

BEST eNews September 2011



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September News

Introducing STAR



Seniors Transportation
Access and Resources

BEST is pleased to introduce a new initiative: STAR Seniors Transportation Access and Resources.

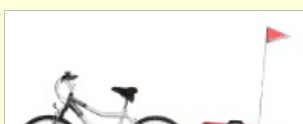
In recent years BEST has been exploring the gaps in seniors transportation services. Seniors identify lack of transportation as a very significant issue, affecting their ability to live independently, age in place, and to participate effectively in their own communities.

But in BC, as in many places, seniors transportation services are fragmented, difficult to access, and expensive. As a result, seniors are isolated and dependent on their families; because there are often limited options to the car, people may continue to drive well past a time it is safe for themselves and their community.

STAR is an initiative of BEST designed to assist with this growing demographic issue. In the STAR model, community-based seniors-serving agencies work with seniors and their families to coordinate and provide rideshares and local shuttles as well as the other diverse forms of transportation required by seniors to live within their communities. With STAR, seniors' agencies access easy-to-use software that greatly simplifies this process. Seniors or their families contribute to costs, BEST fundraises for all participating agencies, and rides are therefore subsidized. It is anticipated that costs for rides will come down as sponsors sign on to STAR. Agencies will be charged a small fee for service, but the capacity that BEST STAR brings to them will create efficiencies and lower their costs.

Seniors, their families, and the community as a whole will benefit from having active seniors, living in and contributing to their community.

In addition, the STAR initiative will enable local agencies to clearly identify gaps – as well as strengths – in their local transportation system. As problems and issues arise BEST will be available to assist agencies with support, ideas,



and resources. Many exciting new developments in seniors' active transportation are taking place in B.C. and throughout North America, and BEST is well-positioned to participate.

STAR components are presently being piloted in three seniors agencies in the Lower Mainland, with four others under development. Plans are underway to determine how the STAR model can be used in rural British Columbia.

For more information on STAR, please contact Margaret Mahan at (604) 669-2860 ext. 201; margaret@best.bc.ca.

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The Bicycle Valet

It has been an exciting and busy summer for The Bicycle Valet.

At events throughout the Lower Mainland and up to Squamish, The Bicycle Valet staff and volunteers have parked over 18 000 bikes – with a new one-day record of 1792 bikes parked at Summer Live in Stanley Park on July 9.

To honour all our hard-working staff and volunteers an excellent party was held at Slickity Jim's at the end of July – it was so good that we are going to have another one in September!

In September we will be at our final Vancity Fresh Air Movie Night, the Coho Festival, Autumn Shift, Lower Lonsdale Fall Festival and World Rivers Day. To find out more about locations and times visit our [calendar](#) or check us out on Facebook or Twitter (@TheBicycleValet).

Congratulations to our July/August contest draw winners: Mike Cline, Angela Leaman, Georgina Havelka, Louisa Phung, and Evan Warburton.

For more information on The Bicycle Valet, including sponsorship interests, please contact Steve Beck (steven.beck@best.bc.ca) or Stephanie Williams (stephanie.williams@best.bc.ca) at BEST, (604) 669-2860.

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Smart Streets: Transportation Transformation

In collaboration with the international festivities around the 350.org 'Moving Planet' day Saturday, September 24th, join BEST and the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) at Creekside Community Centre at the Olympic Village from 12 - 2pm. An afternoon of sustainable transportation-related festivities will be kicked off by a presentation from the CCPA researchers who put together 'Transportation Transformation: Building complete communities and a zero-emission transportation system in BC' <http://bit.ly/nINrPc>

As the Wilderness Committee and Youth for Climate Justice Now will be beginning their 'Momentum for Change' <http://bit.ly/nINrPc> bicycle ride from the Science World-False Creek area after the event, at 2pm, BEST will provide The Bicycle Valet services and the Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition will be providing refreshments, encouragement and bike mechanic services!

Check out the event page on Facebook! <http://on.fb.me/qGw4v8>
Details will be added on a regular basis!



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Chris' Corner

By Christopher Wilcott

As a new feature in the BEST newsletter, I will be highlighting some of the advances in environmentally sustainable transportation that I come across through my travels and through research on the internet.

Recently, I have returned from a trip to my home town of Winnipeg, MB. I was quite surprised to see just how much progress the city has made in promoting sustainable transportation. In the year and a half since my last visit, the City of Winnipeg has made major strides in expanding its active transportation network and bicycle storage facilities. For more information on Winnipeg's AT program visit:

<http://www.winnipeg.ca/publicworks/MajorProjects/ActiveTransportation/about-active-transportation.stm>



Keeping with the theme of Active Transportation facilities in the Manitoba capital, Bicycle Valet Winnipeg is operating at major events in the region offering a free active transportation valet service for bicycles, skateboards, strollers, pogo-sticks, etc. Bicycle Valet Winnipeg was set up with the guidance of BEST's The Bicycle Valet staff. If you are planning a cycling holiday to Winnipeg in the future, keep this organization in mind. For more information, please visit: <http://www.bicyclevaletwinnipeg.ca/>

Winnipeg has also begun to place highly-visible and texturized curb-cuts for the aid of the visually impaired which will also provide an additional benefit of added traction for pedestrians during the winter months. Improvements have also been made for transit riders as real-time next-bus displays have been placed at major transit hubs through the city. The City is also getting ready to open its first Bus Rapid Transit line as construction continues on that project.



Overall, I was very pleased to see an unquestionable commitment on the part of the City of Winnipeg to promote more sustainable transit options despite the prevailing automobile culture of the city; keep up the good work, Winnipeg.

Also, the recent passing Jack Layton has saddened many in our country. Mr. Layton was a great politician and an ardent advocate of sustainable transportation at the federal level. I was recently forwarded a link to a petition to have the West 10th Bicycle route in the City of Vancouver renamed Jack Layton Way. I think that this would be a fitting homage to a man who was so passionate about sustainable transportation. For more information, please visit: http://www.causes.com/causes/631546?fb_ref=recruiter_id%3D79313104&fb_source=home_online

Have an excellent month, everyone!

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Next Up!

Applications are now open for Next Up, an amazing and transformative program for young social change activists between the ages of 18 and 32.

The program is offered in four cities across three provinces: Next Up BC in Vancouver, Next Up Edmonton, Next Up Calgary and Next Up Saskatchewan in Saskatoon. In each province, young people are selected for an intensive seven-month program. Participants develop life-long relationships, explore different leadership styles, meet some of the province's leading change-makers, learn new leadership and organizing skills, and are exposed to current and topical social justice issues and progressive governance.

The application deadline for Next Up BC is **Friday, September 16, 2011**.

For more information and application forms see

<http://www.nextup.ca/index.php/how-to-apply/>

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The Access Transit Users' 2012 Advisory Board

The Access Transit Users' Advisory Committee is now accepting applications for the 2012 calendar year. Members serve for a three-year term. For more information and an application form go to <http://www.translink.ca/en/Rider-Info/Accessible-Transit/Access-Transit/Users-Advisory-Committee.aspx>. Applications need to be submitted no later than September 30, 2011.

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There is No Plan B for Improving Metro Vancouver Transportation

By Peter Ladner

OK, everyone. It's time to stand up and be counted. Are you in favour of improved transit in our region? If yes, do you have a better proposal to pay for it than a 2-cents-a-litre increase in fuel taxes, plus some still-to-be-determined combination of vehicle levy, road pricing, carbon tax revenues or property tax increases? That's where the Mayors' Council on Regional Transportation and the provincial government have landed, working at a level of collaboration that hasn't been seen in this region in decades.

As a key player on the Mayors' Council puts it, there is no Plan B. Either we take this difficult step or we stall on repairs and improvements to a transit system that's vital to the economic and social health of this region. And to families, Premier Clark!

The gas tax increase has been portrayed in the media as simply a way to match senior government contributions and get the Evergreen Line from Lougheed to Coquitlam built, finally. Actually, the Evergreen Line is less than half the package of improvements in the TransLink plan, which spans the region.

It also includes:

- a 9% increase in bus service hours. (Bus passups are now common in Vancouver, Port Moody and Surrey.)
- A new B-Line service in Surrey to connect Guildford, Surrey Central, and White Rock
- A bus between White Rock and Langley
- Bus rapid transit on Highway 1 and over the new Port Mann Bridge in 2013, connecting Langley and Surrey with the SkyTrain network at Lougheed Station.
- SkyTrain station and Seabus terminal renovations to add capacity
- Restored capital funding for roads (\$20 million) and cycling (\$6 million)

Notice what's missing from that list: any rapid transit along Broadway, the self-financing Burnaby gondola, SkyTrain extension in Surrey, a new Patullo Bridge, the North Fraser Perimeter Road (United Boulevard Extension), Vancouver's downtown streetcar, the province's promised new fuel-efficient buses...

Just to get what *is* on the list, TransLink's board, with the mayors' council's approval, has to come up with another \$70 million a year. With a fuel tax increase delivering \$40 million, there's still \$30 million missing, even after TransLink's purge of \$55 million in internal costs.

There's a big opportunity to get this right, getting TransLink the steady long-term funding it so desperately needs to seriously reduce congestion and increase personal mobility as a million people plan to move here in the next 30 years. It starts with the unprecedented cooperation between TransLink and the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, with Minister Blair Lekstrom promising that the province will co-sponsor TransLink's next (2045) plan, and help engage stakeholders in picking from a gnarly assortment of new funding sources in time for spring, 2012 legislation, thus bypassing a potential property tax increase.

We've come a long way since the days of former Minister Kevin ('My way and the highway') Falcon, when the province unilaterally dumped its own provincial transit plan on the region in 2008 without any consultation.

There's also a startling consensus of politicians and business leaders endorsing some form of road pricing, including the B.C. Chamber of Commerce, the Surrey Board of Trade, the Vancouver Board of Trade, the three North Shore mayors and Surrey Mayor Diane Watts among others. A group of senior transportation decision-makers, politicians and business leaders brought together in May by the fledgling Sustainable Transportation Coalition supported using a portion of the post-2012 carbon tax (87%), a vehicle levy (68%) and road pricing (53%) to get the missing \$30 million and more.

There's widespread agreement that while these politically-volatile new measures are necessary, they have to be finessed to allow relief to people in areas without transit, to people who drive fuel-efficient cars, and to those who shift their travel to off-peak hours.

It's so much easier to foment anger about increased taxes than it is to sell difficult improvements to build essential infrastructure. One gets you ratings

and political popularity. The other gets results that make this region liveable and prosperous.

This column appears in the July 26, 2011 issue of Business in Vancouver.

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