

# Neighbourhoods for a Sustainable Vancouver

April 22, 2010

Mayor Robertson and Councillors  
City of Vancouver  
453 West 12 Avenue  
Vancouver, B.C. V5Y 1V4

Dear Mayor and Councillors:

**Re: Council April 22, 2010 -**

**City of Vancouver's Revised Draft Principles for Broadway Corridor Transit Study**

The revised draft of the City's Principles for the Broadway Corridor Transit Study has not addressed our previous concerns outlined in our letter of March 30, 2010 attached, so these concerns still apply.

Of particular concern is that the changes appear to favour Skytrain technology even more than the previous draft.

Please consider revising the draft principles to address our concerns.

Regards,

Ned Jacobs

On behalf of the Steering Committee  
Neighbourhoods for a Sustainable Vancouver

Group contact email: [nsvancouver@hotmail.com](mailto:nsvancouver@hotmail.com)

Attached: Letter dated March 30, 2010

# Neighbourhoods for a Sustainable Vancouver

March 30, 2010

Brent Toderian, Director of Planning  
City of Vancouver  
453 West 12 Avenue  
Vancouver, B.C. V5Y 1V4

Dear Mr. Toderian:

## **Re: City of Vancouver's Draft Principles for Broadway Corridor Transit Study**

Please accept this as our comments on the City's draft principles for the Broadway - UBC Line Corridor Study, in addition to our previous letters to Council dated January 18, 2010 and March 29, 2010 copies attached. This letter is similar to our letter to Council dated March 29, 2010, but the comments have been organized in Appendix A to address the specific applicable proposed principles.

The public was not consulted in the initial preparation of these principles or even provided a copy in advance before it initially came to Council. We find it very disturbing that there was only minimal publicity for the City's March 25, 2010 Open House with no notification to date of citizens who spoke to Council or wrote to the City as interested parties.

We also find it disturbing that TransLink has already announced they will be advising stakeholders of the preferred options on April 15, 2010 when the City's Principles have not even finished the public consultation phase or finalized yet. It makes public consultation more of a public relations exercise than a genuine opportunity for public input. We feel that the City's Principles for the Broadway Corridor should be representing the interests of the residents and local businesses that will be most affected. The principles need to be revised to adequately reflect local concerns and to inform any decisions regarding selecting TransLink's short list of options.

We are also concerned that there is a parallel Central Broadway Planning Program underway that covers a larger area than is typically considered Central Broadway. We would want to be consulted in this planning program from the initial stages as a stakeholder, but to date we have not been included.

Our general comments on the draft principles are attached as Appendix A.

Regards,

Ned Jacobs  
On behalf of the Steering Committee  
Neighbourhoods for a Sustainable Vancouver

Group contact email: [nsvancouver@hotmail.com](mailto:nsvancouver@hotmail.com)

Attached:

Appendix A - Comments March 30, 2010  
Appendix B - Letter dated March 29, 2010  
Appendix C - Letter dated January 18, 2010

## Appendix A

### Neighbourhoods for a Sustainable Vancouver

March 30, 2010

#### Comments on City of Vancouver Draft Principles for the Broadway Corridor

##### Introduction: Intent & Basis

1. The City's Principles should be explicit that current reference to the "Study Area" (delineated in Figure 1 of draft Principles) as the "Broadway Corridor" is for transportation planning only and that foregoing designation and/or related boundaries do not form or imply any basis for land use planning. The City should avoid any explicit or implicit delegation of land-use planning authority to TransLink (an unelected and unaccountable entity). Public transit planning in Vancouver should respect and support established neighbourhood based planning policy, including CityPlan, related Community Visions and other local area plans. As it stands, the City's Broadway Corridor principles refer only indirectly to existing "Related City Land Use and Planning" processes. This serious and inexplicable omission should be corrected.
2. The "Broadway Corridor" should not be designated a Frequent Transit Development Corridor in the Regional Growth Strategy, since this would allow TransLink and Metro Vancouver to have significant land use planning influence. The City should not support the Regional Growth Strategy to the extent that it undermines local land use planning process and authority.

##### Introduction: Themes

**Draft Principle 1 (Environmental Sustainability).** The rapid transit line should significantly support GHG reduction and related environmental targets and objectives established by the Province, regional agencies, and the City (e.g. Greenest City Action Plan).

3. All GHG calculations should be available to the public including raw data, formulas, assumptions, and sources. Allow for embodied energy in the GHG calculations.

**Draft Principle 2 (Financial Affordability).** The rapid transit line should provide an affordable, cost-effective, and timely rapid transit solution for both construction and operation.

4. Give preference for a cost-effective low-impact transit solution such as light rail streetcars or expanded and upgraded electric trolley service with dedicated lanes, coordinated traffic signals and passing switches. Shelters should be provided at all stops, with adequate provision for those in wheelchairs.
5. Consistent with longstanding City of Vancouver policy, continued and expanded reliance on diesel buses (or hybrid diesel/electric equivalents) should not be supported. Excessive noise and air pollution produced by diesel buses cannot be part of a sustainable transportation solution. In addition to the environmental impact of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions associated with carbon-based fossil fuels, it is well established that toxic pollutants and especially fine particulate matter emitted from diesel engines pose severe health risks. The general public and particularly residents along high-frequency transit routes should not be exposed these known and serious risks.
6. Elevated Skytrain technology should be taken off the table entirely for the Broadway Corridor. The technology is entirely inconsistent with the scale and character of local neighbourhoods. Elevated Skytrain technology is strongly opposed by local residents and businesses.

**Draft Principle 3 (Transportation 1 of 2).** The rapid transit line should provide transit capacity and service quality to meet mode split targets for current and future demand.

7. Transit should serve the community; the community should not be beholden to transit. Technology(ies) and routing for the Broadway-UBC corridor should efficiently accommodate high-volume UBC commuter traffic while remaining responsive to local demand and in harmony with the character and scale of existing neighbourhoods. The aim should be to provide efficient and sustainable transportation while restoring the relative calm and livability that existed prior to introduction of current diesel-powered rapid bus services. Foregoing objectives are essential to achieving public support for transit improvements in the corridor, and should be primary guiding principles.
8. As well as considering appropriate rapid transit options in response to existing demand, the City should be advocating for the study to simultaneously explore transit demand strategies that could reduce and/or redirect the level of UBC commuter traffic, especially where these would align with educational objectives. For example, a concerted effort by UBC to relocate a significant component of its undergraduate instructional resources to Robson Square, Great Northern Way and/or other satellite sites within the city centre could substantially alleviate and reshape the pattern of demand on the Broadway Corridor with related implications for the nature and scale of appropriate public transportation. Expanded evening and web-based course options as well as affordable housing (competitive with off-campus student rental and entry-level market housing) for students, faculty and staff on the UBC main campus could also contribute significantly to a sustainable and cost-effective outcome.
9. Any reductions in parking requirements for new development should be determined under the sole jurisdiction of the City of Vancouver and only with support from adjacent commercial, residential and institutional owners/users, and with community support.

**Draft Principle 4 (Transportation 2 of 2).** The rapid transit line should integrate rapid transit with walking, cycling, local transit, and goods movement needs.

**Draft Principle 5 (Urban Development 1 of 2).** The rapid transit line should serve existing and planned land use including major destinations, and help shape future land use policies, including higher densities where appropriate.

10. Do not upzone in advance of transit implementation. There is already more than enough existing zoned capacity and ridership to service transit in the mid-long-term.
11. The City should oppose TransLink's planned dependence on real estate development, property taxes, or development levies to fund transit, as this creates a systemic conflict of interest and would displace other crucial benefits such as amenities and below-market housing. Transit should be funded through a polluter-pay system based on carbon taxes and gas taxes, which should not be revenue neutral. Avoid P3 funding formulas as these have been shown to increase costs, compromise transparency, and are more likely to result in decisions contrary to the public interest, including those of affected neighbourhoods.
12. Existing Transfer of Density policy currently allows downtown area density in the Heritage Density Bank to be landed in the Downtown District and Central Broadway (Burrard St. to Main St.) areas only. Although heritage density transfer within a given neighbourhood is supported, we strongly oppose transfers from Downtown areas to lower density neighbourhoods outside the Central Broadway district as might be contemplated in connection with subsequent land use planning in "transit influenced areas". Expansion of eligible density receiver areas would encourage excessive heritage incentives at the expense of neighbourhood amenities and affordability. Transfer of density is a complex city-wide issue that deserves public consultation and community oversight rather than being included in the corridor planning report.

13. Since Central Broadway is defined as an area where downtown heritage density in the Heritage Density Bank may be landed, we were concerned to learn at the open house that the boundaries for "Central Broadway" have been expanded. Rather than Burrard St. to Main St., the proposed boundaries are expanded 2 blocks west of Arbutus from Vine St. to Prince Edward St. at the east. This expansion of Central Broadway undermines local neighbourhood planning processes of Kitsilano, Mt. Pleasant and Grandview Woodlands, so we oppose this boundary expansion. The affected neighbourhoods have not been consulted.

**Draft Principle 6 (Urban Development 2 of 2).** The rapid transit line should provide a consistently high standard of urban design and amenity, and significantly improve the public realm for pedestrians, cyclists and transit riders.

14. In the interests of subsidiarity, accountability and competency the City of Vancouver, with local community consultation, should establish urban design and amenity standards, not TransLink.

**Draft Principle 7 (Economic Development).** The rapid transit line should promote a diverse, healthy, and green economy, improve access to major commercial and institutional destinations, and support the concentration of Central Broadway jobs.

**Draft Principle 8 (Social / Community 1 of 3).** The rapid transit line should address the needs of local and regional transit users, neighbours, adjacent communities, and businesses.

15. Give more weight to comments from those local residents and local businesses that are most affected.

**Draft Principle 9 (Social / Community 2 of 3).** The rapid transit line should minimize and mitigate construction and operation impacts.

16. The City should negotiate with TransLink to establish a comprehensive and equitable compensation package in advance so that businesses and residents that are negatively affected by a particular technology or route selection are appropriately compensated for lost revenue or property devaluation.

**Draft Principle 10 (Social / Community 3 of 3).** The rapid transit line should provide opportunities for meaningful engagement of stakeholders and the general public.

17. The City of Vancouver should be protecting and advocating for the interests of local residents and businesses that will ultimately be living with the outcome of the ongoing Broadway Corridor and UBC Line Rapid Transit Study. The City should not permit TransLink to exert undue influence over the ongoing technical study, related public consultation or the assessment of competing technologies and routing.

18. TransLink should provide a transparent and credible community consultation process for transit line technology and route selection, without predefined outcomes, which to date has not occurred.

Please refer in this Draft Principle to other NSV comments about community engagement: