



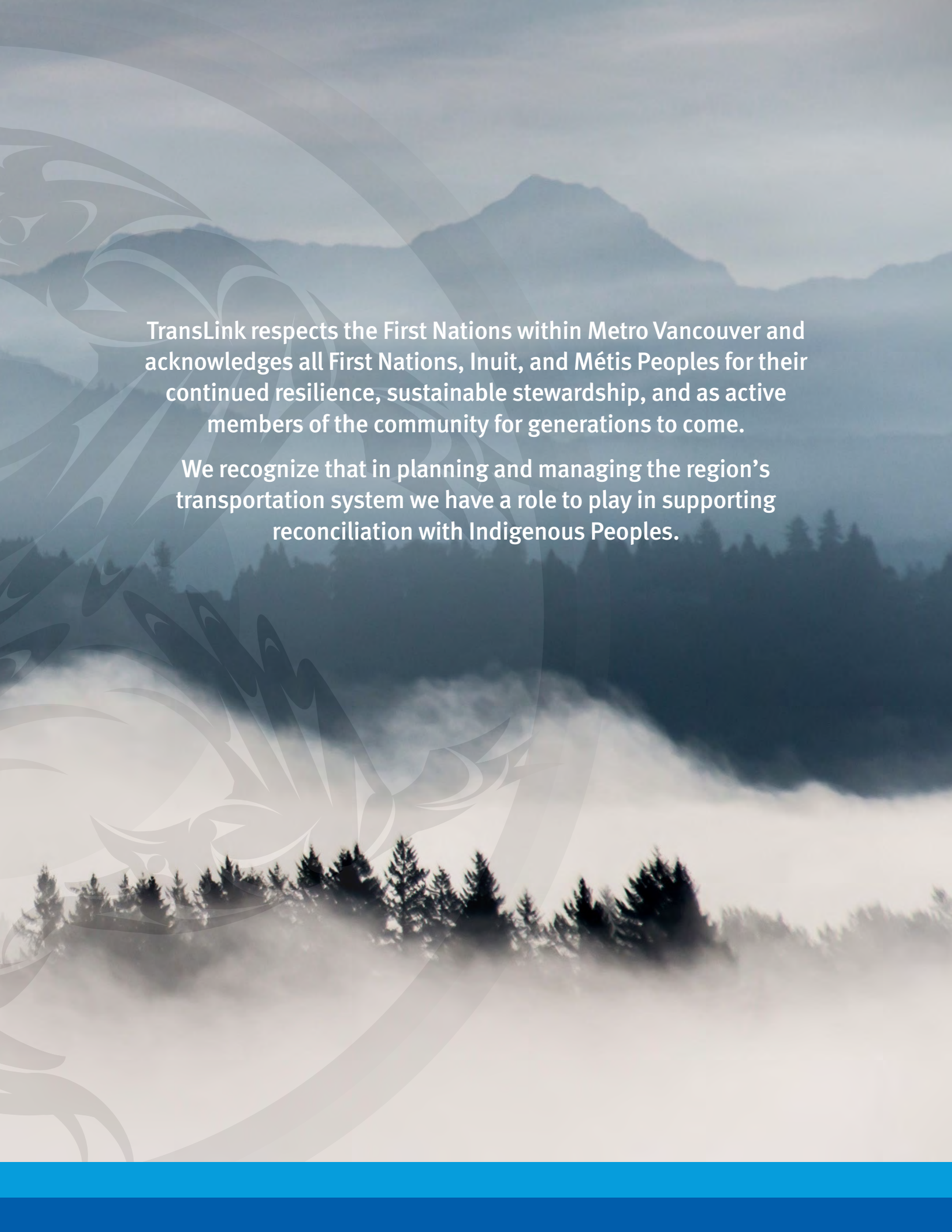
# TransLink Reconciliation Report 2023

August 2024

[translink.ca](https://translink.ca)







TransLink respects the First Nations within Metro Vancouver and acknowledges all First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples for their continued resilience, sustainable stewardship, and as active members of the community for generations to come.

We recognize that in planning and managing the region's transportation system we have a role to play in supporting reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples.



# Foreword

At TransLink, we recognize our role in moving reconciliation forward in meaningful ways. We are committed to continuing to build and operate an inclusive and accessible transportation system that supports all Indigenous Peoples, cultures, and their perspectives.

We are grateful to the First Nations and Indigenous organizations within Metro Vancouver who have been open to working with us. We understand that reconciliation involves building and maintaining meaningful relationships and establishing initiatives and policies that are reflective of Indigenous priorities.

TransLink recognizes that cultural recognition and language revitalization actively helps to restore connections back to First Nations communities and helps to create awareness and a welcoming

As the Director of the Indigenous Relations team, it is important for us to listen to the advice and feedback of the First Nations and Indigenous organizations we serve to address needs and support opportunities to further reconciliation at TransLink.

I am proud of the work that TransLink has accomplished in educating our staff about the history of Indigenous Peoples, governance structures, and the movements for justice and reconciliation. We are constantly learning through engagement with First Nations, Indigenous groups, ongoing training, and the recent establishment of an Elder's Program.

Our goal is to become a culturally respectful organization that will improve our ability to understand and incorporate the regional transportation priorities of First Nations

environment. In 2023, several cultural recognition projects were showcased in partnership with local First Nations. Our hope is that these artworks and Indigenous place names featured throughout TransLink's operations will remind us all of the important work to support lasting and meaningful reconciliation.

TransLink is committed to advancing our 2024 corporate priorities to Deliver Today, Deliver Tomorrow and Deliver Together. We will continue along the path to meet the needs of First Nations and Indigenous organizations that we are privileged to work alongside.



**Kevin Quinn**  
Chief Executive Officer

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kevin Quinn'.

and Indigenous organizations. My team is committed to weaving our guiding principles of Recognition, Inclusion, Respect, Celebration, Perspectives, and Communication into everything we do at TransLink.

We look forward to continuing to work in partnership with First Nations and Indigenous organizations to make a more accessible and affordable transportation system for Metro Vancouver.

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**Alanna Simmons**  
Director, Indigenous Relations

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# Commitment to Advancing Reconciliation

**In 2019, TransLink introduced the Indigenous Relations department to develop policies and procedures that support our working relationships with First Nations and Indigenous organizations within our service region.**

TransLink extends our sincere gratitude to the First Nations and Indigenous organizations who have been willing to work collaboratively with us as we establish new relationships, initiatives, and policies that are inclusive of Indigenous Peoples. We recognize that this work is long overdue. One of TransLink's goals is to gain and build trust by creating positive and sustainable outcomes for Indigenous Peoples. TransLink continues to be committed to listening to the regional transportation priorities of Indigenous Peoples, finding unique pathways to best address their concerns, and identifying opportunities. We understand that this will require ongoing investments in Indigenous communities for the foreseeable future.

In 2021, through our engagement on the Regional Transportation Strategy (Transport 2050), we heard that working together effectively requires bilateral engagement and the building of relationships based on shared communication, mutual benefit, and respect. With this in mind, we better understand the needs, issues, interests, and priorities of Indigenous Peoples within our region. This information helped shape the strategies and actions that we will implement, in collaboration with government and regional support over the coming years to advance reconciliation. Our focus is to build the confidence and accountability necessary to implement the commitments outlined in Transport 2050 and to be flexible as Indigenous interests and priorities may evolve over time.

In March 2022, the Indigenous Relations Vision Statement and Guiding Principles for TransLink were confirmed through engagement with First Nations and supported by TransLink leadership and staff, the Mayors' Council, and the Board of Directors. These two foundational documents serve as a public statement and commitment to set the tone for how we will work with Indigenous Peoples to ensure we live up to our commitment to advance reconciliation.

The 2023 Reconciliation Report was made possible by the ongoing support of the TransLink Board of Directors, the Mayors' Council, and Senior Leadership and staff of TransLink, British Columbia Rapid Transit Company (BCRTC), Coast Mountain Bus Company (CMBC), Metro Vancouver Transit Police (MVTP), and West Coast Express (WCE). Many departments across TransLink have been involved in work intended to contribute to thriving and sustainable Indigenous communities and support our continued journey to advance reconciliation.

## Indigenous Relations Vision Statement

TransLink’s mandate is to connect Metro Vancouver and create a more livable region. In doing so, TransLink will be inclusive of Indigenous Peoples, their cultures and their perspectives. TransLink will actively support reconciliation and the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in collaboration with Indigenous governments, organizations, and businesses in the pursuit of thriving and sustainable Indigenous communities.

## Indigenous Relations Guiding Principles

### RECOGNITION

TransLink recognizes the legal and constitutional rights of Indigenous Nations and Peoples and the relationship between Indigenous Peoples and their treaty and unceded lands and resources

### INCLUSION

Increase inclusion and diversity of Indigenous Peoples within TransLink’s business and expand opportunities for Indigenous businesses

### RESPECT

Respect and value Indigenous history, culture and knowledge

### CELEBRATE

Celebrate engagement and inclusion of Indigenous employees and Indigenous businesses and participate in Indigenous celebrations

### PERSPECTIVES

Seek to understand and incorporate Indigenous communities’ perspectives and solutions in TransLink’s decision making and the delivery of TransLink services, including those of urban Indigenous Peoples

### COMMUNICATION

Timely, consistent, appropriate, and meaningful consultation and engagement, and open two-way communication based on honesty, integrity, and respect



**TransLink's focus over the past year can be characterized by three key components:**

- strengthening relationships with Indigenous Peoples,
- continuing our reconciliation journey for TransLink staff, and
- ensuring meaningful consultation and engagement for projects and initiatives.



# Strengthening Relationships with Indigenous Peoples

TransLink has worked to improve regional relationships with First Nations, Indigenous organizations, and Indigenous employees through various initiatives. This includes improving First Nation communities' access to transportation services, establishing an employee support network, and launching cultural recognition initiatives.

## First Nations Transportation Program

TransLink is committed to working with First Nation communities to introduce and improve transportation options for treaty and reserve lands within Metro Vancouver. Feedback was received about the lack of transportation services on First Nation reserves and impacts of current service levels on treaty lands, which further entrenched disparities and systemic racism against their communities.

The First Nations Transportation Program represents our commitment to introducing transportation options to First Nation reserve lands and improving service to treaty lands in support of thriving and sustainable communities under a shared understanding of reconciliation.

First Nations communities can benefit from increased transportation options through:

- Easier transportation connections to and within communities
- More affordable, sustainable, and environmentally friendly transportation options
- Improved accessibility for people walking and biking to access transportation services
- Greater access to job and social opportunities in the region
- If requested, greater access for non-community members to homes and/or businesses
- Incorporating First Nation-specific strategic goals, official community plans, and future visions

Working closely with First Nations, we are developing the First Nation Transportation Program together to support new service designs and implementation processes. TransLink has committed regional funding from the 2022 Investment Plan to begin delivering service based on our community engagement. Engagement activities include site visits, seeking information on community transportation needs, potential improvements to transit infrastructure (e.g., sidewalks, street lighting, and bus shelters), and identifying funding opportunities with the ultimate goal of increasing transportation access.





## Indigenous Employee Support

An Indigenous Employee Resource Group was created to offer a safe and inclusive space for all to celebrate Indigenous identities, cultures, and histories, to feel encouraged to share goals and develop a professional network, and to support and learn from each other in the spirit of reconciliation.

### INDIGENOUS EMPLOYEE RESOURCE GROUP

In 2023, the Indigenous Employee Resource Group participated in a ceremonial sweat lodge within the unceded and traditional territory of Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation). The Group also held multiple sharing circles to learn from each other, discuss cultural teachings, and outline mentorship opportunities. There was a series of hosted guest speaker sessions including:

- The founder of Butterflies in Spirit on ongoing advocacy work for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls 2S+,
- An in-house Knowledge Keeper from PLEA Community Services on providing guidance to the organization on cultural plans and access to community-based services,
- A storyteller and member of Kwantlen First Nation held a spoken word session to share award-winning poetry and lived experiences.

## Elders Program

The newly created Elders Program aims to involve Elders and Knowledge Keepers in a variety of meaningful ways, ranging from cultural engagements and spiritual guidance to providing input on internal policies and practices. The goal is to create a collaborative space to share wisdom and insights, which will help TransLink better understand and serve the needs and interests of Indigenous employees and Indigenous Peoples within the service region. Recognizing the depth of knowledge and experience that these Elders bring, TransLink is committed to ensuring their insights are woven into the fabric of our decision-making processes. This initiative marks a significant step in our journey towards a more inclusive and culturally respectful organization. In 2023, invitations were extended to local First Nations and urban Indigenous organizations to participate in the newly initiated Program.







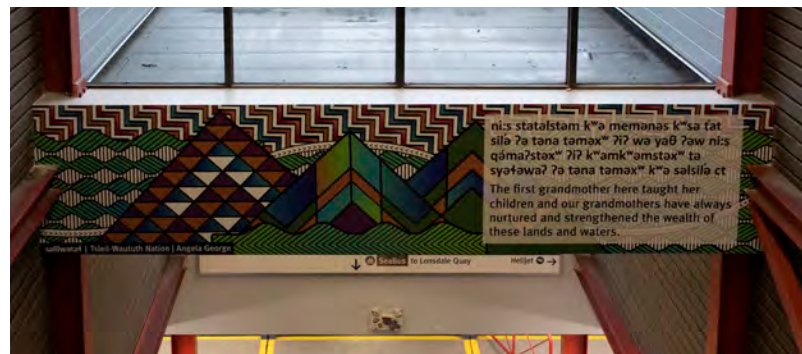
## Cultural Recognition Projects

TransLink recognizes that cultural recognition and language revitalization play a crucial role in restoring connections to Indigenous communities, creating a safe and welcoming environment, and supporting reconciliation. In 2023, multiple cultural recognition projects were showcased in partnership with local First Nations and Indigenous organizations.

**First Nation artwork and signage at SeaBus terminals** were created at Waterfront Station and Lonsdale Quay. The images were sampled with artist permission from artwork on the Burrard Chinook SeaBus, which launched in July 2021. The signage supports Indigenous language revitalization and preservation by incorporating land acknowledgement statements in *hə́n̓d̓qə́mi̓h̓ə́n̓* and *Sk̓w̓x̓w̓ú7mesh sn̓íchim* (Squamish language) which were developed by language experts from *x̓w̓məθk̓w̓əy̓ə́m* (Musqueam Indian Band), *Sk̓w̓x̓w̓ú7mesh Úxwumixw* (Squamish Nation), and *səlilwətał* (Tsleil-Waututh Nation).

**A blessing ceremony for First Nation murals at King George Station**, attended by the four artists and their families and friends was held to celebrate the First Nations' distinct cultures and heritage from

*q̓íćəy̓* (Katzie First Nation), *q̓w̓a:ḥ̓łə́h̓* (Kwantlen First Nation), and *se'mya'me* (Semiahmoo First Nation) and to encourage ridership to reflect on the meaning of the land that we travel on today. The murals are a welcome permanent display at the SkyTrain entrance. This represents the first time these three First Nations are profiled on TransLink's system.







**The Red Dress Day Awareness Campaign** was a collaborative effort with Butterflies in Spirit, a dance group comprised of family members of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and two-spirit peoples (MMIWG2S+). TransLink’s Chief Executive Officer, Kevin Quinn expressed our appreciation to the families of Butterflies in Spirit for their courage and strength in sharing stories about their loved ones. The Healing Journey Through Dance event took place on May 5, 2023 with the art installation at Stadium-Chinatown SkyTrain Station remaining for many months. The powerful messages surrounding Red Dress Day were vital in recognizing injustice and gender-based violence that continue to impact Indigenous Peoples in North America.

**DJ O Show played music for Art Moves artist-in-residence** at various locations on our system during National Indigenous History Month. O Show is an award-winning local musician and a proud former council member of Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh Úxwumixw who plays high-energy playlists, mixing hip-hop,

R&B and Indigenous music. Coming from a diverse background as an Afro-Indigenous person, she embraces both her cultural backgrounds and incorporates the teachings she has learned into everything she does.

TransLink commissioned two Indigenous artists representing x̓m̓əθk̓w̓əy̓əm and an urban Indigenous artist from Kwakiutl Nation to create multiple original designs to be utilized for various communications and promotional materials.





# Reconciliation Journey for TransLink Staff

Cultural awareness training and opportunities to participate in community events for TransLink staff supports the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Call to Action #92. Training and attendance at cultural events and celebrations allows for further exploration of Indigenous cultures, history, and the ongoing movements for justice and reconciliation.

## Cultural Awareness Training



Chastity Davis-Alphonse, a well-respected Indigenous educator, delivered her award-winning cultural awareness program called Canadian History Through the Lens of Indigenous Women

(Deyen – An Invitation to Transform). Participants engaged with Chastity through multiple lenses, such as legislative history, cultural ceremonies, and current social initiatives.

To date, the TransLink Board of Directors, Leadership Team and the Transportation Planning and Policy Division have successfully completed Chastity’s training modules.

## Cultural Events and Celebrations

Opportunities for increased awareness and participation occurred throughout the year for Indigenous events and celebrations, as it is important to honour First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples and recognize their significant contributions.

### NATIONAL DAY OF TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

The Survivors’ Flag ceremony was arranged with Elder participation to display the flag which serves as a powerful symbol of remembrance, paying tribute to residential school survivors and acknowledging the profound impacts of the residential school system on Indigenous lives and communities throughout Canada.

A National Day of Truth and Reconciliation webinar was hosted by TransLink’s employer partner,

which involved a panel discussion with Indigenous leaders and allies to explore the question: Where should organizations focus their resources and energy to ensure the longevity and health of those connections and start to create safer working environments for Indigenous employees?

### COURAGEOUS CONVERSATIONS SPEAKER SERIES

TransLink’s Director of Indigenous Relations gave a staff presentation for the Courageous Conversations speaker series on the Diversity of Indigenous Peoples and Cultures. She shared insights from her personal experiences as a First Nation individual, a review of current terminology, and the perspectives of Indigenous Peoples in Canada.

### WOMEN’S MEMORIAL MARCH

Multiple TransLink and Transit Police teams attended the Women’s Memorial March on February 14, 2023. Taking place annually since 1992, the march was established to raise awareness about gender-based violence, particularly in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside, where many have gone missing or been murdered, including many Indigenous women, girls, and two-spirit peoples. The march is an opportunity for grieving family members, friends, community partners, and the public to share their support.

### TRANSLINK OUTREACH BUS AND FREE SHUTTLE SERVICE

TransLink attended Surrey’s National Indigenous Peoples Day to honour and celebrate the rich and diverse cultures, histories, and contributions of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples co-hosted by ᑭᑭᑭᑭ, ᑭᑭᑭᑭ and se’mya’me, with the free TransLink shuttle service was offered from King George Station to the event throughout the day.



## Meaningful Indigenous Consultation & Engagement

TransLink recognizes that First Nation consultation and engagement requirements are complex and constantly evolving from legal, procedural, policy and economic development perspectives. TransLink will work proactively to identify and address interests and concerns with the goal of enhancing trusting and collaborative long-term relationships with First Nations throughout the lifecycle of a project or program.

### Ongoing Consultation and Engagement

TransLink acknowledges that our operations and projects can affect the rights and interests of First Nations. We are committed to building genuine, respectful relationships with First Nations, ensuring their voices are heard and actively integrated into our decision-making processes. We prioritize early and ongoing engagement throughout the project lifecycle, working collaboratively to create outcomes that are both sustainable and equitable. Reconciliation is a core objective, guiding us to deliver results that honour the land we operate on and the First Nations who have been stewards since time immemorial.

### Access for Everyone Plan

The mandate of the Mayors' Council is to plan, fund, and advocate for the region's transportation system, ensuring TransLink's service meets the needs of local communities, including Indigenous Peoples within Metro Vancouver. This can be achieved by securing funding from the Federal and Provincial Governments for TransLink's new 10-year plan, Access for Everyone. This plan will expand public transit throughout the region and improve infrastructure for drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians.

# 2024 Focus Areas

We recognize that reconciliation requires building new relationships and strengthening existing ones through concrete action over many years. Through this, we will continue along the path to reconciliation by meeting the needs of the First Nations and Indigenous organizations with whom we are privileged to work.

TransLink works to advance the 2024 Corporate Priorities: Deliver Today, Deliver Tomorrow, and Deliver Together, of which reconciliation is a core principle. It is important for TransLink to continue our focus on the following three key areas.

1. Strengthening our relationships by:
    - Requesting Leader-to-Leader meetings with First Nations' Leadership and the TransLink Chief Executive Officer.
    - Reorganizing Indigenous Relations for consultation and engagement purposes and assigning staff as key relationship leads to assist capital and planning projects.
    - Initiating discussions to enter into formal relationship agreements with First Nations to ensure shared priorities are understood and contribution funding is provided in a timely manner.
  - Continuing to assist Strategic Sourcing in implementing the Indigenous Procurement Principles to support increased participation of Indigenous businesses.
  - Continuing to plan for Indigenous art and language revitalization opportunities to promote connections between Indigenous art and place names with the environment, land, and water.
2. Continue working with local First Nations to develop and implement the First Nations Transportation Program for transportation services on reserve lands and increased service on treaty lands.
  3. Enhance Indigenous employment readiness to create a culturally safe and supportive workplace for current and future Indigenous employees.







## Artist Recognition

**Title page and pages 5, 8 bottom middle, 10, and 12:** Gracielene Ulu of x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əyəm (Musqueam).

**Page 6:** Natache Gabriel of ǵ<sup>w</sup>ɑ:ńłǵǵ (Kwantlen First Nation).

**Page 7 top image:** Rain Pierre of ǵǵǵǵ (Katzie First Nation), Natache Gabriel of ǵ<sup>w</sup>ɑ:ńłǵǵ (Kwantlen First Nation), and Roxanne Charles, and Easton Arnouse of se'mya'me (Semiahmoo First Nation).

**Page 7 middle right image:** Siobhan Joseph of Sǵwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation)

Sǵwxwú7mesh Sníchim translation: You have arrived at the place known for the falling maple leaves, a place name of the Squamish people.

**Page 7 bottom right image:** Angela George of səlilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh Nation).

həńǵəmińəń translation: The first grandmother here taught her children and our grandmothers have always nurtured and strengthen the wealth of these lands and waters.

**Page 8 bottom right:** Christine Mackenzie of Kwakiutl Nation.



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