



## Media Advisory

THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF VERNON  
3400 – 30<sup>th</sup> Street  
Vernon, BC  
V1T 5E6

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MEDIA CONTACT: Wendy Majewski  
TELEPHONE: (250) 550-7831  
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### **WHAT'S ALL THE BUZZ ABOUT TDM FOR VERNON?**

Vernon's Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program was established in 2009, as part of the City of Vernon Official Community Plan, which set a target of 20% for all trips to be by walking, cycling or public transportation by the year 2031. The aim is to enhance public health and safety, improve air quality, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, lesson traffic congestion and lower infrastructure and road costs.

The TDM Committee actively promotes the use of more sustainable modes of transportation in a responsible fashion. Other goals are to: increase pedestrian safety education and infrastructure for seniors and children; improve handyDART service for seniors; increase frequency and hours of operation in partnership with BC Transit; increase investments in sidewalks, bicycle route and trails; develop school and workplace travel plans, improve public awareness of the benefits of sustainable transportation through community events and address parking issues.

"The TDM Committee and staff meet the needs of most people in Vernon from pedestrians, seniors, children, families, cyclists and others. Our efforts in improving transit, pedestrian walk ways and cycle paths for children in school areas in this city have been successful and we will continue this important work," Pat Black, Senior's Representative.

#### **TRANSIT**

"The TDM Committee and transportation staff have advocated and improved transit services by adding additional buses, increasing routes and service times and promoting the UBC O transportation system to Kelowna," said Wendy Majewski, TDM Coordinator for the City of Vernon, "HandyDART service has been increased through extended services with two new buses offering a new Saturday service. The UBC O, North Okanagan Connector doubled its trips from four to eight and now also serves Kelowna Airport. In total, 5,300 hours of transit have been added. When comparing ridership from last year to October 2010, there was a 16% increase for the general routes. In September 2010, the 90 North End Connector, (UBC O) ridership was up by 78%. We are very excited about our current work with BC Transit and the Regional District of North Okanagan on this year's transit review for the Vernon Regional Transit System."

The following public open houses will be hosted at:

- Tuesday, June 28, 6:15 p.m. to 8:45 p.m. in Council Chambers, Vernon City Hall
- Wednesday, June 29, 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. at the Vernon Recreation Centre
- Wednesday, June 29, 4:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at Enderby City Hall
- Wednesday, June 29, 4:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at Old Fellows Hall, Armstrong
- Tuesday, July 5, 10:00 a.m. to Noon at Schubert Centre, Vernon
- Tuesday, July 5, 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. in Council Chambers, Vernon City Hall
- Wednesday, July 6, 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. in Paddlewheel Hall, Vernon
- Wednesday, July 6, 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at Village Green Centre, Vernon
- Wednesday, July 6, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the Municipal office in Spallumcheen
- Wednesday, July 6, 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 at Coldstream Elementary School
- Wednesday, July 6, 4:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at White Valley Community Centre in Lumby.

All citizens are encouraged to attend and give their input.

### **SCHOOLS**

As part of meeting the TDM targets, three school travel plans (STP) began in October 2009 with a \$25,000 grant from Green Communities Canada and HASTE-BC, (Hub Action School Transportation Emissions of BC) for Ellison, Harwood and Okanagan Landing Elementary Schools. The TDM Coordinator facilitated the planning process. Engineering staff planned and implemented the related infrastructure upgrades in 2010 at all three school sites. Continued upgrades on 20 Street to 48 Avenue are scheduled to be completed by the end of this year. To be cost effective, upgrades are implemented along with already targeted road improvements for the city.

"The Active Healthy Kids Canada Report Card on physical activity for children and youth was awarded an F for physical activity levels for Canadian children. Only 15% of BC children and youth (ages 5-17) are meeting the daily physical activity guidelines of 90 minutes per day. Historically, children and youth attained much of their physical activity by using active transportation such as walking/biking to and from school. Children need to be active every day to promote their healthy growth and development. Exercise promotes better concentration and focus to help children learn better in school. A great way to achieve this is by walking and biking to school," Dr. Andrew Larder FRCPC, Senior Medical Health Officer, Interior Health Authority.

"As a parent of small children at Harwood School, my primary concern is the safety of my children when walking to and from school. The School Travel Plan Committee (STPC) listened to my concerns, actively witnessed and addressed each of the areas. The STPC has been instrumental in rectifying the worrisome areas and in turn, helped create safe walking paths, reduce the speed of area traffic and made the children entering and leaving our school more visible to the community. I am very grateful to the STPC and their role in making the area safer for children so that they may participate in active lifestyles such as walking and biking when going to and from school," Hollie Rakos, President of the Harwood Parent Advisory Committee.

The City of Vernon has been recognized at the national level for our school travel plan initiatives and infrastructure implementation through national STP newsletters and is featured in the new national manual for STP Facilitators. Vernon is seen as a leader, setting a great example for schools across the

nation. Two new school travel plans were added in September 2010 with funds from the Canadian Partnership against Cancer.

“The School Travel Plan re-affirmed many safety concerns for our children at Harwood Elementary School. The City took notice and made significant changes that allow safer routes to school and I have noticed an increase in the number of children walking and biking to school. The pinch point on 20 Street really helps slow down traffic for our children,” Brian Smyth, Principal of Harwood Elementary School.

“From my perspective, the Okanagan Landing School Travel Plan Committee made enhancements with the new infrastructure upgrades with the pedestrian signal on Okanagan Landing and Grant Roads, sidewalks, traffic calming and bike lane improvements that enhance the neighbourhood area. We have seen an increase in children walking to school and in fact, there are now over 20 children cycling to school. This has been a major improvement for us,” Tom Watkinson, Principal, OKL Elementary School.

The City of Vernon partnered with School District 22 to implement a Bike Safety program for teachers to be certified at the Can Bike 2 level to implement cycling skills and safety education in schools. Bike Rodeos are also offered by Community Policing in elementary schools to encourage children to ride and walk safely.

#### **INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT**

The TDM budget designates \$400,000 for sidewalks, \$200,000 for bike lanes and \$200,000 for trails per year. In addition to infrastructure improvements in the three schools neighbourhoods in 2010, the first half of the Kosmina Trail was constructed. The completion of the second half of the trail from Fulton Road to Mission Road is pending approval from the Department of National Defense. Other improvements were bike lanes on 27 Street from 46 to 48 Avenues, Phase I of the Polson Greenway and second phase to be completed by the spring and summer of 2010. The improvements give all community residents new options for walking and cycling.

#### **COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND EVENTS**

Community events are helpful in increasing public awareness on the benefits of green transportation. Since September 2009, seven TDM community events were hosted. The City of Vernon won the National title for the Commuter Challenge for population category 25,000-49,999 in June 2010. The 2010 Bike to Work Week (BTWW) held in May 2010 was expanded to include the North Okanagan Region. New partnerships with the Bike to Work Society of BC and cities of Kelowna and Kamloops and District of West Kelowna were created to develop a cycle momentum in the Vernon area that attracted 48 BTW teams with 318 team members that cycled over 1,020 trips (11,314 km travelled) saving 2,624.84 KG of CO<sub>2</sub>.

Statistics and results are currently being gathered for this year’s North Okanagan Bike to Work Week campaign (which joined 16 other municipalities across the province on May 30-June 5) and National Clean Air Day on June 8.

Another example is “Vernon Steps Out on International Car Free Day.” On September 22, 2010 a community event was held by Greater Vernon Recreation Services and City TDM staff to promote the new transit service expansion and local programs that encourage walking.

Education programming is another facet of TDM. A Pedestrian Safety Symposium was held at the Shubert Centre on March 22 of this year, hosted by the Seniors Action Network, Community Policing and City TDM staff to promote safe walking and motorized scooter travel.

### **CARPOOLING**

Carpooling provides other benefits besides saving money, including improving our air quality and reducing traffic on our roads. Laura Frank, Sustainability Coordinator with Regional District of North Okanagan, carpools with three City of Vernon employees from Kelowna to Vernon and says, "When I was first thinking about joining a carpool, I was worried I wouldn't have anything in common with my fellow riders. It turns out we get along wonderfully and I have gained new friends who are supportive and offer comic relief on the ride home."

Two regional Carpool Week events were hosted in partnership with cities of Kelowna, Kamloops, District of West Kelowna and Carpool.ca which boosted carpool numbers for the Okanagan region in 2009 and 2010 (the Thompson-Okanagan gained 288 new registrations in 2010 and now has a database of 1,335 registrations).

### **SCHOOL AND STAFF TRAVEL PLANS UNDERWAY**

A new City of Vernon Staff Travel Plan is underway and we are continuing with school travel plans for Silver Star and Mission Hill elementary schools. In the near future, these travel plan processes and best practices will assist in supporting Vernon's corporate and business community. The main outcome is for City TDM staff to assist corporations and businesses with the development of their staff travel plans.

For more information visit <http://www.vernon.ca/services/pde/seeit/index.html>

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Wendy Majewski  
TDM Coordinator  
City of Vernon  
W: 250-550-7831 or C: 250-503-8455

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT**

### **What is TDM and Why is it important?**

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) is the use of policies, programs, services and products to influence whether, why, when, where and how people travel.

TDM promotes the use of more sustainable modes of transportation which contribute to improved public health and safety, improved air quality, the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, less traffic congestion and lower infrastructure and road costs.

As part of the Official Community Plan, City of Vernon has set a target of 20% for all trips to come from walking, cycling, and public transportation by the year 2031. In the spring of 2009, a TDM Committee was formed and, later that year, a TDM Coordinator was hired. Some of the TDM key goals were set to:

- Increase pedestrian safety education and infrastructure for seniors and children
- Improve handyDART service for seniors, transit frequency and hours of operation in partnership with BC Transit
- Increase investments in sidewalks, bicycle routes and trails (\$400,000 for sidewalks, \$200,000 for bike lanes and \$200,000 for trails per year)
- Develop school and workplace travel plans
- Improve public awareness of the benefits of sustainable transportation through community events
- Address parking issues.

### **TDM Highlights**

- In September 2009, Vernon takes a landslide win on International Car Free Day September 22 for the “Green Travel Mode Challenge” between Kelowna and Vernon City Council and staff, to see who would have the greatest percentage of participation.
- October 2009, City of Vernon receives a \$25,000 grant from HASTE-BC (Hub Action for School Transportation Emissions) and Green Communities Canada to conduct three School Travel Plans (STP) for Ellison, Harwood and Okanagan Landing Elementary (OKL) Schools. The TDM Coordinator facilitates the School Travel Plan process. A Municipal STP Steering Committee (MSTPSC) was established with key stakeholders to assist (Community Policing, Interior Health, Council, SD 22 School Trustee, Parent Advisory Councils, student reps and staff).
- A vital part of the STP was to survey parents and students. From the surveys, parents identified key safety concerns regarding pedestrian and cycling infrastructure in each neighbourhood area. Over 90% of all parents surveyed wanted to continue with the school travel planning process. Walkabouts and traffic observations also identified several issues that prevent children from walking and biking to school.
- Interior Health states that, “Children who are more active have increased health benefits, are happier, experience better focus and concentration during school and have better self esteem. One easy way for children to gain these is through their commute to school.”

- The school travel planning committees, the MTSPSC and staff worked on plans to improve the infrastructure and implement safety education events and programs that would assist in increasing the benefits of walking and biking to school.
- A popular education tool that was implemented was the traffic sign poster contest that communicates to drivers from a child's perspective to slow down at school zones. All posters were displayed at the community Earth Day event. To help humanize the current school zone signs, winning signs for each school are mounted underneath.
- The infrastructure upgrade plans at all three schools began in the summer of 2010 and was completed by December 2010 with new sidewalk construction, crosswalk signals, bike lanes and multi-use paths located on 20 Street. The Marshall Field's Trail connection to Cummins Road has been also completed. Traffic calming measures were implemented on OKL Road from Paddlewheel Park to OKL Elementary School.
- 2010 follow-up parent surveys for the STP revealed approximately a 15% increase in green travel modes for students.
- The City of Vernon has been recognized at the national level for our school travel plan initiatives and infrastructure implementation through national STP newsletters and is featured in the new national manual for STP Facilitators. Vernon is seen as a leader setting a great example for schools across the nation.
- As of August 2010, the Kosmina Trail was constructed to Okanagan Avenue. The remaining construction the second part of the trail from Fulton Road to Mission Road is pending approval from the Department of National Defense.
- Other 2010 improvements were bike lanes on 27 Street from 46 to 48 Avenue and Phase I of the Polson Greenway. The second phase is expected to be completed by the summer of 2010
- Spring 2010 was a busy season for the TDM Coordinator , hosting the first ever North Okanagan Bike to Work week and facilitating partnerships with Armstrong, Coldstream, Greater Vernon Cycling Advisory Committee, Regional District of North Okanagan, Spallumcheen, City of Kelowna, City of Kamloops and the provincial Bike to Work-BC Society. A total of 48 BTW teams participated with 318 team members (1020 trips were made by cyclists) travelling over 11,314 km saving 2,624.84 KG of CO2 emissions (May 9-16, 2010).
- During Environment Week (May 31- June 6), the City of Vernon wins the national Commuter Challenge title (population category of 25,000-49,999) and Vernon Regional Transit gains a 15% increase in ridership on Clean Air Day (June 2).
- September 5, 2010, Vernon Regional Transit expanded its service with expanded hours for handyDART and increased the taxi saver budget by \$10,000. For commuters to Okanagan College and to work, the bus starts earlier and ends later (6:30 a.m. to 6:38 p.m.). The UBC O North Okanagan Connector doubled its trips from four to eight and now serves Kelowna Airport and Vernon College Campus. In total 5,300 additional hours of transit were added.

- The TDM Coordinator worked in partnership with Greater Vernon Recreation Services and hosted “Vernon Steps Out” on International Car Free Day on September 22 at Spirit Square. The theme was centered on the launch of the expanded Vernon Regional Transit and to encourage citizens to walk more by promoting local walking programs. Over 250 people attended the event.
- In August 2010, City of Vernon is awarded a grant from the Canadian Partnership against Cancer grant to continue school travel planning for two new Vernon elementary schools: Silver Star and Mission Hill.
- In November 2010, Vernon hosted the second annual Thompson/Okanagan Carpool Week (November 5-9, 2010) which attracted 52 new registrations for Vernon and a total of 65 registrations for the North Okanagan. The Thompson-Okanagan gained 288 new registrations and now has a database of 1,335 registrations.
- In February 2011, the TDM Coordinator, TDM Committee, Community Policing and the Greater Vernon Cycling Advisory Committee teamed up to create a plan to help educate more students in schools on bicycle safety and skills. City of Vernon and SD 22 worked in partnership to launch the first Can Bike2 course for nine district teachers to instruct cycling in schools as part of the student physical and outdoor education classes. Their training will be wrapped up in early May, in time to enhance students’ biking skills and safety education for the 2011 provincial Bike to School and Work Week, May 30-June 5.
- In March 2011, TDM staff worked with the Senior’s Action Network, No Falls Prevention Coordinator and Community Policing to host Vernon’s first Pedestrian Safety Symposium at Schubert Centre. Scooter Safety courses, learning sessions on pedestrian safety and 25 education booths were offered which attracted approximately 200 participants.
- This spring, BC Transit will be initiating hosting a transit review for Vernon Regional Transit.

For more information visit <http://www.vernon.ca/services/pde/seeit/index.html>