

MEDIA RELEASE

Permanent funding for public transit is a big win for public health and social equity

10 February 2021 (Ottawa, Ontario) – Public health organizations applaud today’s announcement from the federal government that it is making annual transit transfers to cities a permanent program. The permanent transit transfer will be worth \$3-billion per year beginning in 2026-27.

“Public transit is a foundational service that provides so many public health benefits for our communities,” said Ian Culbert, Executive Director of the Canadian Public Health Association (CPHA). “Public transit helps to make jobs, essential services and recreational opportunities accessible and affordable to people of all ages, abilities and income levels.”

In an average year, nearly 2 million people across Canada use public transit. For many people, public transit is an essential service that provides them with independent and less costly access to jobs, schools, essential services and recreational opportunities. During the COVID-19 shutdowns last summer, half a million people in Canada were still using public transit each day. Many of them provided essential services as personal care workers in long-term care centres, grocery store workers, cleaners in health care institutions, and workers in food processing plants. For many people, public transit is the only affordable way to get to work.

“Public transit provides so many benefits to society as a whole,” said Kim Perrotta, Executive Director of the Canadian Health Association for Sustainability and Equity (CHASE). “It reduces air pollution, greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change, vehicle-related injuries and deaths, and chronic diseases and healthcare costs. This is an investment that benefits everyone; not just those who use public transit.”

“With this decision, the Federal Government has demonstrated a strong commitment to the creation of healthy, green and just communities” said Pegeen Walsh, Executive Director of the Ontario Public Health Association (OPHA).

CPHA, CHASE and OPHA called on the federal government to provide permanent funding for public transit in a [letter](#) sent to several federal Ministers and in [educational materials](#) on public transit.

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About the Canadian Public Health Association

Founded in 1910, the Canadian Public Health Association is the independent voice for public health in Canada with links to the international community. As the only Canadian non-governmental organization focused exclusively on public health, we are uniquely positioned to advise decision-makers about public health system reform and to guide initiatives to help safeguard the personal and community health of

Canadians and people around the world. We are a national, independent, not-for-profit, voluntary association. Our members believe in universal and equitable access to the basic conditions which are necessary to achieve health for all.

About the Canadian Health Association for Sustainability and Equity

CHASE is a Canadian non-profit organization that works to incubate changes needed to transform our society. We collaborate with non-profit organizations, public health units, municipalities and other organizations to promote innovative policies, programs and technologies that help create healthier and more sustainable communities.

About the Ontario Public Health Association

Created in 1949, OPHA is a non-partisan, non-profit organization that brings together a broad spectrum of groups and individuals concerned about people's health. OPHA's mission is to provide leadership on issues affecting the public's health and to strengthen the impact of people who are active in public and community health throughout Ontario.