



Statement from TransLink Chair Dale Parker

With the release of the Comptroller General's report on Friday, TransLink stated that it wanted to give the document the careful review it deserves before commenting on its findings and recommendations as they relate to our operations.

The portrayal of the report in media headlines, particularly in the Vancouver Sun, is another matter and requires an immediate response on behalf of the over 6000 employees who deliver excellent transit service to nearly one million passengers each and every day.

The front page "Metro transit is broken" headline in the Sun's Saturday edition is not true. Metro Vancouver's transit system is rated internationally as one of the most innovative and efficient in the world as measured by international benchmarks. It is one of the few truly integrated systems in North America.

The Comptroller General's report includes observations on cost containment and administrative costs. TransLink took significant steps on these issues last year when, in spite of higher fuel costs and lower revenues the organization did what was needed to reverse a forecast budget deficit into a surplus, all while continuing to deliver expanded services. This year, the threat of significant cutbacks to service had been resolved thanks to the Mayors' Council decision on October 23rd to approve \$130 million in new annual revenue. The 'structural deficit' has been eliminated and TransLink now has the funding stability it needs to sustain our current system.

The issue of funding and governance has been the topic of discussion for transit and transportation service since day one of our existence. This issue is not unique to the lower mainland and is a challenge that every major metropolitan area faces. The Comptroller General's report suggests a framework that will be useful as a point of reference to move dialogue on this issue forward.

But we have some big advantages in overcoming Metro Vancouver's transportation challenges, beginning with a transit system that has grown substantially to serve record levels of ridership and that has the public calling for more. And we have a strong and clear consensus that the provincial transit plan announced in January 2008 is what we need to support the future we want for Metro Vancouver.