

Vancouver Transportation Plan Update

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Abstract

Like most major urban cities, the City of Vancouver has an overall transportation strategy. In January 1996, the City of Vancouver began a broad city-wide public engagement program that eventually led to the Council-approved Vancouver Transportation Plan in May 1997, nearly 15 years ago.

While the plan was a great step forward for the City, most action items are completed and many of the targets were exceeded a decade ahead of schedule. Development of a new, longer range plan (Transportation 2040) is now underway to set the City's sights higher and farther ahead.

This paper provides an overview of the regional context and original public process undertaken to complete the 1997 Vancouver Transportation Plan and summarizes some key related planning milestones over the years to follow. The paper then summarizes recent transportation monitoring results, highlighting the significant sustainable transportation progress that has been achieved over the last 15 years.

Finally, the paper includes an overview of the development process for Transportation 2040, from its initiation in the Greenest City Action Plan and onward into developing the first active transportation implementation plan. An overview of the plan's goals and principles, as well as a summary of some of the top policies and actions, are included.

Creating the 1997 Vancouver Transportation Plan

Since the decision in the late 1960s not to build freeways in the city, Vancouver City Council began to pass policy to minimize the impact of the car. As 1996 approached, Council policies had become increasingly focused on transportation as a means to a better city, rather than as a goal in itself.

In January 1996, the City of Vancouver began to develop an overall transportation strategy that would set a direction specific for Vancouver while remaining consistent with the regional (now Metro Vancouver) transportation policy and land use plans of that time. The plan was supported by a broad city-wide public engagement program early on, followed in April and May 1996 by a series of four Transportation Symposiums, including a broad public discussion on the Transportation Choices workbook.

In September 1996, the Draft Plan was released and meetings were held to get public reaction. Early in 1997 Council held a series of special meetings to hear delegations on the Draft Plan prior to approving the Final Plan in July 1997. Council and residents were becoming as concerned with the need to protect neighbourhoods from the impacts of traffic as they were to achieving a high level of mobility in the city. Balancing these sometimes competing objectives was going to be a prime concern with the public in developing Vancouver's Transportation Plan.

Regional Context and City Land Use Plans

The basic objectives for transportation in the city in 1996 were largely set with Council's adoption of CityPlan and the Liveable Region Strategic Plan in 1995, the Regional Transportation Plan (Transport 2021) in 1994, and the Central Area Plan for Downtown in 1991.

From a regional perspective, Transport 2021 had already provided Vancouver with a context to begin its master planning process with residents. Vancouverites were engaged in visioning a future that would be less reliant on the private automobile and that included greater transportation choices. In particular, Transport 2021 was instrumental in expanding public education on the needs for transportation demand management to change travel behaviour, strategic expansion of public transit, and land use to support more walkable communities.

Land use decisions for Downtown Vancouver were guided by the Central Area Plan, which sought to improve the balance between office and transportation capacity by increasing residential density in the Downtown and focusing commercial areas around rapid transit centres. These two actions provided positive transportation benefits by reducing the number of vehicle trips to and from Downtown and by increasing the proximity of the labour force to jobs.

Outside of the Downtown, the City of Vancouver adopted CityPlan to guide the balance of its land use decisions. CityPlan emphasized the need to create or strengthen neighbourhood centres as places where people would find shops, jobs and services close to home. New housing was to be focused mainly in neighbourhood centres to help meet the housing needs of Vancouver residents as they age. Similar to the Central Area Plan, these CityPlan policies would provide positive transportation benefits and work toward the regional goal of reducing urban sprawl.

Key Elements of the 1997 Vancouver Transportation Plan

The 1997 Vancouver Transportation Plan aimed to maintain a high level of transportation service for the City, while being less reliant on the private car. The following principles set the direction for the Plan:

1. We will accommodate growth in demand for transportation using the existing road network, without increasing road capacity.
2. Growth in demand for transportation, particularly to the Downtown, will be accommodated by improving alternatives to the car: transit, walking and cycling.
3. The car will continue to be a major form of transport particularly for areas not well served by transit. Regional measures to manage traffic demand, such as carpooling, parking limits, bridge tolls and electronic road charges, will be supported.
4. The importance of maintaining good truck access in the city is recognized by maintaining the existing truck route network. Improved access to the Port of Vancouver and Vancouver Airport will be pursued, where it can be achieved without unreasonable impacts on local neighbourhoods.
5. Traffic calming measures will be supported to slow the speed of traffic and prevent short-cutting to reduce the impacts of vehicles moving through neighbourhoods.
6. Residents of Vancouver and the region can help to achieve a more sustainable transportation system by leaving the car at home and using alternatives where practical.
7. Planning and development policies for the City will support local retailing, personal, business and community services so that residents can find more of the services and jobs they need closer to home.

Based on these seven principles, the Plan identified 70 major initiatives to improve transportation in and around the city, with six later additions. The Plan also set mode share targets for walking, transit, biking, and vehicle trips out to 2021. Along with approval of the 1997 Transportation Plan, Council also approved an implementation work program for the first three years of the Plan.

Key Milestones over the Last 15 Years of the Plan

2001 Transportation Plan Progress Report

In 2001, staff updated Vancouver City Council on the Plan implementation. At that time, most action items had been initiated and about one-fifth were complete. The status of major Transportation Plan initiatives in 2001 was as follows:

Completed - 14 (18 per cent)
Initiated - 54 (71 per cent)
Not Started - 8 (11 per cent)

2002 Downtown Transportation Plan

In 2002, Council approved the Downtown Transportation Plan (DTP), a more comprehensive, yet focused, plan to ensure that Vancouver's city centre remains a thriving commercial centre and one of the easiest and most pleasant downtowns to get to and around, whether walking, biking, taking transit, or driving. The goal of the DTP was to accommodate more people travelling to and within the Downtown without increasing road capacity on existing bridges and roads. Its objectives were to promote transit, walking and cycling while minimizing congestion.

Following technical analysis and public consultation with both residential and business communities in the Downtown, the DTP made 80 recommendations to achieve a more balanced Downtown transportation system generally by providing greater transportation choices. The DTP was supported by the majority of stakeholders and received awards from the Canadian Institute of Planners and the Planning Institute of British Columbia.

In June 2003 Council approved an implementation program for the Downtown Transportation Plan. That program identified 83 specific initiatives that were to be implemented in a three-year timeframe with funding to support a dedicated staff team comprising Engineering and Planning staff.

2006 Transportation Plan Progress Report

In 2006, staff provided Council with a progress report on both the original Transportation Plan implementation and the DTP. For the Transportation Plan, work at that time had begun on all 76 major initiatives: 50 were complete and most of the remaining 26 that were underway were expected to be completed within one to three years. For the DTP, the status of the 83 major initiatives in 2006 was as follows:

Completed - 52 (62 per cent)
Initiated - 18 (22 per cent)
Not Started - 13 (16 per cent)

Transportation Progress in the Last 15 Years of the Plan

Since Vancouver's Transportation Plan was adopted in 1997, the City has been providing transportation choices to support a more sustainable city by making investments that clearly prioritize transportation options other than car use. Most of these transportation initiatives have been completed or are well underway and have been further supported by land use planning with higher density mixed-use neighbourhoods with easy access to shopping and work.

The population of Vancouver grew by 95,000 people City-wide over the last 15 years – a feat made all the more impressive by Vancouver's relatively small share of its metropolitan population (603,000 of 2,313,000) and fully built-out land base. Over this period, 40,000 more people moved Downtown. There are also 23,000 more Downtown jobs and 130 more Downtown high rises of 20 storeys or more. **Figure 1** illustrates the dramatic change in land use for Downtown Vancouver by showing changes to the city's skyline.

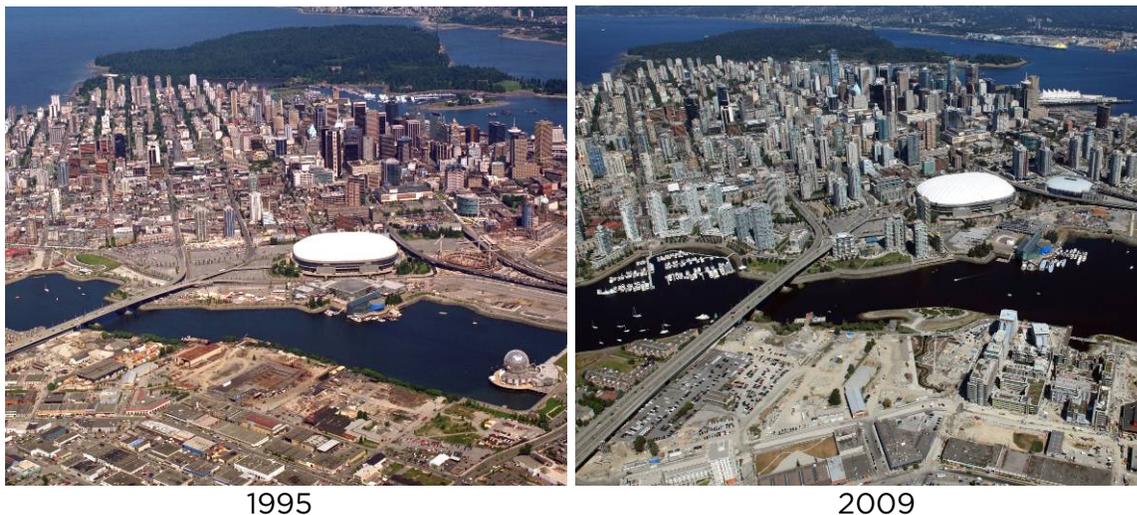


Figure 1: Dramatic Change in Land Use for Downtown Vancouver

Overall, Vancouver has grown steadily over the last 15 years, resulting in an 18 per cent increase in population and a 16 per cent increase in employment. One might expect that the increase in the number of residents and jobs within Vancouver would have resulted in at least a modest increase in vehicle trips into and within the city and downtown. However, this is not what the latest set of transportation monitoring data shows.

Through various sources, it is clear that the increase in the total number of trips to and within Vancouver has been primarily accommodated on transit, bicycle, and foot. This is a very positive sustainable transportation trend that suggests that the policies and implementation strategies of the City's Transportation Plan have been successful in achieving the desired results.

City-wide Transportation Trends

The first example of the decreasing number of vehicles over the last 15 years is Vancouver's annual vehicle screenline data conducted at the boundaries of the city. From 1996 to 2011, there has been a 5 per cent decrease in the number of vehicles entering Vancouver on a daily basis. **Figure 2** shows the relationship of this vehicle decrease as compared to the growth in City-wide jobs and population previously noted. **Figure 3** shows the corresponding increase in commuting to jobs in the City of Vancouver by transit, walking, and cycling.

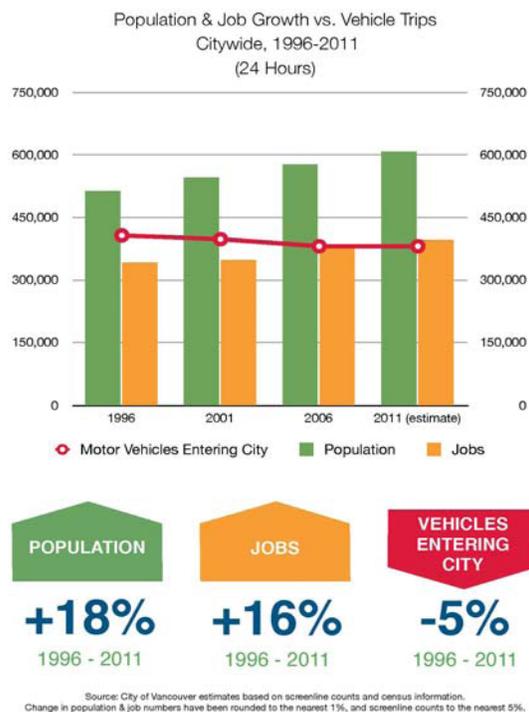


Figure 2: Increase in Population and Jobs City-wide and Reduction in Vehicle Trips into Vancouver (24-hour period)

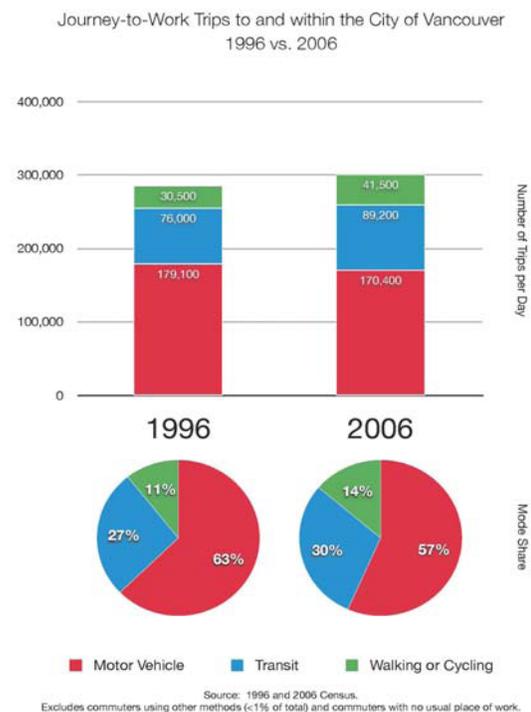


Figure 3: Journey-to-Work Trips To and within the City (1996 & 2006)

This comparison of the federal 1996 and 2006 Journey-to-Work Census data shows that, while the number of vehicle trips has declined by 5 per cent, there has been an overall increase in the number of commute trips into and within Vancouver. Correspondingly, there has been a 36 per cent increase in the number of active transportation (walk and bike) trips as well as a 17 per cent increase in the number of transit trips for commuting into and within Vancouver. These numbers also do not reflect more recent significant transit investments, such as the Canada Line.

In other words, the Journey-to-Work Census data confirm that the policies and implementation strategies of the City's Transportation Plan have been successful in accommodating more growth by new walk, bike, and transit trips and shifting existing car drivers to more sustainable modes. Vancouver is thus in the enviable

position of having simultaneously increased population and jobs while reducing motor vehicle traffic.

A further breakdown of the Journey-to-Work Census data shows that all of the net increase in commute trips was from those fully within the City of Vancouver itself. From outside Vancouver, vehicle volumes have declined, showing the importance of good regional transit service to Vancouver. Transit trips have increased by 24 per cent, indicating that transit has in fact replaced vehicle commute trips into the city (see **Figure 4**). Within Vancouver, motor vehicle volumes were more or less stable, which means the growth in trips was accommodated by walking, cycling, and transit (see **Figure 5**).

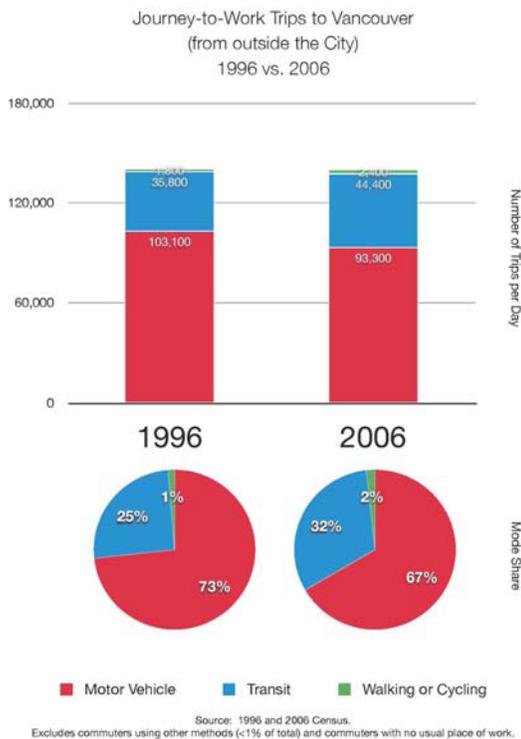


Figure 4: Journey-to-Work Trips from outside the City (1996 & 2006)

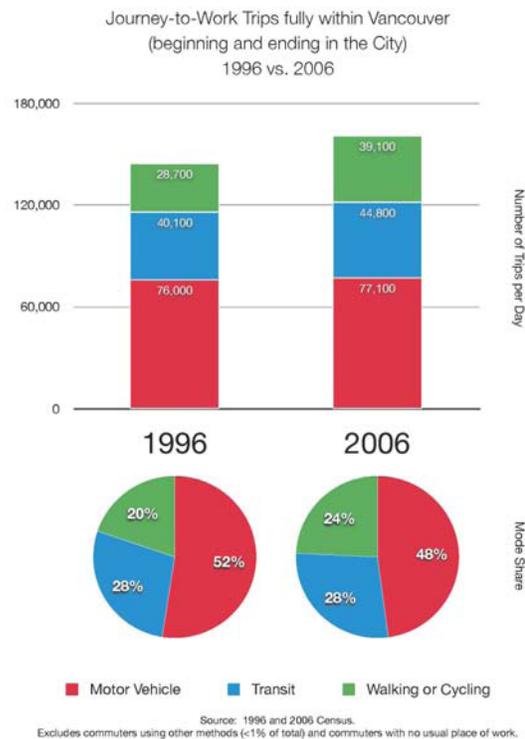
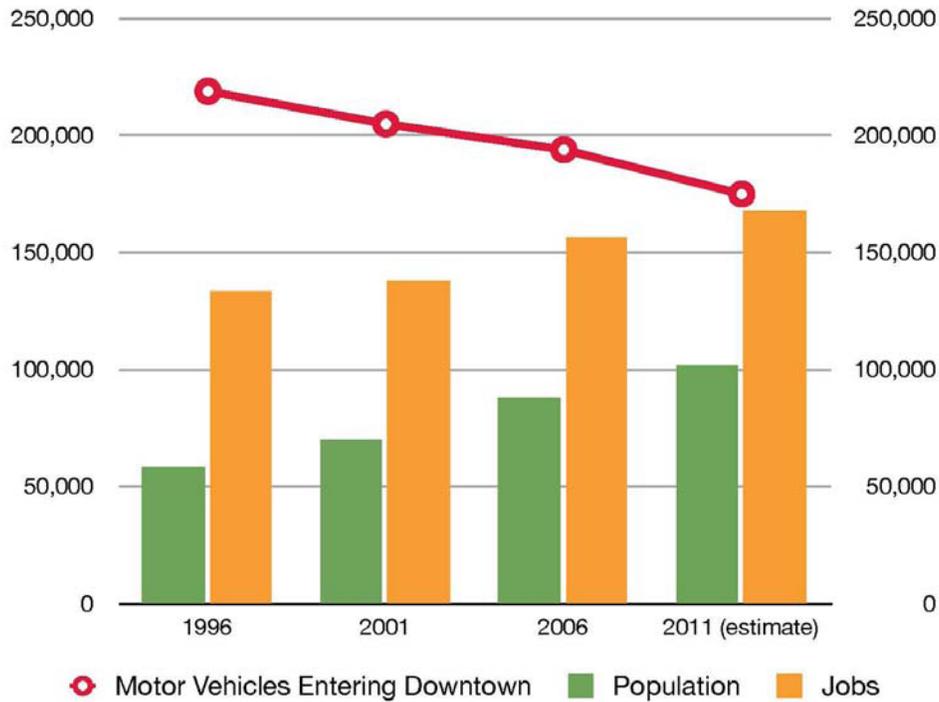


Figure 5: Journey-to-Work Trips fully within the City (1996 & 2006)

Downtown Transportation Trends

The transportation trends for the last 15 years for the Downtown (see **Figure 6**) are in the same direction as the city-wide trends except that they show an even more dramatic increase in downtown population (75 per cent) and jobs (26 per cent), as well as a 20 per cent decline in vehicle volumes entering. Meanwhile, there has been a 15 per cent increase in the total number of person-trips entering Downtown during peak periods. These data come from the City's or TransLink's screenline count program, which determines the total number of trips into Downtown for all transportation modes.

Population & Job Growth vs. Vehicle Trips
 Downtown Vancouver, 1996-2011
 (24 Hours)



Source: City of Vancouver estimates based on screenline counts and census information. Change in population & job numbers have been rounded to the nearest 1%, and screenline counts to the nearest 5%.

Figure 6: Increase in Downtown Population and Jobs and Reduction in Vehicle Trips into Downtown Vancouver (24-hour period)

The increases in population and jobs have combined to support more short intra-downtown commuting trips. Census data show that most of the new commute trips into Downtown over the past 15 years were taken up by transit and that walking and cycling are also picking up some of the new trips (see **Figure 7**). Furthermore, a comparison of 1996 and 2006 Journey-to-Work Census data confirms that almost all new commute trips within the Downtown Peninsula (residents who live and work Downtown) are made on foot or bike, increasing their majority further (see **Figure 8**).

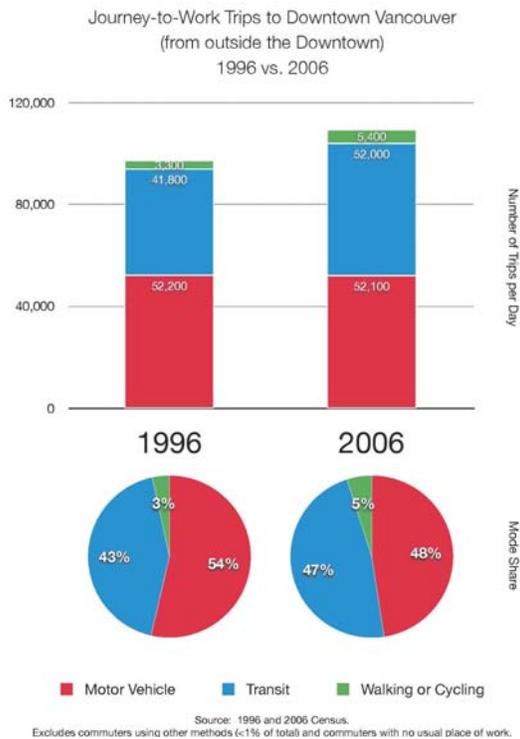


Figure 7: Journey-to-Work Trips to the Downtown Peninsula (from all areas outside of Downtown) (1996 & 2006)

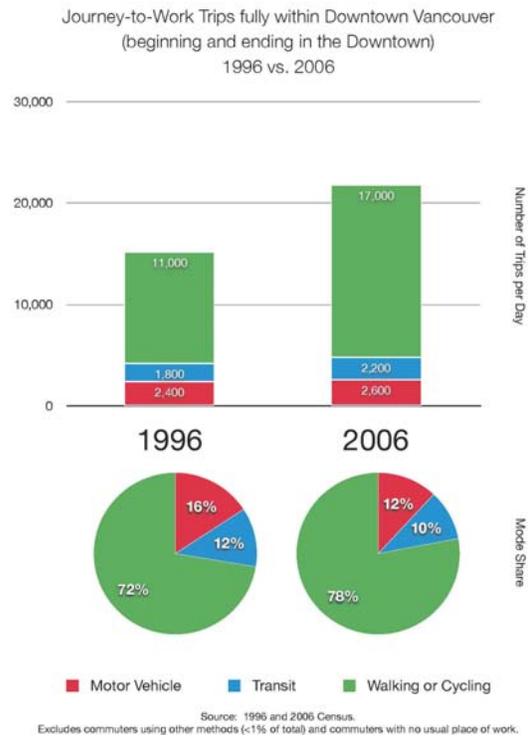
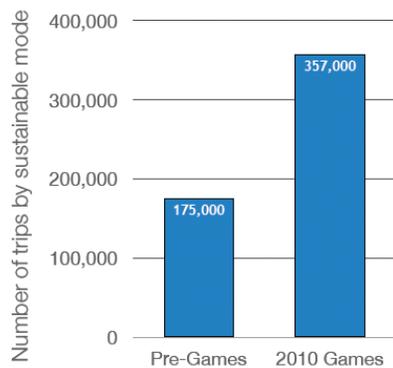


Figure 8: Journey-to-Work Trips within the Downtown Peninsula (1996 & 2006)

Winter Olympics

The success achieved in creating substantial movement towards sustainable transportation modes during the 2010 Olympic Winter Games provides a significant legacy opportunity for the new Transportation Plan (see **Figure 9**). Vancouver residents, businesses and visitors responded to the improved walking and cycling conditions and increased transit frequency during the Games by making over 40 per cent more trips to Downtown while achieving the City's goal of reducing motor vehicle trips by 30 per cent during peak periods.



Trips to Downtown by walking, cycling, and transit **more than doubled** over 24 hours.

Source: City Screenline Counts. Pre-Games = November 2009. 2010 Olympics = February 2010



Figure 9: Increase in Non-Auto Trips During the 2010 Winter Games

The Olympic transportation experience provides a tangible local example of achieving the Greenest City 2020 goal of a majority of trips by walking, cycling, and transit. The update to the Transportation Plan will, however, need to identify new initiatives to replicate these changes for everyday travel.

Successes, Challenges, and Lessons Learned

As the City recently prepared to update its Transportation Plan (see next section), staff informally compiled a list of successes, challenges, and lessons learned from implementing the 1997 Transportation Plan, some of which follow:

- The successful integration of land use and transportation cannot be overstated. The Planning and Design staff at the City has done an incredible job of creating a Downtown that is liveable and walkable, such that 74 per cent of residents who live and work Downtown now walk to work.
- The policy to restrict road capacity was a successful strategy. When an area is redeveloped with services and amenities close by and high-frequency/capacity transit is provided, there is often an even greater reduction in the background vehicle traffic than expected or modelled. Localised turning movements to the new development can certainly increase but pass-through trips often decrease as amenities are brought closer to existing residents that can now walk, cycle or take transit.
- Increases in transit frequency and capacity have been a key component to our transportation success. This has enabled a higher percentage of the longer trips to occur by transit. Some of the improvements that TransLink and the Provincial government have implemented over the past 15 years include the addition of the Millennium SkyTrain Line, 30 per cent more capacity added to the Expo Line, completion of the Canada Line, additional bus routes and service hours added as per the 2005-2010 Vancouver/UBC Area Transit Plan, and introduction of the West Coast Express commuter rail service for the weekday peak periods.
- There are many regional destinations within the City of Vancouver and transit is key to providing a sustainable transportation choice to these areas. The Journey-to-Work data presented earlier indicate that the growth in trips originating from outside the Downtown has generally been accommodated on transit. In other areas of Vancouver the challenge is keeping transit capacity in pace with growing demand. For example, on the high-frequency Broadway corridor, 2000 passengers are passed up every weekday in the AM peak period and drivers have stopped formally counting pass-ups as they would on other routes.
- The effort to standardize neighbourhood traffic calming was a fair and equitable process that is widely respected by local residents. Residents have appreciated the objective criteria that the Engineering Department developed to ensure that neighbourhoods with the most significant

short-cutting vehicle traffic and/or highest traffic speeds were prioritized for capital projects and public processes.

- The City of Vancouver benefits from the grid network of streets celebrated by the Bartholomew Plan of 1929 and predominantly laid down before curvilinear roads became the North American fashion. There are considerable benefits to supporting all transportation modes, either on arterial streets or within close proximity. For example, most of Vancouver's bikeways and greenways have been relatively easy to implement on local streets parallel to the arterial streets, which carry buses and trucks and which are less desirable for cycling and walking. Furthermore, the grid system has provided for easy transit connections as most areas can be served with one transfer and more than one route option. With a grid pattern, there are also multiple pedestrian connections and vehicle traffic is distributed among many streets that can accommodate construction or special impacts more readily.
- The Transportation Plan and subsequent Downtown Transportation Plan, each containing defined targets and projects, have helped to provide predictability for our residents and businesses and accountability to staff to be guided by a vision approved by City Council.
- Not all neighbourhoods in the city have experienced the same sustainable transportation trends. Some areas in the City, such as Kerrisdale, have significantly higher vehicle mode splits than the City on average (based on the 2006 Journey-to-Work Census Data). Kerrisdale is an old streetcar neighbourhood with shopping amenities, a walkable grid, well-developed bikeways, and frequent transit service to both Downtown and UBC. By contrast, the Central Broadway corridor is in need of higher capacity transit to be able to contribute to a better overall sustainable mode split. Despite having the busiest bus route in North America with over 55,000 passengers per day, over 100,000 daily passengers on all routes, and the second largest employment base in the Province, the Broadway Corridor cannot meet the targets set out in the 1997 plan without higher capacity transit.

Updating the Transportation Plan

Although the established modal priorities of walking, cycling, transit, goods movement, and private vehicle use will remain the same, there is a need to establish new mode split targets that are ambitious but achievable. Existing and new transportation strategies and initiatives need to be identified to ensure that our recently approved Greenest City “Green Transportation” targets for 2020 are realized and that the City is adequately supporting longer range transportation GHG targets to at least 2040.

The Greenest City 2020 Action Plan public process also provided an additional round of consultation and an engagement framework from which to build. Consultation continued with a first round on the Transportation Plan mid-2011, with an ongoing stakeholder advisory committee continuing through to the expected second round of consultation. After plan adoption, focus will shift toward shorter term implementation plans, such as the planned Active Transportation Implementation Strategy, a first for Vancouver.

An update to Vancouver’s Transportation Plan provides an opportunity to build upon the successes of the previous plan while setting out a new vision and master plan for sustainable transportation in the City of Vancouver. Greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction targets recently adopted by the City, Metro Vancouver region and Province (**Table 1**) provide additional urgency to develop a coordinated transportation strategy with our transportation partners for reducing carbon dependency and emissions.

Table 1: City, Regional & Provincial Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets

<p>City of Vancouver</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce community-based GHG emissions by 33 per cent from 2007 levels by 2020
<p>TransLink (Metro Vancouver)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce regional GHG emissions at least 33 per cent below 2007 levels by 2020 • Reduce regional GHG emissions at least 80 per cent below 2007 levels by 2050
<p>Province of BC</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce provincial GHG emissions by at least 33 per cent below 2007 levels by 2020 • Reduce provincial GHG emissions by at least 80 per cent below 2007 levels by 2050

To create a liveable and sustainable city, the update to the Transportation Plan requires significant connection between our existing and emerging land use plans and policies, economic development strategies and Community Climate Change Action Plan. The updated plan will also need to support social objectives regarding accessible and effective mobility for all users and to recognize the growing importance of the linkages between our transportation systems, land uses, affordable housing and public health.

Furthermore, an important part of the work program will be to integrate the long-range Transportation Plan with the development of the new Greenest City Implementation Plan and its Council-approved targets for 2020 (**Figure 10**).

Make the majority of trips (over 50 per cent) on foot, bicycle, and public transit.	Reduce distance driven per resident by 20 per cent from 2007 levels.
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Figure 10: City of Vancouver 2020 Green Transportation Targets

Updating the Transportation Plan includes research, data collection, analysis, and public consultation. The final product will be a comprehensive plan that sets a vision for moving forward with improvements that promote multiple transportation choices while emphasizing sustainable modes and economic growth. Targets for transportation mode splits and GHG reductions will be included for future horizon years up to 2040.

The update to the Transportation Plan is being delivered by a multidisciplinary team of Engineering and Planning staff, has taken approximately 18 months to complete and involves two main phases. An extensive communications and public consultation program was implemented for the start of the new Transportation Plan, including education, public and stakeholder meetings, online tools and social media.

The new Transportation Plan is expected to be completed and submitted to Vancouver City Council for summer 2012. The final product will be a comprehensive long-term transportation plan that sets a vision for moving forward with improvements in Vancouver through to 2040 that promote multiple transportation choices while continuing to promote increased healthy and sustainable travel behaviour, and ongoing economic growth and prosperity.

Goals and Principles in the New Transportation Plan

While Vancouver has made great strides since the past plan, some challenges still loom while others have become increasingly significant. Vancouver will continue to have to accommodate new trips without increases to road space – 130,000 new residents and 90,000 new jobs are expected over the thirty years

of the plan. Despite increases to transit service and new rapid transit corridors, transit has only become more patronized, overcrowded, and fiscally challenged.

Meanwhile, the number of Vancouverites aged 60 or better is expected to double in those thirty years, mirroring global trends. Vancouver will also have to cope with continually rising fuel prices and the threat of climate change, though it is relatively well positioned given existing success in reducing motor vehicle travel and meeting Kyoto Protocol targets thus far.

To meet these challenges, the City is in the process of developing targets to track progress toward the Transportation Plan's three main goals. In addition to the Greenest City 2020 Action Plan, 2011 brought a new Economic Action Strategy and a newly elected (and re-elected) Council aiming to tackle affordability and other quality of life issues in Vancouver. The three goals were thus developed out of the eight overlapping objectives identified in the first phase consultation in these three areas:

- Economy: The City with Global Reach and Allure
 - Increasing transit service capacity and quality to support jobs, housing, and economic activity
 - Addressing freight bottlenecks to move more goods and support our role as a Pacific Gateway
 - Enhancing the city's vibrant and lively downtown to strengthen our city as both a destination and producer of global investments and talent

- People: The City Built for All and Open to Everyone
 - Providing better walking and cycling facilities for all ages and abilities to improve health and protect vulnerable users
 - Increasing the affordability of our city by providing more desirable low cost transportation options
 - Improving accessibility for everyone

- Environment: The City at Home in its Natural Setting
 - Making walking, cycling, and public transit the preferred options for all daily trips
 - Reducing the distance driven by our residents
 - Improving access to green & open spaces and fresh local produce
 - Cleaning the air we breathe and water we drink, while improving the outdoor experience

To meet these goals, the City's actions must work in concert across its three areas of influence. Development and land use policies must recognize the continuing importance of shaping transportation positively and connecting people and places with shorter lines. Infrastructure investments and management decisions must continue to make better use of existing road space to move more people on foot, bike, and transit. Pricing, education, enforcement, and other social policy measures are needed to support the built environment across a myriad of social factors to ensure the uptake of sustainable modes.

Fundamental to the plan are several higher level principles, such as the decision to continue to reallocate road space to enable more trips on limited road space, and to make strategic investments in low-cost and high-benefit solutions. Though the plan recognizes the importance of transit and rail capacity to move people regionally, the hierarchy of modes continues to place vulnerable road users first:

1. Walking
2. Cycling
3. Transit
4. Commercial
5. Private Auto

Policy and Actions in the New Transportation Plan

Seven elements are highlighted in the plan, covering the various modes and supporting urban form. Each element includes a high level statement of aims, specific policy positions, and detailed actions. Although the detailed list of policies and actions will be finalized through second phase consultation, some key actions for each element have been highlighted in the following sections to illustrate the type of directions.

Land Use

Leading with land use recognizes the importance of the transportation-land use connection in shaping trips before they start. The plan aims to support shorter trips and sustainable choices through mixed land use, pedestrian-oriented design, compact form, and new housing options. Policy and actions are focused on improving the coordination between planning for developments and supporting infrastructure, with directions including:

- Prioritizing transportation investments in areas with higher existing or future population and jobs density
- Locating major activity generators near rapid transit stations or along frequent bus transit corridors
- Building complete neighbourhoods with most services within a ten minute walk
- Supporting affordable housing near rapid transit stations
- Designing buildings to contribute to a safe, interesting public realm

Walking and Public Spaces

Pedestrians are first in the hierarchy of modes, and are paired with the streets and squares that make up the majority of the urban public realm. The plan aims to make walking safe, convenient, and delightful, and to ensure streets, sidewalks, and laneways support a vibrant public life that encourages healthy choices. Policy and actions are focused on improving the conditions for walking and improving the quality of public spaces, with directions including:

- Creating permanent plazas and gathering spaces downtown
- Widening sidewalks to improve accessibility for everyone
- Creating additional public spaces throughout the city
- Developing policies and guidelines to build a vibrant, memorable, rain-friendly pedestrian realm
- Identifying other pedestrian accessibility and safety deficiencies and prioritize for improvement
- Supporting laws that protect vulnerable road users

Cycling

Along with pedestrians, the hierarchy of modes prioritizes cyclists as vulnerable road users. The plan aims to make cycling feel safe, convenient, comfortable, and fun for people of all ages and abilities. Policy and actions are focused on improving the conditions for cycling to encourage “interested but concerned” Vancouverites to begin riding for more day-to-day needs, with directions including:

- Focusing on completing a cycling network for all ages and abilities
- Providing abundant and secure parking at transit stations, with a retrofit program for existing buildings
- Completing a bicycle safety and comfort study
- Supporting laws that protect vulnerable road users, motorist training, and cycling skills training
- Rolling out a public bicycle sharing system
- Implementing city-wide street end closures on local street bikeways/greenways outside the metro core

Transit

Responsibility for transit planning and operations within Metro Vancouver lies with TransLink, though the City of Vancouver has a role to play in supporting improvements. The plan aims to support transit improvements to increase capacity and ensure service that is fast, frequent, reliable, fully accessible, and comfortable. Policy and actions are focused on ensuring that aspects of urban form under the City’s control support transit improvements, with directions including:

- Working with TransLink to deliver fast, frequent, high capacity, reliable transit to UBC by 2020
- Protecting and designing for future high-capacity transit corridors and potential station locations
- Providing accessible waiting and boarding areas at all transit stops as feasible, prioritizing high-demand locations

Goods and Services

Next in the hierarchy of modes is goods and services movement, prioritized over private automobiles to strengthen Vancouver's role as Canada's primary Asia-Pacific gateway. The plan aims to support Vancouver's role as a major port while reducing environmental and neighbourhood impact while maintaining emergency response times. Policy and actions are focused on improving freight reliability, with directions including:

- Protecting and improving rail corridors for goods and passenger movement, including the Powell Street overpass
- Re-opening Clark Drive as the primary north-south access point for Port-bound trips
- Developing a strategy to facilitate small-scale urban goods and services movement
- Reviewing curb loading zone policies for efficiency
- Supporting improved taxi movement, along with electrification and better wheelchair/bike accessibility

Motor Vehicles

Although planning efforts have reduced travel by automobile in Vancouver, motor vehicles still account for a majority of trips overall. The plan aims to make it easier to drive less, and help reduce automobile use and ownership, while recognizing that motor vehicles may be the only viable option for some people and some trips. Policy and actions are focused on increasing transportation affordability and equity, with directions including:

- Using off-street parking requirements and supportive strategies to encourage reduced ownership and use
- Separating parking and housing costs; approach parking as a flexible district resource
- Providing charging infrastructure to support early deployment of electric vehicles
- Supporting transportation demand management and car-sharing programs
- Supporting regional road or congestion pricing and pay-as-you-drive insurance

Structure and Network

Although Vancouver is based on a relatively consistent grid, the confined downtown and strong freeway revolt combined to leave a few short elevated roadway remnants dominating the main entry points to downtown. The plan aims to identify significant changes to the street network and city structure to support higher level objectives of the plan. Policy and actions are focused on evaluating the use and utility of transportation infrastructure across modes, with directions including:

- Reallocating space on all three False Creek bridges to improve conditions for pedestrians and cyclists
- Pursuing changes to the Georgia and Dunsmuir viaducts and the surrounding road network
- Setting sidewalk criteria for widths and walking space
- Supporting integrated multi-modal waterfront hub

Implementing the New Plan and Tracking Progress

Although the new transportation plan is being developed for a 30-year horizon, it is expected to be part of an ongoing implementation and renewal process with a suite of related plans. The plan itself is expected to be renewed in approximately fifteen years, similar to the amount of time passed since the 1997 plan, and to be supported by implementation plans on a shorter timeframe. The implementation strategies regarding active transportation, for example, will be refreshed every few years to support the flexibility and potential for rapid change these modes represent as compared to major transit investments, for example.

Transit investments also rely on close cooperation with TransLink, the regional transportation authority, which plans and operates Vancouver's bus and rapid transit routes. Partnerships will also need to continue to be cultivated with project stakeholders, representing dozens of groups and covering sustainable transportation advocates and entrepreneurs, business associations and transport companies, and city advisory committees.

Communications efforts more generally will be important not only to engage the general public in ongoing consultation, but also to explain the role of transportation planning in city building and to clarify the rationale behind action items as implementation moves forward. Successful consultation programs build both a stronger plan and stakeholder support, and the process begun with Greenest City will continue to be critical to the plan's future success.

Strategic data collection and analysis will also play a key role. Rigorous transportation planning efforts are grounded in a technical analysis that relies on detailed traffic counts, physical and social surveys, demographic and census information, safety statistics, and ridership numbers. Quality data is also critically important in tracking the success of transportation projects, as well as evaluating their performance to make improvements or apply experience to new locations and types of facilities.

The most important indicator the City of Vancouver tracks for transportation will continue to be the various forms of mode share, covering different scales, times, and purposes. Each of the plan elements will have its own unique metrics, from the amount of pedestrianized space and number of café chairs, to loading zone occupancy and turn over. Several potential types of indicators are highlighted below by goal:

- Economy: The City with Global Reach and Allure
 - Moving People: Trips to downtown, across city boundary
 - Moving Goods: Travel time reliability on key port routes
 - Vibrant City: International imaginability of downtown

- People: The City Built for All and Open to Everyone
 - Safety: Reduction in traffic fatalities
 - Health: Population meeting minimum daily activity requirement
 - Affordability: Income dedicated to transportation purposes

- Environment: The City at Home in its Natural Setting
 - Mode Share: Trips by walking, cycling, and transit
 - Distance Driven: Motor vehicle kilometres travelled
 - Climate Change: Greenhouse gas emission reductions

Other planned monitoring efforts include improvements to travel behaviour data collection, including a pilot for a panel survey that would track a large sample of Vancouverites and their transportation habits and behavioural changes through time and across new quantitative and qualitative factors.

As the policies and actions are refreshed, monitoring information will prove invaluable in determining success toward the three goals. The lessons learned will continue to help the City of Vancouver in adjusting its efforts across the various areas it influences to meet the critical local and global challenges it faces. If Vancouver is to continue past success in increasing population and employment and reducing motor vehicle traffic, each of these plan components will need to work together to build a transportation system designed to support the modern, urban city Vancouver has become.