

Accessible, Affordable Transit for All —Old, Young, & Disabled Included

The main job of our transit system, as I see it and using an environmental climate emergency lens, is to provide an efficient system that moves our population through their daily activities, maximizing environmentally friendly options and minimizing the use of single-occupancy motor vehicles. As well, a vibrant civil society requires that transport be accessible and affordable.

The population that uses transit is changing as our world is changing. We have a rapidly aging demographic with seniors more active than ever before who are still living with declining health and mobility.

The COVID 19 Pandemic may leave us with a permanent reset as many workers will continue to work remotely, and more students learn online. We love our outdoors and increasingly compete for space and access in beautiful destinations like Stanley Park.

How do we respond?

Transit options must be accessible. Drop the bus stop “balancing” program. By eliminating 20% of bus stops our transit system will become 20% less accessible. Many will give up on it.



The tremendous success of the college/university U-Pass shows that cost matters. Expand this program universally. Abandon and rescind fare increases planned to start July 1, 2021.

Everyone wants to spend time in Stanley Park (including coyotes apparently.) Support active transportation and reinstate the #52 bus that circulates around Stanley Park.

More express buses and local buses are needed on busy arterials, and more buses generally would be beneficial.

What can we learn from other cities and the use of advanced technology? New York uses intelligent transport systems to help transit agencies operate more efficiently and provide travelers with real-time, information that makes using transit easier and more attractive.

They use global positioning satellite technology, to help minimize a phenomenon known as a bus “bunching,” which occurs as fluctuating bus ridership and traffic causes several buses to arrive at a stop together and no buses at all to show up for extended periods of time. According to an NYC planner, this bus “bunching” was a major problem for both the NYC buses and the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA).

Let's learn from their experience.

[The preceding was presented by Connie Hubbs to the April 1, 2021 meeting of the Metro Vancouver Mayors' Council on Regional Transportation. It has been lightly edited. The following are some comments by Nathan Davidowicz, who also applied to address the Mayors' Council but was not invited to do so. Both are members of the Vancouver Ecosocialists.]

1. The placement of bus stops was established in the 1950s by the City of Vancouver, and the present staff at TransLink and the city do not know about this old policy that worked well for 70 years. Some of the really-close-together bus stops are mostly only at transfer points. On average, bus stops in Vancouver are every 650-800 ft. TransLink and the city want to change this average distance to 1300-1400 ft., but they have not done any proper public engagement on the policy.
2. U-Passes should be available to all secondary students (like in Victoria). It does not make sense that secondary students are paying more than post-secondary students.
3. The BC government has imposed FREE transit for 12-and-under riders, and that should be expanded to include low-income riders, seniors, and other groups. Meanwhile, the 3-zone fare system should be replaced by a “Fair Fare” based on distance traveled.
4. TransLink must stop cutting the service frequency on many bus routes (about 75% of routes in Vancouver and 25% throughout Metro Vancouver) This will discourage riders from continuing to use transit.

www.ecosocialistsvancouver.org
facebook.com/ecosocialistsvancouver