

# Real initiatives and a just transition plan



## About the Green Economy Network

The Green Economy Network (GEN) is a coalition of environmental groups, labour organizations and social justice and youth movements working together to find real solutions to tackle climate change. Spurred by Canada's failure to move toward an authentic green economy, leaders of more than twenty prominent groups formed GEN to push for a fundamental transformation of our industrial economy. Good green jobs are being created and can be further created in Canada to cut carbon emissions and develop true alternatives to the old ways of working. GEN is now at the forefront of a new social movement striving for a low-carbon, prosperous and just future for all Canadians.

## Better public transit for all Canadians

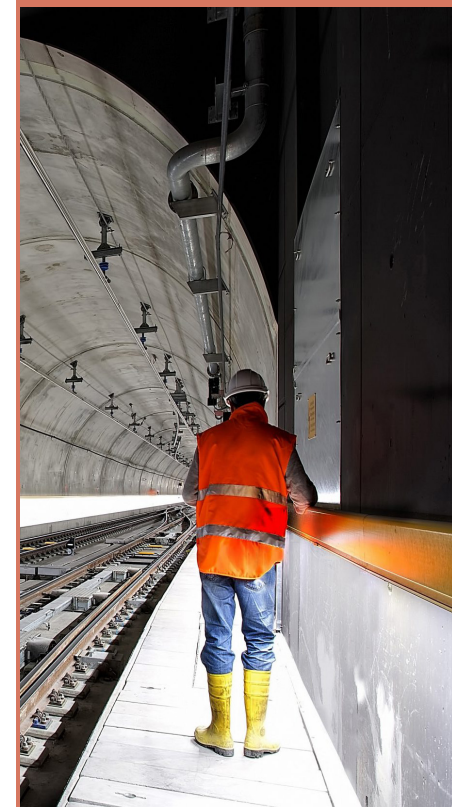
GEN has a comprehensive plan to address the current needs of public transit systems across the country and develop high speed rail travel between the nation's most populous urban centres and along its busiest routes. This plan includes:

- \$53.5 billion for Canadian municipal public transit systems' capital costs over a five-year investment period.
- Of this, \$38.6 billion does not fit within existing federal funding. It would require new funding from governments at all levels.
- \$25.7 billion to design and build three key high-speed rail (HSR) projects: \$20 billion towards building the Québec City-Windsor high speed rail corridor; \$3.7 billion towards a HSR link between Calgary and Edmonton; and \$2 billion towards a link between Vancouver and Seattle.

We need strong domestic content rules, as used by other countries (including our "free trade" partners) to ensure that our green transport initiatives create good jobs – that will also help generate the tax revenues to pay for these essential investments. We need industry policies that allow all segments of our communities to benefit.

Canada is overdue to upgrade its inter-city rail infrastructure to bring it into the twenty-first century. Likewise, upgraded and expanded public transit systems can have substantial environmental and job-creation benefits.

Canadians need a stronger and more comprehensive plan to develop and expand public transit. Currently, provincial and federal governments help municipalities pay for capital projects in public transportation. However, municipal governments still end up bearing the brunt of the combined operations and capital costs. We all share the benefits; it's important to share the load.



## Real initiatives – Public transit and inter-urban rail

To tackle climate change, we need to reduce our emissions and change the way we move people and things from one place to another. Between 1990 and 2019, greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector in Canada increased by 54%. In 2019 the sector accounted for 25% of total national emissions.

As a civilization, we rely far too much on big, dirty oil. The petroleum corporations and cartels are destroying our environment and hurting other sectors of the economy. Building real alternatives is necessary and urgent.

We need to create thousands of quality jobs while fighting climate change. We need a just transition plan to reach a low carbon economy now.

## Can we take on this challenge? Of course!

A green economy is more than just an idea. There are lots of examples and transit success stories all over the world. There is no question – we need more public transit and inter-urban rail to ensure that the future transportation needs of Canadians are met while providing both jobs for today and a clean planet for tomorrow. How? Read on.

# Real examples from across Canada

## Domestic content = Jobs here in Canada

Public ownership and management of municipal transit and domestic content rules are essential to ensure that communities and workers in Canada reap the benefits.

For example, the Ontario Government's now-repealed Green Energy and Green Economy Act, which contained local content requirements, was successful in creating at least 91,000 direct and indirect jobs in the solar sector and 89,000 direct and indirect jobs in the wind power sector between 2009 and 2016.

## Better municipal transit creates jobs, cuts greenhouse gases

Canada has long history of manufacturing high quality transit equipment in many parts of the country. There are active manufacturers of city buses in Manitoba and Quebec. For example, New Flyer in Winnipeg builds environmentally positive hybrid and electric buses.

Green economy advocates need to consistently show the positive environmental and socioeconomic impacts of worker-focused clean climate proposals.

## Lessons from Ontario: Measuring the impact of green transit investments

### *Kitchener-Waterloo*

An extensive rapid transit plan in the Kitchener-Waterloo area of Ontario is expected to produce \$296 million in user benefits over 30 years, reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 14,000 tonnes annually by 2031, generate over 6,000 jobs, and reduce health care costs in the region by \$10 million. (1)

### *Hamilton*

In 2021, the federal government announced it will partner with the Government of Ontario to contribute a total of \$3.4 billion to a light rail transit (LRT) project in Hamilton. The construction of this project will produce an estimated 3500 jobs, while the delivering of its regular operations and maintenance will produce another 300. (2)

### *Ottawa*

The Ottawa LRT project, which is currently being expanded into the city's west end, is projected to reduce carbon emissions by approximately 94,000 tonnes by 2031. It is also projected to create a total of 20,000 person-years of direct and indirect employment, as well as a total of \$3.3 billion in economic output. However, construction delays and operational issues have called into question Ottawa's choice to use a public-private-partnership model for the project. Green jobs activists should be engaged in conversations regarding the benefits of public job creation through the public delivery of services. (3)



## The future of green transit: high-speed rail

High speed rail is nothing new. High speed rail technology has existed since the 1960s and is increasingly becoming the norm for intercity travel within and among advanced industrialized countries.

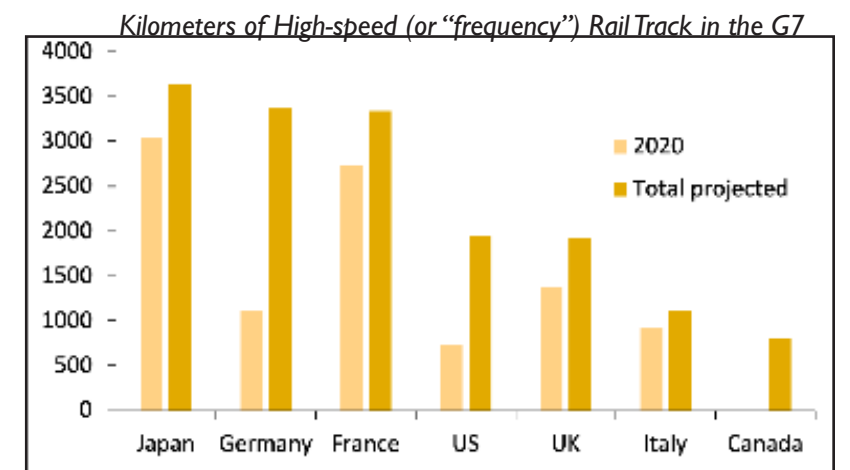
Typically, rail travel emits ten times less GHGs per passenger than flying, and rail is better adapted to electric power. Developing high-speed rail infrastructure in Canada should thus be a key element in greening the economy.

Many studies have demonstrated the feasibility and practicality of implementing high speed rail lines in Canada in major corridors, such as Windsor-Toronto Montreal-Québec City, Calgary-Edmonton, and Vancouver-Seattle.

A high-speed rail network would change the face of transportation in Canada, reduce greenhouse gases that cause climate change, create thousands of green jobs, and help bring Canada up to speed with other countries where extensive high speed rail service is increasingly becoming the norm.

## References and resources

1. <http://rapidtransit.regionofwaterloo.ca/en/>
2. <https://www.hamilton.ca/city-initiatives/priority-projects/light-rail-transit-lrt>
3. <https://leveller.ca/2021/10/lrt-disaster-should-spell-beginning-of-the-end-for-p3s-in-ottawa/>



## Speed and scope: Canada's rail lines are lagging

So far, just \$491 million has been pledged by the federal government to build a high "frequency"—not speed—rail line along the Toronto-Quebec City corridor. Because this planned line would not reach speeds typical of high-speed rail lines, it lacks the formal designation. We can do better.

The federal government's current rail proposal will reach max speeds of 200 km/h. While this is an improvement from Canada's current rail capacity, most high-speed rail lines can reach speeds of at least 250 km/h, and every country in the Group of Seven (G7) has existing or proposed rail lines that reach max speeds of 300 km/h.

For perspective, the world's first high speed rail network opened in 1964 between Tokyo and Osaka, Japan. Its average speed was more than 200 km/h.

Canada lags every other country in the G7 in terms of the total quantity of both planned and existing high speed (or "frequency") rail track. While the government has planned 800 km of high frequency rail, its projections for high-speed rail still stand at zero.