



# TRANSIT ELECTION REPORT CARD DELIVERS MIXED GRADES

## MILLIONS OF CANADIANS RELY ON PUBLIC TRANSIT EVERY DAY.

They take it to work and to school. For many seniors and people living with disabilities, it is essential to daily life. Public transit makes our cities more liveable by making them less congested, and makes climate targets easier to reach.

The Canadian Urban Transit Association welcomes the all-party consensus that we need to build more public transit. CUTA also welcomes the consensus on the importance of rural transit and Via Rail's High-Frequency Rail Project. There is a multi-partisan tradition of investing in public transit and CUTA is pleased to see it continue in the parties' platforms in this election.

Investing in new transit	Weight	Liberals	Conservatives	NDP	Bloc	Greens
Commitment to Permanent Transit Funding	15		-			
Support for already announced major capital projects	7					
Funding to electrify public transit fleets	4					
Funding to support rural transit solutions	2					
Funding to support active transportation	2					
Commitment to Quebec City-Toronto High-Frequency Rail Project	2					
Overall funding profile	-	\$14.9B	\$5.9B	\$20.9B*	-	-
<b>How They Fared</b>	-	<b>A-</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>A+</b>	<b>B+**</b>	<b>B+***</b>

The baseline for these numbers is the federal government's existing capital plan as contained in Budget 2021, which includes \$14.9 billion over the next eight years. This includes \$5.9 billion over the next five years, over and above existing transit capital funding from the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program, and the first three years of the Permanent Transit Fund slated to begin in 2026.

\*This figure is approximate. The NDP platform pledges to double the Community Building Fund. While this fund can be used for infrastructure of all kinds, from wastewater to roads, transit has historically received the largest share of funding. CUTA has allocated half the amounts in the NDP fiscal platform to public transit here while acknowledging the exact amount could be much higher or lower.

\*\* The Bloc supports transit funding, but its preferred mechanism is through an unconditional transfer to the Quebec government. Though there would be no requirement for these funds to be invested in public transit, Quebec has historically invested in public transit and its climate plan makes specific commitments about equalizing transport spending between transit and roads as well as fleet electrification.

\*\*\* The Greens have not released a costed platform.

**CUTA is also disappointed that no recognized party platform supports extending operating support.** The federal government and provincial governments of all stripes recognized public transit's essential role by providing \$4.6 billion in operating support in last year's Safe Restart Agreement. Transit systems and their riders are grateful. But funds are running out—and unless extended, service cuts are likely.

Cuts would particularly impact workers and students who live too far from work or campus to walk or cycle but whose income is too low to drive. They would make daily life harder for many seniors and people living with disabilities. And as people leave transit for cars, cities will become more congested and climate targets harder to meet.

Keeping transit moving with ongoing operating support	Liberals	Conservatives	NDP	Bloc	Greens
<b>How They Fared</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>C-</b>	<b>A+</b>

**Liberals:** Though the Liberal platform does not commit to extended operating support, the party's response to a CUTA questionnaire opens the door slightly. It commits a Liberal government to, "continue working with provinces, territories, municipalities, and public transit authorities to ensure essential services like public transit can continue during the pandemic." And it, "recognizes circumstances where federal support in provincial and territorial responsibilities may be required."

**Conservatives:** The Conservative Party platform did not commit to extended operating support and it did not respond to CUTA's questionnaire.

**NDP:** Though the NDP platform does not commit to extended operating support, the party has pledged to work with willing municipalities in providing free transit which would entail a federal role in providing operating support.

**Bloc Québécois:** Though the Bloc's platform also does not mention operating support, it did express support in a response to a CUTA questionnaire.

Full, unedited responses to the questionnaire can be seen at [cutaactu.ca/election2021](http://cutaactu.ca/election2021)

## WE NEED NEW TRANSIT—AND WE NEED TO KEEP EXISTING TRANSIT RUNNING

Successive Liberal and Conservative governments have made significant strides in building public transit, first through the Gas Tax Fund, then Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program, and now the Permanent Transit Fund. The Liberal government, with the support of the Bloc Québécois and NDP, is pledging meaningful help for transit systems to electrify their fleets.

But building new lines without ways to keep existing—or new—service running is only half the story. Helping systems buy electric buses that they can't afford to run won't help meet climate goals. Nobody builds a house without ways to heat it or turn on the taps, and public transit is no different.

Covid has turned transit's economics on its head. Before the pandemic, 51% of the cost of operating transit came from the farebox. Ridership is less than half pre-Covid levels—and for every 10% decline, transit systems lose \$470 million a year. Unless this revenue is replaced, service cuts are likely which will make our cities more congested, less fair, and make climate goals harder to reach.

**Public transit's top priority is extended operating support to keep buses and trains running for the millions of Canadians who take them every day. CUTA will work with all parties, and the provinces and territories, to deliver the extended operating support required.**