

City of Vancouver Transportation Department response to
UBC Facebook Transportation Event
Exploring Vancouver's Transportation Future

Over five hundred Vancouver area-residents participated in a June 2011 Facebook-based public discussion about the City of Vancouver's Transportation Plan update. Learn about *Exploring Vancouver's Transportation Future* at <http://gcc.ubc.ca>

The following nineteen recommendations (in bold) are the participant recommendations resulting from the Facebook discussion. This document is a City of Vancouver Transportation Department response to these recommendations. Public input from this and other public consultations held in spring 2011 will be integrated into a draft Transportation Plan by the City of Vancouver, which will then go back to the public for feedback in early 2012.

**Recommendations of the Public Facebook Discussion (in bold) and
City of Vancouver Transportation Department Response**



1. Improve and expand bicycle routes and infrastructure.

The Transportation Plan update will set directions for cycling, including the city's bicycle network and cycling infrastructure. The plan will include an updated bicycle network strategy, identify existing routes that need improvements, and identify infrastructure and facility types for various routes. The plan may include a framework for selecting bicycle facility types based on several factors.

2. Invest in the construction of more separated, and protected, bike lanes, which benefit drivers' comfort and cyclists' safety.

The current trial downtown separated bike facilities (Dunsmuir and Hornby), as well as the Dunsmuir Viaduct and Burrard Bridge lanes, provide a separated bike facility from Kitsilano through downtown, to Strathcona (or vice versa). As a trial, these facilities will continue to be monitored and evaluated in regards to bike volumes, traffic volumes, travel times, safety, usage demographics, and other factors. If these trial facilities are deemed successful, pending Council approval, a plan for an extended separated bike network, both downtown and outside of downtown, would be completed.

3. Develop an education campaign aimed at improving attitudes towards public transportation and to encourage cycling.

We have found that citizens tend to have a positive attitude towards public transportation. In fact we often hear that people just want more and improved transit service to make it an easier option. One of the difficulties with transit currently in Vancouver is that many routes are at or near capacity, especially in the Broadway Corridor.

The Transportation Plan will consider how to promote walking and cycling and how to educate citizens on the benefits and health and safety-related aspects of active transportation. Currently cycling promotion work tends to be done by groups such as Vancouver Area Cycling

Coalition and BEST (Better Environmentally Sound Transportation), with Bike Month and Bike to Work Week events. The transportation plan update may recommend expanded and more direct City involvement in cycling promotion.

4. Raise awareness about bike lanes and their safety features. Map commuter and recreation biking networks.

With the trial Dunsmuir separated bike lane the City produced a short film to highlight the features of the bike lane, to educate both cyclists and motorists. Additional awareness work could be done in this regard to highlight the cycling infrastructure throughout the city, including the network of local street bikeways. This will be explored through the transportation plan.

The City has developed a citywide bike map, available for free, which is generally updated on a yearly basis. This map indicates the routes by facility type, such as off-street, on-street separated, painted bike lane, or local street bikeway. The plan will consider opportunities for additional mapping options (e.g., web-based).

5. Install traffic signals (or at least stop signs for vehicle traffic) at locations with bikes (on bike routes!) have to cross busy streets.

Where bike routes cross streets with high traffic volumes the City has been installing cyclist (and pedestrian) activated traffic signals to stop traffic on the arterial, allowing cyclists to cross. The City continues to monitor locations where cyclist and pedestrian volumes are high and prioritises signal installations taking into account proximity to schools, parks and pedestrian and vehicle volumes.

6. Improve bicycle facilities to include secure bike and gear storage, and upgrades like roof systems over the new bicycle corrals, and change and shower facilities.

The need for secure bike parking, particularly in commercial areas and at transit stations, is a concern we continue to hear from citizens. The constrained space on our busy streets means creative solutions to bike parking have to be explored. One example is the on-street bike corral at Commercial Drive and 6th Ave, which took the place of an on-street car parking space. Such parking facilities and other approaches could be expanded to other commercial areas. We will continue to work with our partners, such as TransLink, to provide secure bike storage at transit stations. The Transportation Plan team will be exploring the option of a downtown bike centre, with parking, showers and change rooms. Initiatives such as covered bike parking areas will be examined in further detail in the Transportation Plan.

7. Invest in safety programs for everyone on the road.

The City with its partners, including ICBC and Vancouver Police Department, will develop an education campaign regarding road safety and appropriate behaviour by all road users this year. The 2011 Road Safety Awareness Program will focus on all road users in an effort to help people understand that the responsibility for safer streets depends on everyone practicing courtesy and awareness of their surroundings, and upon working together to share the road, regardless of the mode of travel. The transportation plan will explore opportunities for expanding this program to be more ongoing in nature.



8. Continue to focus on liveability and sustainability.

Liveability and sustainability will remain a major focus of transportation and land use planning by the City. The recent adoption of the Greenest City Action Plan provides strong direction regarding sustainability, for both land use and transportation initiatives. The updated Transportation Plan will continue to reinforce the City's transportation priorities of walking, cycling and transit.

9. Develop mixed use neighbourhoods that have amenities within a 5-minute walk while still maintaining a community/residential feel.

The development of compact, mixed-use communities, with jobs, shopping and other daily needs within walking distance, is a priority for the City. This has been done well in the downtown and Metro Core, so the challenge will be in the neighbourhoods throughout the rest of the city. Arterial streets will continue to play an important role as commercial hubs, so we will explore how to make these often busy, loud streets more pleasant shopping areas, while maintaining necessary transportation functions. Focusing higher density development in these areas and at other key nodes will help attract enough local population to support shops, services and amenities, while still maintaining a community feel. The Transportation Plan will not provide specific land use initiatives, but may provide high level directions to help inform a future citywide land use/structure plan.

10. Build new high density developments with a mix of uses to support easy access to amenities and green travel options.

High density, mixed use development has been instrumental in creating Vancouver's vibrant, liveable and walkable downtown and city centre. For areas outside the downtown, such as Norquay Village Neighbourhood Centre, our goal is to create dense, mixed-use neighbourhoods allowing easy access to amenities by foot. The recently approved Cambie Corridor Plan will allow for increased density with low- and mid-rise residential development along Cambie Street, to take advantage of the Canada Line rapid transit line. The additional density will support additional retail and amenities along the corridor, making it a more walkable, transit-oriented community. The City will continue to use good land use planning to support sustainable transportation. The Transportation Plan will not provide specific land use initiatives, but may provide high level directions to help inform a future citywide land use/structure plan.



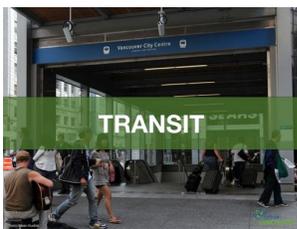
11. Develop car free zones by closing specific streets.

Directions were given in the Greenest City plan, as well as by Council, to examine car-free corridors in the city centre, such as Robson or Granville Streets. The City has recent experience with temporary car-free corridors, such as the pedestrian corridors for the 2010 Winter Games, and the VIVA Vancouver summer 2011 street closures.

Developing permanent car-free corridors would require extensive consultation with impacted businesses and residents, as well as transportation stakeholders. Streets the feature transit or truck routes would be more challenging to close, as alternate routes would have to be found. Car-free corridors will be explored as part of the Transportation planning process.

12. Improve children's transportation to and from school by creating car-free blocks, paths, or zones.

Transportation education and driving restriction enforcement can help in this regard. One idea used elsewhere is to have active transportation “halos” around schools where the priority would be on walking and cycling. This might involve a combination of traffic calming and enforcement, which would still allow local residents to drive to their home, but would discourage parents from driving their children to school. Training children to cycle safely from a young age, and encouraging “walk-buses” and Safe Routes to School type initiatives are some realistic and practical ways to get more kids walking and cycling to school. One challenge is cross-boundary students, who are often driven to school from one part of the city to another. Strategies to encourage walking and cycling to school will be explored in the Transportation Plan. The Vancouver School Board will be an important partner in these efforts.



13. Relieve the over-crowding of buses and trains during peak times.

While a certain amount of crowding is to be expected at peak times on a well designed, efficient transit system, extreme crowding and pass-ups are not desired. This is a concern we have heard numerous times during our public consultations. The main issue here is a lack of sustainable funding to provide additional capacity/service on the crowded routes. There are also technology limitations. For example, on the Broadway Corridor the buses are generally running at capacity, and it is not possible to run more buses. To solve the crowding problem, rapid transit is a promising solution to provide increased capacity. The UBC Line Study is examining rapid transit options for this corridor. The City will continue to work with TransLink to advocate for sustainable transit funding so that sufficient capacity can be provided on all routes. TransLink will be updating their long range plan starting in 2012 and we anticipate an update of Vancouver's Area Transit Plan will follow in the near future. These two plans will provide an opportunity to advocate for new or upgraded services where overcrowding is an issue. The Transit Plan will identify our priorities for these advocacy and partnership efforts.

14. Ensure transit improvements keep pace with growth of use.

Vancouver faces a unique challenge: there is more demand for transit than available capacity on many routes. New transit routes are often near full when they open. Secure, sustainable funding is required to provide the mix of transit options -community shuttle, bus, streetcar, rapid bus, rapid transit- that Vancouver needs as it continues to grow. For example, there are long-term plans for bus rapid transit or light rail on Hastings Street and 41st Avenue. The City will work with TransLink on the update of its long-range regional transit plan and Area Transit Plan for the City of Vancouver to explore ways to improve transit capacity and reliability within the region.

15. Develop transit systems that minimize traveling time.

The City supports a transit system that provides a mix of transit options, including community shuttles, buses, rapid buses and rapid transit. Currently, the number one transit priority for the City is rapid transit along the Broadway Corridor. This would help improve transit reliability and reduce travel time between Commercial Drive and UBC. With the Transportation Plan

update we will examine other improvements that can be made to reduce transit travel time, such as lane and signal priority for buses, where appropriate.

16. Prioritize transit solutions for suburban commuters coming into Vancouver, especially rail.

The City supports expansion of the regional rapid transit network, such as the Broadway Line, the Evergreen Line, rapid transit in Surrey as well as upgrades to the Expo Line. These rapid transit networks, in conjunction with the bus network, are vitally important to provide transit capacity and reliability for both Vancouver residents and commuters coming into the city. Many residents from other cities travel to Vancouver for work or leisure activities and it is important that there are sustainable travel options. The City will continue to advocate for a sustainable funding source to enable the completion of a rapid transit network in the region.

17. Find ongoing sources of revenue for funding and expanding public transit, both for crowded Vancouver lines and commuter routes.

As noted above, sustainable and sufficient funding of transit, for both project capital costs and ongoing operational costs, is a significant regional challenge. The City will continue to advocate for funding solutions that address the need for ongoing revenue sources and explore with TransLink various methods for ongoing funding, particularly sources that encourage a shift to walk, bike, and transit.



18. Widen sidewalks and remove pedestrian obstacles such as ill-placed benches. Revisit bylaws to create hanging signs instead of sandwich boards that pedestrians have to dodge.

The Transportation Plan update will examine improvements to the sidewalks and public realm, and provide directions and strategies to make streets more vibrant, comfortable, and enjoyable public spaces. It will also examine ways to balance the needs of multiple transportation functions for a variety of age groups and mobility needs. For example, seniors often make use of benches at transit stops but these can also be a barrier to pedestrians in areas with constrained sidewalks. In the long term, sidewalks can be widened through redevelopment of adjacent properties but this does not help with short-term needs. More consistent street furniture and formal streetscape design guidelines will be explored through the City's transportation planning process.

19. Channel a greater proportion of public funds into developing walking, cycling and transit infrastructure.

The City has recently reorganized its Transportation Division to better align with the City's transportation priorities and functions. Along with this, a greater examination of funding allocation by mode is being conducted to ensure funding levels more appropriately match the City's transportation priorities. Also a priority through the next capital plan will be to collect data about usage before and after changes to measure the success of projects for attracting more walking, cycling and transit trips.