

TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT SOLUTIONS FOR BC'S INDUSTRIAL AREAS & BUSINESS PARKS

Opening Statement

Regional districts and their comprising jurisdictions across BC are going through the process of updating their regional growth strategies¹. The urban planning concepts of developing goals, land use designations, and policies which support “complete communities” where “higher density trip-generating development” is being directed to Urban Centres and Frequent Transit Development Areas where “most trips can be taken by transit, walking or biking.”²

Public transit solutions are not planned or focused on Industrial Areas or Business Parks³, as these are lower-density areas and are – by design – located further away from residential neighbourhoods; resulting in longer commutes with fewer stops and therefore lower use. This makes them less financially viable options for regular bus service. As a result, the workers and businesses that operate on Industrial lands do not have equitable access⁴ to reliable and timely public transit as workers and businesses operating in sectors within urban centres.

As governments develop strategies to incentivize the use of public transit and active transportation over traditional automotive commuting, skilled trades, technical workers, and businesses located within vital Industrial Areas and Business Parks, need similar opportunities to be available for them as well. Due to the lack of ridership density within these spaces, traditional public transit service or infrastructure investment options may not be financially or logistically feasible within the short term⁵.

Transportation Demand Management solutions, developed in partnership with all levels of government and industry can mitigate the service need of businesses and workers in Industrial Areas and Business Parks, while also providing opportunities for these groups to participate in programs and activities of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improving efficiency of regional transportation systems.

Background

Industrial Areas and Business Parks are zoned to specifically accommodate the needs of manufacturing, processing, warehousing, distribution, repair, and goods-handling businesses of

¹ [About Metro Vancouver 2050](#) (Accessed February 19, 2021), [Capital Regional Growth Strategy Indicator Report](#) (Accessed March 3, 2021), [Regional District of Nanaimo Regional Growth Strategy Annual Report 2019](#) (Accessed March 3, 2021)

² [Metro Vancouver Regional Planning Committee March 5, 2021 Meeting](#) (timestamp 44:35-50:49)

³ “Business Parks”: We are using this definition to encompass land uses which are labelled in a variety of ways across the province, but which have similar functional purposes. Some districts or municipalities will call these areas Employment, Mixed Employment, Corridor, Commercial-C2, Trade-Oriented Land, etc.

⁴ [Why Manage Transportation Demand?](#), Victoria Transport Policy Institute (Equity) 2017 (Accessed March 5, 2021)

⁵ [Transit Future Plan, Prince George](#) – January 2014 (pg 26) Accessed March 1, 2021

a variety of intensities. Due to the nature of their work, these business uses are permitted in areas away from residential zones, with ‘buffering’ types of businesses located in the areas between their locations and that of the majority of a community’s housing.

At the same time, regions and municipalities are planning growth with greater density of housing and services to surround “Urban Centres.” These areas are encouraged to have neighbourhood-serving shops and services, with enriched public realms, higher density office and commercial buildings, educational and public institutions like universities and museums, and all the other amenities which ideally allow for “most trips to be taken by transit, cycling and walking.”

These planning concepts are an excellent value for residents who live in and commute within or to other urban centres, frequent transit development areas, and/or through frequent transit networks, where transit services are planned and transit infrastructure investments are made. However, businesses and workers in Industrial Areas and Business Parks – intentionally located further away from housing options place workers at significant distances from work. Public transit options, such as regular bus services, are not provided with the same frequency or convenience for these skilled trades and technical workers who are therefore required to use their own single occupant vehicle to travel to and from work.

Recognizing the importance of the industrial sector to BC’s economy, some regional districts, such as Metro Vancouver, are beginning to develop specific policies and strategies around protecting their Industrial Lands, and designating more specific uses for Business Park zoning areas, which the BC Chamber of Commerce has been advocating for and is reflected in its Policy; PROTECTION OF INDUSTRIAL LANDS FOR FUTURE PROSPERITY (2019). While this Strategy addresses the importance of protecting the land itself, and it does mention the need to “provide transit for industrial workers”⁶ it goes no further into what – if any – changes to services or investments by government will be made to ensure that these transportation options are available.

Transportation Demand Management is a methodology of governments (often at a municipal or regional level) working with developers or business owners within particular areas to develop plans for alternative transportation options which may meet the specific transportation needs of their business’ or area’s workers. For example, if two warehousing facilities within a business park are interested in adding a third shift to increase capacity within their facilities, then they may contact Translink’s TDM⁷ team for support in this via coordinating a shuttle bus, vanpool, or car share program.

⁶ [Metro Vancouver Regional Industrial Lands Strategy Report](#) (pg 56) Accessed February 2, 2021

⁷ Translink TDM Plans for Development Guidelines FINAL – July 2019

A current case study of this support is that of the Gloucester Business Park in Langley⁸, where Translink surveyed 200 employees from 12 businesses (a sample size of 10% of businesses in the area) and found that 40% of those workers would be interested in participating in a vanpool program to access their work. Translink assessed the respondents and found that 21 potential vanpool groups could be developed, consisting of 100 people.

Understanding what opportunities are available (such as vanpools) or investing in the expansion of bike paths⁹ in order for workers to safely and effectively commute to and from work requires the investment of time and money by municipal¹⁰, regional¹¹, provincial, and federal governments. These investments benefit not only the specific businesses and workers in those Industrial Lands and Business Parks. They benefit all those on the road¹², by reducing commuter traffic and increasing travel safety; and they benefit our collective effort to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions.

THE CHAMBER RECOMMENDS

That the Provincial Government:

1. Engage with industry, regional districts, municipal governments, and other stakeholders, particularly Translink and BC Transit, to help develop a comprehensive public transit service plan for Industrial Lands and Business Parks;
2. Require that Translink and BC Transit include Transportation Demand Management services to their constituents as part of their mandate letters again; and
3. Work with regional districts and the municipal governments in implementing and promoting active transportation options and investment in related infrastructure.

Submitted by the Delta Chamber of Commerce

Supported by Surrey Board of Trade, North Vancouver Chamber of Commerce, and Greater Vancouver Board of Trade

⁸ "Survey responses from Gloucester Business Park indicate positive demand with over 40% of respondents being somehow interested in joining the Vanpool program." (Translink TDM Vanpool test case in Gloucester)

⁹ As consistent with, and complementary to, BC Chamber of Commerce Policy, [ENHANCING SUPPORT FOR CYCLING AS A MODE OF WORKPLACE TRANSPORTATION \(2019\)](#)

¹⁰ [Transportation Demand Management: A Small and Mid-Sized Communities Toolkit, Fraser Basin Council](#) (Accessed February 18, 2021)

¹¹ [Fraser Valley Future 2050: Fraser Valley Regional Growth Strategy – working DRAFT](#) 6 (pg 32, 42-43) Accessed March 3, 2021

¹² [Transportation and Healthcare Costs, 'BC ON THE MOVE' in a Healthier Direction Submission to the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure by the BC Alliance for Healthy Living](#) (Accessed March 2, 2021)