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MEDIA RELEASE

Transit expansion needed to ensure campus access and boost region's innovation economy, say post-secondary education leaders

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Transit expansion needed to ensure campus access and boost region's innovation economy, say post-secondary education leaders

The presidents of the University of British Columbia and Simon Fraser University are saying "yes" in the coming transportation and transit funding plebiscite.

Improving transit and easing traffic congestion is essential for the 80,000 students, and 21,500 staff and faculty who commute to the two universities. The economic and social benefits of improving linkages along the Broadway corridor and beyond are also critically important to the region as a whole, say the presidents of the institutions.

"Better transportation choice and improved regional connectivity are of great importance to the UBC community as this issue directly affects the well-being of our 50,000 students, 14,000 staff and faculty and our alumni – almost 200,000 of whom are based in the Lower Mainland," said UBC President Arvind Gupta. "Efficient, convenient and reliable transportation is also critical to maintaining and growing the vital economic relationship between UBC and regional communities, fostering innovation and research collaborations, and increasing student employability."

"With three campuses in Burnaby, Surrey and Vancouver, SFU is heavily dependent on adequate transit and transportation alternatives," said SFU President Andrew Petter. "Our students already suffer from commute times almost twice the national average and many living south of the Fraser have no viable transit options at all. Without new investments in transit and transportation, the situation for them and for the region will only get worse."

The presidents of both universities are encouraging participation in the plebiscite by students, staff and faculty – regardless of how they vote – with the goal of sparking an informed and educated debate on campuses across the Lower Mainland.

FACTSHEET**Public Transit to UBC**

- UBC and central Broadway is the second largest transit destination in the region, outside of downtown Vancouver.

Public transit is leading the way to get people get to campus.

- In 1997, 77 per cent of all trips to campus were made by car, and public transit accounted for only 18 per cent of daily trips to and from campus.

- As of 2013, car trips to campus had decreased significantly to 41 per cent of all trips, with public transit accounting for 55 per cent or roughly 78,000 trips per day.
- 77 per cent of UBC students, 41 per cent of staff and 31 per cent of faculty were commuting to campus by transit.
- UBC's [2014 Transportation Plan](#) has a goal to maintain at least 50 per cent of all trips to/from campus on public transit.
- UBC has highest transit mode share in the region for journey to work with over 36 per cent of UBC staff and faculty taking transit to work.
- More than 40 per cent of those travelling to UBC originate outside of the city of Vancouver.
- Commute times for students, faculty and staff can be long.
- 32 per cent of students living off campus spend more than 50 minutes commuting to UBC each way.
- 18 per cent of staff and faculty spend more than 50 minutes commuting to UBC each way.
- The current bus system can't meet demand – an estimated 2,000 people a day are passed by full B-Line buses along the Broadway corridor.

Public transit to SFU

- SFU is the only university in B.C. with campuses located in three major Metro Vancouver cities – Burnaby, Surrey and Vancouver – all served by public transit.
- Many SFU undergraduate students are enrolled in classes on two campuses, some on all three SFU campuses, and some travel between campuses on the same day.
- Vancouver campus students report the highest levels of public transit use. Increased congestion into the downtown core also lengthens the commute between Burnaby and SFU Downtown.
- SFU's Burnaby campus is hampered by insufficient transit system capacity. Students report waits of up to 30 minutes at Production Way Station and other key campus and residence pickup points.
- Roads south of the Fraser are regularly congested, while students from the region using transit to travel to SFU's Surrey campus and other campuses face overcrowded buses and long, irregular commute times.
- 88 per cent of SFU undergraduates report regular use of public transit for their commute to the university – 31 per cent higher than the national average.
- SFU students spend an average of 47.4 minutes commuting on transit each way, compared with the national average of 25.2 minutes.

As Canada's engaged university, SFU is defined by its dynamic integration of innovative education, cutting-edge research and far-reaching community engagement. SFU was founded almost 50 years ago with a mission to be a different kind of university—to bring an interdisciplinary approach to learning, embrace bold initiatives, and engage with communities near and far. Today, SFU is a leader amongst Canada's comprehensive research universities and is ranked one of the top universities in the world under 50 years of age. With campuses in British Columbia's three largest cities—Vancouver, Surrey and Burnaby—SFU has eight faculties, delivers almost 150 programs to over 30,000 students, and boasts more than 130,000 alumni in 130 countries around the world.

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