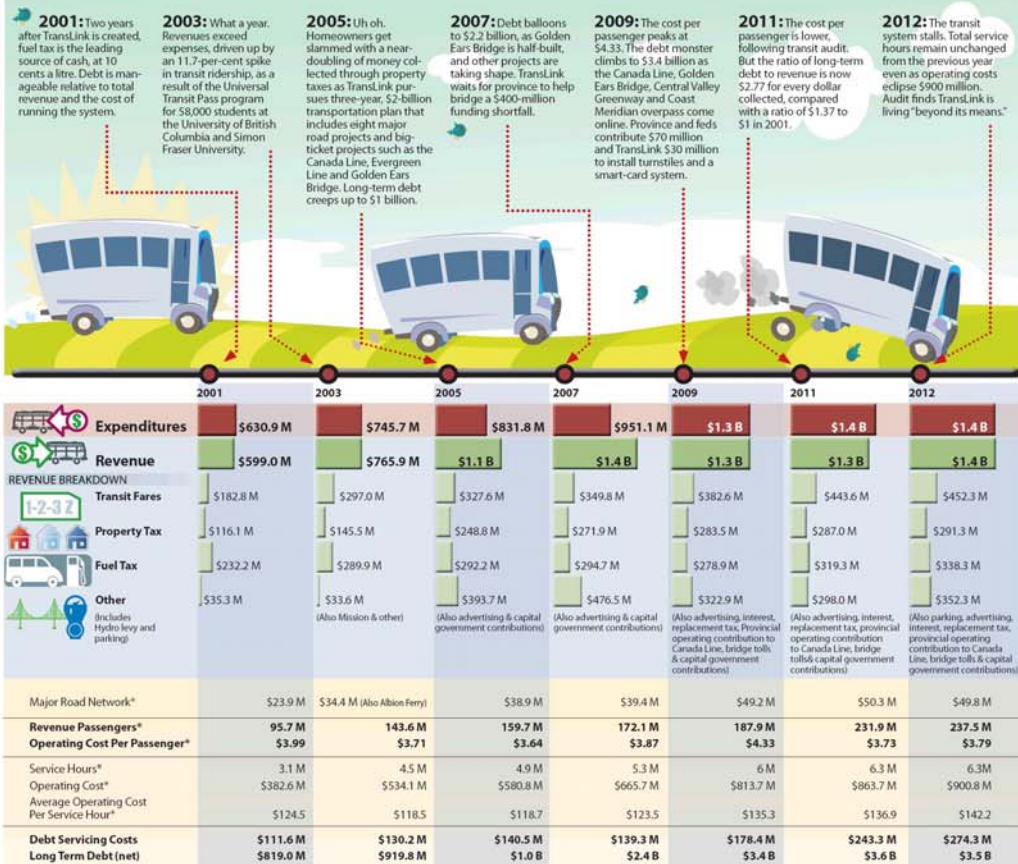


# TRANSLINK: A BUMPY, WINDING RIDE

In early days, TransLink relied on fuel tax as its main revenue source and debt was manageable. By 2005, cracks were appearing, in the face of major road and bridge projects. By 2009, debt had climbed to \$3.4 billion (all figures adjusted to 2013 dollars), and a recent audit found TransLink living 'beyond its means'.



\* Conventional transit only which includes everything but HandyDART

## MOVING PEOPLE: BY THE NUMBERS



### Buses

(shuttle, trolley, regular buses):

	2001	2007	2012
Diesels	858	961	844
Hybrids	n/a	n/a	208
CNG	n/a	n/a	50
Trolleys	244	227	262
HandyDART	246	325	330
Com. Shuttles:	4	153	174
<b>Total</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>1,871</b>



### SkyTrain cars

(including Canada Line)

	2001	2007	2012
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>298</b>



### SeaBus

(shuttle, trolley, regular buses):

	2001	2007	2012
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>



### WestCoast Express cars

	2001	2007	2012
Locomotives	n/a	n/a	6
Cars	24	24	32
Cab cars	8	8	6
Cafe cars	5	5	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>50</b>



### Total TransLink staff

(all operating companies and administration)

	2001	2007	2012
<b>Total</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>6,699</b>



### Bus drivers (CMBC)

	2001	2007	2012
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,903</b>	<b>5,055</b>	<b>5,305</b>

Source: TransLink, n/a = not available

Researcher: Kelly Sinokki

Graphics: Roger Watanabe



### SkyTrain attendants

(BCRTC)

	2001	2007	2012
<b>Total</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>661</b>



### Transit Police

	2001	2007	2012
<b>Total</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>238</b>

**2006** TransLink revives the idea of tolling major bridges and roads, but Liberal transportation minister Kevin Falcon says that the government only supports tolls on new projects.

**2007** TransLink receives another three cents per litre on the gas tax, bringing it to 15 cents, from the province on the condition it raise property taxes for transit. It also raises fares, while Victoria hands over authority to generate revenue from developing and selling property around rapid transit stations, but kills the parking tax and a Hydro tax TransLink had been collecting. Falcon, calling the mayors' dysfunction, imposes new unelected board of members in 2008.

**2008** Ottawa permanently extends an increase in the gasoline-tax transfer payments to provinces, some of which is then shared by B.C. government with TransLink.

**2008** TransLink raises property taxes to cover the parking site tax that the province had cancelled a year earlier.

**2009** Mayors agree to a \$130-million "stabilization plan" — raising the gas tax, property tax and fares — to help TransLink avoid a looming deficit. Mayors also float the idea of tolls on all Metro bridges, charging drivers for road use and pulling money from the provincial



carbon tax and accessing some of the federal fuel-tax funds that go to the province. It also pro-

poses a \$122 vehicle levy. The Liberal government rejects all those ideas.

**2009** TransLink begins collecting the first tolls on the newly opened \$600-million Golden Ears Bridge, left.

**2010** Premier Christy Clark says she's open to considering using the carbon tax to support public transit. Within a year, her government backtracks and opposes the idea.

**2011** Province approves another two-cent gas tax hike, bringing it to 17 cents per litre, to help TransLink pay its \$400-million share of the Four

Line. Mayors also propose a vehicle levy or road/bridge tolling again, with a backup plan that if those fail to gain support they will impose two-year property tax increase of \$23 per home.

**2012** TransLink votes for a 12.5-per-cent fare hike. An independent TransLink commissioner rejects the hike.

**2012** Mayors ask the province for road/bridge tolling, vehicle levy or a regional carbon tax for transit, but all are rejected. In response, mayors nix a backup plan to raise property taxes, and give the Liberals an ultimatum to come up with ways to pay for transit or cut service. Clark refuses an audit

of TransLink, and says any new funding sources must be supported by the public, be affordable for families and not negatively affect the economy.

**2013** Mayors again propose five funding sources for transit expansion, including the regional carbon tax, road pricing, regional sales tax, vehicle levy and leveraging land values near SkyTrain stations. Province says mayors need a consensus on specific transit priorities first and announces a working group with mayors on sustainable funding. Clark makes an election promise to have a referendum for any new TransLink revenue source. She is re-elected in May.

Kelly Sinclair and Bob Shaw