



KEEPING PUBLIC TRANSIT RUNNING

WHO WE ARE: The Ontario Public Transit Association (OPTA) is the collective voice of the transit industry in Ontario. Our member-driven trade association represents public transit systems, health and social service agency transportation providers, suppliers to the industry, consultants and government representatives.

OPTA thanks the Government of Ontario for providing emergency transit operating support through the Safe Restart Agreement and the 2022 supplement. Transit systems also appreciate the province's top-up of gas tax funding and hope this critical arrangement remains in place moving forward. Support from all levels of government ensured public transit services remained intact during the pandemic, preventing service cuts that would have negatively impacted frontline workers that depend on public transit every day.

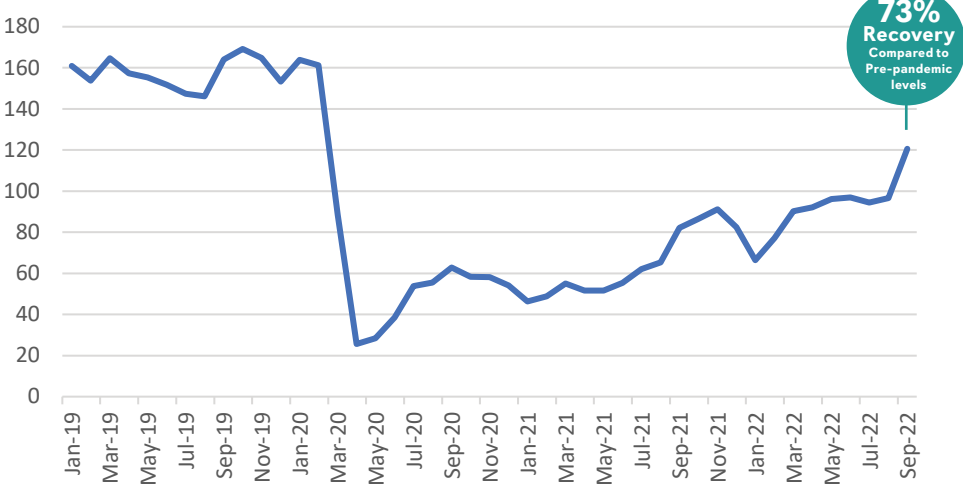
The pandemic dramatically reduced ridership and farebox revenue for transit systems across the province. **As of September 2022, national transit ridership has increased, shifted and evolved, but is only at roughly 73% of pre-pandemic levels.** Given the varying demographics of the customer bases in different regions, ridership recovery has not been consistent across the province.

Past investments in transit resulted in sustained ridership recovery, but that important work is not yet done. Most Ontario public transit systems are expecting significant budgetary shortfalls in 2023. This is due to residual pandemic induced ridership decline and increased fuel costs and other inflationary pressures. Without emergency operating funding support, public transit systems will have to cut services which will have a significant negative impact on Ontario's economy.

A RECOVERY STILL IN PROGRESS

Transit networks are vital to Ontario’s post-pandemic recovery. They link our sprawling urban areas and will support the anticipated rapid increase in housing supply through transformational public development initiatives like transit-oriented communities.

Canadian Transit Ridership (Total Trips - Millions)



Region	Ridership Recovery (Sep-Oct 2022)
Toronto	69%
Ottawa	63%
Mississauga	92%
Hamilton	76%
York Region	68%
London	90%
Brampton	115%
Milton	72%
Windsor	78%
Woodstock	95%

We must avoid a downward spiral of declining service levels that would further diminish ridership, revenue, affordability, emissions reduction potential, and social inclusion. Service cuts reverberate for years, and Ontario’s transit networks must be prepared to support the province’s anticipated population growth and increased housing supply. All levels of government need to come to the table to support public transit at this important time.

A CRITICAL INVESTMENT TO KEEP OUR COMMUNITIES CONNECTED

OPTA and our members call on the Government of Ontario to renew emergency transit operating support in 2023 with an investment of \$250M to help transit systems maintain service levels and prepare for an increase in population.

Additionally, we encourage the Government of Ontario to work with the federal government to renew the 2022 federal-provincial transit-housing funding arrangement, for a matching federal contribution.

Timing is important. Ontario’s transit systems need to know if they can count on provincial support for transit operations by February 2023 to ensure the risk of services cuts is minimized.



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