



December 19, 2025

Honourable Mike Farnworth
Minister of Transportation and Transit
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

RE: Support for Carefree Society's Accessible Transportation Service Model

Dear Minister Farnworth,

For over 50 years, the Carefree Society has provided accessible and inclusive transportation in Prince George and the Regional District of Fraser–Fort George. We pioneered HandyDart services in Northern BC and remain committed to serving people of all ages, identities, and abilities.

Recent changes to BC Transit's procurement model—combining custom and conventional transit—have left community-led organizations like ours without a clear or sustainable path forward. This shift has exposed barriers to entry and continues to threaten the accessibility of transportation for marginalized populations.

We respectfully request your Ministry's **support, facilitation, and collaboration** to ensure that community-driven solutions remain part of BC's transportation framework. Specifically, we seek:

- **Formal involvement** in discussions on legislative and regulatory alignment between the Passenger Transportation Act and the Accessible BC Act.
- **Access to funding opportunities** for small-scale, universally accessible transportation and related services initiatives.
- **Recognition of community-led models** as essential to filling service gaps where private providers cannot effectively operate.

Our Vision & Proposal

We have launched a pilot program to integrate community-led transportation into the provincial model, with potential for replication in other jurisdictions. This approach focuses on:

- **Accessible Tourism:** Inclusive day trips and local experiences for underserved populations. *Delivering Transportation and Supporting the Sector (Proposed):*
- **Housing & Social Connection:** Transportation for supportive housing residents.
- **Employment & Education:** Helping individuals reach jobs and children attend events.
- **Transit Gap Coverage:** Serving rural areas and complementing HandyDart responsiveness.



Our flagship service—the **Carefree Service**—is a destinations and tour service, with a mobility-aid vehicle, designed around universal accessibility principles, offering safe, comfortable, and flexible transportation that promotes social connection and reduces isolation.

Why This Matters

This model aligns with provincial objectives to:

- Reduce costs for families.
- Strengthen healthcare access.
- Make communities safer.
- Support job growth.

Northern BC's unique demographic challenges—long distances, sparse populations, and the need for collaboration with health, social, and Indigenous agencies—make this pilot both urgent and impactful.

Next Steps

We request a meeting within the next 30-45 days to discuss:

- Legislative and regulatory adjustments to support accessibility.
- Funding pathways for community-led transportation.
- Opportunities for collaboration with BC Transit and other stakeholders.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to working together to advance accessibility and inclusion in transportation across Northern BC.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Christos Vardacostas", is written over a horizontal dashed line.

Christos Vardacostas, MA (Dev Econ), BComm, BA
Executive Director



"Serving the Prince George Community since 1971"

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cc:

Carefree Society Board of Directors

Kate Mukasa, Executive Director, Transit Strategy & Policy Branch

Rosalyn Bird, MLA, PG-Valemount

Dana Lajeunesse, BC Parliamentary Secretary for Accessibility

Dan Levitt, Seniors Advocate for BC

Steve Raper, Northern Health

Prince George Mayor and Council

Chris Calder, CAO, Regional District Fraser-Fort George

BC Rural Health Network