, except FTEs)	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
	Actual	Forecast	Budget	Plan	Plan	Plan
Income Statement:						
Revenue:						
Operating contributions from the Province	71,874	79,105	85,762	91,658	97,263	110,087
Amortization of Deferred Capital Contribution (DCC)	41,766	43,777	57,583	57,677	65,442	74,220
Amortization of Contributed Surplus and Other Capital Grants ²	631	1,782	3,352	2,424	2,075	1,890
Local taxation	53,847	63,197	81,201	90,024	111,112	139,051
Passenger & advertising revenue	59,632	61,313	63,429	64,524	65,232	67,155
Investment & other earnings	834	3,721	2,191	2,388	3,103	4,342
	228,584	252,895	293,518	308,695	344,227	396,745
Expenditures:						
Salaries and benefits	52,526	56,701	61,593	63,339	64,858	70,098
Operating costs	116,900	128,537	140,018	153,849	165,237	184,971
Capital asset amortization expense ²	54,051	59,422	80,953	80,168	97,969	118,970
Debt service costs	6,856	7,823	10,954	11,339	16,163	22,706
(Gain) loss on sale of capital assets	329	-	-	-	-	-
	230,662	252,483	293,518	308,695	344,227	396,745
Net Income (Loss)	(2,078)	412	-	-	.=	-
Capital Expenditures	68,974	171,701	89,443	162,922	208,118	260,926

¹ Forecast includes only costs shared between the funding partners. Non-shareable costs including mark-to-market adjustments are excluded.

² For purposes of this Service Plan, amortization of Contributed Surplus is disclosed as Revenue. Accepted financial statement disclosure records amortization of Contributed Surplus as a recovery from Net Assets.



To achieve the objectives of the *Provincial Transit Plan* and the expectations of the shareholder, infrastructure investment is required. As transit services and bus fleets increase, a number of transit facilities will need to be expanded or replaced. These include garages and maintenance facilities, transit exchanges, park and rides and bus stop improvements. Technical infrastructure investment in fleet management, fare collection, information, security systems and transit priority are also required to meet the challenge of provincial objectives.

BC Transit's capital plan is summarized in Table 4.

Table 4
BC Transit Capital Plan
2010/11 - 2012/13 Forecast

(Figures in thousands)	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	Total
	Plan	Plan	Plan	
Province-Capital Grants	33,051	61,666	59,331	154,048
Municipalities (FAL)	49,699	95,050	122,077	266,827
Other	6,693	6,206	26,709	39,608
Total Capital Projects	89,443	162,922	208,118	460,483

8 Contact Information

For further information with respect to BC Transit's plans and programs please contact:

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