

## West Vancouver transport plan is pedestrian oriented

BY SAM SMITH, NORTH SHORE NEWS    MARCH 20, 2013

DISTRICT of West Vancouver council happily received the municipality's Strategic Transportation Plan last week, but residents attending the meeting were less enthused.

In 2010, in an effort to reduce greenhouse gases, educate citizens about alternate transportation routes and at the same time make it comfortable for people of all shapes and sizes to get around the district, staff drafted the Strategic Transportation Plan. An updated plan was presented at a committee of the whole meeting March 11 and received praise from most of council.

"I think it's a great plan," said Coun. Bill Soprovich. "I think we're on track."

But some concerned residents attending the meeting were shaking their heads as they listened to Raymond Fung, director of engineering and transportation, list the accomplishments the plan has helped produce in the last three years.

"For example, we completed the Bridge Road and Welch Street sections of Spirit Trail," Fung said. A completed cycling map, bus shelter improvements and the Safe Routes to School program were also listed as part of their successes in Fung's presentation.

The district prioritizes transportation projects in a hierarchy that benefits pedestrians the most, bikers and public transportation second, goods and services third and car or truck drivers last. The priority is given to pedestrians and cyclists in order to reduce carbon emissions and make West Vancouver a more walkable place.

However, in West Vancouver it just doesn't work, said West Van senior Rick Richards. "It's the dumbest thing I've ever heard of," said Richards of the plan. "It doesn't work for this community. This municipality is built around cars."

Richards said West Vancouver is too mountainous and filled with so many hills there's no way he and his friends could walk or bicycle to get where they're going. "My friends and all my acquaintances are in their 70s," Richards said. "Now you're not going to put those people on bicycles to go and get their groceries, or put them on bicycles to go out and play bridge. You've got to facilitate the use of single-person vehicles."

Car pooling and more parking stalls should be top priority, Richards added.

Coun. Mary-Ann Booth agreed car-pooling should be within the plan and Fung said his department will look into it.

In principal, all of council agreed with the plan's vision of working on projects to reduce the city's carbon footprint and encourage cycling and walking. However, Coun. Craig Cameron and Booth said the city isn't following its own plan.

"I don't think we as a district have bought into the transportation hierarchy," Cameron said. "We haven't really accomplished anything, as far as I can tell, and we're not on track to accomplish anything de-emphasizing the use of single occupancy vehicles."

The district needs to follow its own ideals and work to get people out of their cars and on to their bikes, buses or feet, said Cameron.

"One of my big pet peeves with government is when they say they're going to believe in things, but they don't actually believe in them," Cameron said. "I guess what I would like as a council is to reaffirm - truly - the transportation hierarchy."

Focus needs to be put on projects to get people walking, bussing or cycling as the plan dictates, said Booth.

Council agreed to have the plan updated and it will be presented back to council at a later date.

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