



**17<sup>th</sup> January, 2015**

Hon. Bill Morneau  
Toronto Centre, Minister of Finance  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

To Hon. Minister Bill Morneau,

The pre-budget consultations requested that as many Canadians as possible share their proposals for budget 2016 with the Ministry. We speak on behalf of a group of residents in the city you just visited (Surrey) and would like to bring forward a number of concerns with topic(s) that may have been raised during your visit.

Last year, regional Mayors agreed to include an on-street **Light Rail Transit (LRT) system** in Surrey as part of the regional vision for transit expansion. The Light Rail proposal has been supported for some years by the City of Surrey as an alternative to the expanding SkyTrain.

However, this decision was against the results of the **Surrey Rapid Transit Study** – commissioned by the regional transit authority (TransLink) and the provincial government, in which the consultant had concluded that Light Rail had a **negative business case** and would not bring the most ridership and the most quantifiable benefits.

In addition, our organization has identified **14 major shortfalls and/or issues** (*attached*) with the proposed LRT system, ranging from high operating costs, to construction impacts and traffic closures that haven't been discussed with Surrey residents. Among these major issues, an LRT will result in a **net increase in greenhouse-gas emissions** as it was not expected to actually recoup its construction and operations emissions.

In May of last year, the City released a study that claimed that the proposed Light Rail Transit solution was the “most appropriate” solution for Surrey through an examination of the economic aspects. We were looking forward to hearing about travel time reductions, benefits to transit riders and effects on city-wide transit mode-share – but the study did not include **any** assessment on the transportation outcome and practically *avoided* this aspect in its discussions.

Supporters of LRT insist that because an LRT will offer more kilometres of rail than SkyTrain, it will offer more benefits by reaching more of the city. However, this position ignores technical realities in transit planning, and is an irresponsible way of conducting the argument.



Previously successful transit projects in this region, like the Canada Line, had an emphasis on travel time and featured full grade-separation. A slow, street-level LRT with more stops will not attract high ridership. It would fall short in every aspect where SkyTrain has found success – with fewer customers, slower growth around transit, more suburban sprawl and more congestion.

A **SkyTrain extension**, linking Surrey and Langley, is the only option for the South of Fraser that will offer tangible transportation improvements for South-of-Fraser residents. Numerous media surveys have shown a high level of local support for extending SkyTrain into the South of Fraser.

The Surrey Rapid Transit Study previously studied a SkyTrain and Bus Rapid Transit alternative and found that it would **cost the same to build as an LRT**, but offer twice the travel time savings benefits. The services would be faster and more reliable, offer more capacity for future growth, and require less transfers with lower operating costs and operating deficits.

Building and expanding the SkyTrain system has made Metro Vancouver a leader on the world stage. Despite the relatively small population of our metro area, Vancouver is one of the continent's best-performing areas in transit ridership. Continuing this expansion in the South-of-Fraser is paramount to building upon this success. The mobility enhancements this can present to the South-of-Fraser will bring the highest economic returns and benefits.

To move this issue with local decision-makers, we started a **website** ([skytrainforsurrey.org](http://skytrainforsurrey.org)) and an **online petition** which has received support from some 565 signatures at the time of writing.

We have also urged the Provincial government to overrule the choice for LRT, and refuse to fund a Surrey rapid transit project if the City of Surrey is not willing to accept a SkyTrain alternative. Today we are urging the Federal government to do the same.

Sincerely,

## SkyTrain for Surrey Campaign Directors

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**Daryl Dela Cruz**  
Chair, Surrey

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**Spencer Whitney**  
Director, Langley

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**Jacky Au**  
Director, Surrey

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**Benedic Dasalla**  
Director, Surrey

Campaign website: [skytrainforsurrey.org](http://skytrainforsurrey.org); Contact us: [info@skytrainforsurrey.org](mailto:info@skytrainforsurrey.org)



## Appendix A: Footnotes and sources

1. We have separately attached the **Surrey Rapid Transit Study Alternatives Analysis – Phase 2 Evaluation**, a 536-page 2012 TransLink/MOTI joint study and the most complete examination of Surrey alternatives thus far.
2. We have separately attached our **Review of the Economic Benefits of Surrey LRT Study**
3. Metro Vancouver’s superior transit ridership success is demonstrated in the following Appendix B and Appendix C tables.

## Appendix B

### **SkyTrain ridership/km vs. light rail transit systems**

Data is from the [American Public Transit Association](#) (Q3 2014) unless stated

City	System name (type)	Weekday daily boardings	Daily boardings per mile
Vancouver	SkyTrain (driverless)	377,900 (highest)	8,870 (highest)
Calgary	C-Train (LRT)	310,700	8,510
Boston	MBTA light rail (LRT)	214,500	8,250
Edmonton	Light Rail Transit (LRT)	98,144*	7,550
Toronto	Streetcar (on-street)	281,900	5,525
San Francisco	Muni Metro (LRT)	145,500	4,076
Houston	METROrail (LRT)	45,700	3,571
Newark	Newark/Hudson Bergen LRT	72,939**	3,143
Minneapolis	METRO Light Rail (LRT)	64,500	2,938
Los Angeles	Metro Rail (LRT)	203,400	2,892
Seattle	Link Light Rail (LRT)	40,300	2,330
Portland	MAX, Streetcar (LRT)	113,900	2,330
San Diego	Trolley (LRT)	124,100	2,320
Phoenix	Valley Metro (LRT)	41,200	2,060

\* Q3 numbers were not reported. Data from Edmonton Transit, collected during the same period, is used instead. See: [www.edmonton.ca/transportation/RoadsTraffic/2014LRT\\_PassengerCountReport.pdf](http://www.edmonton.ca/transportation/RoadsTraffic/2014LRT_PassengerCountReport.pdf)

\*\* Q3 numbers were not reported. NJ Transit’s own FY2014 data is used instead (same number is reported in APTA’s Q4 ridership report). See: <https://www.njtransit.com/pdf/FactsAtAGlance.pdf>



## Appendix C

### Metro Vancouver transit ridership per capita

Data is from the American Public Transit Association (Q4 2012)

Region	Population	Annual Ridership (thousands)	Annual Ridership (per capita)
New York City	19,831,858	3,893,854	196
Greater Toronto	5,583,064	1,003,230	180
<b>Metro Vancouver</b>	<b>2,313,328</b>	<b>363,163</b>	<b>157</b>
Calgary	1,120,225	157,325	140
Montreal	3,824,221	433,710	113
Boston	4,640,802	399,594	86
Washington, DC	5,860,342	456,915	78
San Francisco Bay	6,349,948	476,219	75
Chicago	9,522,434	658,203	69
Philadelphia	6,018,800	336,981	56
Los Angeles	13,052,921	620,903	48
Seattle/Puget Sound Region	3,807,148	175,215	46

### Against similar-size cities

Region	Population	Annual Ridership (thousands)	Annual Ridership (per capita)
<b>Metro Vancouver</b>	<b>2,313,328</b>	<b>363,163</b>	<b>157</b>
Portland	2,289,800	113,728	50
Denver	2,645,209	86,660	33
Pittsburgh	2,360,733	65,464	28
Cleveland	2,063,535	48,153	23
San Antonio	2,234,003	47,147	21
Orlando	2,223,674	29,364	13
Sacramento	2,196,482	27,281	12
Charlotte	2,296,569	26,412	12
Kansas City	2,038,724	16,507	8
Cincinnati	2,128,603	16,357	8