



October
2020

Director's Report

Dear UBC/UEL/UNA Neighbours,

I trust that your fall is off to a good start. The return to school for our children has brought some sense of normalcy to our September, but the wildfires coupled with the pandemic and the ongoing drug overdose crisis have also had me wondering what else 2020 will throw at us.



5000+ riders crossing the Lion's Gate bridge during the September, 2019 Whistler Gran Fondo
(image: Whistler RBC Gran Fondo)

On the topic of wildfires, I coincidentally had the chance to travel from Vancouver up to Whistler on the first Saturday of September in both 2019 and 2020. The experiences could hardly have been more different. Last year's experience was one I won't soon forget. I rode my bike as part of the Whistler Gran Fondo bike race. During this event, the Sea to Sky highway is closed to cars, and about 4,000 bikers get a great work out, while enjoying car-free, stunning views of the route from Vancouver up to Whistler. For me, that day brought an intense feeling of being fully alive and invigorated. I distinctly remember how crisp and clear the mountains looked, and how lucky I felt to live in this beautiful area.

This year's journey up the same highway was a stark and sobering contrast. I snapped the picture to the right from the Lion's Gate bridge, looking north at the North Shore mountains, which were completely obscured by the smoke. As we drove (our carbon-burning car) up to Whistler, I noticed that my kids were awfully quiet in the back seat. When I asked if they were OK, my son responded in a very somber voice, "I hate what humans are doing to our planet."



Crossing the Lion's Gate Bridge during the wildfire smoke of September, 2020

It scares me to think about extreme weather events such as these fires becoming more and more common as the impacts of climate change not only continue but accelerate in frequency and duration. I lay awake that night feeling a heavy burden of responsibility. The burden of a mother wondering what my children's world will look like when they are my age, the burden of someone who now has a seat – a small seat, but a seat none the less – in local government, and the burden of a citizen in a society where we are consuming more than 1.6 times the resources than our earth can regenerate. In each of these roles, I feel the inertia of the status quo: citizens and corporations won't necessarily change their behaviours until government policies are far stricter, but governments struggle to make major changes unless citizens are crying out louder than



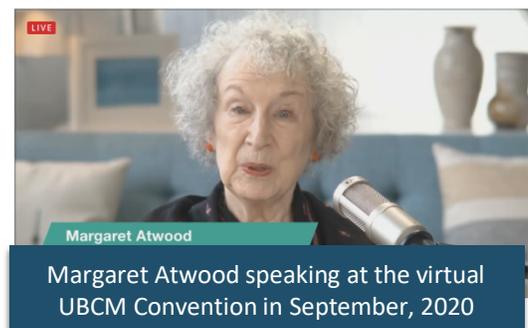
the individuals and industries that benefit most from the status quo. If we want our governments to act – whether on climate action, homelessness, housing affordability, the overdose crisis, or any other issue that you care about, we need to let our elected representatives know. You can make your thoughts known in a number of ways, including and not limited to: writing letters to leaders at all levels of government from local to national, applying as a delegation to decision making bodies, questioning candidates in the election campaign about what they would do about specific issues, or starting petitions to let leaders and neighbours know what issues are important.

Until I started serving as your elected official at Metro Vancouver and TransLink, I didn't really think letters or delegations would do anything. While they may not solve our worlds complex issues, I do know that they get heard. It is the old adage "the squeaky wheel gets the grease." If we as citizens don't stand up for the things we care deeply about, politicians have a harder time pushing through policies that align with these issues. I am not suggesting that government can't just go ahead and make these changes, but each decision results in "winners" and "losers," and if those who will be negatively impacted by policies are lobbying and speaking up louder than those who are in favour of a policy, it certainly is harder to get buy in.

So, this is your call to action. If this year has you feeling down – whether because of the crises of climate, economy, health, housing, or any other issue you feel passionate about, make a plan to get more involved. If your plan involves local government, please reach out and I can try to help you navigate the system.

I'd like to close with some words of wisdom from one of Canada's greatest literary heroes, Margaret Atwood. I had to privilege of hearing her speak at this year's (virtual) Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) convention in September.

At one point, she spoke about the importance of maintaining one's sense of hope despite all the craziness going on around us. I'll end with her advice to us on the topic of hope:



"I always have hope because what is the point in not having it. Without hope, you think 'I'm not going to exert myself' ... There is always hope, it is an innate human quality. Let's try not to snuff it out. Without hope you don't act, with hope you do." – Margaret Atwood, 2020

Wishing you a healthy and hopeful October,
Jen McCutcheon. (areaajen@gmail.com)



Updates from Dr. Daly, Chief Medical Officer for Vancouver Coastal Health at the recent Virtual Town Hall

Thank you to all residents and special guests who were able to join us for the third UBC/UEL/UNA Virtual Town Hall on September 17. We were very fortunate to receive a comprehensive update from Dr. Patricia Daly, the Chief Medical Officer for Vancouver Coastal Health, which is one of five health regions in the province, and the one that we are part of. If you would like to hear the audio recording, you can do so here. Dr. Daly's update starts at the 7:30 mark of the meeting.

Direct Link to Audio File: [September 17 2020 UNA/UBC/UEL Third Virtual Town Hall Meeting \(mp3 audio file\)](#)



Thank you, Dr. Daly, for providing such a comprehensive public health summary at our most recent Town Hall (image: VCH)



Please stay tuned for my next engagement session, which will focus on healthy and complete communities. The panel will include Andy Yan, Director of SFU's City Program, senior Regional Planning staff from Metro Vancouver, and VP Michael White from UBC's Campus and Community Planning. This session's panel of experts will help us understand best practices in planning and allow us to articulate what factors we would prioritize for the future of our communities. This includes addressing factors such as affordability, livability, greenspaces, and access to amenities. We will also hear from UBC about their vision and plans for development of the area, and then have time for discussion and questions for our panelists.

Crosswalk on East Mall at Eagles Drive



One of the questions raised at the September Virtual Town Hall was to UBC about the status of traffic calming measures on East Mall at Eagles Drive (across from the UBC Tennis Centre). There have been a number of concerns raised about the speed with which some cars drive down East Mall, and then number of children (and adults!) that try to cross East Mall at Eagles Drive. Michael White, UBC Vice President for Campus and Community Planning, followed up, stating that upgrades to this intersection are still planned for this

fall. Improvements to the existing crosswalk will involve traffic calming and curb bulges to improve the pedestrian experience and safety at East Mall and Eagles Drive.

Specifically, there will be speed humps approaching the crosswalk to help reduce travel speeds approaching the crosswalk, but the crosswalk itself will not be raised. Curb bulges will be placed at the crossing to reduce the crossing distance and exposure time for pedestrians crossing. The intersection will also have flashing lights with the crosswalk signs, similar to the lights on the 16th Avenue.



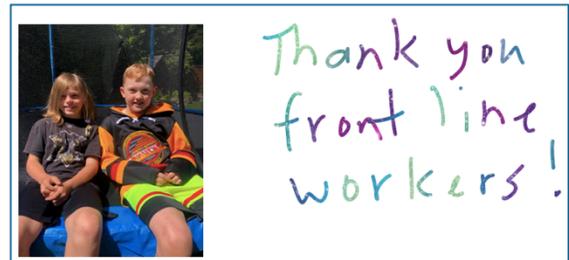
East Mall (at Eagles Dr.) crosswalk slated for safety upgrades this fall



Community Updates

This section aims highlight awesome community initiatives. Please send me your ideas about people who are going out of their way to make our neighbourhoods even better. I know there are lots of examples, and I'd love to hear from you about some of them (email me at areaajen@gmail.com)

This section really is my favourite one to write, and this month features a particularly lovely story about two of our youth with big hearts. Instead of me telling their story, I'll start with the boys' version. Holden Wouters and Mathias Vangsgaard wrote the letter below to health workers at UBC/UNA's Tapestry Seniors' Residence, as well as Amica in Vancouver. These residences were chosen because the boys had a grandmother and great aunt in these residences.



Dear Healthcare workers,

Our names are Mathias and Holden. We are 9 & 10 and going into fifth grade. We are lucky kids. We don't have to worry about money. We get three nutritious meals a day. We get to play lots of hockey. And we are healthy. But lots of other people are not so lucky.

Our parents asked us what we could do to give back to our community over the summer. We could have just donated to charity, but we started thinking a lot about seniors who are not allowed to have visitors or leave their retirement homes because of COVID, and about the health care workers who keep them safe.

With the generous support from friends, family, and businesses in our community (and our parents), we put together 44 care baskets for seniors and 175 food bags for support workers at two retirement homes, including Tapestry at Wesbrook.

Health Care Workers - thank you for all that you have done and continue to do to help our family and so many others!

From, Mathias and Holden



Isn't that beautiful? I reached out to staff at Tapestry to hear their response to the efforts made by the boys, and Natalie Wallace, Wellness Supervisor at Tapestry at Wesbrook stated that:

“The employees at Tapestry at Wesbrook Village were blown away by the generosity of Holden and Mathias. Their thoughtfulness behind the initiative was very kind, and the meal was delicious! They generously provided the ingredients to make a delicious meal, along with the recipe. This act of kindness was very appreciated by all the employees.”



Left: Holden and Mathias dropping off care packages at UBC's Tapestry Residence

Right: 175 food bags and 44 care packages ready for distribution to healthcare workers and seniors.

Images from Angelique Blunk



Mayors' Council on Regional Transportation Updates

Safe Restart Funding

On Sept. 18 the federal and provincial governments announced Safe Restart funding relief supporting TransLink, BC Transit and BC Ferries.

TransLink CEO, Kevin Desmond, said, “We very much welcome today’s transit funding announcement and thank our provincial and federal government partners for providing this vitally important funding relief. The \$644 million package will greatly assist TransLink by covering the substantial net revenue losses we are currently incurring as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The funding also allows us to continue our enhanced public health and safety measures on transit and ensures that we can maintain a state of good repair across our region’s transportation network – including transit, roads, bridges, and active transportation infrastructure to support pedestrians and cyclists.”

[More info here](#)



TransLink CEO, Kevin Desmond speaking about the Safe Restart Funding



Fall Service Changes

On Sept. 7, TransLink reallocated service to the bus routes that need it the most. These changes are made four times a year to reflect changes in demand and deliver more service to help customers get around the region.

Changes made to bus routes serving the UBC area:

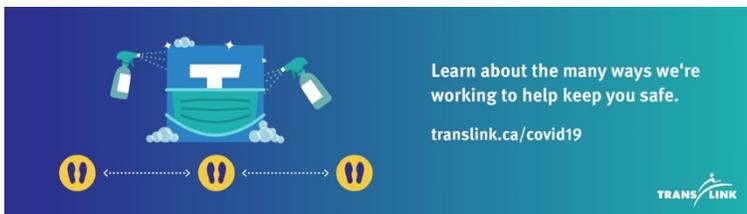
- 14 Hastings / UBC
- 25 Brentwood Station / UBC
- 44 UBC / Downtown
- 68 UBC Exchange / Wesbrook Village

[Find the most up-to-date information about service changes here](#)



TransLink Safety Measures

Earlier this year, TransLink launched its Safe Operating Action Plan which outlines measures to keep Metro Vancouver moving safely as BC's economy restarts. In August, TransLink made it mandatory to wear a mask when aboard transit vehicles. Customers will notice several other changes at stations and on vehicles designed to improve sanitation, promote physical distancing, and avoid overcrowding where possible.

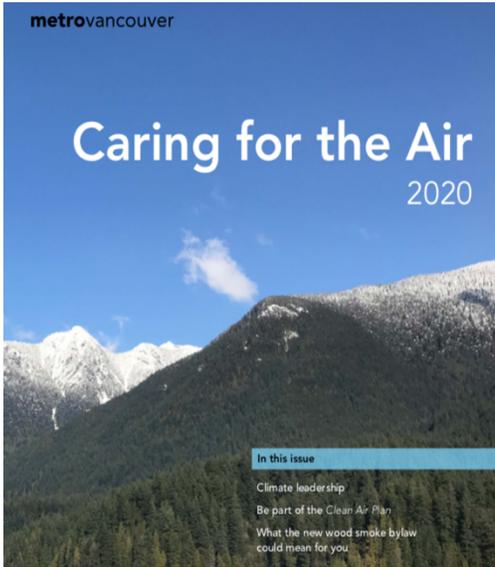


"I applaud the safety measures and layers of protection put in place by TransLink, especially as more people return to work and school," said British Columbia's Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry. "By wearing a mask on transit, you are looking out for each other and demonstrating to those around you that you care about their health too." [Learn more about how TransLink is keeping the system clean for customers](#)

Monitoring Air Quality in Metro Vancouver

In addition to providing core services such as clean drinking water, solid and liquid waste removal, and managing regional parks, Metro Vancouver plays an integral role in monitoring and regulating the quality of our air.

On September 8, 2020, Metro Vancouver issued an air quality advisory for fine particulate matter (PM2.5) due to smoke from wildfires burning in Oregon, Washington and California. The advisory remained in place for 11 consecutive days before being lifted on September 19. (FYI this was not the longest advisory on record – that was a 14-day stretch in 2018).



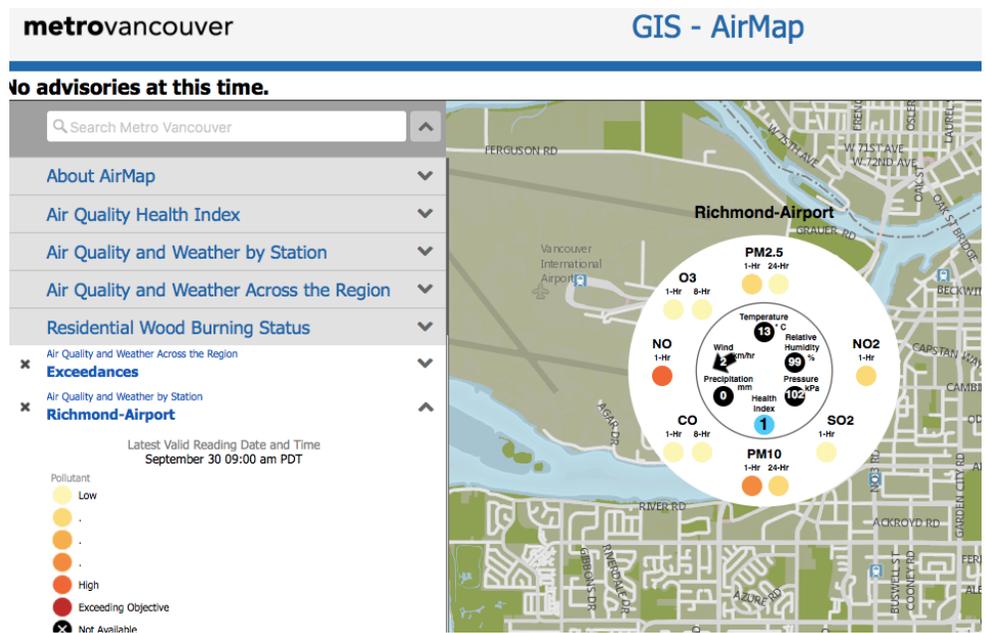
Metro Vancouver generally enjoys clean air, and monitoring data shows that overall levels of air contaminants continue to fall even as the region’s population continues to grow. Metro Vancouver’s 2020 Caring for the Air report outlines the state of the region’s air quality in the prior year and highlights the work being done to improve and protect air quality.

<http://www.metrovancover.org/services/air-quality/AirQualityPublications/CaringForTheAir2020.pdf>

The 2020 Caring for the Air report was prepared during the early phase of the COVID-19 pandemic response. Next year’s report will examine in detail how the public health response to COVID-19 affected air quality in Metro Vancouver and will contribute to discussions about resiliency and public health.

Climate change and air quality are strongly linked, since many major sources of greenhouse gases in the region are also major sources of health-harming air contaminants. Public and stakeholder consultation is currently ongoing on the [Clean Air Plan](#), which will be the next iteration of Metro Vancouver’s plan to manage air quality and greenhouse gases in the region. (While the “official” end date for public comment is September 30, feedback will be accepted and considered after that).

Metro Vancouver’s air monitoring network is one of the most comprehensive in the world. Our network includes 31 permanent stations and one mobile unit, which collect air data from Horseshoe Bay to Hope every hour of the day, seven days a week. During the smoky week here, I was checking the Metro Vancouver Air Quality map daily. You can find it here, and if you want more information, click on each of the pollutants to see hourly data. www.airmap.ca





BC Elections

What does the BC Provincial Election mean for us?

As you may be aware, BC is now in the process of conducting a provincial election

For more information about provincial elections and how to vote, contact Elections BC at <https://elections.bc.ca>, or 1-800-661-8683. On these websites, you can find out more about how to sign up to mail in your vote or where to vote in person, as well as what dates advance voting will be available. You can also find out more about all BC political parties, here: <https://www.elections.bc.ca/docs/fin/Registered-Political-Parties-Information.pdf>.



Finally, [this news article](#) currently reports that the following candidates will be running in our riding (Vancouver Point Grey). The article will be updated as any candidacies are added or changed.

Mark Bowen (BC Liberals)

David Eby (BC NDP, incumbent)

Devyani Singh (BC Greens)

Having a democratic voice in deciding who will lead us is both a right and a responsibility. Please take the time to learn about BC's political parties and what they stand for, as well as about each of the three specific candidates running to represent us here in Vancouver Point Grey. For more contact information for all BC political parties, see here: <https://www.elections.bc.ca/docs/fin/Registered-Political-Parties-Information.pdf>.

Can I still contact our Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA)?

As a result of the election being called, the legislature has been dissolved. This means that from now until the Oct. 24th election has concluded, ministers are still responsible for their portfolios (such as health or education), but we no longer have Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs). Within our riding of Vancouver Point Grey, this means that our previous MLA David Eby's office cannot schedule conversations to hear about local issues, do policy advocacy, community outreach, or connect us to Ministry staff.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Minister Eby for his hard work to support residents of UBC and the UEL. I have brought a number of issues from residents to the attention of Minister Eby and his constituency office and have been impressed at how he and his team have addressed each concern. After listening to the issue at hand, he and his team have helped to brainstorm potential solutions, advocate for our communities in Victoria, or put me in touch with relevant ministers or staff to help address a concern.

The Vancouver Pt. Grey community constituency office will be available by phone, email and kiosk appointments in person for assistance with concerns such as MSP, BC Housing, and community referrals, and can be reached at 604-660-1297 or david.eby.mla@leg.bc.ca, where you will be connected with a Constituency Assistant. If you are looking for urgent assistance you can also connect directly to Service BC or BC211 (contact information below).



Links to provincial services:

To be connected toll-free to any BC Government Ministry or agency, please call Services BC at 604-660-2421.

For more information about COVID-19 programs and resources see: <http://www.gov.bc.ca/covid19>

To receive information about community supports or advocacy organizations, please call BC211 by dialing 211.

For more information about provincial elections and how to vote, contact Elections BC at www.elections.bc.ca or 1-800-661-8683

Links & Connections

[Jen McCutcheon's Website](http://www.areaajen.ca)

www.areaajen.ca

[Jen McCutcheon's Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/AreaAJen)

www.facebook.com/AreaAJen

[Metro Vancouver](http://www.metrovancouver.org)

www.metrovancouver.org

[Mayors' Council on Regional Transportation](http://www.translink.ca)

www.translink.ca

[Union of BC Municipalities](http://www.ubcm.ca)

www.ubcm.ca

[University Neighbourhoods Association](http://www.myuna.ca)

www.myuna.ca

[University Endowment Lands Administration](http://www.universityendowmentlands.gov.bc.ca)

www.universityendowmentlands.gov.bc.ca

[UEL Community Advisory Council](http://www.uelcommunity.com)

www.uelcommunity.com