

2011 Metro Vancouver Regional Trip Diary Survey

Briefing Paper #2

An Overview of Cycling in Metro Vancouver

Introduction

The 2011 Metro Vancouver Regional Trip Diary Survey is the latest survey conducted as part of an on-going data collection program undertaken by TransLink. It provides a snapshot of passenger travel patterns and tracks the weekday trip-making behaviour of a random sample of local residents on a 24-hour basis. It is the most comprehensive source of information on overall travel pattern in the region. The data provides an important foundation for a variety of research and analytics such as transportation performance benchmarking, monitoring of long term transportation trends, policy and project planning, updating of the regional transportation demand model, etc. All of these will help inform regional dialogues on transportation issues and facilitate an evidence-based decision-making approach for the transportation system.

In addition to the more detailed analytical reports which are typically produced to document results from the survey, a series of briefing papers will be prepared to provide high level discussions of key study findings. Briefing paper #1 provides a synopsis of key travel characteristics at the regional level, focusing on the size of demand and mode share. This briefing paper (#2) provides an overview of cycling in the region.

Key Findings

As the region continues to grow and change, so does people's use of bikes. TransLink's 2011 trip diary survey shows that people are making more trips by bike and that **cycling is the fastest growing mode of travel**.

Looking at a sample of all travel on typical fall day in Metro Vancouver, the current state of cycling¹ in the region looks like this:

How Much Do We Cycle?

- The number of bike only trips has increased from 84,300 in 2008 to 106,500 in 2011, a growth rate of 26%. Considering that Metro Vancouver's population is 2,313,000, this means that there are 4.6 trips completed by bike per 100 residents. This number is higher in the summer months when the weather is warmer and drier.
 - Notably, the number of bike trips in the City of Vancouver increased by 35%.

¹ Cycling trips are defined as trips with distinguishable origin and destination, and a purpose other than the riding activity itself. For example, recreational bike rides around the seawall are not included.

- In terms of mode share, this growth represents an increase from 1.5% cycling mode share in 2008 to 1.8% in 2011.
- An additional 6,200 bike trips use another transportation mode to complete the journey, with 65% of these trips completed by transit. Of the remaining multimodal bike trips:
 - 18% are completed by driving
 - 13% are completed by driving, as a passenger
 - 5% are completed by a taxi, school bus, or other mode
- 48% of commute trips by bike are shorter than 5km. In comparison, 22% of commute trips by driving (more than 285,000 trips!) are also shorter than 5km. At least some of these trips can shift to bike if the right conditions exist.
- The number of daily trips made by bicycle is nearly equivalent to the number of riders on the Canada Line in 2011.

Who Cycles?

- Many different kinds of people ride bikes, but there are opportunities to diversify this mode. Currently:
 - 71% of people who bike are men. Studies have shown that women are less willing to engage in risky behaviour, and evidently less likely to cycle when the only bicycle routes are on roads adjacent to high speed motor vehicle traffic. Experience from other cities indicates that a greater percentage of women ride bikes when cycling is well provided for with extensive networks of traffic-protected bikeways.
 - 75% of people who bike are between the ages of 25-64, while this age cohort represents only 62% of the population
 - People from high income (greater than \$100,000/year) and low-income (less than \$25,000/year) households represent a greater share of the bike riding population than their respective shares of the general population.
- TransLink market research from 2010 indicates that 25% of people in the region cycle at least one day per week in at least one season, and another 22% cycle at least once a year.

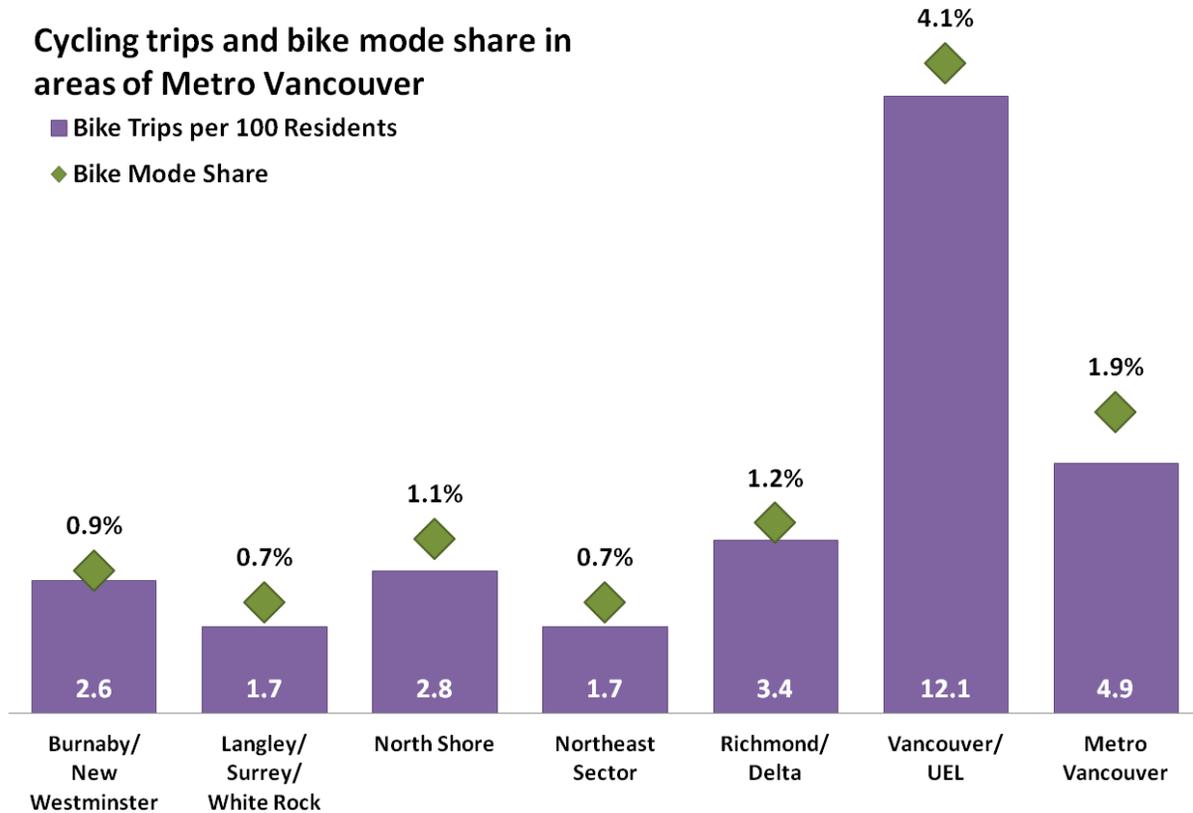
Why Do We Cycle?

- The majority of bike trips in Metro Vancouver are to and from work. While commuting trips account for 34% of all regional trips, they account for 55% of all cycling trips.

Where Do We Cycle?

- The level of bike activity varies significantly across the region, though people that live near town centres and major activity centres are more likely to cycle. These areas are often higher-density, mixed-use, and connected by good cycling infrastructure, so cycling is often the most time-competitive option.

Figure 1: Sub-regional cycling trips and mode share²



Data: 2011 Metro Vancouver Regional Trip Diary Survey conducted by TransLink

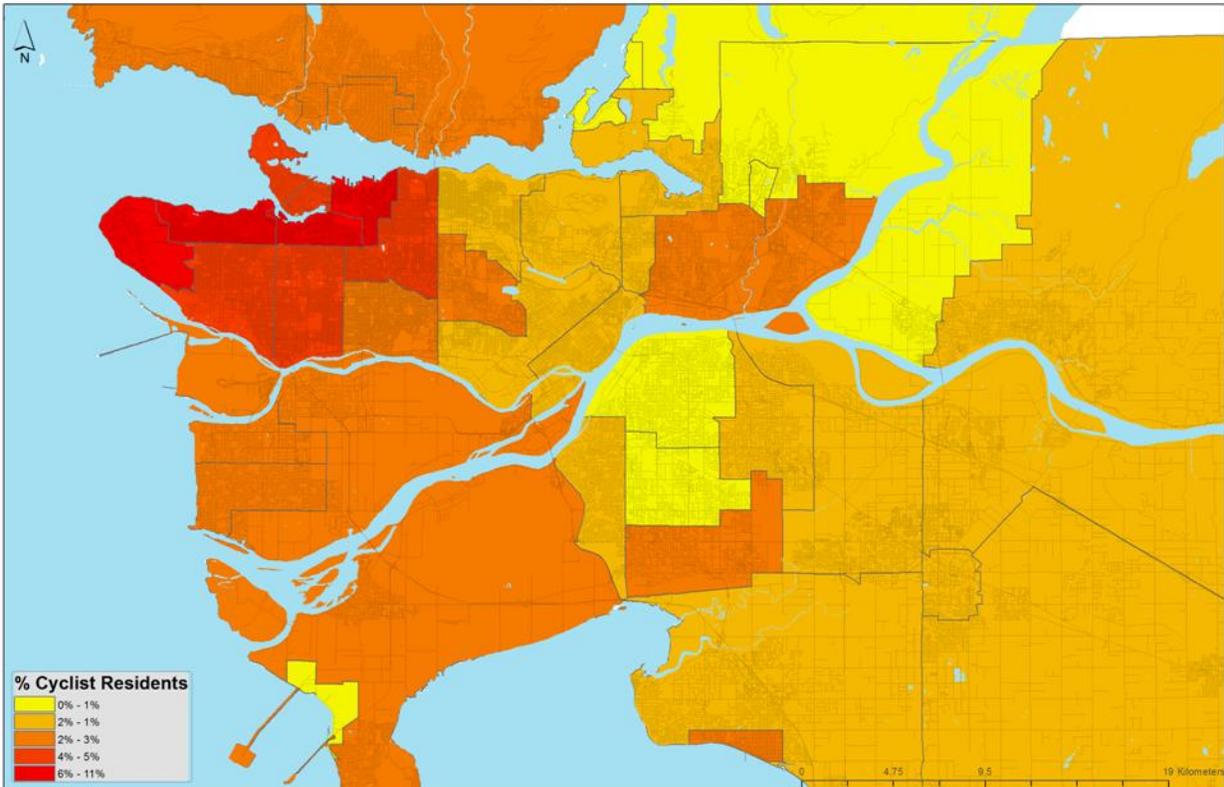
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- There are people riding bicycles living in every municipality, but cycling trends vary significantly. The City of Vancouver has the highest cycling mode share in the region, and has seen the highest rate of growth in cycling trips, while some other areas have seen limited growth, or even some decline, since 2008.

² Includes both single and multi-modal bike trips

Figure 2: Tendency to Ride Bikes by Place of Residence

Share of residents who cycle throughout Metro Vancouver



Data: 2011 Metro Vancouver Regional Trip Diary Survey conducted by TransLink

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Summary

Cycling is growing in popularity as a means to get around the region. This growth has been most significant in places with high quality bikeways and land use practices that support cycling but there are still untapped opportunities to attract more people to cycling. Some parts of the region have seen limited change in bike use, or even some decline, due in part to more auto-oriented urban environments. Women still represent less than one-third of all people who cycle in this region, but may be more inclined to bike with improved, safer cycling infrastructure. Lastly, a significant number of regional car trips cover short distances and, under the right conditions, could shift to bikes.

Increasing the number of people that choose to cycle is important, because cycling provides many environmental, economic, and health benefits to individuals and the region.

- **Environment:** Riding a bicycle produces no noise pollution, no smog-forming pollutants, and no greenhouse gases.

- **Economy:** Cycling is an inexpensive travel option, and is one of the most efficient uses of limited energy and road space. Riding a bike can also save time, as it is often the fastest way to travel for trips under 5 km. Lastly, cycling infrastructure costs significantly less than infrastructure for motorized modes, and evidence from peer regions suggests that greater gains can be achieved per dollar spent.
- **Health:** Cycling supports an active lifestyle, which improves individual health and helps lower healthcare costs overall.

The vision of the Regional Cycling Strategy is that, by 2040, Metro Vancouver is renowned as a cycling – friendly region where cycling is a desirable and mainstream transportation option because it is safe, convenient, comfortable, and fun for people of all ages and cycling abilities. The region’s vision, as articulated by the Regional Cycling Strategy, is for at least 10% of all trips to be made by bike by 2040. This vision is ambitious, but the conditions of our region make this achievable. Metro Vancouver has a mild climate that allows for year-round cycling; regional land use plans encourage mixed use, high density town centres; and cycling and transit services are already reasonably well integrated. Most importantly, many of the motorized trips currently being made in the region are relatively short and may be reasonably shifted to cycling.

TransLink is aware of the challenges that keep people from cycling, but is also aware that many of these challenges can and are being overcome. The recently adopted [Regional Cycling Strategy](#) and the [Regional Transportation Strategy](#) now in development both chart a course of action to realize the vision of “cycling for everyone.”