

Tool and Ideas

Arterial Traffic Management

CityPlan

Riley Park/South Cambie **RPSC**

The State of Vancouver's Arterials

The decision not to build freeways in the 1960's saved many inner city neighbourhoods and the Downtown. This decision has also highlighted the importance of managing our transportation system and the distributed arterial street network. Ensuring the safe and efficient operation of this network of arterials has required changes such as the installation of left turn bays at major intersections, and the removal of parking for portions of the day. Optimizing this limited resource (street space and capacity) has meant that we must encourage residents and commuters to utilize alternative modes of transportation such as transit, walking and cycling.

Vancouver's CityPlan and Transportation Plan

Both Vancouver's CityPlan and Transportation Plan call for new directions respecting the use of Vancouver's road network, including its arterial roads.

CityPlan confirmed that Vancouver residents want less dependence on the car, less traffic intrusion in their neighbourhoods, less noise, more safety and more pedestrian-friendly environments. The Transportation Plan suggested that providing alternatives to the car was essential both for a more environmentally sustainable future and for a solution to congestion on city streets.

Both plans recognized that the growth in demand for transportation must be met by the existing road network, and that changes to that network must be designed so as not to increase road capacity. This means finding a better way to share the network.

Sharing Vancouver's Arterial Streets

The Transportation Plan acknowledged that the main mode of transport will continue to be the private automobile, and that encouraging alternate modes of travel is essential to accommodate Vancouver's growth. It suggested a set of measures to allow for a better sharing of Vancouver's road network. These measures include:

Allocating More Road Space to Transit

Transit performance improvements would be gained by higher frequency, improve express services, and more efficient boarding arrangements. Better service could be provided for transit on some routes by building curb extensions to provide space for shelters, by signal priority, and other traffic controls.

Truck Access

The City currently has a network of truck routes for heavy trucks (3 or more axles) that must be used to access destinations in the city. The purpose of the truck route system is to disperse truck movements over a relatively large number of routes so that no single area of the city is severely impacted. Neighbourhood impacts due to Goods movement must be considered. The overall transportation network must provide balance to all modes. Therefore, initiatives such as enforcement, and in some circumstances restricting certain truck movements are recommended.

Accordingly, UBC, through its Strategic Transportation Plan, has made efforts to mitigate the impact of heavy trucks in residential communities. UBC has now implemented a Truck Management Program to promote on-site storage and re-use of excavated materials, and

scheduling of construction activities to "even out" truck traffic.

Allocating Space For Cyclists

Expand the City's network of bikeways to provide a more complete network. Bike lanes and bikeways provide safer and more comfortable access to all parts of the city for the broad range of cyclists and improve the desirability of cycling as a mode of transportation. In RPSC, signed bicycle routes include Heather Street, 37th Avenue, and Ontario Street.

Providing Safer And More Convenient Road Crossings For Pedestrians

Pedestrian priority areas should be created in commercial centres, so pedestrians may enjoy more direct routes, have enhanced walking areas and have improved crossing opportunities. Corner bulges, medians and other measures make crossings safer and more convenient. Pedestrian-controlled signals respond to crossing requests more quickly.

On the busiest arterial roads more signalised crossings, and other easier crossing opportunities are being provided, even though these may reduce traffic speed and flow. However, to ensure the safe flow of traffic, waiting times at peak periods may be coordinated with adjacent traffic signals on the same road.—In some non-signalised locations, pedestrian median reservations may be appropriate to provide easier crossing opportunities

Adapting The Arterial Road Network For Transit And Local Transportation Uses

Currently, the City's arterial road network provides a grid of major roads, about ½ mile apart (0.8 km). Providing better access for transit buses, pedestrians and bikes will mean giving higher priority for these modes

on the arterial streets. On some streets, this means providing space for Light Rail Transit or bus-only lanes. Peak-period parking would be retained in commercial areas wherever possible, bike facilities would be provided where appropriate, and pedestrian crossings would be made easier in pedestrian priority areas. These changes mean less space for cars on these roads than today. As a result, general traffic may probably move more slowly at peak times. This must be balanced with potential negative impacts of shortcutting traffic and extended “rush” periods.

Calming Traffic

On neighbourhood collector streets with volume up to 10,000 vehicles a day, traffic calming can be part of the approach to transportation. Measures generally would be aimed at slowing traffic to 50 km per hour, while not diverting traffic onto other streets. The result should be less impact on neighbourhoods and improved safety, with small or no increases in average journey times.

Example Approved Community Vision Directions for Arterials

Traffic and its impacts were major issues in all Vision areas. Each Vision identifies a number of changes for traffic and transportation, including changes along streets and to transit, traffic calming, and bike routes and greenways. All changes focus on giving more priority to walking, cycling, and transit, and giving less priority to moving cars. Suggested improvements include:

- more strictly enforcing traffic speeds
- adding more and safer places to cross
- adding more trees and other plantings and public art
- widening the sidewalks
- further enforcement of truck bylaws
- providing better clean-up and maintenance along the sidewalks and boulevards.
- keeping on-street parking where it now exists and, where possible, restoring on-street parking that has been prohibited
- making more room for landscaping, sidewalks, buses, and bikes
- adding and improving bus shelters
- more frequent bus service, including the use of community mini-buses