

For Immediate Release

Friday, March 5, 2021

**Statement from B.C. Urban Mayors' Caucus and UBCM on Meeting Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Rob Fleming on transit and transportation needs in urban British Columbia**

SAANICH, BC – Kelowna Mayor Colin Basran and Victoria Mayor Lisa Helps, co-chairs of the B.C. Urban Mayors' Caucus released the following statement following a meeting with Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Rob Fleming to discuss the transit and transportation needs of our growing communities.

"On behalf of the B.C. Urban Mayors' Caucus, we would like to thank Minister Fleming for meeting to discuss the key elements of the *Blueprint for BC's Urban Future* that relate to moving people in our communities sustainably and affordably.

"We were happy to hear the Minister's strong commitment to public transit and also his assertion that even highway and intersection projects would ensure these investments result in more transit friendly outcomes, including a focus on active modes of transportation.

"We expressed appreciation for the federal-provincial Restart funding which has kept transit systems stable despite a decrease in ridership and revenue due to the pandemic. The Restart funding has also enabled us to maintain transit service, which so many of our essential workers depend on, and to avoid fare increases.

"We were encouraged to hear that the Province is in conversation with the federal government about additional operating supports for transit given the uncertain and uneven period of pandemic recovery. And we are pleased that the Provincial government is already in conversations to ensure that BC gets its fair share of the \$5.6 billion in federal transit funding that was recently announced

"We look forward to working with the Minister and the government to redesign a transit funding model which has relied too heavily on regressive transit fares and local property taxes to one that is more resilient and equitable and to expanding transit service in our communities. Investment is needed now in planning and business case development so that we will be ready to build for the future and to help deliver on both our local climate action plans and CleanBC.

"We thank the Minister for committing to meeting quarterly with our caucus to continue to work together to deliver affordable, reliable low-carbon transportation solutions to make life better for our businesses and our residents.

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### **About the BC Urban Mayors' Caucus**

The BC Urban Mayors' Caucus is an informal, non-partisan group of mayors from Abbotsford, Burnaby, Coquitlam, Kamloops, Kelowna, Nanaimo, New Westminster, Prince George, Richmond, Saanich, Surrey, Vancouver and Victoria, representing over 55 per cent of the province's total population. The group came together in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and acts as a unified voice on critical issues facing their communities and urban British Columbia.

The group published the *Blueprint for British Columbia's Urban Future*, which outlines four key priorities for urban communities across the province:

1. Mental Health, Substance Use and Treatment
2. Affordable Housing
3. Public Transit
4. A New Fiscal Framework

Read the Blueprint [here](#).