

LUMCO

Ontario's Big-City Mayors

April 9, 2020

The Honourable Caroline Mulroney
Minister of Transportation
777 Bay Street, 5th Floor
Toronto, ON M7A 1Z8
minister.mto@ontario.ca

Dear Minister Mulroney,

Thank you for your government's leadership during these extraordinary times. On behalf of Ontario's big city mayors, I am writing to draw your attention to the significant financial challenges our cities and public transit systems are facing in providing this critical service during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As you know, Transit is a critical service that enables front-line health care workers to get to work, ensures manufacturing sector employees can keep the supply chain going, and helps maintain access to groceries and pharmacies. Most transit systems in Ontario have opted to forego farebox revenues in order to maintain access while protecting the health of transit operators.

On behalf of Ontario's big-city mayors, I am asking the Province to begin a dialogue to identify solutions to our public transit challenges, which may include emergency relief funding to replace lost operating revenue, emergency grants for those facing liquidity issues and support for the procurement of personal protective equipment, cleaning agents and disinfectants.

LUMCO has worked with the Ontario Public Transit Association (OPTA) and local Transit authorities to gather data and better understand the public transit challenges we are facing. Some key challenges include:

- Transit systems that serve LUMCO municipalities have lost more than \$70 million to date. Anticipated losses from April to June total more than \$415 million.
- Public transit ridership across the province is down approximately 80% with declining ridership exacerbated by the need to further reduce capacity to implement physical distancing measures.
- The closure of universities and colleges over the summer will result in a loss of predictable revenues for 13 LUMCO communities.

LUMCO

Ontario's Big-City Mayors

- Public transit systems are reporting a quadrupling of cleaning related costs following the onset of COVID-19 alongside difficulties in procuring cleaning supplies and personal protective equipment for public transit staff.

As you know, we have very limited ability to take costs out of our Transit budgets. In some cases, a reduction in services will be feasible, but nowhere near 80 per cent. There are fixed costs to providing even reduced services, and these will be unsustainable.

We would welcome a phone call with you at your earliest opportunity to discuss these matters. To confirm your availability, please have your office contact me at mayor@guelph.ca.

Ontario's big city mayors are thankful for your leadership at this time. We are committed to continuing to do everything we can to slow the spread of COVID-19 in our communities in partnership with you and your government.

Sincerely,



Cam Guthrie
Chair, LUMCO
Mayor, City of Guelph

cc: The Hon. Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Ontario Public Transit Association
Canadian Urban Transit Association
Association of Municipalities of Ontario