



Media Backgrounder:

Federal Gas Tax Funding: what it means for Metro Vancouver transportation

In 2005, the Government of Canada began the Gas Tax Revenue Fund, using the monies to support capital projects that promote sustainability in local regions across the country. In the first three years of the program, TransLink has received a total of \$122.7 million; now, Years 4 and 5 (2008-09 and 2009-10) will provide TransLink with a further \$186.4 million.

What did \$122.7 million over three years help us buy so far?

- 50 standard-sized buses powered by compressed natural gas (CNG)
- 361 standard clean diesel buses
- 16 60' articulated clean diesel buses
- 21 60' CNG articulated diesel buses
- 9 standard highway coaches

We were able to replace 232 buses that had reached the end of their service lives and add 220 more buses. We were able to introduce slick-handling low-floor accessible Nova buses to North Vancouver. We've been able to increase long-range bus service between downtown Vancouver and areas like White Rock, Boundary Bay and Steveston. The purchases have meant business for Canadian companies like New Flyer Industries and Nova.

The next two years of the program will see further improvements, and not limited to the bus system.

- 146 standard and articulated buses (\$68.6 million of \$116.3 million cost)
- 23 new community shuttles (\$2.5 million of \$5.3 million cost)
- 34 articulated zero-emission electric trolleys (\$7 million of \$53.6 million)
- 1 new SeaBus (\$5 million of \$25.5 million cost)
- 55 HandyDART buses (\$2 million of \$8.7 million cost)

The funds will also allow us to add another 38 rail cars to the SkyTrain fleet and expand the SkyTrain operations and maintenance centre in Burnaby (\$10 million of \$54 million). The Maintenance and Transportation Training Centre, is receiving \$50 million of its \$165 million cost from the Gas Tax Fund.

By replacing literally hundreds of buses, adding hundreds more and expanding the SkyTrain fleet, we are able to provide viable alternatives to private vehicle travel and help ensure the sustainability of our region.

Furthermore, all new buses are low-floor accessible (except the highway coaches, which are equipped with wheelchair lifts); this, plus the replacement and expansion of the HandyDART fleet, will provide greater mobility and opportunities for people with disabilities around the Lower Mainland.

These purchases continue to meet the ever increasing demands of our ever increasing region, the largest geographic area covered by any single public transportation system in Canada, if not in North America.