



Feb  
2024

## Director's Report



*Celebrating the start of the  
Year of the Dragon with  
Premier Eby*

Hello UNA/UBC/UEL neighbours,

Happy Lunar New Year! This is a festive time in many Asian cultures, and a great opportunity for the rest to learn more and enjoy this important time in the lunar calendar. I hope to see many neighbours at this weekend's [UNA Lunar New Year Festival](#) on Sunday February 11<sup>th</sup> at the Wesbrook Community Centre.

In this month's newsletter, you can read about a new location for TransLink's rectifier, funding concerns for expansion of our public transportation system (and how you can help), and some regional updates regarding climate action.

You can also find out more about Metro Vancouver's recent snow pack report, which indicated that our current snow pack is significantly lower than usual.

As always, please reach out if you have any questions, suggestions or concerns that I may be able to assist with. I'm always happy to connect.

All the best,

*Jen McCutcheon*

Jen McCutcheon, Metro Vancouver Director for Electoral Area A ([www.areaajen.ca](http://www.areaajen.ca) or [areaajen@gmail.com](mailto:areaajen@gmail.com))



*Despite the relative lack of snow  
this year, we've enjoyed some good  
family fun in the mountains*

## Mayors (and your Electoral Area Director) Call for More Funding for Public Transportation

In January, TransLink's Mayors' Council (where I represent Electoral Area A) launched a new campaign in partnership with community leaders, calling on residents of Metro Vancouver to ask governments to fund urgent transit expansion in the region. Specifically, we are asking members of our communities to write to provincial and federal elected officials, urging governments to fund the "Access for Everyone" plan. You can do this by [signing this online petition](#) to our MLA (Premier Eby), and MP (Joyce Murray).

Transit ridership in Metro Vancouver continues to rise, with post-pandemic ridership recovery in this region now at more than 90 per cent, surpassing all other major transit systems in Canada



and the United States, including New York, Toronto, Montreal and Miami. Transit service levels have remained frozen since the beginning of the pandemic. Overcrowding on the system has now surpassed the previous records set in 2019 – when TransLink’s service was expanding every year, and with population growth half of what it is today. Now, more than a quarter of rush-hour trips in Vancouver and Surrey are overcrowded and only getting worse.

The Mayors’ Council has unanimously approved the initial phase of the “Access for Everyone” transit expansion plan, which TransLink is ready to start rolling out in mid-2024

if funding can be secured by April. It includes the finalizing of planning for three new Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) projects, expansion of TransLink’s bus fleet and additional bus depot capacity, active transportation and road safety projects, and new bus service starting in September 2024 focused on the most critical off-peak overcrowding hotspots around the region.

You can watch a recent interview with Mayors’ Council for Regional Transportation Chair, Brad West [here](#).

As local leaders, the only two ways that we have to fund public transportation are through fare increases and by raising property taxes. We need more funds from both the provincial and federal governments, as well as more predictability in funding through a permanent funding source. You can watch a recent interview with Mayors’ Council for Regional Transportation Chair, Brad West [here](#).

You can find out more, and sign the petition here: <https://accessforeveryone.ca/>

## TransLink Trolley Bus Rectifier Location Update

TransLink has identified a new site to locate a replacement rectifier unit, which is vital to ensuring continuity of electric trolley bus service on the UBC peninsula. They are not proceeding with the originally proposed location on the northwest corner of Western Parkway and University Boulevard, based on concerns shared by UEL residents and the developer of the adjacent property.

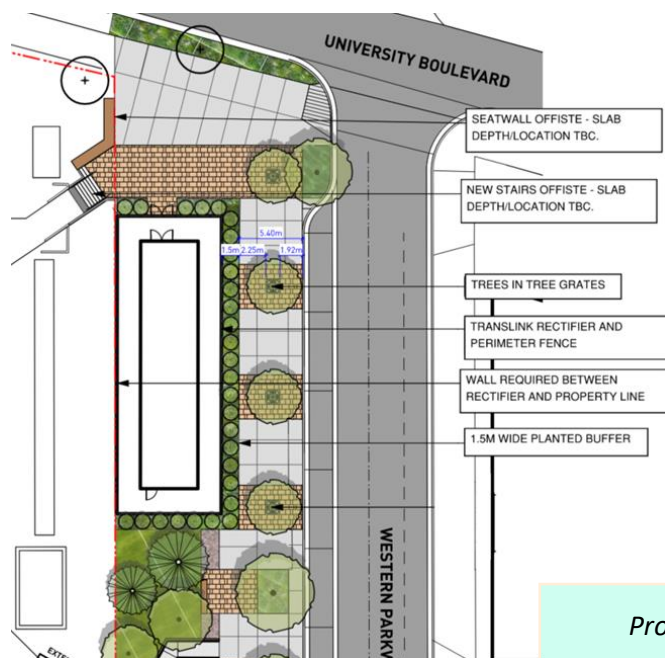


*Proposed location of TransLink’s new rectifier for trolley buses*





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The new location, south of Western Parkway at University Boulevard, meets technical requirements. TransLink's project team is working with Regent College to integrate the rectifier unit into the streetscape through landscaping. More information is available at [translink.ca/rectifiers](https://translink.ca/rectifiers).

TransLink is seeking feedback on the new location from the UEL community. Community members with questions or feedback can contact TransLink at [publicengagement@translink.ca](mailto:publicengagement@translink.ca).

All feedback received by TransLink by **February 20, 2024** will be reviewed by the administration and the Ministry of Transportation as part of TransLink's development application.

*Proposed location of TransLink's new rectifier for trolley buses*

## What Are the Key Actions that our Region Needs to Take to Address Climate Change?

Metro Vancouver, like other similar jurisdictions, is at a critical juncture. Its Board of Directors has adopted the necessary targets and plans aligned with the global science to avoid the worst impacts of climate change, and it is time to put those plans into action. The pathway to a zero-emissions and resilient region – the technology, regulations, and investments – is well understood. Metro Vancouver's [Clean Air Plan](#) and [Climate 2050](#) strategy and supporting roadmaps outline the necessary actions and roles. The next step is to move swiftly from comprehensive planning to bold leadership.

At our January Board meeting, we received a comprehensive and timely report that identifies priority Big Moves needed to accelerate toward the Board-adopted greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction targets. We need to be acting on these Big Moves now, and our actions need to reflect both the current climate crisis and the affordability crisis.

For Metro Vancouver, the most pressing and impactful Big Moves are:

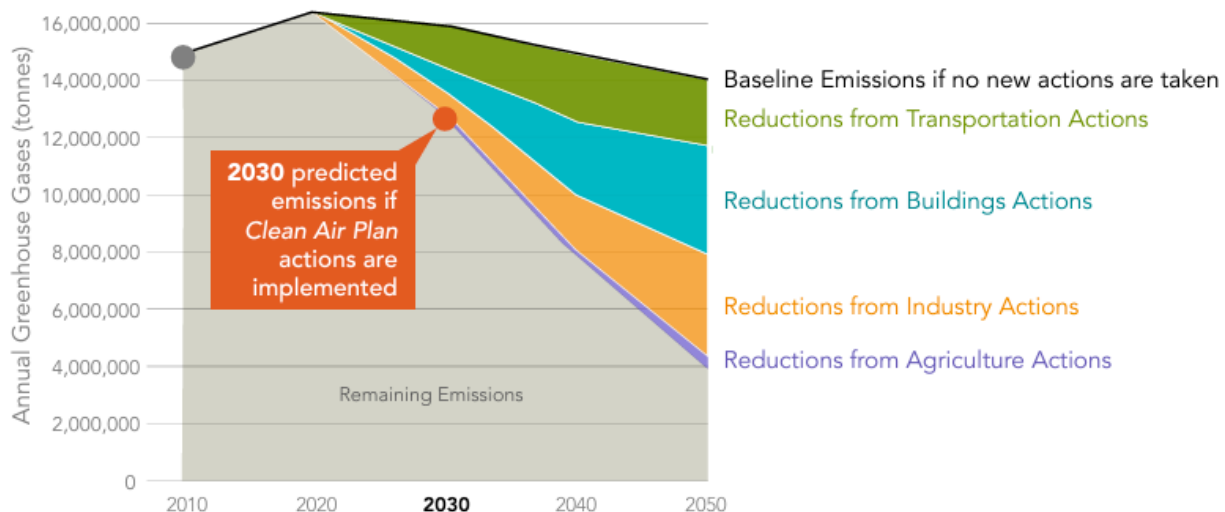
1. Developing and adopting a regional GHG emission regulation for existing large buildings
2. Developing and adopting regional regulations for shifting to sustainable transportation
3. Developing and adopting regional GHG emission regulations for industry
4. Strong regional advocacy for the transition to clean, renewable, and resilient energy

# ELECTORAL AREA A Director's Update

From Jen McCutcheon, Director, Electoral Area A

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## Potential Reductions in Regional Greenhouse Gases



Modeling data showing the potential reductions in regional greenhouse gases if Metro Vancouver's "Big Moves" are implemented, per the Clean Air Plan: <https://metrovanancouver.org/services/air-quality-climate-action/Documents/clean-air-plan-2021.pdf>

For member jurisdictions priority actions that complement the above include:

1. Zero Carbon Step Code, EV-ready bylaws, and support for existing buildings regulations
2. Community plans, zoning, and infrastructure to enable sustainable transportation
3. Collaboration on advocacy for clean, renewable energy policy

Collectively, the Big Moves for buildings and transportation, together with supporting policies and investments from other orders of government, could reduce regional emissions by up to 6 million tonnes per year by 2050, and up to 2.8 million tonnes by 2030 (40 per cent of the 2030 target). In this fiscally challenging time, affordability and equity are key considerations; it is imperative that regulatory measures are grounded with related supportive policies. Without these Big Moves, the region will not meet its climate action targets. Staff will be seeking direction from the MVRD Board on these priority Big Moves and other Climate 2050 actions in the near future.

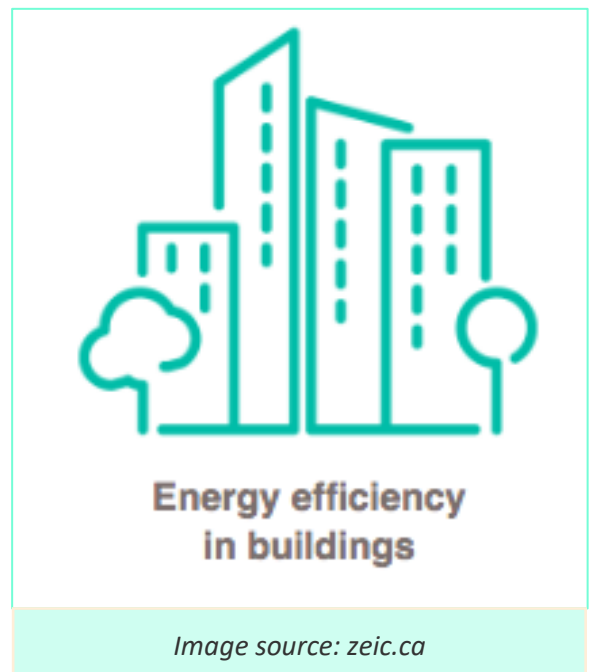


## Disappointing Lack of Action on Engagement for Large Building Retrofits

As described in the previous section, developing GHG reduction requirements for existing buildings is a Big Move or priority climate action in Metro Vancouver's Clean Air Plan and Climate 2050 Buildings Roadmap. I was disappointed that at its January meeting, the Metro Vancouver Board did not support conducting further engagement on a regulatory proposal for reducing GHG emissions from existing large buildings over 2,322 square metres.

The regulatory proposal had been developed based on initial engagement with key stakeholders, and staff were now looking to engage further with impacted and interested audiences. The regulatory proposal was designed to cover about 9,000 buildings, which represent less than 2 per cent of the region's overall building stock, yet contribute over one-third of building GHG emissions. The proposal included annual GHG reporting for buildings over 2,322 square metres, initial GHG limits for office and retail buildings over 9,290 square metres,, and a final GHG limit of zero emissions for all buildings over square metres by 2045. Initial and final GHG limits would exclude those emissions from cooking and district energy. The goals of engagement were to broaden awareness and seek input from those likely to be impacted, or have a role in implementation. A distinct stream of engagement was focused on equity and affordability considerations.

Unless decision makers are willing to move forward with key climate actions identified by scientists, it is going to be increasingly difficult to meet our climate targets. As a parent and as someone who cares deeply about our planet, this is very concerning.







## Very Low Snow Pack Levels in Metro Vancouver and Beyond

Metro Vancouver's most recent snow survey shows low snow pack levels for this time of year. Our region tends to experience a low snow pack year once every five to ten years. The last notable year was in 2015 when the snow pack reached a record low during the winter and spring months.

As of February 1, 2024, our reservoirs are showing about one-third of average historical for both snow depth and snow water equivalent. This is in contrast to last year, when they were well over 70 per cent for both during the same sampling period.

There are still a few months left in the snow accumulation seasons, so it's still too early to tell what impact current conditions will have on the water supply for spring, summer and fall. Nevertheless, it's vital that everyone proactively conserve water.

As a result of low snow pack levels, there are potential implications for our drinking water supply and to the fish populations in our rivers. Metro Vancouver will continue to monitor snow levels and weather patterns over the next few months in advance of the high demand season. Operational adjustments are likely to include an early start to filling the water supply lakes for the summer demand period.

As a result of low snowpack levels, there are potential implications for our drinking water supply and to the fish populations in our rivers. It is important that we continue to proactively take measures to conserve our water supply both for drinking water and to support river flows for fish.



*Metro Vancouver watershed staff conduct a snowpack depth on the west side of Loch Lomond, an alpine lake in the Seymour watershed. Image source: Metro Vancouver*

Annual seasonal lawn watering restrictions will come into effect on May 1. If people don't follow the rules, there is a chance we may need to ban lawn watering, like last year. We know that proactive public education campaigns supported by robust local enforcement is key to conserving our summer water supply for where it's needed most — drinking, cooking, and cleaning.

# ELECTORAL AREA A Director's Update

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## Celebrating 100 Years of Drinking Water in Metro Vancouver



Image source: <https://metrovancover.org/services/water/watersheds-reservoirs>

Speaking of water, this year, Metro Vancouver is celebrating the 100th anniversary of the [Greater Vancouver Water District](#). Over the last century, our drinking water treatment and transmission system has expanded to match the growth and complexity of our region. Today, thanks to collaboration, foresight, and planning, Metro Vancouver provides high-quality drinking water for 2.8 million residents through a system of water supply areas, dams, treatment facilities, reservoirs, pump stations, and water mains. Metro Vancouver is now planning for the next 100 years to meet the needs of a growing population and ensure the water supply system is resilient to the effects of climate change and seismic events.

## Family Day Campfire in Pacific Spirit Regional Park



Join Metro Vancouver staff for stories, songs, and surprises about local plants and animals.

**February 19, 2024**

11:00 am to 3:00 pm at [Pacific Spirit Regional Park](#)

For all the details, visit [metrovancoveronline.org](https://metrovancoveronline.org).

We gratefully acknowledge the financial support of the Province of British Columbia.

## I Love Transit Week: February 12-16

From February 12 to 16, TransLink is celebrating all the things we love about transit. Whether you're a seasoned transit rider or a curious newcomer, there's something for everyone during this special week.

**I ♥ TRANSIT**



For those who are unfamiliar, I Love Transit Week celebrates the countless ways public transportation enriches our communities and helps shape our region. From reducing traffic congestion to fostering those connections to the people and places that matter the most, transit plays a vital role in our daily lives.

Visit [translink.ca/ilovetransit](https://translink.ca/ilovetransit) for more!





## Did You Know That “Compostable” Bags Actually are NOT Compostable?



Did you know that you shouldn't put ANY plastic bags in the compost?

Plastic and plastic-lined bags, even the ones labelled "biodegradable" or "compostable" are not accepted at all local facilities as they can cause operational problems, may not break down properly during processing, and may contaminate the finished compost. If the operator identifies plastic bags or other non-compostable materials in the green bin, the entire load may be rejected and sent to landfill. Leave them out of your green bin to be safe, unless specifically allowed by your municipality or service provider.

## Jen's Board and Committee Appointments for 2024

I am excited to announce that I was re-appointed to the same Metro Vancouver Committees for 2024. Here is a list of the boards and committees that I serve on in my role as Electoral Area A Director. Feel free to reach out to me if you would like to learn more.

- Metro Vancouver Regional District (MVRD) Board of Directors
- TransLink Mayors' Council for Regional Transportation
- Chair of the Electoral Area Committee, MVRD
- Climate Action Committee, MVRD
- Mayors' Committee, MVRD
- Flood Resiliency Taskforce, MVRD
- Caucus of Committee Chairs, MVRD
- TransLink Planning & Priorities Committee
- Co-chair of TransLink's Indigenous Relations Working Group
- Board Member for Metro Vancouver Zero Emission Innovation Centre (ZEIC)
- ZEIC Governance Committee
- ZEIC Human Resources Committee Co-chair
- Fraser Valley Regional Library Board of Directors
- Lower Mainland Local Government Association (LMLGA) Third-Vice President
- Municipal Finance Authority of BC Alternate Director

## Links & Connections

[Jen McCutcheon's Website](http://www.areaajen.ca)

[www.areaajen.ca](http://www.areaajen.ca)

[Jen McCutcheon's Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/AreaAJen)

[www.facebook.com/AreaAJen](https://www.facebook.com/AreaAJen)

[Metro Vancouver](http://www.metrovancouver.org)

[www.metrovancouver.org](http://www.metrovancouver.org)

[Mayors' Council on Regional Transportation](http://www.translink.ca)

[www.translink.ca](http://www.translink.ca)