

TAC SUSTAINABLE URBAN TRANSPORTATION AWARD SUBMISSION - VANCOUVER TRANSPORTATION PLAN PROGRESS REPORT (MAY 2006)

SUMMARY

The Transportation Plan Progress Report 2006, reviewed the progress made on Vancouver's *1997 Transportation Plan*.

The 1997 Plan set out goals to increase walking, cycling and transit use by 2021. The key finding of the Progress Report was that less than 10 years later, many more people are now walking, choosing cycling and taking transit than they were 10 years ago. In fact, Vancouver exceeded its original goals.

Here are the details:

Vancouver's *1997 Transportation Plan* has been largely implemented. Many of the mode share targets that were set for 2021 have already been achieved, and remaining initiatives will soon be completed.

Overall, the City's transportation policies have been successful in achieving the desired sustainable urban transportation results. Population and employment in Vancouver have grown steadily over the last 10 years, resulting in a 23 per cent increase in trips to Vancouver. However, numbers of vehicles entering and leaving the city have actually decreased by 10 per cent over the same period. New trips to and within Vancouver have been increasingly accommodated on transit, bike, and walk modes. This trend contrasts sharply with the rest of the Greater Vancouver region, where we see auto use increasing.

Vancouver's Downtown has experienced dramatic growth in residents and jobs, creating an efficient, high-density, mixed-use centre. Trips to Downtown have increased 22 per cent in 10 years, yet numbers of vehicles entering and leaving the Downtown Central Business District have decreased by seven per cent. New trips to Downtown have been by transit, cycling and walking. In particular, walking has become the fastest growing and most important way of getting around the Downtown.

Central Broadway -- the city's health and civic centre -- is the largest employment area outside of Downtown. It has experienced a doubling in transit trips to the area. Broadway has a similar dense, mixed-use development as the Downtown, but trips to the area are increasingly auto-oriented. It has an auto mode share that is more comparable with the Greater Vancouver region than with the Downtown. Central Broadway is not currently served by rail rapid transit -- a factor contributing to the high auto mode share of trips. With bus service on Broadway nearing capacity, it is unlikely the City's mode share targets can be achieved until rail rapid transit service is extended.

The University of British Columbia (UBC), on Vancouver's western border has experienced a near tripling of transit trips in the last 10 years, largely due to the introduction of the "U-Pass" program. Transit trips to UBC have now exceeded the 2021 mode share target.

Cycling trips in Vancouver have almost tripled in the last 10 years. In the same period, the City doubled the size of the bikeway network. In the morning peak period there are 2,700 bike trips into the Downtown area alone. On an average day, there are more than 50,000 bike trips to Vancouver destinations.

The City's *1997 Transportation Plan* outlined 76 major initiatives, and established innovative new transportation policy for the City. Fifty of these initiatives are now complete, and most of the remaining 26 are currently underway and will be completed within one to three years.

Beyond these major initiatives and 2021 mode share targets, the *1997 Transportation Plan* helped guide individual land use decisions, such as parking requirements, and the development of the city as a whole. The Plan provided a vision and a policy framework for transportation planning that all City departments strive to achieve.

It is hoped that Vancouver's Transportation Plan, and this Progress Report, can be used as a template for other Canadian municipalities, as they consider ways to reduce the impact of local transportation activities on the environment.

INTRODUCTION

Municipalities in Canada continue to be one of the most attractive places in the world to live and work. However, continuing population and employment growth, coupled with issues such as rising fuel prices, traffic congestion, and increased awareness of the negative health and environmental impacts of automobile use present ongoing challenges. Some questions these challenges raise are:

- Are there effective ways for municipalities to provide improved choice and greater use of transportation alternatives such as walking, cycling and transit?
- Can land use play a key role in supporting increased use of transportation alternatives?
- Are there partnerships that municipalities can form with other agencies and organizations to help them achieve more sustainable transportation patterns?

Vancouver's Transportation Plan Progress Report (May 2006) illustrates that the answers to all these questions are 'Yes'. Data collected from a number of sources shows that the vision for increasing walking, cycling and transit outlined in the 1997 Vancouver Transportation Plan was achievable, and in several cases progress has been much quicker than expected. Areas where there continue to be challenges in implementing the Plan are also discussed in the Progress Report.

OVERVIEW - VANCOUVER TRANSPORTATION PLAN (1997)

The Vancouver Transportation Plan was approved by City Council in May 1997 following a city-wide public consultation program that began in January 1996. It laid out innovative new transportation directions for a shift to alternatives to the car. Key elements included:

1. Sharing the Road Network
 - Allocating more road space to transit
 - Improving truck access
 - Allocating Space for cyclists
 - Improving pedestrian comfort and safety
2. Calmer Traffic in Neighbourhoods
 - Addressing the need for safe, quiet neighbourhood streets and convenient alternatives to the car for local trips
3. Better Transportation Balance Downtown
 - Providing greater emphasis on transit while maintaining road capacity at current levels
4. Targets for Transportation (*see Table 1. – Appendix*)
 - Guiding the actions needed to implement the Plan and monitor progress
 - Providing mode share targets for 2021
5. Priorities for Implementation
 - Placing the highest emphasis on transit improvements
 - Outlining 70 major initiatives
 - Adding 6 more major initiatives in the years following the plan
6. Paying for Transportation
 - Funding for changes to the transportation system provided within existing property tax revenues

DISCUSSION

The Transportation Plan Progress Report has shown that overall, the City's 1997 Transportation Plan policies have been successful in achieving their desired results. Population and employment in Vancouver grew steadily over the last 10 years, resulting in a 23% increase in trips to Vancouver. However, vehicles entering and leaving the city actually decreased about 10% over the same period (see *Figure 1 – Appendix*). New trips to and within Vancouver have been increasingly accommodated on transit, walk and bike modes. This trend is in contrast to the rest of the region where auto mode use has been increasing (see *Figures 2 and 3 - Appendix*).

Vancouver's Downtown has experienced dramatic growth in residents and continued growth in jobs, creating an efficient, high-density, mixed-use centre. Trips to Downtown have increased 22 per cent in ten years, yet vehicles entering and leaving the Downtown Central Business District have decreased by 7 per cent (see *Figure 1 – Appendix*). New trips to Downtown have been by transit, cycling and walking. In particular, walking has become the fastest growing and most important way of getting around the Downtown. Amongst major North American cities, Vancouver has the highest walk mode share for the journey-to-work (see *Figure 4 – Appendix*).

The Central Broadway area is the city's health and civic centre, and the city's largest destination outside of the Downtown. Broadway has experienced a doubling in transit trips to the area. It has a similar dense, mixed-use development as the Downtown, but trips to Central Broadway are increasingly auto-oriented. Its auto mode share is more comparable with the GVRD than with the Downtown. Central Broadway is not currently served by rail rapid transit, a factor contributing to the high auto mode share of trips destined to this area. With bus service on Broadway nearing capacity, the Millennium Line extension to Central Broadway is needed to achieve the Plan's mode share targets.

The University of British Columbia (UBC) has experienced a near tripling of transit trips in the last ten years, largely due to the introduction of the U-Pass program. Transit trips to UBC have now exceeded the 2021 mode share target. Transit growth in Vancouver and the rest of the region has been much higher than other Canadian cities (see *Figure 5 – Appendix*).

Cycling trips in Vancouver have doubled in the same period the City doubled the size of the bikeway network. In the morning peak period there are some 2,700 bike trips into the Downtown alone and on an average day there are over 50,000 bike trips to Vancouver destinations. Cycling is the city's fastest growing transportation mode (see *Figure 6 – Appendix*).

Highlights of the major initiatives that helped achieve these results include:

- 1) Road Network
 - Street furniture and amenities program funded by advertising revenues
 - Improvements cost-shared with regional government and ICBC
 - City-wide Noise Study
 - Reclassification of low volume arterials to collector streets
- 2) Transit
 - Vancouver transit strategy (strategic actions for improving transit)
 - Vancouver Area Transit Plan completed in partnership with region
 - Universal Transit Pass implemented for University of British Columbia (UBC)
 - Canada Line rapid transit line (Vancouver to Richmond) including City funding towards some stations
 - Bus bulges installed at 26 locations (*see Figure 7 – Appendix*)
- 3) Cycling
 - Installation of bike routes including new network of painted bike lanes in the Downtown
 - Cyclist priority measures including bicycle signals and painted bike boxes at intersections
 - Bicycle racks on commercial frontages
 - Study of pedestrian and bicycle bridge crossings (False Creek)
 - Improved information about cycling
- 4) Neighbourhoods
 - School safety programs
 - Pedestrian volumes and opinions study
 - Sidewalk Task Force reviewed safety and convenience measures
 - Reduced waiting time for pedestrians at traffic signals
 - Criteria for pedestrian priority areas
 - Traffic calming
 - Development of a network of greenways - walking and cycling corridors that connect parks, historic sites, neighbourhoods, etc. (*see Figure 8 - Appendix*)
 - Southeast False Creek Sustainable Community
- 5) Downtown
 - Downtown Transportation Plan
 - Transit improvements
 - Conversion of one-way streets to two-way streets
 - Reduced residential parking standards
 - Support for car-sharing (*see Figure 9 – Appendix*)

6) Goods Movement

- New Port Road for truck access
- Corridor plan for City's busiest truck route (Clark-Knight)
- Posting of engine brake prohibitions
- Speed and commercial vehicle enforcement

7) Funding

- Cost-sharing with Greater Vancouver Regional Transit Authority (TransLink), ICBC, and the provincial and federal governments
- Implementation of a new city-wide development cost levy for sustainable transportation projects

8) Monitoring

- Sources of data include automatic and manual traffic counts, screenline surveys, trip diary surveys, Census, AirCare (regional emission testing) odometer readings and other special counts

Beyond the major initiatives and the mode share targets, the 1997 Transportation Plan has helped guide individual land use developments, such as parking requirements and the development of the city as a whole. It has provided a proven vision and a policy framework for transportation planning that other municipalities could adopt for their plans.

CONCLUSIONS

The Transportation Plan Progress Report shows that the City's 1997 Transportation Plan has been largely implemented. Many of the mode share targets that were set for 2021 have already been achieved. Despite an increase in the number of trips in the city, automobile volumes have declined slightly, while walking, cycling and transit trips have all increased significantly. The Progress Report, with its detailed listing of the major initiatives that have contributed to this success, provide a proven set of actions that other Canadian municipalities could consider in their transportation plans. The full Transportation Plan Progress Report and its covering report to Vancouver City Council can be viewed and downloaded at <http://vancouver.ca/ctyclerk/cclerk/20060530/documents/rr1a.pdf>.

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Table 1 Summary of progress towards the Transportation Plan 24-hour mode share targets

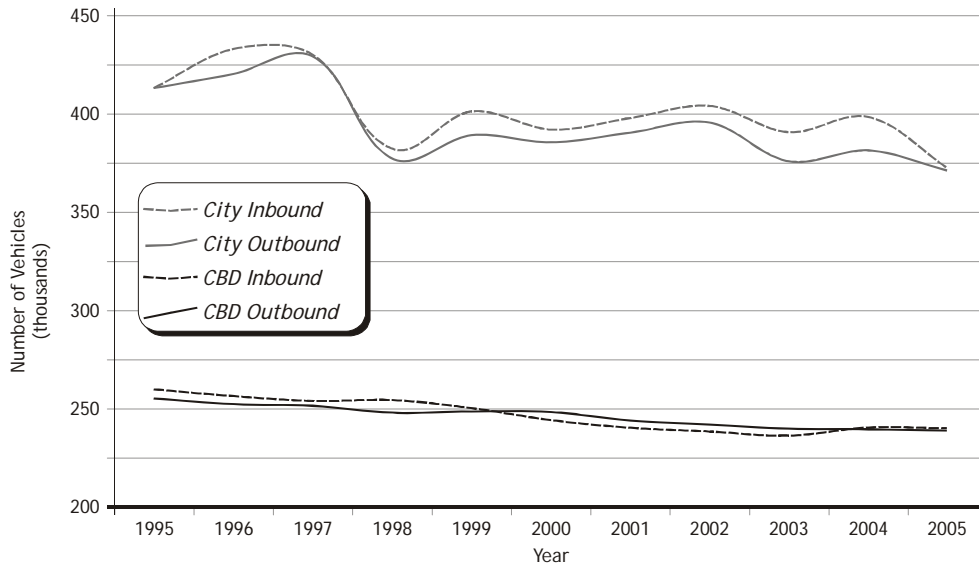
Mode	Downtown			Central Broadway			Vancouver			UBC		
	1992	2004	2021 target	1992	2004	2021 target	1992	2004	2021 target	1992	2005	2021 target
Driver	49%	27%-32%	36%	n/a	51%-57%	45%	52%	49%-51%	44%	59%	37%	41%
Passenger	13%	7%-10%	12%	n/a	8%-12%	15%	17%	12%-13%	15%	18%	19%	16%
Transit	23%	27%-32%	34%	n/a	18%-22%	25%	14%	17%-18%	23%	14%	42%	33%
Bike	15%	2%-3%	18%	n/a	2%-4%	15%	17%	3%	18%	9%	1%	10%
Walk		25%-29%			10%-14%			16%-17%			1%	

Legend for comparing 2004 mode share performance to 2021 targets

	Exceeded objective	This mode share has surpassed the 2021 target set out in the Transportation Plan. Revised targets to reflect current and anticipated trends are required.
	Neutral	This mode share has not achieved its objective; however, this is not necessarily a negative trend. It may be that it is on track to reach its target by 2021 or that shifting preferences for other non-auto modes means the target should be updated to reflect current and anticipated trends.
	Under objective	More work needs to be done to achieve the 2021 targets. These targets would be achieved following the completion of the Canada Line and Millennium Line extension to Central Broadway, as identified in the Plan.

Figure 1

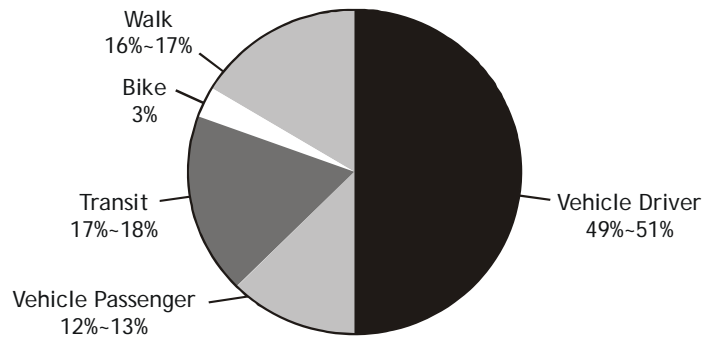
Vehicles entering/leaving the city and the Central Business District (CBD) in a 24-hour period



Note: Data for 2001 and 2002 was not available and has been extrapolated.
Source: City of Vancouver Annual Cordon Count Program

Figure 2

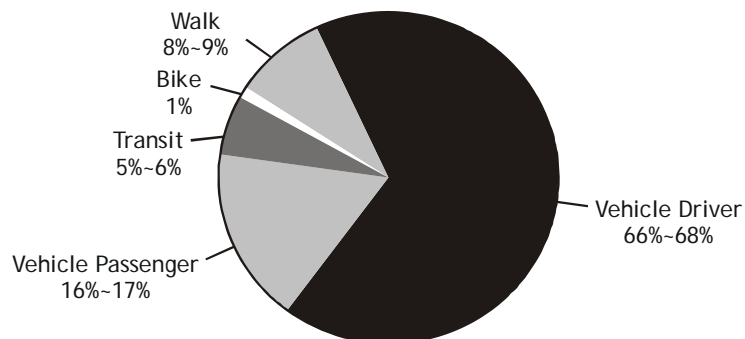
Trips to and within Vancouver in a 24-hour period



Source: TranLink Trip Diary, 2004

Figure 3

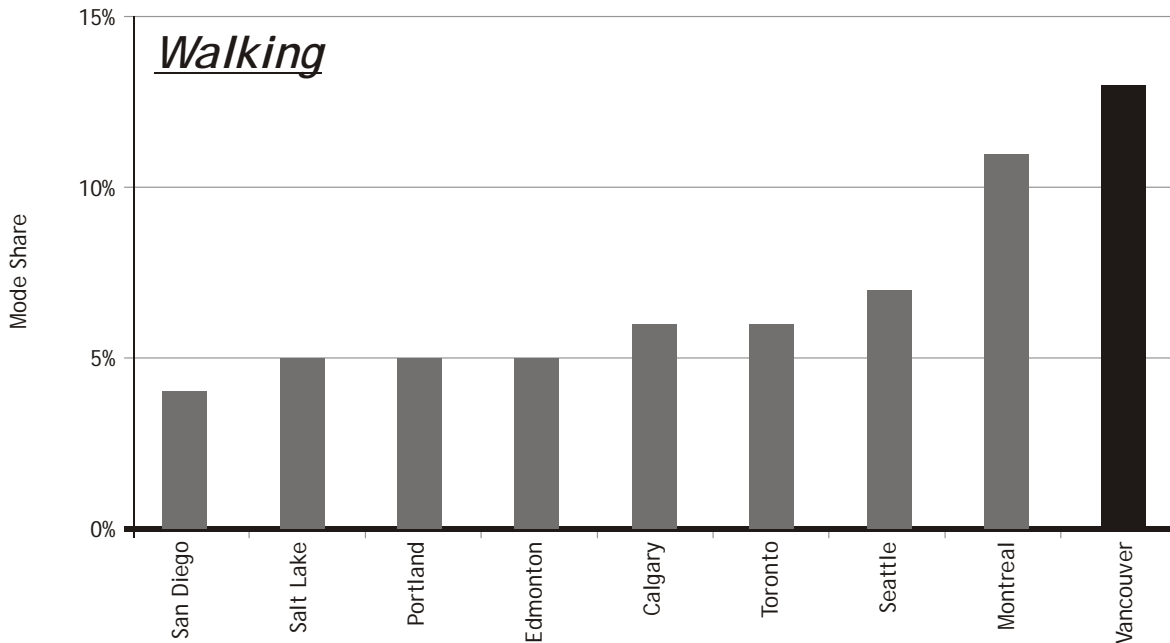
Trips to and within the rest of the GVRD (not including Vancouver & UBC) in a 24-hr period



Source: TranLink Trip Diary, 2004

Figure 4

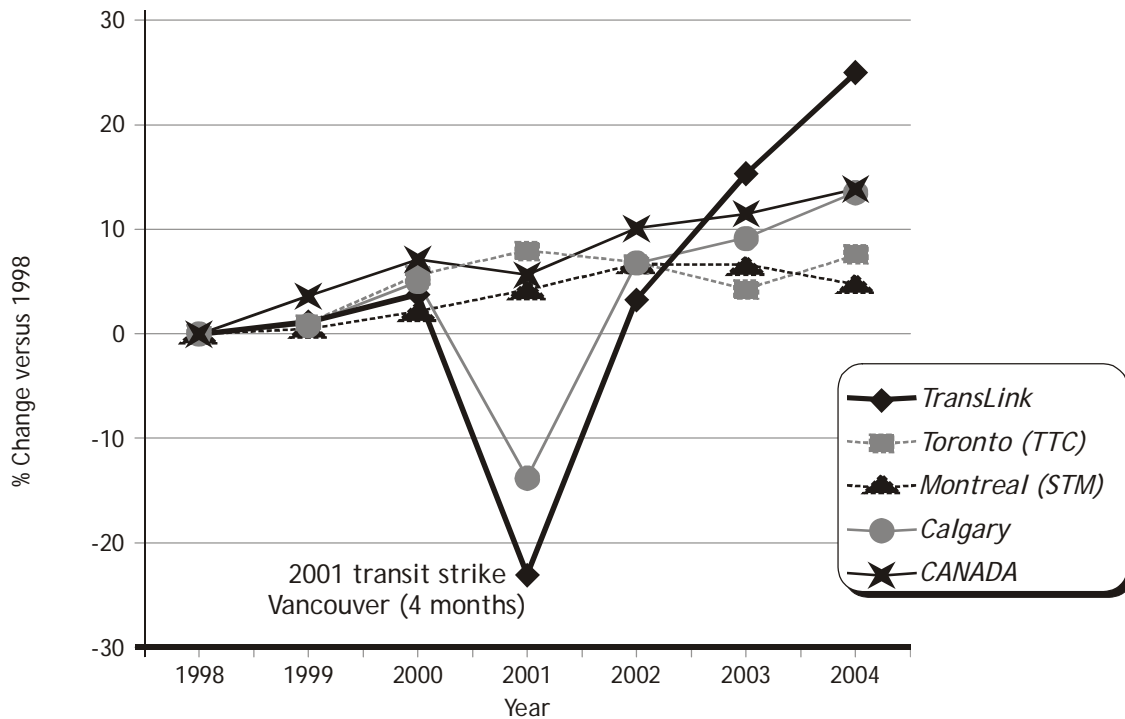
Comparison of walk mode share for journey-to-work trips originating in Vancouver and other Canadian and US cities



Source: US data from US Bureau of Census, 2000. Canadian data from Statistics Canada 2001 Census, except Vancouver, which is based on the 1996 Census. The 2001 Census data for Vancouver is not accurate due to a bus strike during the Census collection period.

Figure 5

Transit ridership trends - TransLink & other major Canadian systems



Source: TransLink GVTA

Figure 6
Vancouver Bicycle trip growth in a 24-hour period

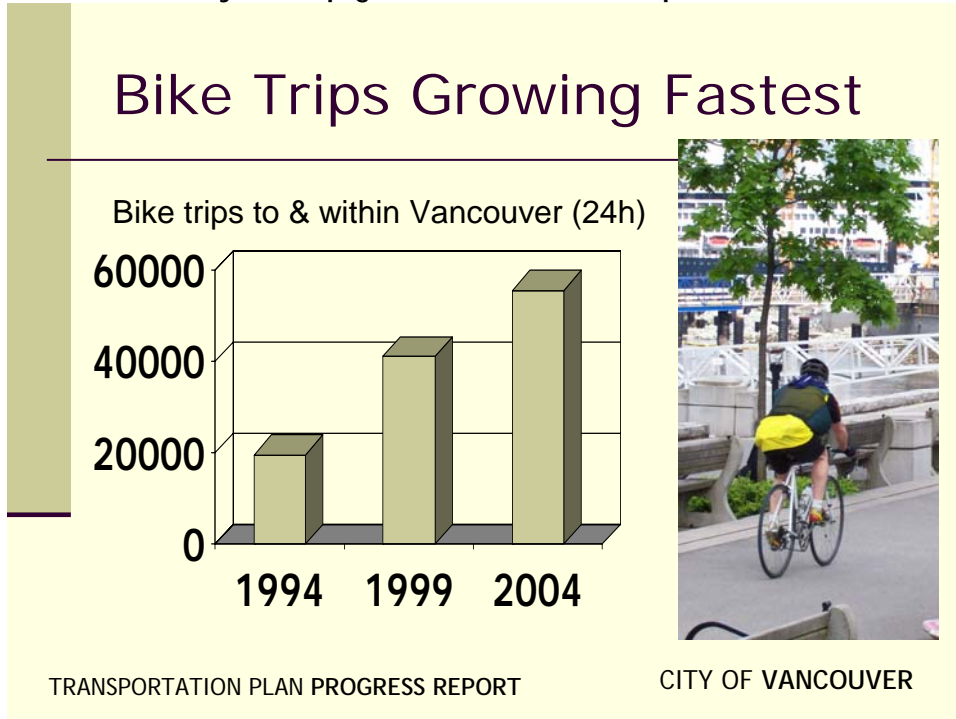
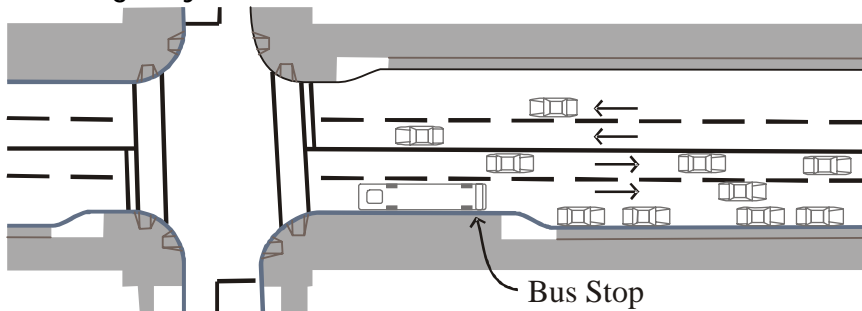


Figure 7
Bus bulge layout



A bus bulge allows buses to stop in the moving lane of traffic.

Figure 8
City Greenway Network

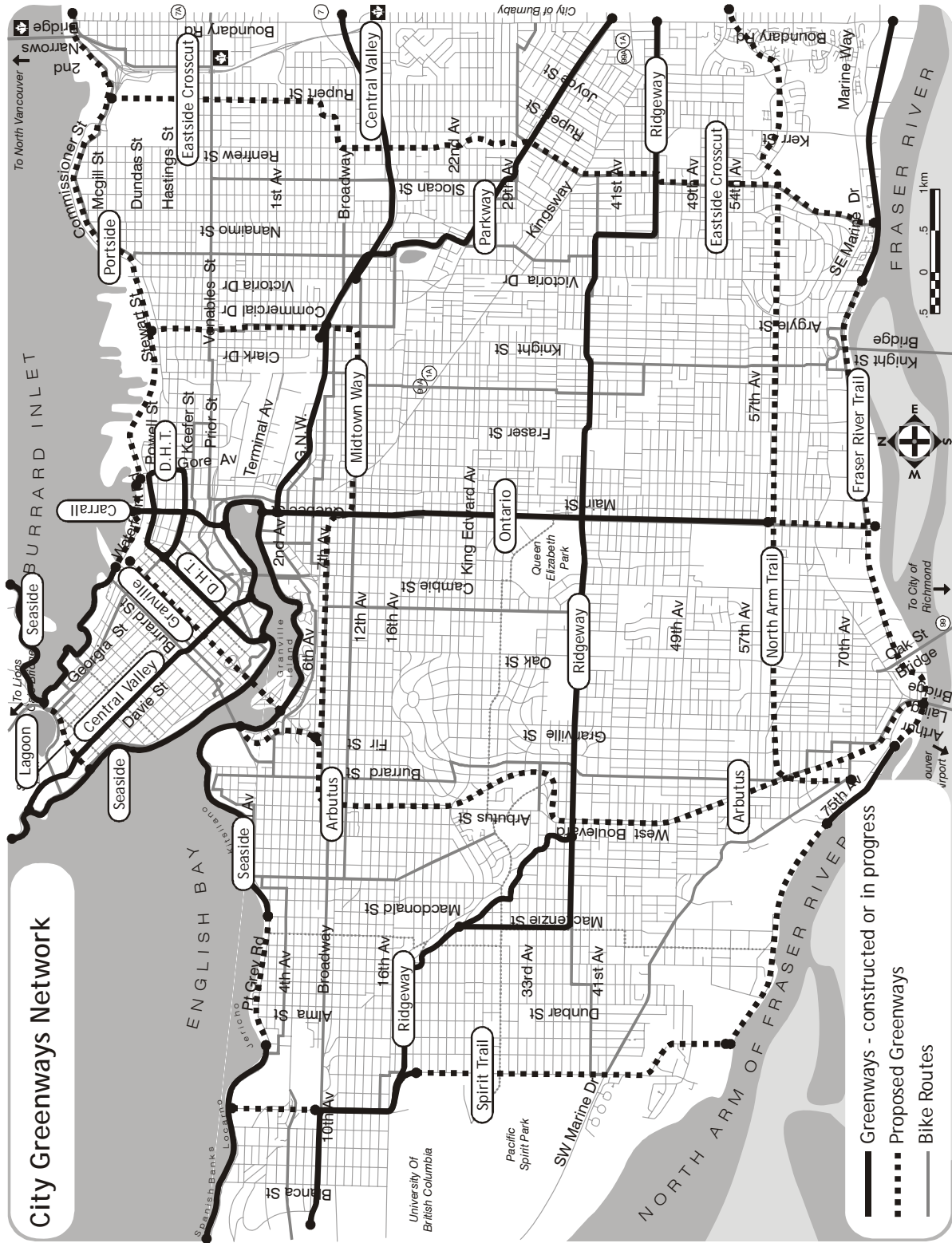


Figure 9
Co-operative Auto Network (CAN) vehicle locations

