

## City of Burnaby Transportation Plan – Phase 2 Consultations

### Burnaby Board of Trade Submission

December 2020

This submission provides feedback, ideas and critiques on behalf of the Burnaby business community in regards to the proposed Burnaby Transportation Plan. We appreciate the City of Burnaby’s willingness to engage with the business community on this topic, and to welcome our input.

This feedback was developed in direct consultation with Burnaby Board of Trade members who worked via a dedicated task force to review the City’s proposed plan, hear submissions from guest speakers, and contribute feedback and ideas on possible changes or improvements to the plan. Our submission includes both suggestions regarding broad themes and priorities as well as specific policy recommendations.

This feedback is outlined below, organized by the section of the plan being referred to, with a recommendation in bold text followed by a brief comment or explanation.

#### **Burnaby Board of Trade Recommendations:**

##### **City-Wide Targets**

**BBOT Recommendation: Add a Vision or Target to the plan that is focused on the length of time required to make a trip in Burnaby. Given the anticipated increase in population and vehicles, maintaining or even reducing the length of time it takes to traverse our city would be a bold goal and would inform decision-making throughout the plan.**

The essence of the transportation network is how we move people, goods and services throughout our City. In a transportation plan of this scope, there should be a specific vision related to the efficient movement of those people, goods and services.

Currently, the City has set only three major goals or “City-Wide Targets” for the plan::

- Vision Zero – Zero deaths and serious injuries
- Mode Split –  $\frac{3}{4}$  of trips on transit/walk/bike by 2050
- Zero Emissions – Zero GHG emission from transportation by 2050

The Burnaby Board of Trade recommends adding an additional target entitled “Trip Time”. The “objective” of this target would be “no net increase in the time taken to travel throughout Burnaby”, and the “measurement” would be “an equal or decreased duration of trips between destinations in Burnaby in 2050” compared to a base year.

In addition, while the BBOT feels the Vision Zero goal is laudable, we suggest it be more clearly defined as seeking a specific reduction in traffic-related injuries and deaths, and that specific reduction should be explicitly stated (ie:

10% reduction in transportation-related fatalities and serious injuries). We feel this would encourage changes that improve safety whilst not unduly negatively impacting the efficiency of the transportation network.

### **Proposed Policies - Land Use, Public Realm and Transportation**

#### **BBOT Recommendation: Facilitate the Creation of More “Complete Communities” that accommodate population growth but limit need for commuting through expanding gentle density (re: policy 2.0)**

To address congestion, it is useful to look at the motivations that lead to driving, including the need by residents for convenient access to the goods and services they need in their everyday lives.

As the City accommodates continued population growth, a goal should be to update community plans to facilitate the creation of more “complete communities” outside of the major town centres and already-defined areas. A goal of this action would be to encourage the development of multi-use communities with increased availability of key goods and services inside the neighbourhood which decreases the need for inter-community travel.

To achieve this, the BBOT recommends adding gentle density outside of the major town centres should be encouraged and facilitated by the City. This increased gentle density should be focused along existing transit corridors and major thoroughfares, and around Burnaby’s post-secondary institutions, but outside of the existing four town centres and SkyTrain station neighbourhoods

#### **BBOT Recommendation: Protect and Preserve Industrial Lands (re: policy 2.0)**

As Burnaby grows development should not be allowed to encroach upon industrial lands. Industrial lands are already in very limited supply, and we cannot allow for their conversion to housing or other, non-industrial uses.

Not only vital for our economic future -- almost one-quarter of all Metro Vancouver jobs are housed on industrial lands -- preserving industrial lands locally limits the use of the transportation network to service those lands. If we allow industrial lands to be moved further afield there will be an increase in the kilometres driven by both employees travelling to those sites and by trucks delivering and picking up materials, goods and products.

We encourage Burnaby to work with other municipalities in the region, (through Metro Vancouver and bodies such as its Industrial Lands Strategy Task Force) and with the province where appropriate, to develop strategies to preserve existing industrial lands.

#### **BBOT Recommendation: Support Mobility Pricing If Based on BBOT’s 7 Principles (re: policy 7.0)**

Transportation demand management measures like mobility pricing can be an effective way of spreading out demand and maximizing the capacity of our finite road network, and likely need to be a part of our long-term transportation strategy. However, the Burnaby Board of Trade only supports mobility pricing efforts that meet the following 7 principles, and we recommend the City of Burnaby adopt these principles as well:

- Focuses on mitigating congestion
- Is revenue neutral and not a net new revenue generator
- Allows for time of day incentives
- Is applied regionally
- Mitigates the cost on businesses and goods movement
- Is open to future technology
- Is transparent and accountable

**BBOT Recommendation: City of Burnaby to be more aggressive in pursuing and adopting technology to improve transportation (re: policy 8.0)**

We encourage the City of Burnaby to be open to new technologies and to actively pursue technological solutions that can assist in improving the efficiency of our transportation network. With appropriate due diligence, Burnaby can be a leader in adoption of transportation technology in the future.

For example, utilizing 'Big Data' to analyze traffic patterns and road usage can unlock hidden capacity and efficiencies in our limited road network. By integrating this type of technology into our traffic system, both historical and real-time data could be used to identify areas where traffic signals can be changed to maximize traffic flow.

**BBOT Recommendation: Better understand the impacts of ride hailing services on congestion and road use, and develop ways to mitigate any negative impacts (re: policy 8.0)**

Ride-hailing services represent an innovative market shift, offering consumers more choices, flexibility and value. However, the experience of some cities suggest ride-hailing can have negative impacts on congestion and transit-use. The Burnaby Board of Trade supports ride-hailing but also recommends the City of Burnaby work to understand its impacts and develop ways to mitigate any negative unintended consequences.

**Proposed Policies – Public Transit**

**BBOT Recommendation: Endorse and build the Burnaby Mountain Gondola (re: policy 1.0)**

The BBOT urges the City to work with Translink to fully support and build the Burnaby Mountain Gondola project. This project will provide years of clean, safe, and reliable transportation up and down Burnaby Mountain, allowing for the full maturation of both Simon Fraser University and the UniverCity community. The route chosen should be the one that provides the fastest service and greatest capacity against the current bus options.

**BBOT Recommendation: Create more amenities along transit routes to make transit use safer, cleaner and more enjoyable (re: policy 2.0)**

The Burnaby Board of Trade believes that transit needs to be comfortable and safe in order to be appealing enough to convince drivers to switch modes. Technological improvements (public wi-fi, digital wayfinding and scheduling) coupled with physical improvements (better shelters, new washroom facilities) will serve to make transit use more appealing to commuters and current vehicle users and assist in converting drivers to transit users.

**BBOT Recommendation: Allow for more commercial opportunities in and around transit infrastructure to increase the appeal of using transit and create economic opportunities for businesses. (re: policy 2.0)**

Creating more opportunities for food, retail and service providers in and around transit will also allow transit users to access those goods and services easily while using the transit network and avoid making separate trips, possibly by vehicle. For example, the ability to pick up a few grocery items at or near a SkyTrain station will prevent a separate vehicle trip to the store later on. This also will serve to create more commercial opportunities for Burnaby businesses.

**BBOT Recommendation: Keep the cost of transit low and competitive to encourage people to use it into the future, and study the impacts of transit fare pricing on usage (re: policy 4.0)**

The economics of public transit versus driving must make sense, and keeping fares low is an important component of that. The demand for transit is elastic, particularly for those with vehicular alternatives. Fare increases and the percentage of funding sought from fare revenue should be considered in light of how they may impact the decision to use transit by these types of users. The City of Burnaby should, either on its own or in concert with Translink and other governments, study the impacts of price on transit usage to determine possible initiatives to increase ridership through price signals.

### **Proposed Policies – Goods and Services Movement**

**BBOT Recommendation: Embrace Burnaby's role as part of a port, airport, and border region. (re: policy 1.0)**

The Metro Vancouver region is a port, airport and border region, and therefore the movement of goods in and through Burnaby is an integral part of our local, provincial and national economy. This responsibility to the broader province and country has many potential economic benefits, but also its own challenges. However, the Burnaby Board of Trade believes we must philosophically embrace our place in this broader supply chain.

**BBOT Recommendation: Support and invest in ways to remove at-grade rail crossings in the city. (re: policy 1.0)**

50 train cars travel through our city each and every day as part of the essential movement of goods. To support this important mode of goods movement, we recommend the City proactively look to support and facilitate projects that remove at-grade rail crossings. For example, the BBOT strongly supports the proposed Holdom Overpass and sees this as an example of a smart solution to potential rail-traffic conflict.

**BBOT Recommendation: Implement an app-based method of reporting road damage or other infrastructure barriers to the movement of goods. (re: policy 1.0)**

The Burnaby Board of Trade recommends the City of Burnaby launch an app-based method by which road users can report hazards, damage and other challenges to goods and services movements to allow for expedited amelioration by the City. By creating an app-based method for reporting pot holes, flooding, malfunctioning traffic signals, or other infrastructure concerns, the City can 'crowd source' real-time data about the efficiency of the road network to minimize disruptions.

**BBOT Recommendation: Support short-haul and last-mile goods movement by creating more curbside parking dedicated to commercial goods movers. (re: policy 1.0)**

Curbside parking is key to the movement of goods within the city. The Burnaby Board of Trade would welcome the creation of a greater number of curbside parking spots explicitly for short-term commercial use. As the City's public realm design standards are rolled out across the City, this may create opportunities to create these new dedicated spots, allowing businesses which offer delivery to more efficiently serve their customers.

**BBOT Recommendation: Ensure policies and regulations related to trucking and goods movements are aligned with neighbouring jurisdictions and provincial standards (re: policy 1.0)**

The Burnaby Board of Trade recommends Burnaby continue work to ensure Burnaby's rules and regulations regarding weight limits for trucks, speed limits, truck routes, etc. are harmonized with the surrounding cities. In addition, these regulations should be aligned with municipalities along key transportation corridors throughout BC

to allow for easier movement throughout the region and province, and to and from major infrastructure (ports, highways, airports, borders).

**BBOT Recommendation: Be open to new technologies or practices that will increase efficiencies in goods movement. (re: policy 2.0)**

Over the coming years, new technologies or practices such as drone delivery, autonomous trucks, or greater use of long combination vehicles, will allow for safer, greener and more efficient goods movement---but only if local governments and regulatory authorities embrace and allow them. The Burnaby Board of Trade recommends the City be open to embracing these changing technologies and practices, and look to find ways of integrating them into the existing transportation framework quickly.

**BBOT Recommendation: Create policies at the City that support environmental sustainability in the trucking industry. (policy 2.0)**

Trucking is an essential part of goods movement, but this aspect of our transportation network makes a significant contribution to our carbon and other greenhouse gas emissions. The Burnaby Board of Trade recommends the City plan to support the efforts of the trucking industry to increase sustainability by adopting supportive policies itself.

Such actions at the City level may include:

- Supporting dialogue around the consumer's desire for inexpensive, fast shipping of items purchases online, as this consumer shift e-commerce will lead to greater numbers of trucks on City streets. Any proposed solution to this concern, however, must market and consumer driven as opposed to regulatory.
- Embed sustainability into the City's procurement policy specifically as it relates to clean, sustainable trucking, encouraging and incentivizing operators to adopt cleaner technology
- Investigate allowing truckers with electric-powered engines to have greater weight allowances on roads to mitigate for the increased weight of those more-sustainable engines. Without such an allowance, a scenario may exist whereby electric trucks face an economic disadvantage as they will be able to carry less cargo
- Explore planning for where the trucking industry will be allowed to park its vehicles when not in use within the City, and explore supporting EV charging stations in those locations
- Support the creation of more incentives to drive fleet conversion of more efficient vehicles

**BBOT Recommendation: Reduce the numbers of delivery vehicles required to be on the road network by facilitating "delivery lockers" in and around transit infrastructure. (re: policy 3.0)**

The Burnaby Board of Trade posits that creating more delivery drop points, such as "delivery lockers" at common hub locations will reduce the number of delivery vehicles making trips to the doorstep. Locating these drop points along transit infrastructure specifically will allow transit users to pick up items purchased online and prevent individual delivery trips to their home address by allowing businesses to deliver to a central hub. The Burnaby Board of Trade recommends the City to work with Translink to investigate this potential delivery solution.

**Proposed Policies – Driving**

**BBOT Recommendation: Improve on the existing road network by addressing the lack of North-South routes. (re: policy 1.0)**

The Burnaby Board of Trade understands the road network is finite and it is generally accepted that you cannot address congestion through simply adding capacity. However, while there are limited opportunities to increase road capacity or to build new roads, that does not mean there are no opportunities at all.

In Burnaby, there is a clear need for increased North-South road capacity and long-term planning and land-use decisions should be made to recognize and address this. Road improvements and expanded road capacity along major corridors such as Boundary Road, Willingdon Avenue, and North Road are needed, and net, new North-South connections should be added to the road network. The Burnaby Board of Trade would welcome further opportunity to engage with the City in identifying those key corridors in need of capacity improvements.

**BBOT Recommendation: Implement traffic design measures that address capacity and maximize traffic flow such as turning lanes, optimized signal timings, more efficient pedestrian crossings, and roundabouts. (re: policy 2.0)**

With a finite road network, every effort must be made to maximize its efficiency. Physical design measures such as increasing roundabouts and creating dedicated turning lanes will allow for greater traffic flow and should be prioritized. Where the City has implemented these recently (such as Still Creek Drive) the results have been promising.

Technical improvements can also maximize traffic flow. As mentioned elsewhere in our recommendations, better use of technology can allow for increased efficiencies in the traffic signal network. Traffic signal optimization has been shown in other cities to reduce congestion and reduced fuel consumption and related greenhouse gas emissions.

**BBOT Recommendation: Protect availability of parking for businesses, particularly those made available for retail consumers. (re: policy 2.0)**

The availability of parking does have an impact on travel behaviour, but it also has significant impact on economic activity and on the viability of businesses. Parking availability, particularly that for businesses, must be managed carefully.

The Burnaby Board of Trade sees limiting parking spots as a blunt tool for discouraging auto ownership and use, and see many potential negative repercussions for our business community. A lack of parking spaces, especially in areas with limited transit availability, makes it difficult for businesses to attract both customers and employees, for example.

Parking can be used to encourage economic activity, build community and actually limit driving. The public parking lots in the Burnaby Heights represents a good example of this. These parking lots support the customer base required for the retail businesses to thrive, and in turn those retail businesses create a district that is highly walkable (once you are there). While these lots do facilitate driving to the area, that one vehicle trip can accommodate a shopping trip, a restaurant visit, a service appointment, etc. – all of which can be done on foot and otherwise would have necessitated multiple vehicle trips.

The BBOT supports market-driven reductions in parking requirements for major residential or mixed-use developments --- if there is genuinely less vehicle ownership there is no need to invest in building spots that will remain vacant --- but this must be balanced with the needs of the surrounding business community, both current

and future.

**BBOT Recommendation: Facilitate the expansion of private car sharing companies in Burnaby (policy 6.0)**

The availability of ride-sharing services may be able to reduce vehicle usage at the margins by allowing for one-way trips or encouraging multi-modal trips, thus reducing overall vehicle traffic. The Burnaby Board of Trade supports the City's stated policy of expanding these services, but notes this should be focused on private car sharing companies.