



Public Bike Share Stakeholder Meetings

May 30th 2013

SUMMARY NOTES

Attendance:	Andy Kuo, EzeeRiders	Mark Pribula, Zipcar
	Mike Gat, Cycle BC Rentals	Karen New, Modo
	Enrique Vertti, Bikes and Blades Rentals	Kamala Rao, TransLink
	Tom Woywitka, Yes Cycle	Adam Cooper, UBC
	Joe Kainer, English Bay Bike Rentals	Suzanne Vander Wekken, SFU
	Janko Veselinovic, JV Bikes	Tom Lancaster, VIA Architecture
	Brian Vetter, Spokes	Jaswant Sandhu, Black Top Cabs
	Tim Quarles, Spokes	Lynn Warwick, Mount Pleasant BIA
	Paul Bogaert, Bike Doctor	Russ Davies, West 4 th BIA
	Ray Kwan, RayBen Motors and Bikes	Erin O'Melinn, HUB
	Ben Ho, RayBen Motor and Bikes	Julie Beynon, HUB
	Jeffery Chan, Pedal	Roger Foster, HUB
	Gwendal Castellan, Tourism Vancouver	Sgt. Brian Green, VPD
	Suzanne Raikes, Tourism Vancouver	Sgt. Jim Graham, VPD
		Gavin Davidson, Alta Bicycle Share

Staff:	Scott Edwards	Catherine Neill
	Kathryn Kolbuch	Mo Douglas
	Melissa Summerton	Linda Chow
	Brandon Hildebrandt	Steve Chou

Executive Summary

The City, in coordination with Mobilize Strategies, hosted 2 separate stakeholder outreach meetings with 28 participants from a variety of external agencies, including TransLink, VPD, BIA's, UBC, SFU and several bike rental/retail shops to discuss the City of Vancouver's plans for Public Bike Share (PBS). The meetings were held on May 30th, 2013, and provided an overview of the PBS system, an update on the status of the project and the planned timeline. After the presentation was completed, the attendees were provided an opportunity to ask clarification questions based on what they heard. This was then followed by an open discussion about PBS in Vancouver.

The purpose of these information meetings was to provide a project status update and for staff to address questions, from stakeholders, in previous meetings. Attendees were provided an opportunity to ask questions based on what they heard, which was then followed by an open discussion about PBS in Vancouver.

Feedback on Mitigation Strategies:

Following the last round of consultation, staff addressed concerns previously raised and presented on a number of mitigation strategies. Outlined below are the key issues, the mitigation strategies outlined by staff, and any additional comments or feedback received.

1) Impacts to Public Realm

Mitigation strategies as proposed by staff:

- Station siting principles were devised to most appropriately position stations and minimize impact on the public realm. All stations will be subject to a review and approval process.
- Alta completed a demand analysis that looked at existing trip data, existing cycling infrastructure, density, employment and land-use to determine optimum station placement, scale, and density.
- Placement of stations will not compromise the use of surrounding public and private lands or the usage of the transportation corridors.

Additional feedback received:

The BIA's and businesses indicated they would like to be involved in the station siting process and would have suggestions for potential locations. They also posed questions about the potential expansion of the program both locally, within Vancouver, and regionally to other destinations, such as UBC.

2) Impacts to Bike Rental Businesses

Mitigation strategies as proposed by staff:

- Rate structures are set by Alta, in consultation with the City, and will be set such that it becomes more economical for a user to visit a bike rental shop if they anticipate their ride to be 2 hours or longer.
- For those PBS stations that may be placed within close proximity of a bike rental shop, the City commits to consult with the bike rental shop.

- The City is looking at ways to support the marketing and sales of bike rental shops by encouraging the formation of partnerships with the PBS operator. For example, Alta could potentially offer PBS members discounts on biking accessories etc.

Additional feedback received:

While encouraged by the rate structure and the possibility of partnership opportunities, the bike rental companies emphasised the continued need to promote the use of bike rental shops. They also emphasised the need for PBS to target commuters rather than tourists. They remain concerned with the potential proximity of the stations to their businesses and the station locations within Stanley Park.

3) Education

Mitigation strategies as proposed by staff:

- Information on the correct use of the system would be available at multiple locations including online, and at the stations. Information would include correct helmet usage, the rules of the road and instructions on how to rent a bike and helmet.
- Unique to Vancouver, in order to increase accessibility to helmets, each station will have a helmet vending machine and return receptacle. Helmet rental will be at an affordable rate.

Additional feedback received:

There were some requests for clarification around what information, such as proper helmet fitting, would be included on the system.

Additional Feedback Received:

Further to the comments above another theme that emerged was:

1) Integration with Other Organisations

There were suggestions that PBS synergise with other relevant agencies and organisations to increase multi-modal transportation options, to promote the system and to educate users. This included the possibility of integrating PBS with car-share companies for trip-linking, for better transit integration with TransLink and for private property owners to host a station. In regard to helmet use and driver education, participants suggested the VPD and ICBC help promote and encourage compliance and good behaviour. Alta is open to exploring potential partnerships on these issues.

Detailed Summary of Feedback

Below you will find a more detailed summary of the feedback obtained from the meetings, which have been grouped together by theme. Under each theme heading you will find a list of frequently asked questions (FAQ's), staff responses in italics, followed by a list of comments provided by the attendees.

Implementing PBS in Vancouver

- Who determined the scale of the system?

A study was originally conducted by TransLink in partnership with the City of Vancouver, which examined the feasibility of PBS and compared systems in other cities around the world. The analysis gave suggestions for geographic coverage areas in Vancouver where PBS would be viable and recommendations for the scale of the system. As well, we are seeing that while the coverage area of PBS systems varies from city to city, the density of stations remains fairly consistent.

TransLink study link:

<http://www.translink.ca/site-info/document-library-result.aspx?id={0044F9A5-BECB-4C4D-9FD0-E3D32D8E9A7F}|{D191F5C3-2E4D-4937-9EDC-578A1FC50285}|{6B6CD0F7-D14F-4C72-BDFC-A9DA1E4C3919}|{A7685FAD-DB49-43D5-AC93-C5BF73CA5061}|{9AC16684-25D3-4938-9C83-07EB6DBA83CE}&ref={48F61830-22A1-4F90-804A-83C0C9A9D367}>

- This was an aggressive timeline the last time it was presented to the group. Is it still an aggressive timeline?

We are much further ahead but, yes, it is an ambitious timeline. Alta and PBSC have certain steps to finalize including the production of the equipment. The City of Vancouver has agreed to work with other stakeholders regarding integration of the system into the public realm. The earliest system deployment that is envisioned is late 2013.

- What will be the next steps for reporting back to Council?

Staff have been given direction by Council to work with Alta. We expect that the next time we report back to Council, it will be when both the City and Alta are ready to enter into a contract.

- It appears that the pilot will be launched in the winter? Does that make the most sense?

The main purpose of the pilot is to allow us to test key components of the system such as the integration of the helmet system. We know it is a quiet time of year to launch but we intend to use this to our advantage.

- Could you provide us with more details about membership for the pilot?

Membership for the pilot will be part of the discussion that staff will have with Alta. It's not uncommon for PBS systems to launch partway into the year. Some of the possibilities for Vancouver may involve members who sign up as annual members to be granted "bonus" time during the pilot launch. We will look to Alta as the operator to suggest how to manage memberships during this time.

Integrating the PBS in Vancouver with Other Systems

- Will there be integration with TransLink's Compass Card?

We have been talking to TransLink; however, given the roll-out timelines of the Compass Card, we may not fit with the schedule of their initial roll-out. As such we will explore this integration for a later date.

- The City is looking at revising the car-share by-law to require new developments to provide space for car-share vehicles. Will there be an incentive or parallel by-law for bike share?

We are currently looking at something simpler such as exploring how new developments might include a station as part of their development. Proximity to stations is often seen as a benefit to commercial tenants as it increases "foot traffic" to their front door.

- Businesses are looking to the City to provide outreach and include them in the process of site selection as soon as system is off the ground.

We will be providing information on station locations to relevant businesses before we install them.

- Is there potential for synergy between the bike share and car-sharing? This system is about trip linking and getting users closer to transit and we would be happy to hear about more stations that integrate with car-share. Partnerships between Modo/Zipcar, transit, and bike share would be beneficial.

Gavin (Alta): Alta is open to collaboration on stations with car-sharing bodies.

- Will there be an opportunity to work with the police to make this successful? Is VPD bound to be hard on the helmet law and be very vigilant with ticketing? Is there a way to encourage and educate rather than enforce during the initial roll-out until the system gets off the ground?

The senior management team includes a senior representative from the VPD and they have been working closely with us. The intent is not to have the 125 stations act as locations for ticketing helmet infractions. VPD continues to be supportive of working with other city departments and stakeholders on education campaigns.

- Do systems in other cities have workplace incentives for employees?
Incentives are available in other cities but they vary. Incentives such as these will need to be developed by Alta in discussion with the City.
- TransLink (represented by Kamala Roa) is very supportive and see it as the first and last mile of transit. TransLink is interested in PBS stations at rapid transit stations but unfortunately, there is not a lot of land we can offer. They would like to echo the comments about enforcement and would like to see more enforcement by VPD on driver behaviour as that is a bigger issue.
- This is an exciting opportunity from a public health perspective. PBS will represent an opportunity to move a lot of people who want to cycle but find it inconvenient.
- Research shows bike-friendly BIAs that are in many cases outperforming non bike-friendly BIAs.
- The concerns of all Tourism Vancouver members should be balanced within the system and the City and Alta should aim to consult businesses in the station siting.

Stations

- What is the overall size of the stations? Will they be large? How much back-up space will this include? How big will the helmet vending machines be?
The station sizes will be large, the minimum size is approximately 2 metres by 15 metres (plus clearance). The helmet vending machines will, as a reference, be comparable to a large pop vending machine.
- How much coverage of Stanley Park will there be?
PBS is intended to be a transit extension. Some users will try it out in places like Stanley Park but there won't be the capacity to fulfill the demand for recreational users.
We know indicating the duration of the free time is going to be key in getting tourist to understand the financial benefits of using a bike rental shop and it will be priority for us to promote this.
Gavin (Alta): Just to remind everyone, the rate structure chart indicated in the presentation does not include helmet rental, which will be an additional cost to incur.
- It appears as though there are stations planned for what looks like Denman and Robson/Georgia. Can you confirm these locations?
These are potential station sites that have been identified - none have been confirmed.

- Is there a formal process for businesses to express support for having a station in front of their business?

We will start by targeting BIAs and the neighbourhood level. Following that we will target the individual businesses.

- Will staff look at putting the stations in the residential neighbourhoods as suggested in Phase 1 of the consultation?

We must recognise that most of the destinations for the system are in commercial shopping areas or linking to transit. As a result there will need to be a mix of both commercial and residential station locations.

- Businesses would appreciate being part of the conversation on station siting.

Equipment, Operations, and Maintenance

- How will you address the helmet issue?

At this point every station will have the capability to distribute helmets. Upon system launch, all helmets will be brand new. These helmets will be dispensed at stations, returned by users, inspected and sanitised by Alta, and then put back into the system. The intention is that they are easy to access.

- Will renting a bike and helmet be two separate transactions?

They can be combined or separate transactions. For casual users, it can be one transaction where they rent a bike and helmet together. For annual members, they can decline a helmet if they have one with them or rent a bike and helmet separately.

- Will there be age and size restrictions?

Extremes are not recommended; for example, the system may not properly accommodate someone who is too small or may not be comfortable for someone too tall. There will be other limits in place. Users will need to be 16 years or older (to be confirmed with Alta), fit the bikes and able to ride a bike.

- Can the basket on the front of the bike hold much? How does it work? Can you put a bike rack on the rear of the bike?

The basket is intended for carrying smaller items which can be secured with bungee cords. The bike is not intended for modifications and there will be no bike rack on the rear.

- Will users need to have a credit card to access the system?

Casual users will need to have a credit card. For annual users, there may be alternate methods of payment and deposit but generally our understanding is that yes, users will need a credit card.

- How is the bike secured? If it is stolen is the user liable?

There is a locking mechanism at the station for the bike. While these mechanisms were not as secure in some of the earlier European systems, a recent study of the North American systems suggests that they have had a very low incidence of theft and vandalism. Users will be required to provide credit card details to rent a bike so if the bike is lost or damaged the last user can be charged.

- Space is so confined. If we add a helmet vending machine then space will be constrained even more. If we are trying to shift people to a more sustainable transportation mode then we don't want to deter them further. The City should work with the Province on a relaxation of the helmet law.

Revenue and Financial Support

- What is the financial picture like for the system?

There will be three main streams of revenue: sponsorship, membership, and user fees. The sponsorship agreements will be a five year deal. The City will provide some support up-front, such as helping to integrate the system with the urban domain and providing staff time. Similar to car-sharing in Vancouver, the City will not be the operator and will not be providing direct ongoing support.

- Could you tell us more about the sponsorship for the system?

Typically sponsorship models from other cities that have PBS systems suggests either one title sponsor or a multiple, with generally 2 to 3 sponsors being secured. Vancouver's title sponsor is currently being secured by Alta; with additional key sponsors also supporting the system.

- What is the financial cost of PBS to the City? We are not charging for the use of public land. This is a potential lost revenue source to the City and means the City is subsidising a private company.

The usage and financial projections of the system suggest that the overall system will make money in the long-run and the City could then recoup costs associated with its support. This system is being financed through three sources: sponsorship, membership and user fees. We are putting money in up-front but will not be financing the system in the long-run.

- We also have a difficulty in financing public transit so why would this model work any better? Why should the City subsidise PBS?

Every trip in the city is subsidised in some way: for pedestrians we maintain the sidewalks and motor vehicles are typically the most subsidised. Sustainable forms of transportation are subsidised less. By providing PBS we will increase capacity and mobility for the entire transportation system.

- Does the City have a Plan B or C if the system is a financial flop? We should note that Montreal had to put up a bond for their PBS system.

Sponsorship money is in place for 5 years and following this we can revisit the contract and renegotiate at this point should we choose to. In regard to Montreal they were the first to develop the system and are expanding to other cities which requires capital and loan guarantees. The City of Vancouver is supporting the costs associated with the exploration of the system and managing the implementation but don't intend to financially support it in the long-run.

- Gavin (Alta): These meetings have involved a good cross-section of stakeholders and the discussions have been fruitful. We don't have many other cities who reach out and are as proactive as Vancouver.

Education and Communication

- PBS hasn't been on the public radar. There needs to be more public education.

The marketing and communications strategy will be taken on by Alta although the City wants to assist Alta with the initial public outreach during implementation.

- What work will you do with ICBC to educate drivers?

This will be part of a broader discussion and the City already has regular meetings with ICBC and its partners.

Erin (HUB): HUB also is working actively with ICBC on this component of educating drivers to cyclists on the roads.

Transportation Impacts and Concerns

- One of the challenges for the system is if it becomes a commuter program then all the bikes will funnel into one area that can't fully accommodate the amount of supply.

Balancing of the system is part of the operating model. Luckily in Vancouver, we have several major transit nodes and a good mix of land-use especially compared to other North American cities. There are ways to mitigate the challenges of rebalancing; one of which is that typically there are more docks than bikes are made available. Newer systems have a ratio of docks to bikes that is between 1.75:1 and 2:1.

- Is there a plan to expand cycling infrastructure?

Yes. The Transportation 2040 Plan was recently approved by Council and it outlines improvements to the cycling networks. One such example is the Point Grey Road-Cornwall Avenue Project.

Impact on Bike Rental and Retail Businesses

- The bike rental shops are still concerned with the competition and are hoping that the system is targeted at local users and not tourists. Is there something that can be done to discourage tourists from using the system such as increased fees for a day pass or the requirement of a BC ID or BC telephone number to rent a bike?

We have heard this issue raised previously and have reflected increased fees for longer trips and single day use in the rate structure. We do not want to restrict the system to local users only as it is intended to be a mode of transit extension for everyone.

Gavin (Alta): There is opportunity for synergy between the PBS and bike rental companies in circumstances such as indicating to PBS users when it would be more beneficial to use a bike rental shop.

- Given the ability to scale the stations up quickly there is a fear factor for the bike rental businesses, especially since there is abundant space in the park to add to proposed stations, as you respond to user demand to increase the system.

It should be noted that there are trade-offs to using land in busy areas including parks, and changes will need to be considered in a similar way to the initial station placements.

- How do existing bike rental companies deal with PBS users if they approach them in their stores about the bikes? For example if they have a flat tire should they refuse to repair it?

Firstly we recommend that if a user visits your store that you use the opportunity to sell them one of your own products or services but ultimately the PBS bikes are not your equipment and we don't recommend you interfere with it. The bike rental companies should discuss this with Alta.

- We are encouraged by the rate structure graph but there is a need to really emphasize that if the time duration of the rental is longer than 2 hours that user would be better off using a bike rental shop.
- These stations will be visually prominent all over the city. The station locations as dotted on the diagram will be a direct hit on our businesses and there is an inequity in the subsidy to the private firm. There needs to be a serious effort to mitigate the effect in a very short order. The BIAs would also like to know if there will be any way to promote local businesses at the stations or online.

To remind everyone the presentation included a slide of where other bike share systems in other cities actively promote bike rental and retail businesses on their website, which is a massive marketing opportunity.

- Alta recognises that this is a challenge to bike rental and bike retail stores, which they respect. An important point is that PBS is essentially a form of transit not targeted at recreational users. Alta is looking to accommodate businesses.

- In Paris, the introduction of the system saw mode share for cycling double in the first year and this can be seen as a business opportunity.

Future Expansion of PBS in the Region and Integration with Other Systems

- You mentioned other areas like UBC that the system could possible expand to, could you explain further?

The study conducted by TransLink brought up three geographic coverage areas within the City of Vancouver all of which were centered about the Downtown peninsula. The larger area could be contemplated as potential expansion if the program is successful or if more sponsors are available. The study by TransLink also identified other areas within the region.

- UBC is very interested in PBS and is looking at developing our own system. One of the things we have been thinking about are trips that cross boundaries of systems. Currently, we are taking a pause and letting the City sort through some of the issues. If the system is successful, we hope to look at this issue again March of next year.

Additional Comments

- This is a great idea and I hope it will be successful.
- The sooner this system is launched better.