

TRANSIT VISION 2040 — FROM VISION TO ACTION

TRANSIT VISION 2040 defines a future in which public transit maximizes its contribution to quality of life with benefits that support a vibrant and equitable society, a complete and compact community form, a dynamic and efficient economy, and a healthy natural environment.



THEME 2: REVOLUTIONIZING SERVICE

STRATEGIC
DIRECTION

2.3

Enable a “quantum leap”
in suburban transit

REVOLUTIONIZING SERVICE

Strategic Direction 2.3:

Enable a “quantum leap” in suburban transit

In urban areas, future growth will likely be concentrated in the same suburbs that now experience the lowest transit service levels and pose the greatest challenges to building ridership. A determined and targeted strategy of enhancements to suburban land use, transit facilities and transit services will be needed if tomorrow is to differ significantly from today. Major increases in fleets, operating hours, service reliability and operating speeds are required to meet the needs of changing markets in conventional suburban settings. There will be a need for transit to infiltrate suburban neighbourhoods with flexible and demand-responsive service arrangements.

In terms of land use, original streetcar suburbs may prove the greatest opportunity for retrofit, but suburban shopping malls will also be key. They can be transformed into more fully developed community centres with a diversity of land uses. Barriers to the densification of suburban areas need to be better understood, and proactive strategies will need to be developed.

Suburban communities should **use existing opportunities and resources**, wherever possible, to retrofit existing automobile-oriented areas to become **compact, transit-supportive nodes**.

Funding strategies are needed to ensure that adequate transit service is provided in suburban communities, particularly in new developments.

Access to transit facilities should be improved with **innovative alternatives** to park and ride facilities.



PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND TARGETS

Indicator 1: Increased population and employment density in suburban communities

Target:

By 2040, suburban communities in Canada will exhibit transit-supportive development patterns, including:

- Increased population and employment densities, particularly in key activity nodes
- Shopping malls transformed into fully developed community centres with a diversity of land uses
- Decentralized activity nodes that work to reduce commute distances

Indicator 2: Transit Accessibility

Population and Employment Transit Accessibility Targets:

Major metropolitan areas	By 2040, all residents and jobs will be located within 400m of a transit stop or station with frequent service (minimum 8 departures per hour during peak periods)
Large cities	By 2040, all residents and jobs will be located within 400m of a transit stop or station with frequent service (minimum 8 departures per hour during peak periods)
Medium cities	By 2040, all residents and jobs will be located within 400m of a transit stop or station with frequent service (minimum 6 departures per hour during peak periods)
Small cities	By 2040, all residents and jobs will be located within 400m of a transit stop or station with frequent service (minimum 4 departures per hour during peak periods)
Small & rural communities	By 2040, all residents and jobs will be located within 400m of a transit stop or station with frequent service (minimum 2 departures per hour during peak periods)

INITIATIVES AND BEST PRACTICES

Intensification of suburban development can contribute to the achievement of more transit-supportive land development patterns. Suburbs are typically dominated by low density, single family detached homes. Key nodes, such as existing suburban malls, can be redeveloped or intensified to create compact, self-sufficient and transit-supportive hubs. Large existing parking lots particularly present opportunities for sustainable land use patterns.

Vancouver, British Columbia



An image of the Oakridge Centre from the 2007 Oakridge Centre Policy Statement.

Oakridge Centre is an automobile-oriented mall in Vancouver that was originally built in 1956. In recent years, there has been a high level of interest in retrofitting the mall into a pedestrian- and transit-oriented mixed-use centre. The 2007 Oakridge Centre Policy Statement presents a framework to guide **rezoning** and **redevelopment**. Key planning principles within the Policy Statement include:

- Create a neighbourhood and municipal-serving centre
- Create a transit hub
- Create a mixed-use node
- Create an amenity rich public realm
- Optimize parks and open space
- Enhance built form



Proposed redevelopment plan in 2006.

Original plans to redevelop the 11-hectare Oakridge Centre, bringing high rise residential buildings onto the site, were approved by the City in 2007. However, since that time the SkyTrain's Canada Line has been constructed with Oakridge—41st Avenue Station located on the site, making **transit-oriented development** initiatives even more desirable. As a result, a new and more ambitious redevelopment plan has been proposed that takes advantage of the new transit hub. This new plan intends to transform the mall into its own small community, with a mix of **diverse housing types**, retail, offices, a library, parks, pedestrian paths, and bikeways. The plan **uses the existing expansive parking lots** as sites for much of this new development, proposing the use of new underground lots. To further promote the use of transit and active modes of transportation, dramatically **reduced parking requirements** are also proposed.

The new plan was presented to City Council at a July 2012 standing committee, and it was agreed that it move forward into the public consultation stage.

Funding Transit in new communities is a significant issue in ensuring that suburban areas are sufficiently served by transit. When suburban areas develop, there is often a delay in the provision of transit service. Several Canadian municipalities, including Edmonton and Ottawa, have implemented programs where some transit service to new developments is paid for by developers until the transit market can mature. This reduces the typically high level of automobile dependency that often exists within these newly developed areas, while obtaining residents' support for the availability of high quality transit service through future years.

Ottawa, Ontario

OC Transpo in Ottawa has developed a process that enables transit service to be offered in new subdivisions earlier than would be warranted. It is based on an **operating subsidy provided by the developer**. In essence, the subsidy is calculated to bring the revenue:cost ratio for the service up to the average value for the transit system and is discontinued when the development reaches maturity. This allows transit services to be provided as soon as people start to move into the development.



INITIATIVES AND BEST PRACTICES

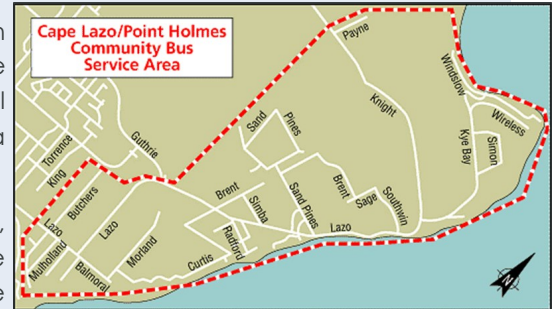
Improving Access to Transit Facilities is critical in suburban areas. One of the major barriers to transit use in these communities is inaccessibility to rapid transit or commuter rail. Park and ride facilities can consume large areas of valuable land and encourage car ownership. Alternatives are needed where low density developments are unable to support conventional transit service. Convenient, cost-effective options such as car sharing and demand-responsive transit service are being employed in many suburban Canadian communities.

Comox Valley, British Columbia

Community Bus services use smaller vehicles than conventional transit, driven on low-volume routes, offering **cost-effective service** to customers who live beyond the limits of conventional transit. These services are particularly useful for seniors or people with disabilities, but can be used by all members of a community.

Community Bus service is offered in many communities across Canada, including two low density residential neighbourhoods in Comox Valley. The neighbourhoods of Cape Lazo/Point Holmes and Huband Road/Seal Bay have access to community buses that run three times each weekday to and from points of interest. All residents of these areas can book trips by telephone 24 hours in advance of the three hour-long designated daily trip windows. The service picks up and drops off customers at their door; customers with disabilities additionally have the option to arrange door-to-door pick up and drop off at their destinations, while other passengers can make free transfers to conventional Comox Valley Transit service.

Other Canadian Community Bus service, such as Milton, Ontario's service, have more regular schedules in place with designated bus stops within the service area.



Cape Lazo/Point Holmes and Huband Road/Seal Bay Community Bus service areas.

Calgary, Alberta

Calgary's **Community Shuttle Bus** program began in 1984 as a pilot project to help serve communities with insufficient ridership levels to support the regular bus service. Community Shuttle operators work part time and earn wages of roughly 60% of regular bus operators. This part time work appeals to many prospective employees including students and seniors as well as people seeking an entry level position before becoming a regular bus operator. Community Shuttle Buses are no more than 30 feet in length and seat no more than 24 people.

Since its inception, the service has expanded and Community Shuttles now comprise 10% of Calgary Transit's fleet. The service is now additionally used to **replace regular routes during off peak times** when ridership is low, as well as to **provide service in new communities** before regular services can be supported. As ridership levels increase, Community Shuttle services are replaced with regular service.



Providing Fast and Efficient Service in suburban communities, as a proactive approach, can encourage community support for transit as well as land use patterns that are more conducive to transit in the future. Drastic forward-looking measures may be required in order to effectively address the challenges of suburban transit service.

Greater Toronto Area, Ontario

The communities of York Region and Brampton have recently taken drastic measures to reduce automobile dependency through providing **fast, efficient transit service** through dedicated **busways** and other **transit priority measures**. York Region's Viva and Brampton's Züm rapid bus services address the issue of typically long distances between trip origins and destinations.

While concerns for low ridership levels inhibit transit service improvements in many suburban, automobile dependent communities, York Region and Brampton's proactive measures prioritize providing transportation **modal choice** and encourage overall **support for transit** and **transit oriented development** patterns.

SUBURBAN TRANSIT CHECKLIST

- Are automobile-oriented developments being retrofit to encourage pedestrian activity and transit use, with compact development and transit-supportive land uses such as a range of housing types, retail, community facilities and offices?

- Has a funding strategy been developed that will allow the community to provide frequent, efficient, and reliable transit service that is accessible for all members of the community?

- Do all members of the community have convenient and affordable access to rapid transit, commuter rail, or other forms of frequent transit service by modes of transportation other than personal vehicles?

This guide is one in a series designed to assist CUTA members with implementation of *Transit Vision 2040* strategic directions for which they are in a leadership role. It incorporates performance indicators used in annual reporting at a national level to track progress towards 2040 targets. While CUTA is taking the lead for ten of these 27 strategic directions, the remaining 17 fall within the responsibility of other stakeholders, and these guides have been developed in order to provide support to CUTA members and encourage progress toward the *Vision*. The guides summarize the goals and objectives of each strategic direction, propose performance indicators and targets, illustrate best practices from transit systems across the country and provide a checklist to assist members in reviewing their progress.