

TO: Mayors' Council on Regional Transportation

FROM: Mike Buda, Executive Director, Mayors' Council Secretariat

DATE: April 4, 2024

SUBJECT: **2024 Mayors' Council Budget**

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Public Affairs Committee recommends that the Mayors' Council on Regional Transportation:

1. Allocate \$984,797 towards projected 2024 expenditures, out of an estimated total 2024 budget envelope of \$1.832 million, leaving \$848,089 unallocated until or unless otherwise directed;
 2. Direct the Chair and Vice-Chair to oversee the 2024 Mayors' Council budget, and report back on plans and results as needed to the Mayors' Council;
 3. Determines that all costs and expenses approved by the Mayors' Council Executive Director, Chair or Vice-Chair are necessary for the Mayors' Council on Regional Transportation to perform its duties under the *South Coast British Columbia Transportation Authority Act*;
 4. Release this report publicly upon approval;
 5. Receive this report;
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PURPOSE:

This report provides a brief summary of the Mayors' Council 2023 work plan and expenditures and proposes a 2024 budget to support the likely priorities in a 2024 workplan (to be considered in a separate report in March). Given the intergovernmental and personnel issues likely to be discussed, the report is presented in-camera, with a recommendation that it be released publicly upon approval.

BACKGROUND:

Each year, the Mayors' Council is allocated a budget ("budget allocation") from TransLink as set by [South Coast British Columbia Transportation Authority Act](#) (SCBCTA Act) at 0.07% of TransLink's gross revenues in the previous year. This annual budget allocation goes to fund:

- A. Mandated or basic costs that the Mayors' Council must budget for every year:
 1. Meeting expenses (facility costs, A/V services, food and refreshments, Recording Secretary)
 2. Members' remuneration and expenses
 3. Statutory responsibilities (costs, usually related to research support, associated with oversight of long-term strategies, investment plans, remuneration and executive compensation).
- B. More discretionary expenses that are related to delivering on the Mayors' Council's broader aims and objectives around improving transit and transportation in Metro Vancouver:
 1. *Secretariat and office expenses:* The Mayors' Council has engaged the services of a full time Executive Director to oversee the operations of the Mayors' Council Secretariat and provide advice and support to the mayors. This position, along with a Coordinator position to support meetings and committees, represents an ongoing expense.
 2. *Consulting support for strategic projects:* The Mayors' Council has, from time to time, engaged consultants to assist with its work, undertaking projects in past years that included the

development and implementation of a high-profile provincial and federal election outreach and engagement strategy, and communications activities in support of investment plans. In 2023, this work, much more expansive than in 2020 and 2021, was focused on the Access for Everyone public engagement campaign.

3. *Travel, accommodation and meals:* In 2023, some travel was undertaken in support of the Access for Everyone campaign, particularly for meetings in Ottawa.
4. *Website:* The Mayors' Council website (www.mayorscouncil.ca) was established in 2014 to support the release of the 10-year plan. Modest management costs for running this site (server and software costs, hosting fees, etc.) were covered by TransLink for the first year and are now born by the Mayors' Council at a nominal cost.
5. *Senior government advocacy:* Communication consulting and research support, plus any required travel or meeting support costs to undertake federal and provincial advocacy.

At the beginning of each year, the Mayors' Council has adopted a strategic work plan to focus resources and time on its highest priorities in the coming year. While a range of secondary issues will also require the focus of the Mayors' Council through the year, it is the identified strategic priorities that drive the agenda and where energy and therefore the budget allocation is focused.

At its January 26, 2023 meeting, the Mayors' Council adopted its 2023 Work Plan and Budget with the following key elements:

1. **Investment Plan:** Develop, fund and approve the next Investment Plan by mid-2024 that will complete TransLink's post-pandemic financial recovery and deliver the first tranche of new projects and services identified in 10YP.
2. **Bus Rapid Transit Action Plan:** Develop and implement a Bus Rapid Transit Action Plan that will define BRT design for the region, build the support of local partners, First Nations and communities for new lines, prioritize corridors for each Investment Plan delivery phase of 10YP.
3. **Climate action:** TransLink is partnering with Metro Vancouver to identify the regulatory and supportive policies that will be required to achieve a 65% reduction in GHG emissions from light duty vehicles by 2030.
4. **Public affairs and advocacy:** Develop and implement a comprehensive public affairs strategy in 2023 and 2024 to generate public and senior government support to fund and approve 10YP. The strategy will be developed by the Public Affairs and Governance Committee and was approved by the Mayors' Council in March, 2023
5. **Reconciliation:** TransLink and the Mayors' Council, in Transport 2050 and its Indigenous Relations Vision Statement and Guiding Principles approved in 2022, has committed to fundamentally change how it works with Indigenous Peoples. At its September 2022 meeting, the Mayors' Council approved a Terms of Reference for the Indigenous Relations Joint Advisory Working Group to provide advice to staff, Board and the Mayors' Council on how to make progress towards its TransLink's reconciliation vision.
6. **Governance change:** The Minister Responsible for TransLink, the Mayors' Council and TransLink Board have identified preliminary objectives for improving the collaboration and governance at TransLink. A Joint Governance Task Force of the Mayors' Council and TransLink Board was struck at the December 7, 2022 meeting to finalize and operationalize the governance changes proposed by the Minister in a process to launch this month.

DISCUSSION

2023 Budget

As set by the [South Coast British Columbia Transportation Authority Act](#) (SCBCTA Act), in 2023, the Mayors' Council originally estimated its budget allocated a maximum budget at \$1.478 million, which was based on 0.07% of TransLink's estimated gross revenue in the previous fiscal year. This budget envelope was revised upwards slightly to \$1,492,953 after TransLink's 2021 gross revenues were finalized in March 2023.

In 2023, the Mayors' Council allocated \$1,447,547 to projected expenditures (including \$500,000 towards for the 2023 public engagement campaign), leaving \$45,406 unallocated. See Table 1 below for a 2023 budget report.

TABLE 1: 2023 Budget Report

Item	2022 Actuals	2023 Budget	2023 Expenditures	\$ Variance, budget to actuals
Total budget envelope from TransLink	\$1,162,456	\$1,492,953	\$1,492,953	
Expenses:				
Meeting costs (food, facilities)	\$11,622	\$60,500	\$70,091	(\$9,591)
Staff support (ED, Coordinator, Rec. Sec.)	\$341,153	\$354,458	\$373,803	(\$19,345)
Consulting Services	\$0	\$10,000	\$0	\$10,000
Member meeting remuneration	\$287,793	\$360,189	\$485,750	(\$125,561)
Office supplies	\$172	\$200	\$153	\$47
Travel and accommodations	\$2,690	\$26,200	\$40,994	(\$14,794)
Website management	\$12,186	\$15,000	\$8,348	\$6,652
Public Affairs	\$11,024	\$620,000	\$518,718	\$101,282
Total expenses:	\$708,193	\$1,446,547	\$1,497,857	(\$9,591)
Unallocated budget envelope:	\$454,263	\$46,406	-\$4,904	
Expenses as % of total TransLink budget envelope	60.9%	96.9%	100.33%	

Total 2023 expenditures were 3% or \$51,311 over budget. This variance was driven by higher than anticipated Mayors' Council meetings and workshops related to supporting the development of a 2024 Investment Plan and funding strategy for the Access for Everyone Plan which resulted in higher meeting costs and member remuneration. Public Affairs costs were lower than budgeted due to \$100,000 in Access for Everyone campaign expenses covered by the TransLink Board to support the Mayors' Council's public engagement efforts. The Mayors' Council used 100% of its allocation from TransLink in 2023, which is above the average range of 50-60%, reflecting the resources dedicated towards the Access for Everyone campaign.

2024 Budget

The Mayors' Council's budget allocation is based on TransLink 2023 gross revenue figure of \$2.618 billion, which translates to a \$1.832 million budget allocation of the Mayors' Council. This budget allocation is a 22.77% increase from the 2023 allocation due to higher TransLink gross revenues.

The 2024 workplan is outlined in a report being considered during the March meeting cycle first at the Public Affairs and Governance Committee, and then the Mayors' Council meeting on April 4, 2024. It is proposed that \$984,797 be budgeted out of the \$1.823 million budget allocation to support the Mayors' Council 2024 Work Plan:

TABLE 2: 2024 Proposed Budget

Item	2023 Expenditures	2024 Budget	\$ Variance
Total budget envelope from TransLink	\$1,492,953	\$1,832,885	\$339,932
Expenses:			
Meeting costs (facilities, food, videoconferencing)	\$70,241	\$80,350	\$10,109
Staff support (ED, Coordinator, Recording Sec.)	\$373,803	\$392,493	\$18,690
Member meeting remuneration	\$485,750	\$420,753	-\$64,997
Travel and accommodations	\$40,994	\$26,200	-\$14,794
Website maintenance & agenda management	\$8,348	\$15,000	\$6,652
Public Affairs	\$518,718	\$50,000	-\$468,718
Total expenses:	\$1,497,857	\$984,797	-\$513,058
Unallocated budget envelope:	-\$4,904	\$848,089	
Expenses as % of total TransLink budget envelope	100.33%	53.73%	

The 2024 budget proposed in Table 2 assumes the following:

- \$848,089 in unallocated budget to be allocated following approval of the 2024 Work Plan, to accommodate possible expenditures related to the continuation of the Access for Everyone campaign.
- Meeting remuneration is estimated at \$652 per member¹ per meeting ([as set out in legislation](#)) for 13 meetings and workshops of the full Mayors' Council, plus 2-3 committee meetings per month for 10 months, with 7-8 members on each committee, plus working group and task force meetings, as well as study tours and advocacy-related trips to Ottawa and Victoria.
- Costs to organize 13 in-person meetings including the use of contracted service providers to deliver live-streaming now expected by the public.
- Executive Director and Coordinator salary and benefits with a COLA escalator from 2023 levels, and a Recording Secretary retained on a consulting basis for the meetings noted above.
- Travel and accommodation costs are anticipated to support federal advocacy.

¹ As per legislation, remuneration is increased by CPI each year. The 2023 CPI adjustment is estimated at 2%, with the final figure calculated in January, 2024 once CPI data available.

- Website support costs to maintain current level of service.
- Public affairs costs to develop a strategy to engage governments, parties and the public in advance of the federal budget and provincial election in 2024 in support of the Access for Everyone plan.

Adjustments to the 2024 budget may be required at that time if the budget envelope is substantially reduced due to lower 2023 gross revenues figure than is being estimated in this report.

As has been past practice, it is recommended that the Executive Director, and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Mayors' Council be delegated authority to approve expenditures incurred on behalf of the Mayors' Council according to TransLink's existing financial control policies.

NEXT STEPS

Budget updates will be provided to the Mayors' Council as requested through the year. Proposals to allocate a portion of the currently unallocated budget envelope for new initiatives not assumed in this budget must first be reviewed by the Chair before being considered by the Mayors' Council.