

Tools and Ideas

Arterial Transportation



Mount Pleasant

City of Vancouver
Community
planning program

The State of Vancouver's Arterials

The decision not to build freeways through Strathcona in the 1960's preserved many inner city and downtown neighbourhoods. This decision has also highlighted the importance of managing our transportation system and the arterial street network. Facilitating the safe and accessible operation of this network of arterials and supporting sustainable modes of transportation such as transit, walking and cycling are priorities of the City of Vancouver.

Vancouver's CityPlan and Transportation Plan

Both Vancouver's CityPlan and Transportation Plan call for new direction with respect to 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, and safer, more pedestrian-friendly environments. The Transportation Plan concluded that providing alternatives to the car was essential both to obtain a more environmentally sustainable future and to alleviate 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 has been improved by higher frequency, improved express services, and more efficient boarding arrangements. In some locations bus bulges, curb extensions (to provide space for shelters), and transit priority measures facilitate transit flow.

Truck Access

The City currently has a network of designated truck routes for heavy trucks (Gross Vehicle Weight over 10,000 kg) that must be used to access destinations in the city. The purpose of the truck route system is to convey goods and provide services efficiently to all portions of the city, using streets suitable in their design for large, heavy vehicles. With most truck routes having residential frontages, the trade-off between liveability and efficient goods movement must be balanced. Therefore, initiatives such as enforcement against truck drivers illegally driving on undesignated routes and in some circumstances restricting certain truck movements

may be required. The north-south arterials in Mt. Pleasant, as well as Kingsway, Broadway, 2nd Avenue, and Great Northern Way, are designated truck routes.

Allocating Space for Cyclists

The City continues to expand its network of Bikeways to provide a more complete network. Bike lanes and Bikeways provide facilities for cyclists and more comfortable access to all parts of the city. In Mount Pleasant, signed Bikeways include Ontario, Windsor, 10th Avenue, and Off-Broadway.

Providing Accessible and Convenient Road Crossings for Pedestrians

The Transportation Plan places pedestrians as the top transportation priority for the City of Vancouver and emphasizes the need for improved pedestrian facilities. Some commonly used pedestrian facilities include pedestrian-actuated traffic signals, corner bulges, marked crosswalks, zebra-marked crosswalks and changes to sidewalks and drop ramps. Corner bulges reduce the crossing distance and make pedestrians and drivers more visible to each other. Vulnerable road users, such as visually- or mobility-impaired pedestrians, or pedestrians with strollers, are considered when designing transportation facilities.

Adapting the Arterial Road Network for Transit and Local Transportation Uses

The city's arterial road network provides a grid of major roads, about 800 metres apart. 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 bike lanes, bus-only lanes, or Light Rail Transit. Such changes would mean less space for cars on these roads than provided today. As a result, general traffic would likely move more slowly at peak times. This must be balanced with potential negative impacts of shortcutting traffic and extended "rush" periods. Recently, bus-only lanes were implemented on Broadway during peak morning and evening rush hour periods, and dedicated bike lanes are proposed for Great Northern Way.

Calming Traffic

On neighbourhood collector streets with volumes 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 comply with legal speed limits, while not diverting traffic onto other streets. The result should be less impact on neighbourhoods and a more comfortable living environment for residents, with small or no increases in average travel times.

Approved Community Vision Directions for Arterials

Transportation is often one of the issues of primary concern to residents. Each area with a Council-adopted Community Vision (e.g. Kensington/Cedar Cottage and Renfrew-Collingwood) identified a number of directions for traffic and transportation, including changes along streets and to transit, traffic calming, and bike routes and greenways. Changes focused on giving more priority to walking, cycling, and transit, and giving less priority to moving cars.

Suggestions included:

- improved crosswalks;
- more trees, greenspace, and public art;
- wider sidewalks;
- cleaner and better-maintained sidewalks and boulevards;
- more landscaping, sidewalks, buses, and bikes;
- more and better bus shelters;
- more frequent bus service, including the use of community mini-buses;
- truck enforcement;
- more on-street parking; and
- more speed enforcement.