

Public Bike Share Stakeholder Meetings

September 5th, 11th, 12th, and 28th 2012

SUMMARY NOTES

Attendance:	Janko Veselinovic, JV Bike	Charles Gauthier, DV BIA
	Justis Morginn, Denman Bike Shop	Tomarra Walker, Robson BIA
	Andy Kuo, EzeeRiders	Stephen Regan, West End BIA
	Maureen Cameron, Van Cycle	Leanore Sali, Gastown BIA
	Louis Kwan, Bayshore Bike Rentals	Lynn Warwick, Mount Pleasant Commercial Improvement Society
	Geoff Sharein, Spokes Bicycle Rental	Kamala Rao, TransLink
	Joe Kainer, English Bay Bike Rentals	Helen Cook, TransLink
	Tim Woodburn, West Point Cycles	Debra Rolfe, HUB
	Jan Atkinson, Ace Cycles	Steven Beck, BEST
	Paul Dragan, Reckless	Margaret Mahan, BEST
	Tom Woywitka, Yes Cycle	Gordon Price, SFU
	Paul Bogaert, Bike Doctor	Meghan Winters, UBC VCH
	Mike Theil, Bicycle Sports Pacific	Claire Gram, Vancouver Coastal Health
	Sam Shahbakhshi, Bikes on Robson	Adam Cooper, UBC
	Trevor Clark, Mountain Equipment Co- op	Kevin Millsip, VSB
	David Holzer, Car2Go	Andrew Prebushewski, VPD
	Mark Pribula, ZipCar	Pat Allem, VPD
	Gwendal Castellan, Tourism Vancouver	Eric Doyen, VPD

Staff:	Kathryn Kolbuch	Marnie McGregor
	Mo Douglas	Linda Gillan
	Scott Edwards	Jen Sheel
	Melissa Summerton	Neal Peacocke
	Linda Chow	Steve Chou

Executive Summary

The City, in coordination with Mobilize Strategies, hosted 4 separate stakeholder outreach meetings with over 35 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 September 5th, 11th, 12th, and 28th, and provided an overview of the PBS system along with the opportunities and challenges associated with the initiative. City staff also provided 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, which was then followed by an open discussion about PBS in Vancouver.

In addition to the four stakeholder meetings explained above, staff also reached out to a variety of City organized committees including the Women's Advisory Committee, Seniors' Advisory Committee, Active Transportation Policy Council, Gastown Historic Area Planning Committee and the Chinatown Historic Area Planning Committee. Similarly, staff provided an update on the PBS project, responded to questions, and collected feedback from the groups.

While the City staff obtained a tremendous amount of feedback from a wide range of perspectives, there was more significant discussion around these 3 key themes:

1) Impacts to Public Realm

There were questions about where the stations would likely be placed, and how they would impact areas such as sidewalks, parking lanes, etc. As well, people were curious to understand the physical dimensions of the stations and how they would look and interface with the public realm.

2) Impacts to Bike Rental Businesses

Several bike rental shops, particularly the ones concentrated near Stanley Park, raised significant concerns about the negative impacts PBS would impose on their business model. These shops would like the City to explore a variety of different mechanisms to avoid taking rental business away through PBS. Some of the ideas included: restrictions on PBS station siting, modified PBS fare structures to deter tourist trips, and partnership opportunities to help raise awareness of existing bike rental companies and their potential advantages over PBS.

3) Education

From all perspectives, there was a general concern around safety issues and how PBS will change the existing landscape. How can we educate new/returning bike riders? Will there be more riders on the sidewalk? Can PBS help foster a safer bicycle culture? How can we encourage helmet compliance? Those are just a few of the questions asked during the meeting, but in general there was an understanding that education played an important role in the roll-out of the PBS program.

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

- What is the high level goal of PBS in Vancouver?

To provide added mobility and to accommodate growth in Vancouver while using existing transportation infrastructure.

- Have we decided on an operator?

Yes. The preferred operator is Alta/Public Bike System Company (PBSC).

- What about the issue of helmets?

Helmets are the number one concern for the City of Vancouver. The issue of helmets differentiates Vancouver from many cities. The integrity (safety, security, and inspection) and 'ick' factor (sanitization) are important. One of the requirements from the operator is detailing the processes and steps for tracking, replacing, inspecting, and cleaning helmets.

- Would we consider changing the helmet law?

The helmet law is provincial and at this point we are not suggesting we would try to change that law.

- How set is the time frame?

The time frame is optimistic but manageable.

- Could you speak about current contract negotiations including details associated with the system?

We currently have a shell plan but we have not worked out the finer details such as costs.

- I would like to know if there were any attempts to find a local operator.

- Valuable information could come from polling people who live and/or work in the downtown because users of PBS in Toronto and Montreal have mainly been local.

- It is important to have transparency relating to research, etc.

- The helmet issue has never worked. I am concerned that you are pushing ahead regardless.

- Data on Melbourne may provide input into the impact of helmets. They may be trending towards certain solutions.
- The timeline of the project is aggressive and a concern. We need to make sure PBS is not rushed such that it puts a negative impact on cyclists. We need to make sure the operator doesn't prioritize other cities like New York over Vancouver.
- I am concerned that there will be pressure for the system to succeed.

Stations

- Where will docking stations be located and will parking be removed?

Docking stations will be located on public land, where feasible. Stations could also be located on private land; this might be done through development negotiations, for example. Some parking will likely be removed to accommodate docking stations. The requirement is a minimum of two parking spaces.

- Are there any thoughts about approaching private owners for locating docking stations?

We are looking at public land now. However, there appears to be support from businesses and we're looking at those opportunities for Vancouver.

- Will there be docking stations in and around Stanley Park?

There may be some stations within Stanley Park but there are challenges with the physical footprint. There is interest in having stations at destinations like Second Beach, the pool, and the bus stop. There probably isn't enough room around the Seawall.

- What is the thought process for deciding how the Seawall and Stanley Park will be handled? Is the Parks Board involved with this process?

Yes, the working group is engaging with the Parks Board. One of the challenges involves understanding where people might ride a bike with relation to the Seawall. Some of the issues surrounding people using PBS in Stanley Park could be addressed with the placement of stations and the possibility of having information at stations on bike rentals.

- What is the logic of having stations in Stanley Park? Bike rental shops in the West End already have Stanley Park covered.

We don't know where the stations will be located yet. We do know the coverage area includes Stanley Park and we are hearing that some people want stations at destinations such as the aquarium. One of the things we would be interested in is data and any other information from bike rental stores on bike usage. This will help us to better understand the industry.

- Is the geographic spread of the PBS system in Vancouver large enough?

A study was conducted by TransLink which recommended three geographic coverage areas. The one we are working with now is a medium sized area.

- How does the density and geographic coverage of the PBS system in Vancouver compare with those in other cities such as Toronto and Montreal?

The size of the coverage area varies but the density of bikes and stations is similar from city to city. The number of bikes and stations proposed in Vancouver is consistent with the numbers recommended by the proponents who responded to the City's Requests For Expressions Of Interest (RFEOI).

- What are the ratios for docking stations to bikes? What are the trips made per bike?

The ratio is evolving. An example would be 2:1. Figures for trips per bike per day range from 1 to 5.

- There may be controversy for taking out parking spots for docking stations.
- I am interested in hearing about the impact of bike parking/stations on sidewalks. There might be limited space.
- A discussion with BOMA (Building Owners and Managers Associations) may be worthwhile for connecting with building owners for access to private land.
- I would like to know if there will be incentives for property owners to allow docking stations on private property.
- I would be interested to know about the subsidized discount that PBS will be getting for using public property.
- Having too many bikes in Stanley Park and on the Seawall area will negatively affect the experience for locals.
- There is no commuting done in Stanley Park so how can we discourage the use of PBS in Stanley Park? We could give tickets to people riding a PBS bike in Stanley Park. It would be easy to spot the bikes and it could provide another source of revenue for the operator.
- There is support for not having stations in Stanley Park. This should be similar to the food carts where a buffer is created around certain areas.
- Robson Street is open to changing rush hour regulations to facilitate the installation of docking stations on-street.
- The Vancouver School Board (VSB) has thought about bringing in and implementing a bike system element for its staff. VSB is open to a conversation about PBS around VSB sites. They would be interested in corporate memberships.
- I am pleased to hear we are discussing station locations down the road.

Equipment, Operations, and Maintenance

- What are the dimensions of the docking stations?

The docking stations will be approximately 1.8 metres wide including the bikes. A typical length may be 12 metres but could be larger depending on the requirements for the number of bikes.

- How will the financial transaction take place at the docking station kiosks?

The transactions will be purely electronic. There will not be a cash box.

- What about the problems related to when a station becomes full or empty? Will the operator redistribute bikes from station to station?

Bikes will be redistributed by the operator. There will also be open data and mobile apps providing information to users about the real time availability of bikes at stations.

- Will there be a way to contact the vendor about an issue with the bikes?

If there is a damaged bike, there will be a button on the bike that the user can press, which will alert the vendor to an issue. We need to make sure these are responded to quickly.

- Will the bikes have GPS?

Yes. GPS has been found to be useful for users to provide them with information such as the distance they've travelled. It is also useful for the operator to understand the usage of bikes.

- What is the protocol for dumped bikes?

There is GPS built into the bikes and credit cards used to access the system are linked to the user. Education will be needed to help ensure users are clear on system operations.

- Will there be software problems and challenges?

We are looking into that currently and are trying to learn from other cities.

- VPD is interested in the physical design of bikes and the physical operation of financial transactions at kiosks (i.e. using smart chip versus swiping). We would be interested to see if there will be video surveillance like at ATMs.

- PBS is subsidized by tax dollars but tourists don't pay taxes. A solution could be requiring a Canadian credit card.

- If credit cards are only accepted, it will isolate a portion of the population. We could also consider including debit.

- There could be a partnership/support for people who do not have a credit or debit card (e.g. Capital Bike Share).

- People will ride downhill and all the bikes will be there. In Paris, they only redistributed during at night. I would like to know if this might be an issue here.
- Technology (e.g. apps) is as important as the bike. One click access to docking station information would be valuable. An easy to use app would make a big difference to the accessibility of PBS.
- It will be important to have access to open data.
- I would like to know if the seat of the bike can be taken off.
- I have privacy concerns related to the use of GPS and credit card information and am interested in knowing if anything is being done regarding access to that information.
- I would like information about the charges for losing/damaging a bike or helmet.
- I am concerned about vandalism and tagging at stations. This could add to the VPD workload.
- Enforcement will be critical to success. There will always be the 'jackass factor' that leads to damages. Video surveillance could be one deterrent.
- I am interested in how the helmet problem will be solved.
- Helmets are a concern. People may be reluctant to use a used helmet. I am interested in knowing about the price of renting a helmet and the impact on ridership.
- Helmets can be labour intensive to maintain and there will be lots of time-consuming maintenance required for the bikes.
- I am interested in know more about how helmet fitting will work.
- Rental shops spray and clean every day. We explain and fit helmets for people.
- The bikes are dark. Make them colourful, brighter, and look better.
- I am interested in understanding how VPD will be targeting their enforcements.
- There could be something developed similar to U-Pass for PBS.
- I would like to know if the City has any control over any of the local force (operations) that would be required.

Revenue and Financial Support

- What will be the sources of revenue for the operator?

There will be revenue generated from memberships, usage fees, and sponsors. We will need to look at by-law changes for logo sponsorship. There will be no revenue from ads; we are an ad-sensitive city.

- How is the rate being set? Does the City participate in setting the rate?

Rate of payment has been suggested but is not dictated by the City of Vancouver.

- What about the cost of mischief and damages for a PBS system?

A provision for a 6% loss of bikes from theft and vandalism is built into the cost of operating the PBS system. Figures indicate that about 2% of bikes are usually lost due to theft and vandalism. In North America, that statistic is generally lower.

- This will require large scale capital investment. Losses will happen in the first few years. As the company becomes cash poor, maintenance may be the first thing to go. Is the City subsidizing the vendor?

The vendor will have to have funding in place for the initial capital launch. The City will help get the PBS off the ground especially in years one and two. However, by year three, the vendor will have to show that their business model is self-sufficient. We are working out our level of support; however, this support will not be on-going.

- What are some of the financial contributions from the City?

There will be staff time and public space such as near community centres; however, we do not want to be continuing to contribute financially to the system.

- Is the company PBSC/BIXI having serious financial problems?

We have heard about this concern and we are currently looking into their financials. We also have legal and financial experts looking into whether BIXI's financial issues are a concern for the City of Vancouver.

- What about insurance on the PBS system?

The setup will be similar to carsharing where the responsibility will be with the operator to have the system insured. Taxpayers will not be on the hook for insurance.

- I would like to know whether there is a guarantee of profit for the private operator.

- I am concerned over the long term stability of PBS given the company is financially in trouble. The potential failure of PBS and loss of private businesses would be a tragedy. I would be interested to know the amount of money we would be on the hook for.

- In Toronto, the city is covering a \$600,000 shortfall. I would like to know more about the contract, financial model, and the risk to the City.

- Capital Bike Share usage over three years has skyrocketed.

Education and Communication

- How will rules, wayfinding, and other items be communicated?

Those items will be communicated through marketing, outreach programs, and other media such as screens, webpages, and videos. Issues related to safety and operation will be included in this messaging.

- People using PBS may not have ridden in a long time and/or have not ridden in traffic. Is there an education component or disclaimer? We don't want conflicts or people getting into accidents.

We have heard from many about education. This is a component we are currently discussing and working on with the operator.

- Given how many of the bike routes are located off the main streets, how will signage work and how do you link bike routes with major origin/destination routes?

PBS will be integrated into the existing wayfinding system. We are looking at apps/map wayfinding elements and trying to find synergies. Connections between the bike routes and main streets could be facilitated with the placement of stations.

- Can bike shops be added to PBS station maps?

We would be open to this idea through our wayfinding project; however, the key question is who would manage the data and information?

- There needs to be education about the PBS system and users need to learn that PBS is not a good all day service.
- It is important to educate all road users (drivers, pedestrians, and cyclists). Cyclists need education on following the rules of the road and about hand signals and stop signs.
- Users, both new and returning, must be educated about the rules of the road and safety.
- All locals know the laws but tourists don't. Perhaps there could be tourist education about our bike network and laws.
- Safety for pedestrians is a concern. There are issues around cyclists riding on the sidewalk, crowding on sidewalks, and cyclist behaviour including not stopping and going the wrong way.
- Cycling infrastructure has outstripped education.
- In Montreal, maps are mailed with annual memberships.
- Vending maps may be an option.

Transportation Impacts and Concerns

- What about safety?

Statistics from other jurisdictions show safety in numbers and that the incidence of collisions involving PBS users is very low. In general, more people cycling can help to raise awareness of cycling and improve safety.

- TransLink is interested and supportive of PBS. PBS will help achieve the regional goals outlined in Transport 2040. It can expand the reach of transit and get people out of cars. As well, it can also take people off crowded transit vehicles which will make the system more accessible to others who don't have the option of biking. Also, good cycling infrastructure is valuable to the success of cycling in the region. The integration of PBS with the Compass Card is possible in the future.
- Perhaps we could link user fees and membership with transit to encourage transit use.
- I would like to better understand why someone who would use PBS every day wouldn't just buy a bike.
- It is important that PBS habituate people. Anecdotally, people appear to gradually purchase their own bikes after the installation of PBS.
- Registering for separate systems (PBS and transit) is not something I would like to do.
- PBS could support a shift in our cycling culture and help improve the experience of riding in Vancouver. We need cyclists to be part of traffic instead of just being individuals riding at the maximum speed.
- There may be a funnel of high demand around the outside footprint of the system.
- It is important to ensure a balance in terms of how the public domain is used. There is a need to share the space with food trucks and many other competing uses. Also, there is a need to ensure sidewalks are maintained for the primary use of pedestrians.
- Bike congestion on streets is a concern.
- There might be a spike in the use of PBS during the period after the transit system closes but before the bars close.
- Alcohol consumption and cycling may be an issue.
- There should still be equal treatment of personal bikes on transit and TransLink should continue to accommodate personal bikes. Limits shouldn't be introduced simply because of the introduction of PBS. Don't stop installing bike racks on buses and keep allowing bikes on SkyTrain.
- We should be clear about what we want to accomplish with PBS. There is evidence that most are not changing mode shares from the car.

- It would be valuable to know if there have been changes to car and bike ownership in other cities.
- The McGill study “Making the Marriage Work” could be a resource.

Impact on Bike Rental and Retail Businesses

- How have rental and retail businesses adjusted to a PBS system?

Our understanding is that the cycling culture has picked up in cities with PBS. The business model of companies adjusts to work with the pricing structure of a PBS system. In some cases rental sales drop in the first year but then rebound. As well, some experience an increase in the sale of ancillary items.

- Where is the data for impacts coming from?

The data comes from academic research where possible and direct phone interviews.

- What are some of the effects of PBS on bike retail sales and what did shops do elsewhere to compensate/take advantage of PBS in their cities?

We are hearing that store owners are talking to people elsewhere and changing their retail model so there may be opportunities and synergies that exist.

- Are there any considerations for discouraging leisure users?

There are different rates for each type of membership. Casual users are charged more. Furthermore, there is an opportunity to redirect casual users from the PBS webpage to bike rental companies.

- I would like to know which studies are being cited and pulled from relating to the positive and negative impacts of PBS.
- Seeing data that shows business can survive “ruinous competition” would give comfort.
- This is my job and I am very serious. We are preparing for the death of the industry.
- The bike rental industry would be most affected by PBS.
- Vancouver rental rates are higher than what was presented.
- Sales may increase for the biking business but there will be rental losses. I’m not sure if this will be beneficial to locals.
- In other cities like Ottawa, Minnesota, and Montreal, rental shops are suffering. The PBS operator dumps stations in areas served by rental shops. This should be looked at for the contract because we don’t want to see the City leave things in the hands of the private operator. Rental companies are interested in having regulations and constraints in the contract to help protect them.

- Input into how small businesses can capitalize would be useful.
- It would be good to document how many rental companies were in operation before and after the implementation of a PBS system. There is value in benchmarking now to understand the impact of PBS on businesses.
- This should be promoted more for locals and tourists should be driven to rental shops.
- We remember in 2007 there were people using Paris' *Vélib* bikes all over the city. In 2010, it looked like there were fewer people using Vélib and more people using their own bikes. As well, new bike stores had opened and bike sales had increased.
- Retail shares similar concern with rental. There is a desire to have rental and retail be integrated into the bigger picture. Stakeholders in retail and rental are concerned they aren't provided with an advantage over other stakeholders. As well, they would like to ensure larger stakeholders aren't given the advantage.
- The pricing structure is a concern. Casual users and tourists are rental companies' bread and butter. There is concern that they may switch from their product. This could be alleviated by making a one day use more expensive or only offering two day membership.
- Increasing the daily user fee and reducing the annual fee will help the bike rental industry. This will help encourage annual users and deter casual users. This could be a disincentive to tourists.
- Rather than raise daily rates (e.g. UBC wants to keep it low), maybe increase the beyond 30 minute use rate.
- Putting a limit of one bike rental per credit card could be one solution.
- The fact that there is a cluster of rental shops in one area shows that there is huge demand for PBS.
- The PBS system is being operated by a private company. I am concerned about what would stop the company from moving into English Bay.
- Understanding the percentage demand from tourists would be beneficial.
- Apps and technology could be used to inform users of bike shop locations. This could possibly be integrated with PBS.
- 1.4 to 1.7 hours is the average rental period for our rental company.

Future Expansion of PBS in the Region

- Have there been discussions with UBC and other municipalities?

UBC appears keen to launch their system immediately after Vancouver's or to do a co-launch. There have been discussions with Richmond; they are interested but appear cooler to the idea.

- What are the opportunities for standardization of PBS in the region?

Discussions have been held with TransLink about integrating the Compass Card with PBS so that users will simply need one 'transportation card' to access PBS and transit. One possibility is a launch of PBS and the Compass Card at the same time to help support each other.

- What are some of the infrastructure developments over the next 3 to 5 years? Is the City looking at more infrastructure and is there a partnership with PBS?

The City is looking at that now with the Transportation Plan. We are hearing ideas from the public although not directly related to PBS. There is some interest in higher level facilities and additional spot improvements to existing facilities and networks. This could be advanced in the fall through the Transportation Plan.

- PBS is a scaleable system which can be applied elsewhere in the region.
- There are opportunities and benefits for a PBS system at UBC with trips to and from UBC currently totalling 74,000 trips. UBC could see a system with 200 bikes and 20 stations.
- I would be interested in know about what would be a proposed system to link the PBS systems in City of Vancouver and UBC? There may be operational synergies and opportunities for partnership.
- This is not a good system to travel from UBC to downtown.
- PBS is not intended for UBC to downtown trips. However, we could have a shared system with access to both.
- Perhaps a zone model could be used for crossing boundaries.

Additional Comments

- PBS is a tool for improved mobility on the UBC campus.
- I live in Kits and don't bike downtown because I don't feel that my bike will be safe when I lock it up there.
- Make it safe for me to park my bike.
- I would wear a helmet whether it is a law or not.
- Vancouver, in reports, is being compared to places with quite different climates.
- London and Paris have huge restrictions on car access.
- I am pleased to read in TransLink report that ridership is up 26% in last 3 years - not because the weather has changed but because of capital investment.
- Having more trips by bike is better for all. In the long run, we will all benefit from this.

- All trips and forms of transportation are subsidized.
- In Montreal, it is hard to lock up bikes and more people ride BIXI and do not own a bike.
- Theft is the largest concern. More bike parking is needed and it would make it easier for people to own a bike.