



Guide to Engaging TransLink in Partner Agency Plans and Developments

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translink.ca



Clear guidance for engaging with TransLink on your plans

This guide provides an overview for local governments and other agencies on when TransLink engagement in partner agency led plans can add the most value, including:

- **Who** at TransLink to reach out to regarding partner plans and development proposals
- **What** land use plans, transportation plans, and major development proposals merit engagement with TransLink
- **When** in the partner agency process TransLink engagement is requested
- **Where** resources, guidelines, and tools are available to provide partner agencies with consistency and clarity on projects and services related to the regional transportation network
- **How** TransLink assesses potential regional transportation impacts and interests, and tracks outcomes of TransLink engagement in partner-led plans

Other TransLink programs benefiting from engagement

While this guide focuses primarily on TransLink's 'Partner Plans Program', it also references other TransLink programs requiring and/or benefitting from involvement with partner agency plans and developments, given TransLink's numerous touchpoints with partner agencies. Information on these other programs can be found in [Appendix 1: Key TransLink Contacts and Resources](#).

There may in some situations be additional requirements or recommendations for TransLink engagement which are not noted in this guide.

Developed together with regional partners – a living document

This document has been developed with input from the Metro Vancouver-led Regional Planning Advisory Committee (RPAC) and TransLink-led Regional Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC), as well as staff members from partner agencies in Metro Vancouver who participated in interviews regarding how TransLink can best provide input to partner agency-led plans and developments. The guide reflects the most current information available at the time of writing, and may be updated periodically to align with evolving regional transportation strategies and policies and other relevant information.

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Why Engage with TransLink?



Mutual benefits, opportunities, reduced risks, and legislated requirement

As the integrated, multi-modal transportation authority for Metro Vancouver, TransLink is mandated to plan, manage, and operate a regional transportation system that moves people and goods.

TransLink collaborates closely with local governments, Metro Vancouver, the Province, and other interest-holders to advance regional transportation goals through aligned planning. TransLink engagement in partner agency plans and major developments (especially early on):

- reduces the risk of issues arising late in the process when resource implications are greater,
- fosters improved communication and efficiencies in the work, and
- provides greater certainty to partner agencies regarding planned transit service and other transportation improvements.

These benefits of early involvement increase the likelihood of advancing shared regional goals and lead to better outcomes for all agencies.

To that end, provincial legislation¹ mandates TransLink to support the regional growth strategy ([Metro 2050](#)) and to review and provide input to partner agency land use plans, major developments, and highway infrastructure plans. Regional policy such as [Transport 2050](#) and Metro 2050 also include direction for TransLink to participate in the development of partner agency plans that have implications for the regional transportation system. TransLink led the development of Transport 2050 in collaboration with:

- Local, regional, provincial, and federal government partners,
- Indigenous Nations and Indigenous organizations, and
- A wide range of interest-holders and residents across Metro Vancouver.

Transport 2050 recognizes that to achieve our shared vision for the region, collaboration, coordination, and cooperation between all partners in the region will be needed.

TransLink supports ongoing regional collaboration throughout its many work streams. The Partner Plans Program contributes through regular engagement with partner agencies on their land use and transportation plans.

Our aim is to work together to advance our shared regional goals and objectives to build the most livable region possible.

How to Contact TransLink's Partner Plans Program

Partner agencies are asked to contact TransLink at PartnerPlans@translink.ca to engage on any partner-led plans, projects, or developments outlined in this guide, per [Table 1](#).

¹ The [South Coast British Columbia Transportation Authority Act](#)

When to Contact TransLink with Land Use Plans, Transportation Plans, and Major Development Proposals

Contact PartnerPlans@translink.ca to engage on any partner-led plans, projects, or developments outlined in Table 1.

Plan Types, Guidelines, and Criteria for Engaging with TransLink

TABLE 1: Summary of partner agency-led plans, projects and development proposals meriting engagement with TransLink’s Partner Plans Program

OVERVIEW	WHEN TO ENGAGE	ESTIMATED TIME FOR TL INPUT
LOCAL & REGIONAL GOVERNMENT-LED PROJECTS		
Major Development Proposals Based on provincial legislation and policy in Metro 2050², TransLink (TL) (in collaboration with partner agencies) has created the following criteria for which major development proposals trigger the need for TL review and comment. TL may elect to provide input on developments not meeting these criteria if such developments present potential opportunities for or impacts to the regional transportation network. Proposals to be provided to TL for input include those that are ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING: 1. An OCP amendment* meeting one or more of these three criteria: • Generates an additional 100 (or more) vehicle trips per peak am/pm hour; • Creates 1,000 (or more) residential units on the site; • Includes 10,000 sqm / 100,000 sf (or more) non-residential development on the site; OR 2. A proposal anticipated to require a Metro 2050 amendment; OR 3. Is located within the geography for a Supportive Policies Agreement (SPA) and meets referral criteria defined through that SPA; OR 4. A proposal which represents a unique opportunity or potential impact for regional transportation and/or TL interests. <i>* ODP amendment in the case of City of Vancouver.</i>	Engagement with TL is best done: • After an applicant submits their OCP amendment application (or in the case where an amendment is not required, other development application) to the local government, AND • Before the local government provides comments to the applicant, AND • Before the development application has gone to Council for bylaw introduction (if applicable) or development permit approval (in cases where the proposal is not an OCP amendment but meets the other noted criteria for TL engagement) This approach provides early input from TL which the local government can share with the applicant, increasing certainty and helping to streamline the development approval process by addressing any issues up front.	Minimum 15 business days

² The South Coast BC Transportation Authority Act requires TransLink to establish the criteria that will be used to determine whether a development proposal is a “major development proposal” for the purposes of TransLink review, and Metro 2050 contains a policy that notes TransLink will establish a definition of major development proposals to support the objective of concentrating Major Trip-Generating uses in areas well served by transit.

OVERVIEW	WHEN TO ENGAGE	ESTIMATED TIME FOR TL INPUT
Neighbourhood, Area & Corridor Plans <i>(including updates and policy amendments)</i> Neighbourhood, Area and Corridor Plans focusing on specific geographic areas within a local government jurisdiction are requested for early TL involvement for more efficient and mutually supportive outcomes. These plans can be focused on land use or transportation or include components of both.	Early stage: Informal check-in at project launch to bring TL awareness and to discuss potential regional transportation opportunities and/or impacts. This is best done at either the early visioning stage, and/or once key plan concepts have been developed, but prior to a draft plan going forward to Council. Early stage engagement may be via one or more rounds, prior to the formal request for feedback at the draft plan stage. Draft Plan stage: Formal request for written feedback for more detailed input including technical comments and alignment with specific TL policies.	Minimum 20 business days (typically needed at formal referral; less time may be needed for early stage informal referrals, and/or for policy-related changes very limited in scope)
Transportation Plans <i>(including updates and policy amendments)</i> Local government jurisdiction transportation plans may be multi-modal or focused on one mode of transportation and can have implications for regional transportation networks or priorities.		
Official Community Plans (OCP) <i>(including updates and policy amendments)</i> An OCP update (or for City of Vancouver, ODP update) may be a comprehensive review and revision of an entire OCP/ODP, or a more streamlined update focused on one or more key aspects of the existing OCP/ODP. Details regarding OCP/ODP amendments associated with a development application are captured under the “Major Development Proposals” description above.		
Regional Context Statement (RCS) updates Metro Vancouver member jurisdictions are advised to connect with TL to discuss components of RCS updates that may have an impact on regional transportation systems or priorities, in particular related to Frequent Transit Development Areas (FTDAs). The Metro 2050 Regional Context Statements Implementation Guideline provides guidance to members jurisdictions on RCS development, submission, and acceptance. Policy 6.2.2 of Metro 2050 (p. 87) indicates that RCSs that propose to add or delete FTDAs must be accompanied by written comments from TL.	Early stage: Informal check-in at project launch, particularly for early feedback specific to any proposed Frequent Transit Development Areas (FTDAs). This is best done at either the early visioning stage, and/or once key content has been developed, but prior to a draft RCS going forward to Council. Early stage engagement may be via one or more rounds, prior to the formal request for feedback at the draft RCS stage. Draft RCS stage: Formal request for written feedback for more detailed input – typically Metro Vancouver provides the formal RCS referral to TL, but direct communications between the local government and TL are often still needed at this stage.	

OVERVIEW	WHEN TO ENGAGE	ESTIMATED TIME FOR TL INPUT
Metro Vancouver Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) <i>(including updates and policy amendments)</i> Provincial legislation requires TL input on both the regional growth strategy (RGS) and any amendments to it. The Metro 2050 RGS Amendments Implementation Guideline provides guidance to member jurisdictions on RGS amendments. For the purposes of the RGS and amendments to it, TransLink is considered an “affected local government” and is required to be notified by Metro Vancouver and invited to comment on proposed amendments.	RGS Amendments Early stage: Local governments anticipating submission of an amendment application are asked to engage with TL prior to applying to Metro Vancouver to proactively work through components of the proposal that may impact the regional transportation system. OCP Amendment: If the RGS amendment application must first advance as an OCP amendment, TL engagement is best done early in that process (see ‘Major Development Proposals’ section above).	Minimum 20 business days (timing dependent on whether input is coming through the TL Board, if Metro Vancouver’s comments deadline permits)
PROVINCE-LED PROJECTS		
Ministry of Transportation & Transit (MOTT) Plans, Studies, and Projects MOTT has a broad range of interests within TransLink’s service area, including a number of provincial highways that are also major transit corridors. MOTT frequently leads studies and planning processes regarding provincial infrastructure within Metro Vancouver. TL is typically a participant in some capacity depending on the nature of the process. MOTT also leads various infrastructure project-based planning processes (e.g. development of a new highway interchange). TL participates in these processes if there is a potential impact to transit operations or active transportation use.	Early stage: Early involvement is preferred to ensure that projects or planning processes consider alignment with TL’s existing and planned transit and active transportation networks. One-time review requests for specific projects, plans or strategies (i.e., not ongoing involvement as part of a working or advisory group) can generally be accommodated within 15 business days. Depending on the nature of the request, this may be longer.	Minimum 15 business days

Other TransLink programs also require and/or benefit from involvement with partner agency plans and developments, given TransLink’s numerous touchpoints with partner agencies. Information on these other programs can be found in [Appendix 1: Key TransLink Contacts and Resources](#). That said, there may in some situations be additional requirements or recommendations for TransLink engagement which are not noted in this guide.

Engagement Outcomes

TransLink seeks to understand the impact of our input on partner agency-led planning processes and projects. To support this, the comment form we typically provide to partner agencies includes a column for partner agency staff to indicate a response to select TransLink comments.

Hearing back from partner agencies and tracking these outcomes helps TransLink assess the effectiveness of our input and improve our engagement with partner agencies to support mutually beneficial outcomes.

Key TransLink Interests



The degree to which a partner-led plan aligns with regional transportation plans and policy is impacted by a wide range of interests which can vary based on the stage and scale of an initiative. These interest areas drive the focus of TransLink's review of partner-led plans. While this list is long, key TransLink interests include:

- Overall [transportation and land use alignment](#)
- [Transit-oriented communities design](#)
- Transit service and [managing the transit network](#)
- [Bus speed and reliability](#)
- [Transit accessibility](#)
- [Active transportation](#)
- [Transportation infrastructure and facilities](#)
- [Roads, bridges, and goods movement](#)

Other TransLink Programs

In addition to engaging with TransLink's Partner Plans program, there are other TransLink programs requiring and/or benefitting from involvement with partner agency plans and developments.

These other key TransLink and regional transportation contacts, programs, and interests are outlined in [Appendix 1](#).

TransLink's Strategic Planning Framework

Under the South Coast BC Transportation Authority Act, TransLink is required to regularly update two planning documents:

- A 30-year regional transportation strategy (currently [Transport 2050](#)), and
- A 10-year investment plan (currently the [2025 Investment Plan](#))

Both plans are designed to support and align with Metro Vancouver's regional growth strategy (currently [Metro 2050](#)). Investment plans must set out TransLink's anticipated operating and capital expenditures and how they will be funded by established revenue sources over a 10-year period.

The [Access for Everyone](#) 10-year plan is a bridge between these two legislatively required planning documents, and is the document under which the [Mayors' Council](#) identifies priority investments from Transport 2050 that are ultimately confirmed and funded via investment plans.

We encourage partner agencies to review these regional transportation plans when developing their land use and transportation plans, to help advance our mutual goals through aligned planning.

Conclusion



When partner agencies engage TransLink early in their land use plans, transportation plans, and major development proposals, all agencies can work together to proactively identify and address potential impacts and opportunities, and to advance regionally shared goals and objectives. Such constructive and meaningful engagement helps to build the most livable region possible for us all.

This guide is an evolving document, and TransLink will continue to check in with partner agency staff via the Regional Planning Advisory Committee (RPAC) and Regional Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC) to gauge how well this guide is working to meet partner agency needs, and iterate on the best processes for TransLink to provide input to partner agency plans and developments.

Please address any questions or communications to PartnerPlans@translink.ca.

Appendix 1:

Key TransLink Contacts and Resources

This appendix provides an overview of other TransLink programs requiring and/or benefitting from involvement with partner agency plans and developments, and relevant contacts and resources.

There may in some situations be additional requirements or recommendations for TransLink engagement which are not noted in this guide.

TransLink Key Contacts

Local Government Funding Programs

One of the ways TransLink supports the movement of people across the region is by investing in local infrastructure projects that improve walking, cycling, and transit and make all travel safer. These investments are made through the Local Government Funding Programs. For more information, see the [funding program guidelines](#), visit the [interactive BICCS & WITT eligibility map](#), or email MRN@translink.ca.

Major Road Network & Regional Goods Movement

Per section 21(1) and 21(2) of the [South Coast British Columbia Transportation Authority Act](#) (SCBCTA Act), TransLink approval is required for any road alterations that would reduce the capacity of any part of the [Major Road Network](#) (MRN) to move people, or would prohibit the movement of trucks on any road other than Provincial highways. TransLink's [Major Road Network Capacity Change Process](#) guidance focuses on corridor-level improvements which trigger an application review by TransLink. TransLink Board approval is required for the removal of any sections of the designated [Truck Route Network](#), based on the SCBCTA Act and TransLink's mandate to support truck movements. For more information or for questions related to MRN changes, email MRN@translink.ca.

Adjacent and Integrated Development (AID) Project Consent Process

TransLink's Adjacent and Integrated Development (AID) program applies to development and other activities adjacent to and/or integrated with TransLink's infrastructure, with the purpose being to manage and protect TransLink's property rights during development and to preserve the safe, secure and uninterrupted operation of the transit system during construction.

For more information, please see [Adjacent and Integrated Developments](#) and engage the AID team at AIDreview@translink.ca for any reviews that may be necessary.

Transportation Demand Management

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) refers to strategies that encourage sustainable travel choices and reduce reliance on driving alone. TransLink's TDM Programs connect residents, visitors, and businesses with active and sustainable transportation options, and the TransLink TDM team works with local governments to implement TDM programs tailored to each community. Contact the TransLink TDM team at travelsmart@translink.ca or activetransportation@translink.ca to learn more.

TransLink's [TDM Guidelines for Development in Metro Vancouver](#) were created to provide best practice and insight to developers and local governments on how to incorporate TDM strategies into new developments. They are structured around four themes that cover the spectrum of process, strategies, context and evaluation that comprise the essential components of TDM planning.

We also encourage participation in [Compass for Developments](#) if eligible. The Compass for Developments program provides a streamlined approach for developers to satisfy municipal TDM requirements for transit benefits. Please see our website or email tdmdevelopment@translink.ca for more information.

Independent Transit Service

An [Independent Transit Service \(ITS\)](#) is a TransLink-approved public transportation service(s) (bus or rail) operating within Metro Vancouver, provided by anyone other than TransLink, its subsidiaries, or contractors. Under the South Coast BC Transportation Authority Act, TransLink is responsible for approving all ITS operations within Metro Vancouver.

TransLink adopted the [ITS Policy](#) to ensure the identification, evaluation, and approval of independent transit services are done in a consistent and transparent way.

The [ITS Factsheet](#) provides more detailed information on the process; for questions about any existing or potential ITS in Metro Vancouver, please contact its@translink.ca.

Additional Guidelines and Tools

In addition to select guidelines noted above, TransLink provides various additional resources, guidelines, and tools to ensure consistency and clarity in projects and services related to the regional transportation network. While not necessarily an exhaustive list, key additional guidelines include:

Transit-Oriented Communities Design Guidelines

Transit-oriented communities are neighbourhoods designed to make walking, cycling, and transit use convenient and desirable by focusing development around transit stations, stops, and exchanges, and thereby maximize the efficiency of existing transit services. TransLink encourages reference to the [Transit-Oriented Communities Design Guidelines \(TOCDGs\)](#), a tool to support the planning and design of communities that integrate land use with sustainable transportation.

Transit Service Guidelines

The [Transit Service Guidelines](#) bring clarity and consistency to the process of adjusting and improving transit services to meet changing customer needs. They are used to:

- Determine where service should be provided;
- Design service characteristics;
- Determine appropriate service levels; and
- Measure and establish minimum levels of performance.

Transit Service Performance Review

The [Transit Service Performance Review \(TSPR\)](#) is published annually to provide a comprehensive review of ridership trends across all modes of the region's transit system. It is a key tool for tracking transit ridership trends, evaluating service adjustments, and identifying emerging needs across the network. Detailed data and insight on ridership trends and patterns by service type and route can be found in the interactive data dashboards on TransLink's website.

Transit Passenger Facility Design Guidelines

Responsibility for delivering effective transit facilities is often shared between local jurisdictions, developers, TransLink and its many project partners. With so many different players potentially involved in the delivery of transit passenger environments, the [Transit Passenger Facility Design Guidelines](#) serve as a principal reference for ensuring design consistency and excellence across all projects, modes and environments.

Park and Ride Guidelines

Park and Ride plays several roles that support the TransLink system: increasing access to transit (especially where non-driving station access options are limited), expanding the reach of the regional transit system, and providing a revenue source. The [Park and Ride Guidelines](#) provide guidance on decisions related to Park and Ride, including what locations are suitable for Park and Ride (including partnering opportunities), where and when Park and Ride should be adapted to other uses, and how Park and Ride is managed.

Interim Guidelines for New Developments: Environmental Noise Assessment

These [Interim Noise Assessment Guidelines](#) were developed in response to the recommendation of a SkyTrain noise study to develop an acoustical guideline for new residential developments near SkyTrain. Consultation with local government planning staff confirmed the need for such a guideline to assess and address all environmental noise sources potentially affecting new developments.

