



City Centre

TRANSPORTATION

PLAN



City of Richmond

November 2000

Why Was the Plan Developed?

Our downtown is growing rapidly. In 1994, there were 27,000 residents and 33,000 jobs in the City Centre. By 2011, we can expect as many as 60,000 residents and 48,000 jobs.

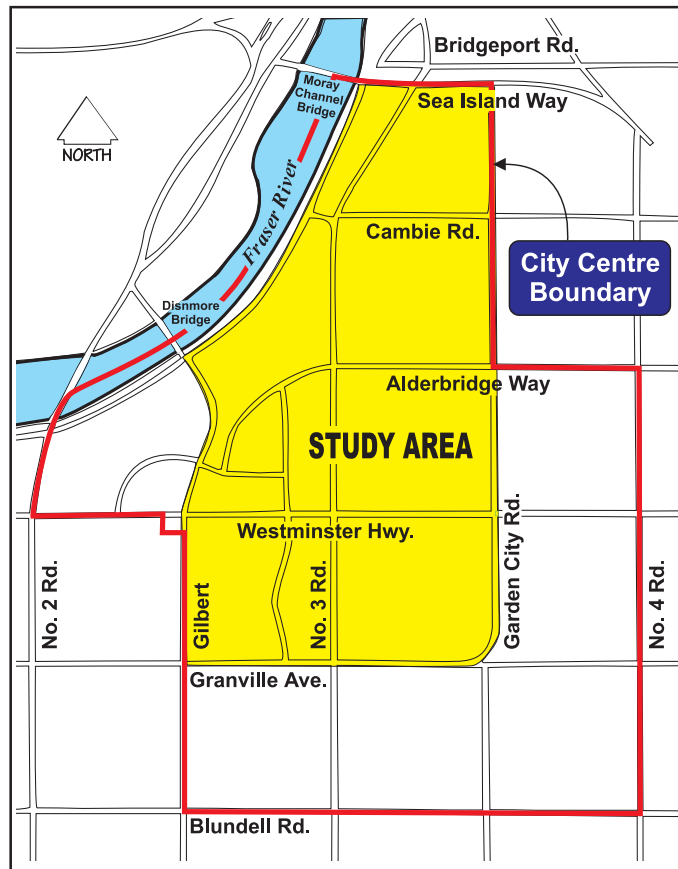
Signs of this rapid growth are already evident. Long queues of cars on No. 3 Road and other major streets serving popular retail areas have become the norm at midday and on weekends. With No. 3 Road being the only main north-south route through the area, it is forced to accommodate ever more traffic. As a result, access to local developments can be difficult, pedestrian and cyclist safety is at issue, and the future quality of life in our downtown is being questioned.



...signs of this rapid growth are already evident.

The City Centre Transportation Plan seeks to address 8 key problems facing downtown...

1. Through-traffic on No. 3 Road conflicts with traffic using local shops and services.
2. Large downtown blocks inconvenience both vehicles and pedestrians.
3. Parking lots accessed from main roads compound traffic congestion.
4. Too few alternative routes exist.
5. Parking is inadequate in popular retail areas.
6. Parking management typically forces shoppers to move their cars repeatedly.
7. Transit does not meet commuter and local user needs.
8. Unfriendly streets discourage pedestrians and cyclists.



it is time to "redesign" our downtown to accommodate better public transit, more bikes, and a more attractive pedestrian environment.



...the Plan proposes both short and long term solutions...

These problems are only “symptoms” of an even larger problem: our dependence on the car. Much of downtown was first built for drivers with strip malls and large open parking lots, but as the City Centre grows and attracts more people, driving is becoming more difficult and hazardous. People still want the freedom to drive downtown, but increasingly they also want flexible, convenient, and environmentally friendly alternatives from which to choose. This means it is time to "redesign" our downtown to accommodate better public transit, more bikes, and a more attractive pedestrian environment.

Transportation Plan Follows City Centre Plan Directions...

The City Centre Transportation Plan follows directions laid out in the Official Community Plan (OCP) for the City Centre which was adopted by Council in June 1995. The OCP is intended to guide development of our City Centre so that it can absorb a major portion of Richmond's growth over the next two decades, and support a strong economy, a high degree of social well-being, and a livable environment. For this reason, the OCP encourages more housing in the downtown, attractive to a broad range of ages, incomes, and cultures. It promotes pedestrian- and transit-friendly approaches to the design of buildings, streets, and parks; and, it discourages car-dependent lifestyles.

The Transportation Plan recognizes the pressures facing downtown as its population and jobs grow, and aims to improve mobility and livability not just in the future, but today and every step of the way. To this end, the Plan proposes both short and long term solutions to getting around downtown, and aims to achieve 4 key objectives:

1. Balance automobile usage with other means of travel, with an emphasis on transit.
2. Make roads work for pedestrians, cyclists, and transit, not just cars.
3. Encourage people to make transportation choices which curb traffic growth.
4. Implement improvements to take advantage of opportunities created by new development.

The Plan

The Plan identifies the requirements of a more balanced transportation system for Richmond's downtown. Ten or twenty years from now the transportation system will be dramatically different from that of today. Transit will be greatly improved, and the stage will be set for the introduction of a rapid bus/transit link with downtown Vancouver and other regional centres.

Through-traffic will be encouraged to skirt the perimeter of downtown, and a series of "loop roads" will help local traffic access downtown destinations. Road space will be utilized more efficiently to enhance circulation for all modes of travel. Public parking will be centralized for convenient access to shops and services, and will be controlled to discourage unnecessary car use. Many more local trips will be made by bus, bike, and foot, and streets and sidewalks will be more visually attractive and easy to use.



1. Rethinking Roads

With the City Centre's population expected to double and its jobs to grow by 50%, using cars as we do today would choke the downtown, damaging its efficiency and livability.

To break this pattern we need to redefine the roles of roads so they may better serve our future needs.

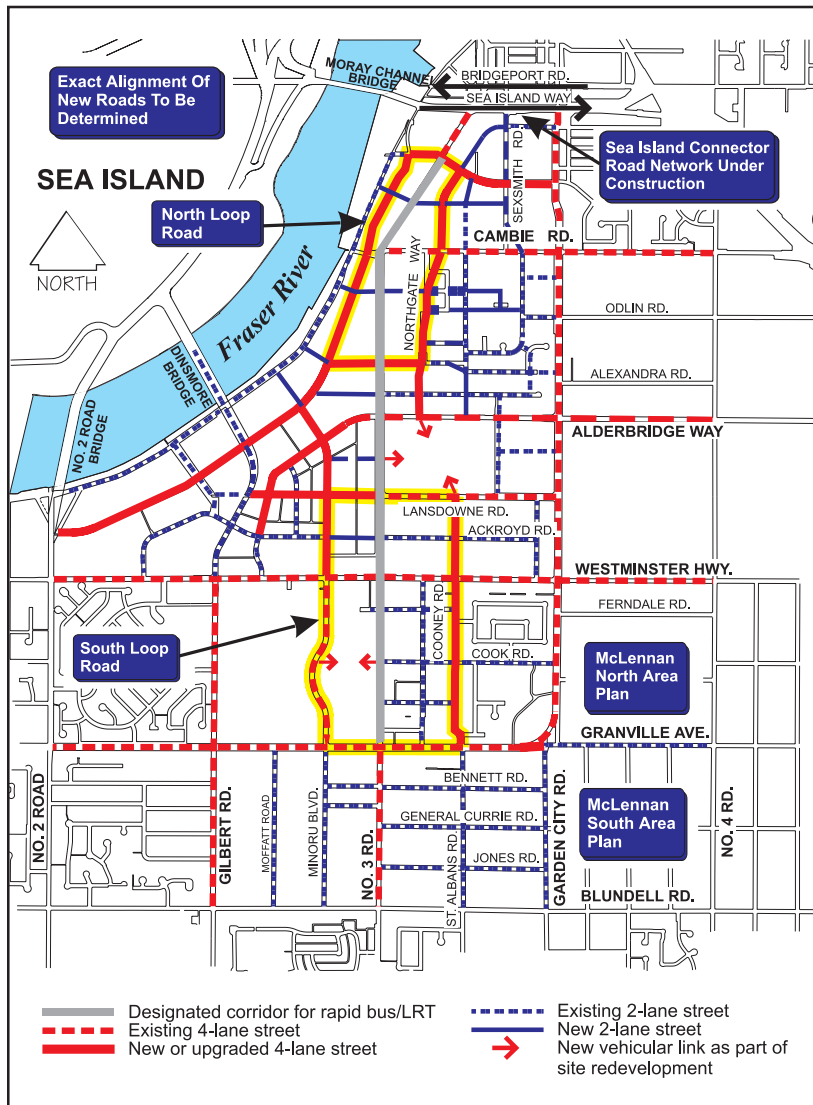
"Main Street"

No. 3 Road is the downtown's most important and heavily used route. If it is to continue as the city's "main street", through-traffic not destined for downtown must be redirected and local traffic must have alternatives ways to access destinations. The Plan promotes use of Granville Avenue/Garden City Road as a downtown "by-pass", and introduces "loop roads" around the downtown's popular north and south retail areas to improve local access.



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Long Term Road Network Plan



Better Connections

For the "loop roads" to be effective and support No. 3 Road as "main street", a fine grain of secondary roads must be introduced to allow for more convenient circulation, and the "loops" must be linked to provide alternative north-south routes.

Unnecessary Congestion

Today, considerable traffic congestion results from cars accessing driveways along No. 3 Road and other main routes, and from parking management practices which force shoppers to move their cars when shopping at more than one location. The OCP aims to reduce the number of driveways by requiring new developments to be accessed via lanes and secondary streets. The Plan encourages parking and traffic management practices that will eliminate the need for short car trips.

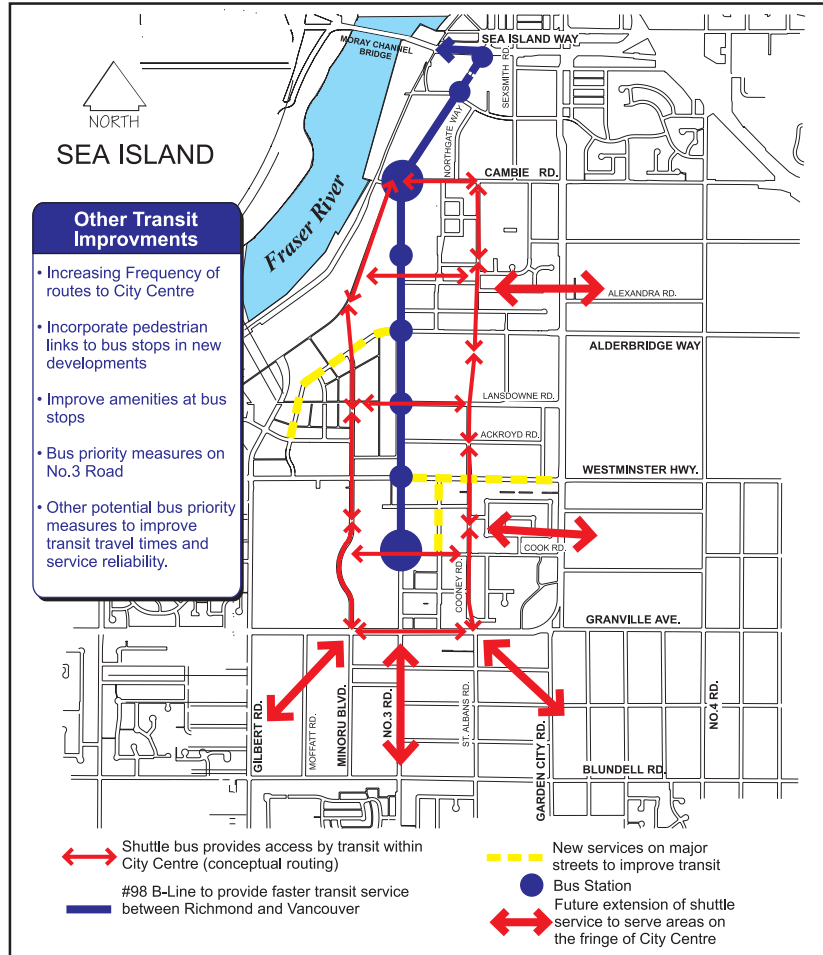
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2. Preparing for Rapid Transit

Richmond has long planned for an at-grade, light rail transit link between its City Centre and downtown Vancouver. While such a commuter service may still be 10 to 15 years in the future, the Plan promotes introduction of an interim transit system in the short-term which will help set the stage for rapid transit through its similar alignment, facilities, and operation.

Introducing #98 B-Line TransLink (the new regional transportation authority) plans to link Richmond and Vancouver with #98 B-Line rapid bus service in Winter, 2000. This new regional system will use low-floor, articulated buses along designated lanes within existing roadways. With specially designed bus stations, and an off-street transit exchange at its terminus, the system will exhibit characteristics similar to rapid transit and attract similar forms and densities of development. The Plan directs that #98 B-Line follow No. 3 Road, the same route proposed under the OCP for rapid transit, thus, allowing for ready conversion in the future from one system to the other.

Long Term Transit Improvements



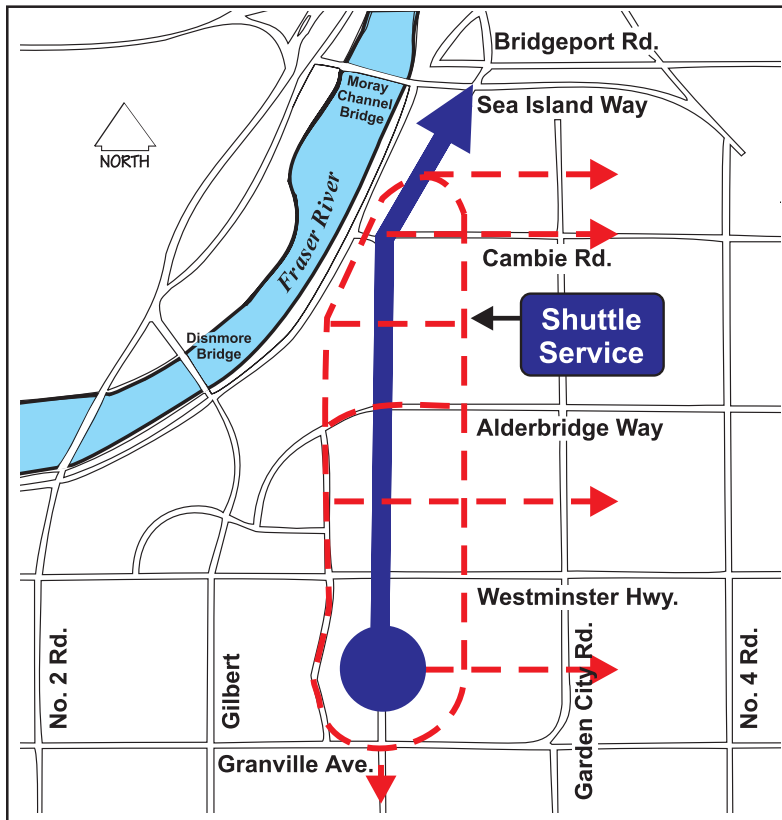
3. Better Local Transit

With the addition of #98 B-Line rapid bus service to Richmond's



down, TransLink will be implementing further improvements to local transit, including the reallocation of regular buses to provide better local transit connections between the City Centre and the rest of Richmond.

TransLink (the new regional transportation authority) plans to link Richmond and Vancouver with #98 B-Line rapid bus service in Winter, 2000.



Improved City-wide Transit

#98 B-Line rapid bus service will take the place of many of the buses which currently travel between Richmond and Vancouver. This will allow for a number of these regular buses to be re-allocated to improve transit connections across Richmond, and between our downtown and the rest of the city. The Richmond Area Transit Plan will be completed in 2000. The plan will identify both local and regional transit service improvements that can be implemented over the next 5 years.

To lessen future parking demands, the Plan seeks to decrease car use by making alternative modes more attractive

4. New Approaches to Parking

Current estimates indicate a shortage of parking spaces in the downtown's popular north and south retail areas respectively. If shoppers continue to use cars in the future as they do today, these shortages may increase by 50% over the next 10 years. To improve this situation, the Plan proposes 3 key strategies:



New Facilities & Management

To meet current demands, new public parking facilities are to be implemented for the downtown. Siting of these facilities would be subject to further study and

opportunities arising from local development. Costs of construction and operation can be recouped through "parking improvement area" fees, pay parking, and/or development incentives. In addition, changes in the management of private lots are encouraged to better serve public needs, and on-street metered parking is proposed where local areas require them for short-stay users (i.e. shoppers, not employees).

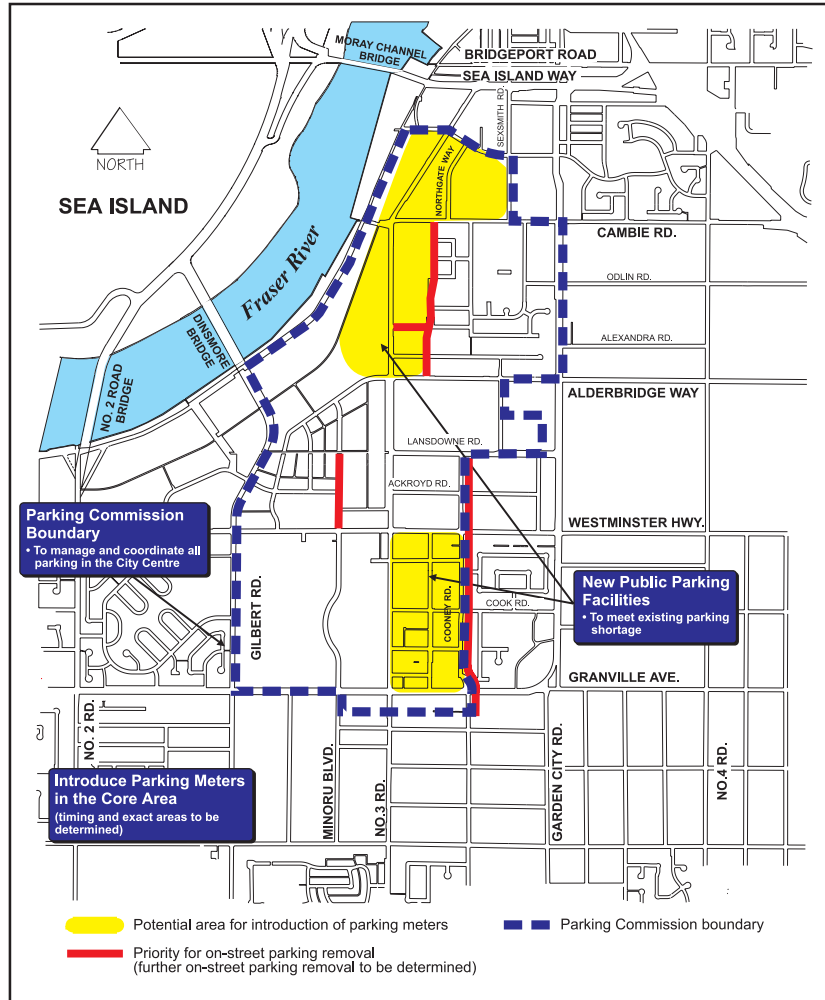
Alternative Modes

To lessen future parking demands, the Plan seeks to decrease car use by making alternative modes more attractive (i.e. with improved transit services) and restricting parking availability (i.e. with parking fees).

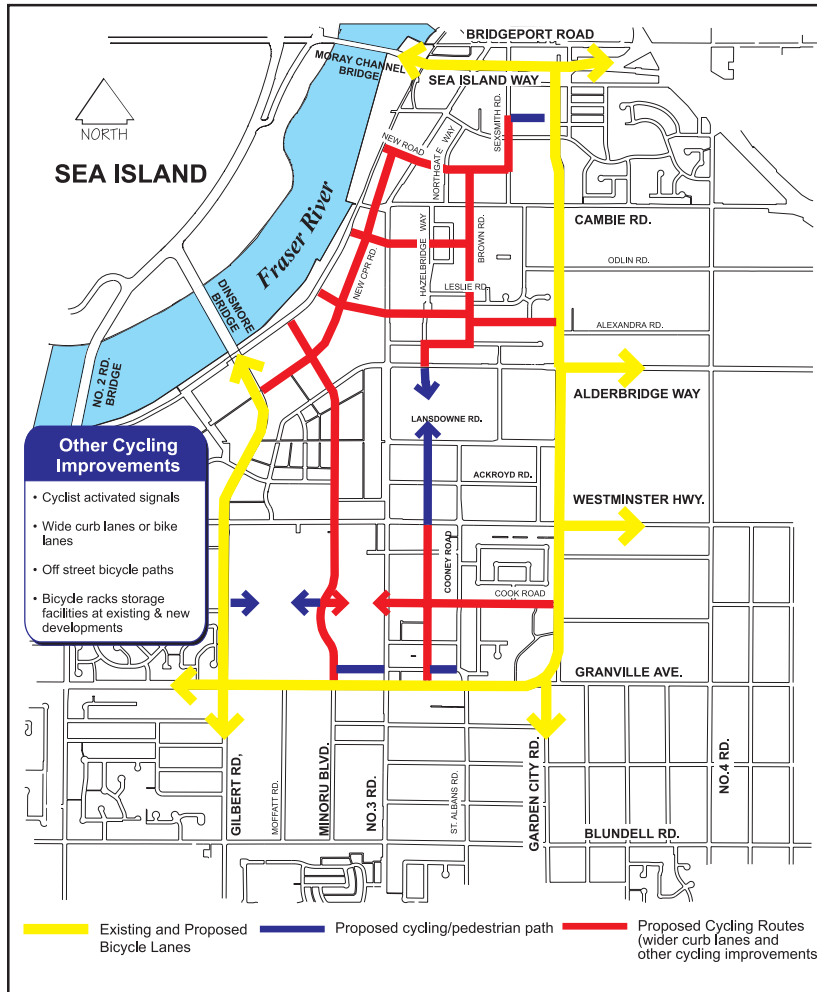
Parking Commission

To plan, implement, and manage parking more efficiently, creation of a "parking commission", with membership from the business community, City Council, and residents, is planned for downtown. While Richmond has little experience in this area, many North American cities, including Vancouver, use them successfully to oversee specific aspects of parking in their downtown areas.

Long Term Parking Improvements



Long Term Cycling Network



- **Off-street links** - Exclusive bike/pedestrians routes linking on-street bike facilities or destinations

The City will continue to pursue implementing bicycle facilities such as bike lanes to enhance bicycle travel to major destinations within the City, including City Centre.

End-of-trip facilities

The Plan reinforces guidelines set by the Official Community Plan pertaining to the provision of bike racks, lockers, showers, and changerooms as part of new downtown developments.

5. Bike-Friendly Environment

With more people living in the City Centre and a desire for alternative ways to get around, Richmond's level terrain makes cycling attractive. The Plan includes two key measures to ensure a bike-friendly environment is established downtown.

Designated Bike Routes

There are four distinct types of bicycle facilities on Richmond roadways:

- **Bike lanes** - Painted curb lanes for the exclusive use of bikes on perimeter by-pass routes
- **Enhanced curb lanes** - Wider curb lanes on busy streets enabling cars to pass bikes safely
- **Shared lanes** - Standard lane widths for use on less busy local streets

6. Streets for People

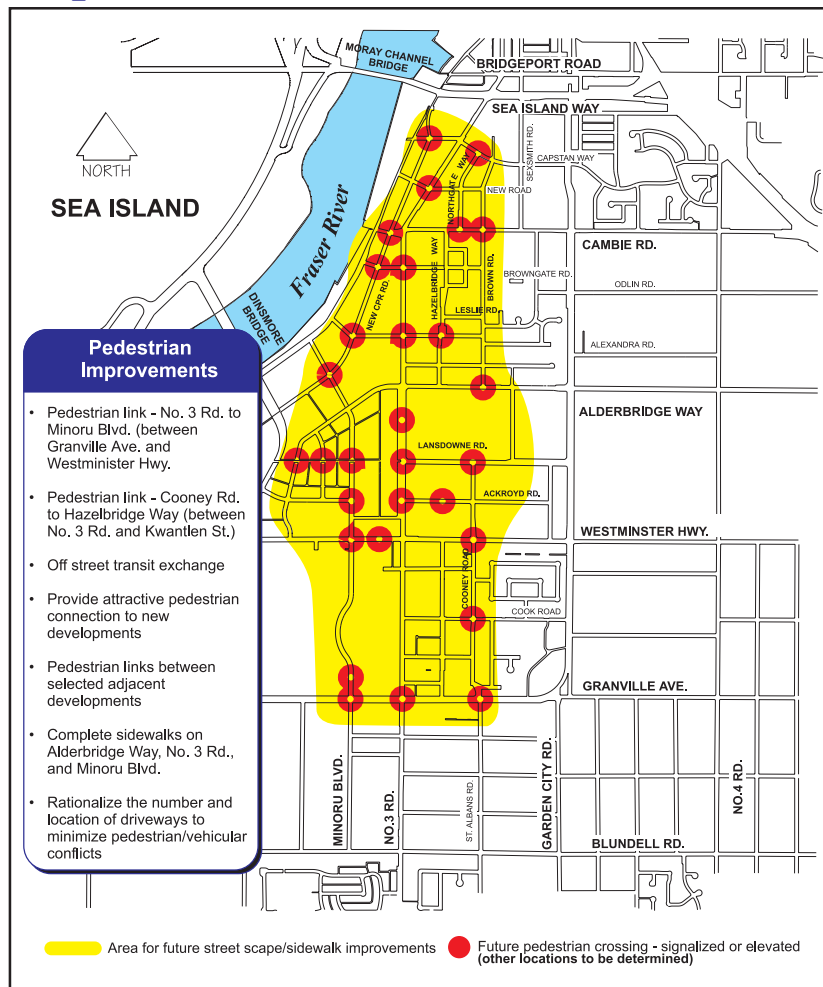
Richmond's downtown streets were designed for cars and many are unfriendly, or even hostile, to pedestrians. With narrow or no sidewalks, numerous driveway crossings, and little weather protection, walking even short distances can be unpleasant. The Plan recognizes that an attractive pedestrian environment is key to getting people out of their cars and onto transit, bikes, and foot. To improve this situation, the Plan proposes:



- Sidewalks throughout downtown;
- Wider sidewalks;
- Trees and landscaped boulevards;
- Benches, shelters, and information kiosks;
- Pedestrian crossing signals on major roads;
- Reducing driveway crossings;
- Improved wheelchair ramps, audible crossing signals, and devices for the mobility impaired;
- Weather protection along shop fronts; and
- Landscaped walkways where parking lots hinder access between adjacent developments.



Long Term Pedestrian Facility Improvements



Improvements proposed under the Plan will not increase general taxation.



7. Paying for Transportation

Improvements proposed under the Plan will not increase general taxation. Instead, they will be financed one of three ways:

Development Cost Charges

Most improvements will be financed through Richmond's Development Cost Charge (DCC) program. Fees collected from private developments are directed by the City through this program to infrastructure projects, including transportation. Alternatively, private developers may construct improvements identified under the program and receive, in exchange, credits towards their DCC fees. Expected program costs for downtown are consistent with projected city-wide income and infrastructure expenditures. Implementation of the Plan should, therefore, have no impact on either the DCC program or infrastructure projects outside downtown.

Local Financial Initiatives

The Plan recommends that a "parking commission" be responsible for future public parking facilities, and suggests that where such facilities are developed by the City for the direct benefit of a specific downtown area, that they be financed through local initiatives, such as:

- a. A "parking-in-lieu" program (as in Steveston) enabling developers to contribute money to public parking when they cannot provide adequate parking on their own lands; and
- b. Metered on-street parking and off-street parking fees, of which some revenues may be directed to local parking improvements.

Other Government Agencies

Transit improvement costs and some of the costs associated with maintaining Major Roads are expected to be borne by TransLink.

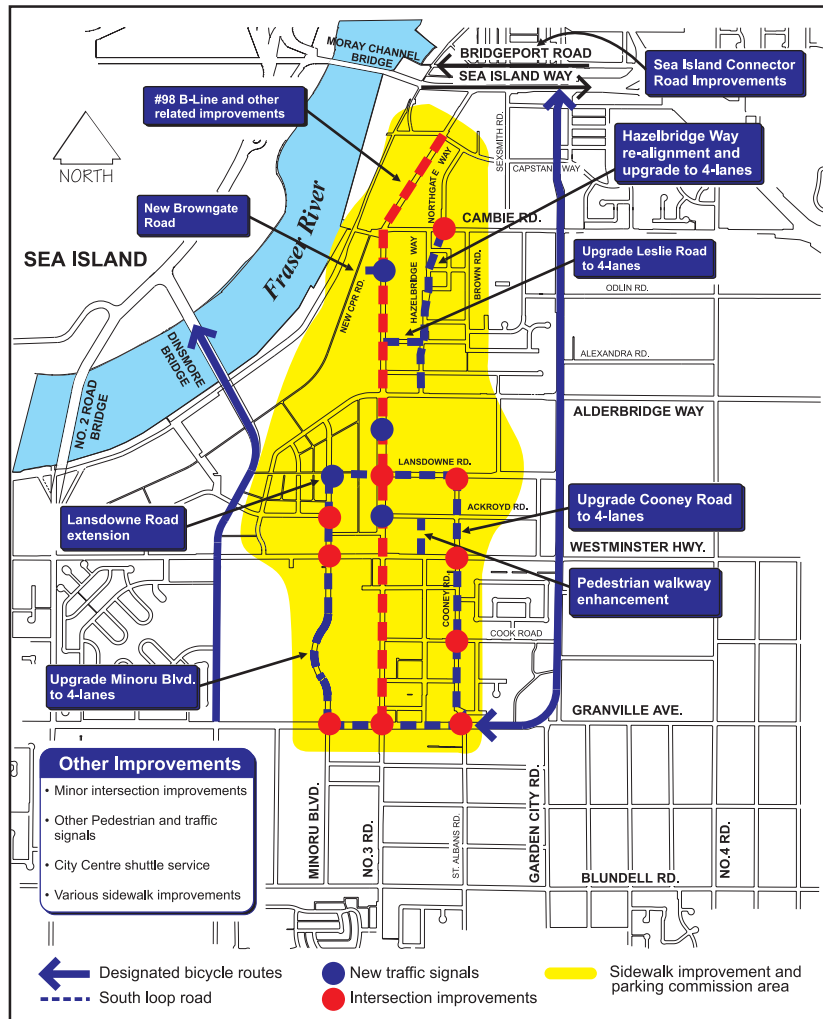
8. Priorities for Implementation of Improvements

Most transportation improvements identified under the Plan will not be implemented until after 5 or 10 years due to the need for land acquisition, high construction expenditures, or coordination with other government agencies. In some cases, where improvements will significantly impact private lands or are intended to serve the needs of new development, the exact timing of implementation may be accelerated or delayed depending on local private development objectives.

The following improvements have been or will be implemented by the City in the short term.

1. The South "Loop Road"
 - a. Lansdowne Road extension to Minoru Boulevard;
 - b. Minoru Boulevard, upgrade to 4 lanes north of Westminster Highway; and
 - c. Cooney Road, upgrade to 4 lanes.
2. The Browngate Road "Extension", West of No. 3 Road
3. Some Designated Bike Routes, Including Gilbert Road Bicycle Lanes

Proposed Short Term improvements



4. New Traffic Signals at:
 - a. No. 3 Road & Ackroyd Road;
 - b. No. 3 Road & Lansdowne Park Shopping Centre entrance;
 - c. No. 3 Road & Browngate Rd "Extension"; and
 - d. Minoru Boulevard & Lansdowne Road.
 - e. Minoru Boulevard & Elmbridge Way.
5. Some Sidewalk/Streetscape Improvements in Busy Pedestrian Areas.
6. A Variety of Minor Intersection Improvements.



Questions?

If you have any questions about the City Centre Transportation Plan, please contact the Transportation Department at:

Richmond City Hall

6911 No. 3 Road,
Richmond BC
V6Y 2C1

Telephone: **(604) 276-4035**
Fax: **(604) 276-4052**
Email: **transplan@city.richmond.bc.ca**

This and other city documents are available on the web at:
www.city.richmond.bc.ca

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City of Richmond

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