



KEEPING TRANSIT RUNNING

PRE-BUDGET SUBMISSION FROM THE ONTARIO PUBLIC TRANSIT ASSOCIATION

More than a million Ontarians rely on public transit every day. But transit systems have only been able to maintain service levels because the Ontario government worked with Ottawa in 2020 to provide significant financial support, and late last year delivered additional support.

These funds are running out.

Unless they are extended, service reductions are almost inevitable. And as such, **the Ontario Public Transit Association's top budget priority is continued financial support to keep transit running.** Before Covid, 55% of the cost of operating public transit was covered by the farebox. But ridership has fallen significantly as people work or study from home—and for every 10% drop in ridership, transit systems lose \$245 million in revenue. Ridership is currently about half pre-pandemic levels.

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55%

Before Covid, 55% of the costs of running public transit were covered by fares but ridership is less than half what it was.

Municipalities cannot fill this gap alone. For most, lost transit revenue is their single-biggest financial shortfall. Toronto's transit system is forecasting a \$561 million shortfall in 2022, which can only be filled by the province and federal government. Premier Ford and Transportation Minister Caroline Mulroney have been steadfast champions of public transit since the pandemic began, and as Covid-related decreases in ridership continue the province's support must also continue.

Unless it does, access to employment and education for millions of Ontarians who live too far from home to walk or cycle but earn too little to drive will be jeopardized. Daily life for many seniors and people living with disabilities will become harder. Our cities will become more congested, as carbon emissions increase.

-\$561 million

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ONTARIO FLEET ELECTRIFICATION

Public transit is a proven way to take climate action, and across Ontario municipalities are electrifying their fleets. Brampton is procuring 450 electric buses over the next decade. OC Transpo is moving to complete electrification by 2036, and Toronto already has North America's largest electric fleet. The federal government is assisting in this conversion, but the province can also play a role.

Quebec is supporting transit systems there to deal with the significant capital costs of new infrastructure like charging facilities and Ontario systems face similarly high costs. Another possibility is making transit systems eligible for the very lowest electricity rates to assist with the ongoing costs of operating public transit. Steps on either or both in the budget would help public transit meet its potential to take climate action.

