



**NOVA SCOTIA  
FEDERATION OF  
MUNICIPALITIES**

**PRESIDENT:**

Brenda Chisholm-Beaton  
Town of Port Hawkesbury

November 7, 2022

**VICE-PRESIDENT:**

Carolyn Bolivar-Getson  
Municipality of the District of  
Lunenburg

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell, M.P.

Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure  
and Communities

**IMMEDIATE PAST-PRESIDENT:**

Amanda McDougall  
Cape Breton Regional Municipality

Infrastructure Canada  
Suite 1100-180 Kent Street  
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 0B6

**REGIONAL CAUCUS CHAIR:**

Paul Russell  
Halifax Regional Municipality

**Delivered via email**

**RURAL CAUCUS CHAIR:**

Bruce Morrison  
Victoria County

Dear Ms. O'Connell,

**TOWN CAUCUS CHAIR:**

Lennie White  
Town of Westville

**Re: Permanent Public Transit Funding Engagement**

On behalf of the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities (NSFM), I would like to thank you for reaching out to discuss the plan for permanent public transit funding with us directly. I would like to convey some of the research done by staff and what priorities NSFM believes need to be kept in mind while designing this fund.

Public transit services, on fixed routes, are provided by four municipalities across the province. In an additional 21 municipalities, community transit initiatives have been launched in the interest of providing reliable and affordable transportation to all members of the local population, with a specific focus on senior mobility.

More funding for public transit has been a long-running advocacy priority for NSFM members. The pressures caused by increasing costs, emission reduction goals, and population growth are outstripping available supports. Moreover, some municipalities have capacity issues that need to be addressed prior to building or expanding infrastructure.

NSFM recently conducted a membership survey, and many respondents stated the need for more support for public transit and community transit. Respondents called for more support for planning, designing, building, operating, and maintaining transit services. Respondents also called for more collaboration from other orders of government in planning the location of public services to ensure that they are within reasonable distance of public transit routes.

In 2019/2020 municipalities collectively spent \$123.5 million on public transit services. This is a 5% increase from 2018/2019. NSFM members often collaborate to expand public transit. One example is Kings Transit Authority operating a bus purchased by the District of Digby to expand services into Digby. A well-designed public transit fund would help to address gaps in current funding programs, incentivize expansion of sustainable transit services, and support inter-municipal collaboration.

In Nova Scotia, community transit services are especially important to small and rural municipalities. With provincial funding programs only covering a portion of these operational costs, there is an opportunity for the federal government to help stabilize and expand these community transit networks.

Infrastructure Canada has indicated the design for this fund will be a mixture of allocation-based and application-based programs. We believe that both municipalities with public transit systems and municipalities with community transit partners may benefit from allocation-based funds. We anticipate engaging with our members on the question of fund design including the benefits and drawbacks of application-based programs, as well as what indicators may be used in allocation formulas, particularly in rural communities.

Thanks once again for holding this consultation. As the voice of municipalities in Nova Scotia, NSFM is happy to continue to engage with Infrastructure Canada over the design and administration of this funding program.

Sincerely,

*Brenda Chisholm-B*

Brenda Chisholm-Beaton  
President, NSFM

CC:

Mr. Andy Fillmore, M.P. [andy.fillmore@parl.gc.ca](mailto:andy.fillmore@parl.gc.ca)

Ms. Lena Metlege Diab, M.P. [lenametlege.diab@parl.gc.ca](mailto:lenametlege.diab@parl.gc.ca)

Permanent Public Transit Funding Questionnaire: [transit-mobilite@infc.gc.ca](mailto:transit-mobilite@infc.gc.ca)