

New Westminster is a great place to call home. The city has an attractive urban environment, includes a number of amenities, efficient transit, and great parks and recreation space.

Access to safe, adequate and affordable housing is fundamental to the physical, economic and social well-being of individuals, families and communities. The homes and neighbourhoods in which we live, play a central role in our overall quality of life. Our homes form the core of our neighbourhoods, and are filled with a diverse mix of residents, such as singles, couples, families, young adults, seniors, and people with special needs. Sustainable communities include a range of housing choices.

The City's Urban Development Forecast anticipates that the city will grow from 68,280 residents in 2013 to approximately 104,000 in 2041. This means adding approximately 16,500 additional housing units. It is anticipated that approximately 40% of the growth will take place in the downtown and 25% of the growth will take place in Queensborough. The remainder of the growth will take place in the remainder of New Westminster.

HOUSING MIX (2011)

DWELLING TYPE	UNITS	PERCENT
SINGLE DETACHED DWELLINGS (including suites)	8,450	28%
DUPLEXES	115	<1%
TOWNHOUSE + ROWHOUSE	1,260	4%
APARTMENT (LESS THAN 5 STOREYS)	11,365	37%
APARTMENT (5 OR MORE STOREYS)	9,315	31%
OTHER	75	<1%
TOTAL	30,580	100%

Source: Statistics Canada (2011 Census).

ANTICIPATED CITYWIDE GROWTH

	2013	2021	2031	2041
TOTAL POPULATION	68,280	79,061	92,098	103,871
TOTAL HOUSING UNITS	31,611	36,602	42,638	48,088

Source: City of New Westminster Urban Development Forecast - 2013 to 2041 (Coriolis, 2014).



Issues & Opportunities

DEVELOPMENT LAND IS LIMITED – Since most of the land in New Westminster is developed, further population growth will be accommodated primarily through redevelopment and intensification of land. This requires a creative approach to accommodating new housing without compromising the existing neighbourhood character that makes New Westminster so special. There are a number of infill options that could be considered in the city, such as laneway housing, triplexes, and duplexes with suites.

AFFORDABILITY – In order to be an inclusive city, it is important that there are housing choices for people of all abilities, ages and incomes. New Westminster is located within a region with some of the most expensive housing prices in North America. Therefore, the homeownership market may be unattainable for many households in New Westminster and other housing options such as non-market and rental housing are crucial for providing places to live. Municipalities such as New Westminster must be proactive and encourage the development and protection of affordable, non-market and rental housing.

DIVERSITY – New Westminster is home to community members with diverse housing needs. A full range of housing should include diversity in cost, location, features, size, and type. Encouraging this full range of *housing types* can help ensure a wide array of *household types* (e.g. seniors, students, couples) can call New Westminster home. This includes some groups that experience greater housing challenges than others, including, low-income households, renters, seniors, differently-abled people, aboriginal households, immigrants and refugees, and moderate-income households and homeowners. The City has also identified the need to provide more family friendly housing.

AGING RENTAL HOUSING STOCK – Rental housing serves an important role in a community. It provides a flexible housing option for workers who need or wish to live closer to their places of employment and for those who do not want or cannot afford to own housing. The deteriorating condition of some of the non-market and rental housing stock is a concern. Additionally, there were no purpose-built rental housing units built in the city between 2001 and 2011 (other than secondary suites and non-profit housing). As a result, the City adopted a Secure Market Housing Policy which provides targeted strategies for increasing the supply of rental housing.

SECURED MARKET RENTAL HOUSING IS...

that portion of the rental stock that provides longer term rental housing where tenants can reside without worry that their tenancy may be terminated by new owners who purchase the units. Rents are determined by market demand, subject to the Residential Tenancy Act.

ATTRACTIVE AND LIVABLE HOUSING – Housing design has an important role in creating an attractive and livable community. The architectural style, building materials and colours of residential buildings all contribute to lively, textured neighbourhoods. The height of buildings and the depth and landscaping of their front yards help to shape the streetscape as well as the experience of pedestrians, cyclists and drivers using the street. Where multiple families share open space, it provides opportunities for residents to be neighbourly, for children to play together, and for people of different ages and abilities to interact. Together, these elements combine to help build a community with an identifiable character and sense of pride.

WHAT HAVE YOU TOLD US?

“The people that live in New Westminster love it and promote it to everyone they know. The reason is that it has a small town, community feel that people respond to.”

“Retain residential, single family zoned properties but allow for variances that include infill options like laneway houses, carriage homes, secondary suites, live/work spaces, home based businesses.”

“Have a stable citizen population, multi-generational neighbourhoods where people know their neighbours and help and support them.”

“Growth in the city is excellent right now...future growth should be very carefully planned so the city remains livable and comfortable.”



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WORK

Ensuring that job growth increases at a similar pace to population growth means there will be opportunities for community members to both live and work in New Westminister. This includes encouraging a greater number of jobs and a greater variety of jobs. In 2011, the number of employed people who worked in New Westminister (regardless of whether or not they lived in New Westminister) was 24,405. The most common sectors of work were health care and social assistance (6,145 employed workers), educational services (2,370 employed workers), and retail trade (2,310 employed workers).

When people live close to where they work, they spend less time commuting which is good for the environment (less emissions), good for our roads (less traffic), and good for individual well-being (better health, more free time). People who both live and work in the city are also likely to have stronger ties to the community.

A strong employment base increases the city's vibrancy and activity in contrast with a bedroom community, where the city is much less active during the day when people are at work. Having more employees in the city also helps local businesses, since they are likely to shop and eat in the area (e.g. during lunch breaks, after work).



It is important that the city have a variety of retail and commercial services that allow residents to meet their day-to-day needs (e.g. buying groceries, going to the dentist) in the city, and ideally in their neighbourhood. Based on the projected population growth it is anticipated that the city could support an additional 711,688 square feet of neighbourhood serving retail and service space by 2041.

Planning for increased employment and provision of services requires strategic planning for the location of future commercial space. Commercial space should be well located and easy to access. Locating jobs near other services (e.g. daycare) generates additional benefits for the employees. Commercial and service space for community members should be located in areas that allow residents to easily access the services by foot, bike or transit.

Issues & Opportunities

SUPPORTING JOB GROWTH – The growth in the number of jobs in New Westminister has not kept up with the increase in the size of New Westminister's work force (residents who are 15 years and older). The ratio of employed workers who work in New Westminister to employed workers who live in New Westminister decreased between 1996 to and 2011. Strategies to increase the number of local jobs need to be created to ensure residents have opportunities to both live and work in New Westminister.

**DID YOU KNOW... in 2011,
New Westminister's workforce
(residents over 15) was 39,360
people. Of those, 5,355 people
both lived and worked in New
Westminister.**

INTELLIGENT CITY – New Westminster is working towards becoming an Intelligent City. This includes providing an open access fibre optic broadband network. Doing so will make New Westminster a more attractive location for technology, research and development, and innovative start-up businesses.

DIVERSITY OF SERVICES – As the population of New Westminster grows, so will the demand for retail and service businesses. Planning for the future of each neighbourhood heart, as well as the city in general, should consider the ability of community members to meet their daily commercial/service needs. What services exist? Which are missing? Part of the discussion will be about what services serve a neighbourhood (and should be located in the community heart) and which serve the entire city and should be located in an area accessible to all residents.

GREAT STREETS – The City’s Master Transportation Plan has identified a number of the city’s commercial streets as “Great Streets.” These streets should be pedestrian and transit-oriented and provide a variety of services to the local community. To help make these streets dynamic and animated active uses (e.g. a baker, a clothes store) should be located on the ground level of buildings, facing onto the street and for uses that are not active (e.g. an accountant, a physiotherapist’s office) to be located on upper levels of buildings.

TRANSITION BETWEEN USES – As a geographically small municipality, different uses (e.g. industrial, office, residential) all tend to be in close proximity to each other. This requires careful consideration to be given to the design of buildings, streets and landscaping in areas where the different land uses are adjacent to each other. These design elements (e.g. landscape buffers) should be used to mitigate any potential conflicts between land uses.

WHAT HAVE YOU TOLD US?

In 25 years OUR CITY will “be a tech hub. Attracting start-up founders, developers, engineers, designers, technologists.”

“Be a city where everything can be found and easily accessible: great shopping, great restaurants, parks and recreation facilities, etc.”

“Be urban but retain its sense of small town. Vibrant city with employment, shopping and entertainment in our city.”

LIVABLE NEIGHBOURHOODS – More and more, employers are looking to gain a competitive advantage when attracting new employees by locating their business in a neighbourhood their employees would like to live in. Easy access to frequent transit is also a significant factor considered when locating a new business. Given the strong neighbourhood hearts that already exist in New Westminster, and the number of SkyTrain stations and frequent bus routes, New Westminster has a competitive advantage on which we could capitalize.



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PLAY

Adequate green space and access to a range of community and recreational facilities is important for fostering healthy lifestyles, encouraging social interaction and enhancing livability. Communities which provide safe and attractive places to exercise, walk, and cycle have healthier residents. Physical activity leads to reduced incidences of chronic disease and helps people maintain a healthy weight. Green space also has restorative effects that improve mental health. Children who are physically active are also healthier and happier, have increased self-confidence and a greater ability to focus, and are better at making friends.

As New Westminster's population grows and as the community undergoes more residential development, providing recreational amenities, arts and cultural activities, and ensuring quality connections between parks and open space systems will become increasingly important. The programming and services provided should serve the needs of current residents including those of different ages, abilities, incomes and interests. New amenities will have to be provided and existing amenities will have to be reviewed as the city grows and the needs of the community evolve.



Definitions

CITY PARK - Embodies the identity and image of the city while providing for city wide celebration and activity. (Optimal size: 30 hectares or larger).

COMMUNITY PARK - Larger urban parks that serve the needs of a neighbourhood area, but also attract people from across the city. (Optimal size: 3-5 hectares).

NEIGHBOURHOOD PARK - Small parks focused on providing play and outdoor recreation opportunities within an accessible distance of a resident. (Optimal size: 0.25 – 3 hectares).

MAJOR GREENWAY - To link all major parks and community/recreation facilities within a reasonable distance of households throughout the City. (Every household should be within 1 km)



Issues & Opportunities

COMPLETION OF THE TRAILS AND GREENWAYS – An interconnected trail network makes walking and cycling more safe and enjoyable, makes accessing amenities, services and transit easier, and helps decrease vehicle use. Significant new trail links have been developed throughout the city in recent years. Upcoming projects, such as the Q2Q pedestrian/bicycle bridge, which will connect Queensborough to the Quay, will further enhance the overall network. The City should be ready to capitalize on any opportunities that arise to make additional improvements to the network. The complete network should include a waterfront trail that connects along from one end of the city to the other.

LIMITED LAND – The Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan sets a target of providing 2.2 hectares of park space per 1,000 people. It also recommends the City acquire land for Neighbourhood Parks within a five minute walk of all homes. This is a challenging task in an urban, developed city like New Westminster, especially as the population continues to grow. The City will need a creative strategy for finding ways to provide new or expanded parks and other public spaces throughout the city.

COMMUNITY NEEDS – The city's parks and community facilities should continue to meet the needs of a variety of residents with different abilities, ages, incomes and interests. An example of a growing interest in the community is the desire to produce local food. The City can explore the ways to facilitate this such as by increasing the number of community gardens. In general, the function of parks should continue to be reviewed as the population grows and the demographics of the population changes (e.g. as the population ages, as more families move into the city).



WHAT HAVE YOU TOLD US?

"Put more emphasis on providing, protecting and valuing a variety of outdoor public spaces – plazas, pocket parks, boulevards, lanes..."

"Trees, trees, trees and parks!"

"Be a vibrant city, full of arts and culture, and friendly people. We will congregate on the beautiful river boardwalk for relaxation and good food."

"Provide free or inexpensive activity for new moms, new immigrants, new residents [and] seniors."

"Increase accessible green spaces."

"More programs for young children."

"Meeting facilities for community groups."

COMMUNITY MEETING SPACES – Community members have expressed a desire for more community facilities. Certain areas of the city have limited (or no) facilities that can be used for community activities and meetings. These spaces provide important opportunities for neighbours to meet and can be used to provide services.

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MOVE

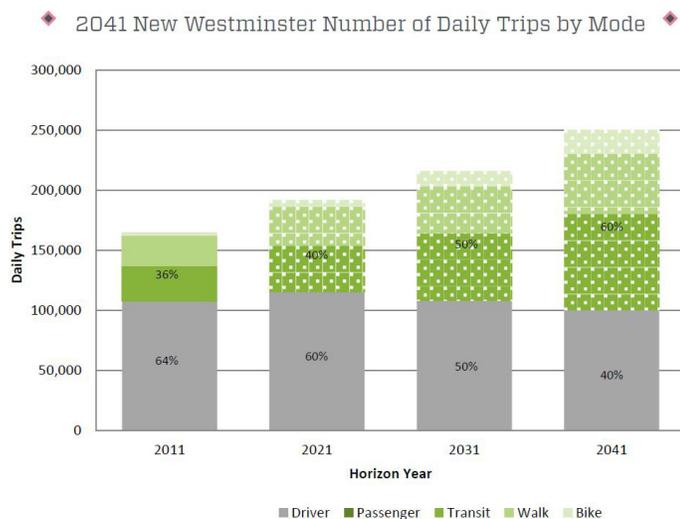
The ability for community members to move around the city is an important element of livability. High quality walking, cycling and transit routes and amenities help connect residents to each other as well to their daily needs and community amenities.

Many of the city's neighbourhoods are compact, are well connected, are highly walkable/bikable, and are well served by transit. In 2011, 34% of trips made by residents were made by these sustainable modes of transportation. The City's Master Transportation Plan sets an ambitious target of achieving 50% sustainable transportation trips by 2031. Half of all trips would be made by walking, cycling and transit! Not only would this mean that people would choose healthier and more environmentally friendly ways to move around the community, it would also mean that even as the population grows the total number of vehicle trips would stay the same as they are today. The Master Transportation Plan sets an even more ambitious target of 60% sustainable transportation by 2041. The historic trend has been a steady increase in trips made using sustainable transportation, but achieving these targets will require significant additional investment in walking, cycling and transit infrastructure in New Westminster and the region.



Integrating land use and transportation planning can help reduce the overall demand for vehicle travel within and through the city, making sustainable travel modes more viable for more trips, to more places, and for more residents. Land use policies support sustainable transportation by encouraging clusters of residential development, commercial and community amenities in nodes throughout the city, as well as in areas well served by transit and notable pockets of transit-oriented development around the SkyTrain stations. These nodes generally encourage high levels of walking and biking due to the number of destinations in close proximity, the existence of appropriate infrastructure, and a comfortable environment. There is also a greater frequency of transit use in these nodes: higher density and a greater mix of uses provides more riders who support the economic viability of a broader range and higher frequency of transit service. There has traditionally been a "chicken-and-egg" relationship between transit and land use... does more transit draw more density or is density drawn to transit? The answer is both!

DID YOU KNOW... With two rapid transit lines and five stations, New Westminster has the highest number of stations per capita in Metro Vancouver.



Issues & Opportunities

HEALTH – Integrated transportation and urban planning policies can effectively encourage physical activity. Being more physically active can improve health and reduce rates of obesity, chronic disease, and stress. Cycling, walking, and transit can also lead to increased social interaction and cohesion, which can result in positive outcomes such as better health and increased participation in community life.

EQUITY – Affordable and barrier-free transit service can enable residents of all incomes and abilities to access necessary services and supports (i.e. employment, education, health care, public and social services) that are critical components to well-being. Well designed transportation networks also aim to increase safety and comfort for vulnerable users including children and seniors.

GREAT STREETS – New Westminster’s commercial streets are a focal point for neighbourhoods and the overall city. They provide places for community members to interact and provide businesses that meet many day-to-day needs. The City’s Master Transportation Plan has identified a number of these commercial streets as “Great Streets.” These streets should be pedestrian- and transit-oriented, have a variety of interesting destinations and the highest quality of urban design. They should encourage people to walk, bike, and spend time in New Westminster’s neighbourhoods.

CREATING A WALKABLE CITY – The city is complete and compact, with short distances between most destinations. Many streets have sidewalks on both sides and are accessible for those using strollers and mobility aids. There are still improvements to be made, for example, by making the pedestrian environment more comfortable, especially during high traffic volume periods. This could be as simple as widening sidewalks and removing barriers.

WHAT HAVE YOU TOLD US?

“More focus on walking, cycling, transit.”

“Have transit and bike corridors to connect all sections of the city and do well (i.e. easy access).”

“Have a shuttle service from downtown to uptown.”

“Be accessible by bike/walk from end to end on the riverfront (Sapperton to West End).”

COMFORTABLE CYCLING FACILITIES – Amenities that support cycling (e.g. signage, bicyclist activated signals, and bike racks) can already be found on many of the city’s bike routes. The Master Transportation Plan identifies a complex, interconnected network of routes (including connections to neighbouring communities) and an implementation strategy for completing these routes.

ATTRACTIVE AND CONVENIENT TRANSIT – Many residents and businesses are within short walking distance of bus routes with frequent service. While most of the city has such coverage (i.e. transit service within 400 metres) there are some areas of high residential population that have infrequent service, particularly in off-peak times. Improving transit facilities (e.g. bus shelters) throughout the city would also make transit more attractive and convenient.



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BELONG

When we imagine what New Westminster will look like in 25 years, we have to think about more than land use, buildings and streets. We also have to think about the community members and their relationships.

Social connectedness refers to the relationships that people have with others and the benefits that these relationships can bring to the individuals and their communities. Relationships and social connections can be a source of enjoyment, support and happiness. Social connectedness helps people to feel that they belong and have a part in society. Creating a socially connected and inclusive community means we need to think about community development, capacity building, and how to bring together individuals, groups, communities and governments to work towards enhancing community wellbeing.

Social connectedness and participation contribute to what is sometimes called 'social capital.' High social capital is associated with better health, enhanced economic development, improved school performance, lower crime rates and more representative decision-making.

It is also important to create an environment that is welcoming to and inclusive of all, including people of different abilities, ages, cultures, incomes and sexual orientations. Some key elements of a welcoming and inclusive community are:

- It ensures that all residents have access to a full range of programs and services and can find meaningful employment.
- It has a strong desire to receive newcomers and to create an environment in which they can feel at home.
- It includes welcoming and inclusive civic facilities, parks and public spaces.
- It embraces different faiths and recognizes their valuable contributions to the community.
- It facilitates inter-cultural and inter-generational interaction and relations.
- It facilitates involvement by all community members in all aspects of community life and municipal decision-making.



Issues & Opportunities

SOCIALLY CONNECTED COMMUNITY – Based on a 2014 survey of 320 parents in New Westminister, 58.1% reported that they felt somewhat or not connected to their neighbours and 73.4% reported that they felt somewhat or not involved in their city. Based on a 2014 survey of 228 youth in New Westminister, 48.2% reported that they did not feel connected to other youth in their neighbourhood and 48.0% reported that they did not feel involved in their city.

WELCOMING COMMUNITY – Immigration is a significant driver of population growth in New Westminister. Based on a 2013 survey of 224 new immigrants and refugees in New Westminister, about a quarter (23.1%) did not generally feel welcome in the city. Cited concerns included difficulty fitting in or belonging; inability to make Canadian friends; and having to deal with disrespectful or intolerant people.

The New Westminister Immigrant and Refugee Survey Report and Action Plan (2014) reported that challenges faced by recent immigrants include finding employment, housing and services such as a doctor or dentist. Recent immigrants also had difficulty in meeting people and making friends, particularly outside their own cultural or ethnic community.

DID YOU KNOW... The City of New Westminister was the first municipality in Canada to issue a formal apology to the Chinese community for past practices which resulted in discrimination and exclusion.

AGE AND ABILITY FRIENDLY COMMUNITY – New Westminister, similar to other municipalities in Metro Vancouver, is experiencing an aging population. In 2011, there were 8,845 people 65+, which represented 13.4% of the population. In 2036, there are projected to be 20,947 people 65+, which will represent 21.4% of the population.

An age and ability friendly community encourages active aging and inclusion by optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security to enhance quality of life. In practical terms, an age and ability friendly community adapts its structures and services to be accessible to and inclusive of people with varying needs and capacities.

WHAT HAVE YOU TOLD US?

“New Westminister is a great city for seniors and we attract people who are retiring; it is important to have a city that embraces and supports the aging population. The City currently does a great job, people keep this in the forefront while planning moves forward specially with the aging population!”

In 25 years OUR CITY will “be friendly and welcoming to a diverse population.”

“Retain its village atmosphere where people say ‘good day’ to each other on the street even when they don’t know one another and going to a community event is like going to a family party.”



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