

TravelChoices

A Long-Term Transportation Strategy for the Capital Region

**Capital Regional District
Regional Planning Services**

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- Potential Rapid Transit Corridors
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PURPOSE

The Capital Regional District has taken important steps to plan for the future. In 2003 the CRD Board of Directors gave final approval to the Regional Growth Strategy (RGS), and the prior year it initiated the development of a regional transportation plan. This plan is now complete. The following pages summarize the vision and key elements of the long-term transportation strategy for the Capital Regional District, TravelChoices.

The strategy sets the stage for how transportation will be planned throughout the region in the coming years. It articulates a preferred transportation future — one in which economic vitality, community livability; quality of life and environmental health are uppermost.

Together the RGS and TravelChoices represent a comprehensive vision for development of the region's land use patterns and associated travel network. They provide a direction for development that will maintain and enhance the quality of life that is so much a part of this region.

Looking ahead, new senior government support for transportation investments and climate change initiatives will become increasingly available. These plans will assist the CRD to secure a fair share of federal and provincial funding contributions for the regional transportation investment priorities identified — funding needed to make the proposed improvements a reality.

Transportation is a truly regional service. In the CRD two-thirds of commuters cross at least one municipal boundary each day. Looking ahead, the challenges are considerable. Over the next 25 years, the population of the Capital Region is forecast to increase from 325,000 to 400,000. In the same period employment is projected to rise from a level of 155,000 jobs to more than 200,000. Congestion is expected to dramatically worsen — by up to 200% — by the year 2026. No municipality will be exempt from this problem.

Successfully addressing the needs of a growing population — and mounting traffic congestion — will require coordinated municipal policies and actions. TravelChoices provides a decision-making framework to help the CRD's 13 member municipalities to move ahead with the implementation of forward-looking solutions to these challenges.

The full series of final consultant reports for TravelChoices, together with the nine technical working papers published in the course of the detailed planning undertaken from 2002 to 2004, are referenced on the last page of this document. For those wishing fuller detail, all background reports are available on the CRD website at www.crd.bc.ca.

VISION

As envisaged in the Regional Growth Strategy, by 2026 the CRD and its municipalities intend to provide transportation systems that are sustainable; that give priority to the movement of both people and goods; and that contribute towards improved quality of life throughout the region. The RGS vision calls for “...*promoting the development of a balanced and sustainable transportation system by providing residents with reasonable and affordable transportation choices that enhance the quality of life.*”

The RGS outlines a transportation vision where a multi-modal approach creates attractive, integrated and effective transportation choices to provide a broad range of mobility options.

TravelChoices further refines the RGS transportation vision:

The mission of TravelChoices is to significantly increase the proportion of people walking, cycling, using transit, ride-sharing or using other alternatives to driving alone.

TravelChoices establishes walking, cycling, transit and ride-sharing as the priority modes of travel, and the central design criteria for all new transportation initiatives. This multi-modal approach supports RGS goals, particularly for more compact land use.

The strategy recognizes that advancing this mission will require increasing the market share for non-SOV (single-occupant vehicle) modes. The priority modes or preferred travel choices for all planning and infrastructure initiatives will be supported through TravelChoices' commitment to:

- **integrating land use and transportation policies** within the urban containment area of the RGS including the planned major centres of the region, along primary corridors, and in other growth areas
- **enhancing alternatives** to driving alone through the provision of attractive and safe pedestrian, cycling and transit facilities, or through demand management programs and incentives
- **managing transportation systems** in an effective manner to maximize the mobility and safety of priority modes, while recognizing that auto travel will continue to play a significant role in the region, and
- **managing transportation investments** in a fiscally responsible and strategic manner.

TravelChoices gives equal recognition to the importance of the efficient movement of commercial goods and related services to the region's economic vitality. It emphasizes:

- **accommodating large commercial vehicles** through a core network of major routes that provide direct access to all municipalities and easy access to this region
- **developing consistent routes and regulations** for commercial vehicles in all municipalities, and

- **managing congestion** during the peak business hours to lower commercial operating costs by providing improved mobility.

The long-term transportation planning work projects that by 2026 the volume of regional travel will have grown by a level of 400,000 person-trips per day. TravelChoices' quantitative target is for at least 300,000 of these new trips to be made by walking, cycling, transit and ride-sharing. Through greater use of the priority modes, it will be possible to restrain future growth in auto use by people driving alone in the CRD.

INTEGRATING LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION

Goal:

Land use and transportation are irrevocably linked. **Better integration of land use and transportation policies is one of the most important goals of the TravelChoices Strategy.**

Background:

Each municipality has the authority to manage its own land use. Since the land use decisions of one municipality often affect neighbouring municipalities, it is important for different levels of government to recognize the symbiotic relationship between land use and transportation. While certain land use patterns can contribute to achieving more sustainable levels of travel demand, at the same time the types of travel options made available can in turn encourage and support more compact land use.

Current municipal data suggests that up to 80% of CRD residents need to travel from their home to another municipality to acquire goods, services or employment. This trend places an increasing strain on the transportation system, and can be reversed through appropriate land use and transportation policies.

The land use policies of the RGS encourage more complete communities — and multi-use centres offering a wide range of services — linked with effective and efficient transportation systems. The RGS calls for some 90% of future growth to occur within its urban containment boundaries. By virtue of more complete communities, and improved transportation systems, access to goods and services can be provided with less economic and community disruption, and less reliance on the private automobile.

Strategies:

TravelChoices proposes to improve the integration of land use and transportation by:

- **improving accessibility within the urban containment area** for all priority modes. This is especially important for travel between major suburban and rural centres, as well as between downtown Victoria and the regional gateways: ferry terminals, the airport, harbours and the Malahat Highway. The public's choice of travel mode can

be influenced by providing safe access to direct and frequent express bus routes, a network of safe bicycle routes, and good inter-modal connectivity.

- **improving accessibility from the major centres** to the surrounding communities. Safe and attractive walking, cycling and transit facilities will help maximize use of the priority modes of travel.
- **coordinating trip reduction strategies** through new measures such as parking management, and mode choice initiatives.
- **establishing consistent policies for primary corridors** to ensure accessibility policies continue to support density and mixed-use developments through a balanced approach for the priority modes. These corridors need to be developed in a way that supports successful high capacity transit systems in the future.
- **improving the travel options and connections between growing suburban areas** of the region. More than 50% of today's daily travel demand, and 60% of the regional employment is between suburban areas — and these numbers are growing.
- **improving travel alternatives in rural areas**, and providing attractive linkages to cycling networks, in order to minimize auto dependence.

ENHANCING ALTERNATIVES TO DRIVING ALONE

Walking

Goal:

The TravelChoices Strategy envisages developing compact urban areas in the region as leading examples of “walkable” communities, with walking becoming the primary mode of travel for local trips. **The goal is to increase pedestrian travel as a preferred choice from the current daily level of 138,000 (11% of total trips) to more than 240,000 trips per day (15% of travel) by 2026.**

Background:

The Capital Region is unique within Canada in that walking already accounts for a significant proportion of journey to work trips. A CRD travel demand study conducted in 2001 also showed that walking is a 24-hour activity, with half of pedestrian travel in the region occurring in the off-peak periods.

Strategies:

The Regional Growth Strategy aims to focus growth in a series of major centres. The availability of local employment and services in these centres will be supported by strategies which promote the attractiveness and ease of walking as a travel option. TravelChoices emphasizes the need to improve walkability by:

- **providing direct, continuous and safe pedestrian routes** to connect surrounding communities to local major centres.
- **providing a more comfortable and interesting pedestrian environment** with the inclusion of amenities such as shops, benches, lighting, architectural features and landscaping. Research shows that people walk more often, and walk further, in attractive environments. Greenways and other pedestrian strategies can increase connections between surrounding communities and major centres. Many of the CRD's urban areas have well established sidewalk networks that evolved over the past 100 years. Retrofitting older sidewalks with walking-friendly enhancements will be one of the biggest challenges in the coming years.
- **improving pedestrian safety** using a variety of design approaches. These include traffic calming measures in neighbourhoods and shopping areas to decrease traffic volume and speed, and better lighting to increase pedestrian safety at nights. It is also critical that direct and safe access be provided to the closest bus routes, and that sidewalk designs take into account the needs of the region's aging population, including the increasing use of motorized mobility aids.
- **improving the design of pedestrian crossings** to focus on "what the driver sees". This is another area that is important because of the aging population. For every 10 years of age a driver is over the age of 25, twice the amount of light at night is required to provide the same amount of visual information. Crosswalks should be designed with special attention to improving pedestrian visibility for drivers.
- **using best practices** in the development of pedestrian routes and crossings to ensure consistency across the region. TravelChoices proposes that work be carried out to help guide municipalities in the use of best design practices in pedestrian safety engineering, and the placement of crosswalks. Ultimately it will be up to each municipality to implement ongoing pedestrian programs that improve the attractiveness, safety, efficiency and convenience of walking.

Cycling

Goal:

Building on the Capital Region's widely-held reputation as Canada's leading cycling community; TravelChoices intends to take this success a step further. It suggests that the region can realize its potential for becoming a world leader in providing an extensive, safe and enjoyable network of cycling facilities for commuting, recreation and tourism. The vision is for a combined municipal network of bicycle routes and amenities that would make the option of cycling highly viable, and attractive, throughout the region.

TravelChoices' goal is to increase substantially the amount of cycling that occurs in the peak periods, and also throughout the day. Currently cyclists represent approximately 2% of the daily travel demand. **The goal of the strategy is to attract more than 5% of the daily travel demand to cycling by 2026. This would increase the number of cyclists to more than 80,000 daily, compared to the 29,000 today.**

Background:

The Capital Region's mild climate also favours cycling as a year-round travel option. To date CRD municipalities have developed more than 250 km. of bikeways, including a network of existing multi-use trails and on-street bicycle routes.

The cycling strategy will need to attract people out of their cars, and people who currently do not feel safe cycling. Design features will be important to success. The Galloping Goose trail is an example of how high design standards have contributed to usage by large volumes of cyclists. Research has also shown that a notable proportion of drivers travel less than 5 kms. To their destination, a potentially important new target market for cycling.

Strategies:

TravelChoices' cycling strategy includes the following elements:

- **designing routes to attract cyclists of all ages** by providing safe bikeways, and incorporating standards that are consistent between agencies and suitable for the traffic volumes along the routes. For municipalities, cycle routes offer an exciting opportunity to showcase attractions, and to build economic activity through cycle-tourism. The design used within a municipality can also express the values and distinctiveness of each community.
- **ensuring adequate funding** is allocated to developing and maintaining bicycle facilities. To achieve TravelChoices' vision for cycling will require more than today's funding level, which represents less than 1% of funding for transportation projects regionally. Cycling already represents 6% of daily work-trips — and the cost of investing in cycling will be repaid by reducing future traffic congestion costs.
- **expanding the existing municipal network of on-street bicycle routes** to more than 550 km. This level will provide safe routes that interconnect all parts of the region, and access to all major employment, recreational and business destinations in the CRD.
- **developing regional programs to enhance safety and awareness** of cycling in the CRD through education, enforcement, and standardized practices for designing and maintaining bicycle routes. In addition, municipalities can be encouraged to market cycling within their communities.
- **integrating cycling with other modes**, such as transit, ferries, airports, railways and local waterways through the provision of end-of-trip and inter-modal facilities.

Transit

Goal:

TravelChoices envisages that by 2026, transit services in the CRD will be the best in Canada. The transit system will be user-friendly and easy-to-use, for travel to downtown and throughout the region. Transit will support the long range goals of the RGS by accommodating the needs of each community.

To achieve this vision, the strategy calls for transit-friendly municipal policies that increase the accessibility to transit for residents and employees in all neighbourhoods. Increasing transit service to offer more direct, frequent connections with regional centres will provide the necessary travel alternatives to driving. **Region-wide transit attracts 8% of today's travel demand or 89,000 passengers per day. The goal is to attract more than 10% of travel to transit by 2026, or the equivalent of 160,000 to 220,000 people daily.**

Background:

Transit has the largest role to play in increasing the proportion of non-SOV modes of travel in the region. TravelChoices calls for transit to support growth in travel within its current market share — and to attract new customers. In the future the transit system will need to focus on providing a customer environment that makes using transit enjoyable and convenient. By increasing the viability of transit as an option for larger numbers of people, new riders will be attracted to transit, and the public transit system will account for a greater share of regional travel.

In the longer term, the improvements to the transit system called for by TravelChoices will assist in developing the market for, and viability of, inter-municipal rapid transit services in the future.

Strategies:

Priority strategies designed to achieve an increased market share for transit include:

- **increasing accessibility** by expanding services within each municipality, and to all major employment and retail areas in the region. This would include offering more direct routes and higher frequency services. It would also entail express bus services to and between centres and other major trip generators, as well as a wide range of alternatives to serve the low-density areas of the region. In addition, as the community ages, the provision of special needs transit services such as handyDART and locally oriented transit services will be increasingly important.
- **planning and implementing a high capacity, frequent and fast transit** service between the West Shore, the Peninsula and Victoria. The planning should include identifying and protecting all potential rights-of-ways needed for the future, and coordinating the timing of high capacity services with long-term funding strategies.
- **coordinating new transit priority measures** such as queue jumpers for buses at intersections, and dedicated bus-only lanes on several major corridors to improve travel time by bus relative to travel time by automobile.
- **ensuring transit is an integral partner in highway planning** for proposed changes to the highway system. This should include protecting highway rights-of-way for future transit-only corridors.
- **improving customer information and amenities** with inter-active route information displays at all major transfer or boarding locations. Linking customers to current real-time information will improve the attractiveness of the service — as will providing a greater number of, and more comfortable, bus shelters and waiting locations.

- **improving transit exchanges** at major or strategic centres. This will facilitate connections between transit routes and enhance the transit experience. It will be necessary to ensure that the transit exchanges are bike and pedestrian-friendly.
- **adding park-and-ride lots** at several strategic locations throughout the region to provide easier access to all transit services, including lower-density areas where service frequencies are low, and walking distances are lengthy.
- **developing fare incentives and new fare strategies** to increase ridership. For example, a one-price fare could allow customers access to other modes of travel in areas with lower levels of service, such as the Saanich Peninsula and part of the West Shore. The one-price fare model might include access to taxi services for the more rural areas of the region.

Travel Demand Management

Goal:

“Travel demand management” (TDM) is a suite of programs intended to shift travel behaviour, and discourage driving alone. **For TravelChoices the goal of TDM is to educate and encourage people to increase their usage of the strategy’s priority modes — walking, cycling, and transit — and to ride-share and telecommute.**

Background:

Travel demand management is a system of incentives and penalties intended to shift travel behaviour to priority modes. TDM is a relatively low-cost tool to help achieve more effective utilization of the existing transportation network and infrastructure. Particularly in major centres, TDM programs and land use policies can work together to make more efficient use of parking resources, and encourage travel by non-SOV modes. In a recent federal study, the Transportation Association of Canada stated that without the support of TDM, transportation policies will not fulfill their potential.

Existing educational and motivational programs in the CRD such as “Bike to Work Week” are organized by non-profit groups, and have successfully contributed to changing travel trends. The potential for enhanced programs in the region is high. In 2004 the CRD conducted a study with employees and employers from all private and government sectors. More than 80% of the business employers surveyed said they understand the need for, and would support TDM programs.

Strategies:

There are a variety of TDM measures with the potential to influence travel patterns in the region, and these will need to be defined as TravelChoices is implemented. TDM priorities should include:

- **developing parking management policies** to control the supply and price of parking as a disincentive to driving. Additionally, several policy areas that influence travel decisions but are beyond local control – such as transportation allowances, parking cash-out and distance-based insurance – are also important considerations.

- **providing direct incentives to encourage walking, cycling, transit, ridesharing** and other alternatives to driving alone. Regional programs could include fare incentives for group transit pass purchases, ride-matching and vanpooling. Local incentive programs could include flexible work arrangements, ride-share parking, guaranteed ride home programs and car-sharing.
- **putting in place trip reduction programs.** These consist of a range of initiatives that may be implemented by employers, institutions and other organizations such as government agencies. Programs may include transit passes, shuttle services, carpool parking, bicycle facilities and flexible work arrangements such as telecommuting. These may be ongoing programs, or event-specific TDM initiatives geared to special circumstances such as festivals, concerts or very large construction sites.
- **partnerships** with local non-profit groups that have the experience and resources to manage and deliver a comprehensive TDM program.

MANAGING ROADWAY INVESTMENTS

Roadway Network

Goal:

Regionally significant roadways include all existing and future corridors serving an important inter-municipal function, and supporting planned facilities for commercial vehicles, transit, cycling, walking and ride-sharing. TravelChoices recognizes that building more roads in response to congestion is costly, and simply encourages people to drive more. **The goal of TravelChoices is to maximize mobility for all forms of transportation, to the greatest extent possible, within the existing roadway system.**

Background:

TravelChoices proposes that travel demand and congestion be better managed. Inter-municipal travel is focused on a relatively small number of corridors which are critical for all modes of travel. For the established areas of the region – such as the urban core – initiatives should focus on improved planning, coordination and operational management of primary corridors. For developing areas – such as Colwood and Langford – the longer term plan also entails completion of new roadway networks.

Strategies:

TravelChoices calls for managing roadway investments by:

- **using what is there today** to balance mobility for priority modes along the primary corridors. This can be accomplished through developing comprehensive corridor management plans; re-shaping land use; and selectively improving roadways.

- **implementing a response plan** to manage, detect and notify drivers of unscheduled roadway incidents that contribute to congestion. In addition, tools such as real-time parking information systems can inform drivers about parking availability in congested areas.
- **maximizing existing facilities** for priority modes in order to defer more costly improvements. The vision for the primary roadway network includes: a comprehensive and coordinated management plan for operating signal systems; route restrictions; and managing congestion and roadway maintenance policies across municipal boundaries to ensure consistent and effective treatment of all priority modes along the primary corridors.
- **limiting network improvements** to areas of the region where accessibility and safety have been significantly affected by urban growth.
- **improving community access** by integrating the priority modes of transit into all road design, and ensuring walking and cycling connectivity where roadway changes could potentially have a negative impact.
- **protecting rights-of-ways** for future rapid transit corridors and other critical transportation system improvements.

Commercial Vehicles

Goal:

Commercial traffic, including trucks, taxis and charter vehicles represent a substantial proportion of daily travel in the Capital Region. The TravelChoices vision recognizes commercial traffic as a priority service, and reinforces the importance placed by the Regional Growth Strategy on the effective movement of goods and services. **By achieving its goal of reduced SOV travel and congestion on the roadway network, TravelChoices aims to contribute to the economic vitality of the region through improved mobility for commercial vehicles, and reduced commercial operating costs.**

Background:

Congestion means lost dollars to commercial enterprises. Since much of the regional trucking industry is comprised of just-in-time delivery of goods, travel speed and efficiency are important business issues. Some 70% of all heavy trucking occurs between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. — in general the fastest growing period for traffic and congestion in the region.

Strategies:

To support improved mobility for commercial vehicles, TravelChoices includes:

- **establishing inter-municipal truck routes** to provide safe and controlled access to all major services for commercial vehicle operators travelling through the primary gateways leading to and from the region. This includes access to inter-modal linkages with air, sea and rail as well as key activity nodes.

- **providing uniform and consistent truck routes**, ensuring that regulations are consistent and enforceable, and minimizing impacts of truck travel on the community.
- **supporting the efficient utilization and movement of taxis**, charter buses and rental vehicles through municipal regulation and local planning. There are 20,000 businesses in the region. Taxis and other similar services contribute to the region's economy, and in particular support a healthy tourism industry.

CONCLUSION

In support of the CRD's Regional Growth Strategy, TravelChoices aims to dramatically enhance travel choice – and mobility — for the public and businesses in the next two decades. Through the provision of facilities, services and programs that increase alternatives to driving alone, it proposes to hold the impact of regional traffic congestion in 2026 to the levels experienced today.

Much of the implementation of the proposals will be carried out by municipalities, or by other agencies. The successful realization of TravelChoices' goals will require that policies and actions be well coordinated by all the parties involved.

Together the RGS and TravelChoices set the stage for a visionary re-development of the region, and the urban areas in particular. Appropriate transportation and land use decisions can lead to a more dense land use pattern, one which offers dramatically enhanced quality of place, and quality of life. This in turn can result in lifestyle and environmental advantages for residents — which in turn can lead to economic advantages as the region secures and retains desirable industry, talent and capital.

Present and medium-term opportunities appear to be good for attracting unprecedented new investment in urban redevelopment and transportation system improvements. The directions and policy framework laid out in the RGS and TravelChoices will ensure that senior government understands the region's unified transportation goals and priorities.

Maps

Potential Rapid Transit Corridors
Recommended Regional Cycling Network
Primary Inter-Municipal Roadway Corridors

BACKGROUND REPORTS

The following background reports are available on the CRD website at www.crd.bc.ca .

Final Reports:

- Final Consultants Reports – TravelChoices Strategy
- TravelChoices Strategy
- Recommended Implementation Strategy

Final Working Papers:

- #1 - Goals, Objectives and Vision
- #2 - Bicycle Strategy
- #3 – Commercial Vehicle Strategy
- #4 – Transit Strategy
- #5 – Roadway Network Strategy
- #6 – Travel Demand Management (TDM) Strategy
- #7 – Integrated Land Use – Transportation Strategy
- #8 – Pedestrian Strategy
- #9 – Managing and Funding Regional Transportation