



AUGUST
2020

Director's Report

Dear UBC/UEL/UNA Neighbours,

I trust that you and your families are staying healthy this summer. I have definitely been missing social connections in both my personal and professional life, and am actively trying to work on increasing these while abiding by Dr. Henry's guidelines. I heard a suggestion recently that I thought was helpful: focus on the things we *can* do during this time, rather than the things we *can't* do. Our family has enjoyed a number of camping, hiking, and biking trips in our beautiful province, as well as spending lots of time in the green spaces of UBC/UEL. If we are going to spend the summer in a pandemic, I really can't think of a better place to be during all this.



Family bike camping trip to BC's Gulf Islands

In my last newsletter (available [here](#)), I provided information on the plans for the new Iona Island Wastewater Treatment Plant. I am happy to report that at our July Metro Vancouver Board meeting, the Board of Directors voted unanimously to endorse a bold design concept. The design concept includes tertiary (the most stringent) treatment level, resource recovery opportunities, integration with Iona Beach Regional Park and surrounding communities, plus a range of ecological projects designed to improve water quality, restore fish habitat, protect bird habitat and enhance terrestrial ecosystems. In other regional news, Metro Vancouver achieved corporate carbon neutrality in 2019, which I have highlighted in this edition.

Upcoming Virtual Town Hall in September and Affordable Housing and Complete Communities Panel in early October. Stay tuned for exact dates!

Turning to more local news, I have two engagement sessions planned for the first part of fall. First, in September, I will be hosting another Virtual Town Hall, and am awaiting confirmation from special guests Dr. Patricia Daly (Vancouver Coastal Health's Chief Medical Officer), Minister David Eby (our MLA and BC's Attorney General), and UBC President and Vice-Chancellor Santa Ono. Then, in October, I will be hosting a panel on Complete

Communities. Panelists will be asked to comment on questions such as: What factors are most important in creating healthy, complete communities? How has COVID impacted how we think about complete communities and the importance of factors such as affordability, resilience, green spaces, and community connectedness? What strategies are best to ensure an adequate mix of affordability and housing types? As soon as the dates are finalized for these two sessions, I will let you know.



Finally, as we move into our sixth month of this pandemic, I feel that Dr. Henry's wise mantra is more important than ever. We are all experiencing the effects of COVID-19 differently. Whether you are feeling sick of the restrictions; anxiety about your health, career, kids, or parents; loneliness; or enjoying the slower pace, remember to reach out to your neighbours when you can, and to be kind, be calm and be safe. We owe it to ourselves and especially to our vulnerable family members and fellow citizens to remain 100% committed to maintaining our layers of protection. This means staying home at even the slightest sign of illness, keeping our physical distance, washing your hands regularly, and wearing a mask in situations where distance may be hard to keep (such as on transit and in stores).

I love hearing from you, so please reach out if you have questions, concerns, or just want to say hello.

All the best,

Jen McCutcheon. (areaajen@gmail.com)

Mayors' Council on Regional Transportation Updates



Mandatory masks coming to TransLink on August 24

Mandatory Masks Coming August 24: I am happy to report that as of August 24, TransLink will require customers to wear non-medical masks or face coverings while aboard transit vehicles. I have heard from many residents who want to go back to riding transit but are concerned about being in the sometimes-confined spaces of our buses and SkyTrains. Dr. Henry has suggested that we wear a non-surgical mask when we are in confined spaces and/or may not be able to maintain a 2-metre physical distance. This mandate from TransLink, and supported by Dr. Henry, will hopefully help to keep riders and staff safe during their time on transit.

Although Transit Police will be able to enforce rules requiring face coverings on transit, the initial focus of this policy will be on awareness and education. Customers who are unable to wear masks due to an underlying medical condition or disability will be exempt from this policy. TransLink will make available a card that will allow customers to self-identify that they are unable to wear a mask.

The mandatory mask policy is part of TransLink's Safe Operating Action Plan. This comprehensive plan increases cleaning and sanitizing of transit vehicles and hubs, increases service levels, and creates space between customers where possible. You can review TransLink's Safe Operation Action Plan [here](https://new.translink.ca/rider-guide/coronavirus-precautions). <https://new.translink.ca/rider-guide/coronavirus-precautions>.



- **Ridership and Funding:** I have good news to report on both the ridership and funding fronts. TransLink ridership is up to 40% of pre-COVID levels, and a recent report showed that 2019 was a record year of ridership growth for our region, with 3.6% more boardings than 2018 (452.9 million boardings!). The 43 bus route - which became the new R4 RapidBus - that serves UBC along 41st Ave, saw an amazing 50% growth between 2018 and 2020. These statistics are great news as our region works towards carbon neutrality and decreasing road congestion.

As I reported earlier this year, dramatic cuts in TransLink funding due to pandemic related drops in ridership and gas taxes had left our regional transportation system in a dire financial situation. I am grateful and pleased to report that recent commitments from the federal and provincial governments will remove pressure on TransLink to reduce services. There are still difficult decisions ahead, but for the time being, services will be able to match demand over the short and medium term. You can read more about the 2019 Transit Service Performance Review [here](https://www.translink.ca/tspr). <https://www.translink.ca/tspr>

For more information and safety tips, visit [translink.ca/COVID19](https://www.translink.ca/COVID19).

Historic Co-operation Agreement between Tsleil-Waututh Nation and Metro Vancouver

At our July Metro Vancouver Board meeting, we were honoured to be joined by Tsleil-Waututh Chief Leah George-Wilson, Elder Carleen Thomas, and Councillor Deanna George to hear more about the importance of a recent agreement that was signed between the Tsleil-Waututh Nation and Metro Vancouver.

In February, 2020, the Tsleil-Waututh Nation and Metro Vancouver celebrated the signing of an historic co-operation agreement for Belcarra Regional Park, recognizing both Tsleil-Waututh's ancestral ties to the land and the present use by its members as well as a Metro Vancouver regional park.

The *Cultural Planning and Co-Operation Agreement* – the first of its kind for Metro Vancouver – formalizes the ongoing collaboration between the two parties and seeks to identify common interests and to share ideas on how to work together to protect, preserve and enhance the regional park for the benefit of present and future generations.

Chief George-Wilson spoke at our Board meeting about the importance of this co-operative



Leaders from the Tsleil-Waututh Nation and MVRD celebrate the signing of a historic co-operation agreement to manage Belcarra Regional Park



model to provide environmental and cultural stewardship. As part of our journey to reconciliation, this model is a positive example of finding solutions that work for all parties involved, and helping all of us to better understand and appreciate the long history and cultural richness of our region.

The agreement follows years of collaboration between Tsleil-Waututh Nation and Metro Vancouver. Since 2016, Tsleil-Waututh and Metro Vancouver have worked together on various projects at Belcarra Regional Park, including recent plans for the Belcarra Picnic Area, which encompasses the location of an ancestral Tsleil-Waututh village known as *təmtəmixʷtən* (Tum-tumay-wa-ton). **Təmtəmixʷtən**, or “the biggest place for all the people,” is the largest of the ancestral Tsleil-Waututh villages, primarily occupied as a winter village. Tsleil-Waututh has occupied *təmtəmixʷtən* since time out of mind until colonization, and still has strong, ongoing ties to this place.

The agreement does not abrogate any treaty rights, existing or asserted Aboriginal rights, titles or interests of the Tsleil-Waututh people or applicable legislation, including Metro Vancouver’s rights and powers under such legislation.

Understanding Metro Vancouver Services and Your Property Tax Bill

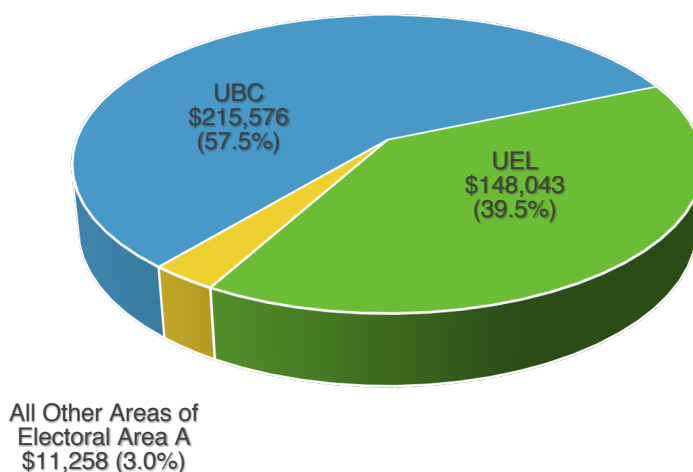
If you are a property owner in the UEL or UBC, one of the line items you will see on your tax bill is “A METRO VANCOUVER,” which shows property tax levied by Metro Vancouver for Electoral Area A (EAA) and regional services.

For 2020, the total amount payable by Electoral Area A property owners for both Electoral Area A and regional services is \$880,870. Of this amount, 42.6% (\$374,876) is for Electoral Area A services and 57.4% (\$505,994) is for regional services.

As shown in the pie chart, properties located on UBC lands contribute 57.5% (\$215,576) of the total Metro Vancouver Electoral Area A taxes collected, and properties within the UEL contribute a further 39.5% (\$148,043).

The other areas of EAA include Barnston Island, Passage and Bowyer Islands, water access homes up Indian Arm and the west side of Pitt Lake, as well as three communities located north of West Vancouver, and south of Lions Bay.

2020 Tax for EAA Services





The table below presents the estimated amounts of residential property owners paid in 2020 for Electoral Area A and regional services.

2020 Tax Estimates			
Assessed Value	Electoral Area A \$ Portion	MVRD (Regional) \$ Portion	"A METRO VANCOUVER" Total \$ Amount
\$100,000	\$3.80	\$5.13	\$8.93
\$500,000	\$19	\$26	\$45
\$1,000,000	\$38	\$51	\$89
\$2,000,000	\$76	\$103	\$179
\$5,000,000	\$190	\$257	\$447

Some of the Electoral Area A services provided to UEL and UBC residents and funded by the Metro Vancouver property tax include:

- Local emergency planning and response, which includes ongoing emergency coordination between Metro Vancouver, UEL, UBC, RCMP, and others, as well as support for community preparedness activities and emergency notification.
- Conducting an election every four years for the Electoral Area A Director.
- Administering the Community Works Fund, which was used in 2019 to help fund green infrastructure projects in the UEL and pedestrian and cycling improvements at the Wesbrook Mall and University Blvd intersection.
- Serving as the local government for liquor and retail cannabis licence applications to the Province, which includes ensuring local community concerns are addressed when the Province considers such applications.
- Communicating local and regional matters through the regular Director's Update.

Some of the regional services funded by the Metro Vancouver property tax include:

- **Regional Parks:** Metro Vancouver's regional parks system includes 22 regional parks, three park reserves, two ecological conservancy areas and five greenways. These protect important natural areas and ecosystems in the region and help residents connect with nature. <http://www.metrovanancouver.org/services/parks>
- **Air Quality & Climate Change:** Metro Vancouver develops and implements plans, policies, regulations and projects that improve air quality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. These plans and policies are supported by air quality monitoring and tracking of emissions in the Lower Fraser Valley airshed. <http://www.metrovanancouver.org/services/air-quality>



- **Regional Planning:** Metro Vancouver is the steward of the regional growth strategy (Metro 2040), which strives to contain and structure the growth coming to our region, protect important lands, and ensure the efficient provision of infrastructure (i.e. utilities, transit and community amenities).
<http://www.metrovanancouver.org/services/regional-planning>
- Other regional services include regional emergency management, E911 emergency telephone service, a global navigation satellite system service, as well as a contribution towards the purchase of affordable housing sites.

Metro Vancouver provides drinking water, liquid waste services and solid waste services, to most municipalities and to the UBC/UEL portion of the Electoral Area. These services are not funded by the Metro Vancouver property tax but instead have different cost recovery mechanisms. For additional information on Metro Vancouver's budget and five year financial plan: <http://www.metrovanancouver.org/services/financial-services/programs-budget/>

Metro Vancouver Achieves Corporate Carbon Neutrality in 2019

I am excited to let you know that our regional district, Metro Vancouver, achieved carbon neutrality for 2019 and potentially through 2022. This milestone is in large part a result of Metro Vancouver's leadership and commitment to climate action, and this achievement puts the region in a strong position to advance important climate actions and achieve its ambitious climate change and environmental goals.

In 2019, Metro Vancouver balanced its entire carbon footprint of 16,645 tonnes of GHG emissions through a number of projects which have community benefits beyond GHG reductions:

- **Ecological restoration of Burns Bog**, which sequesters large amounts of carbon and improves the ecology of North America's largest urban bog.
- **Parkland acquisitions** throughout the region which sequester carbon, protect ecosystems and help people connect with nature.
- **Trenchless tunnel construction methods** for major liquid waste infrastructure projects, which cut down on heavy trucking and cause fewer community disruptions.
- Installation of **energy-efficient boilers and appliances** in Metro Vancouver Housing sites, which reduce emissions, reduce operating expenses and help deliver more affordable housing.
- Increasing the share of **electric and hybrid vehicles** in Metro Vancouver's vehicle fleet, which reduces emissions and contributes to cleaner air.



Metro Vancouver Climate Action Committee Chair Adriane Carr announcing the region's 2019 climate neutrality at a small celebration in Burns Bog.



You can read more about our region's climate action plan, *Climate 2050*, [here](#). Through this plan, Metro Vancouver aims to ensure regional infrastructure, ecosystems, and communities are resilient to the impacts of climate change and has set a commitment to becoming a carbon-neutral region by 2050: www.metrovancouver.org/climate2050

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)

I've always enjoyed the concept of community gardens, and during the pandemic, they are absolute gems! For those of us who live in condos or apartments, these little oases let us immerse ourselves in nature, to connect and share with neighbours (while maintaining our physical distance, of course!), and to grow some of our own food.

It seems I am not the only one who finds solace in our local gardens. As Acadia Park gardener, Oliver Lane, puts it: "Gardening has been a big part of finding some calmness in our daily working and schooling from home COVID-19 routine. We garden at our community plot and also in our front and back yards. It makes me happy and I can really think about other stuff other than work and all the bad news that reaches us every day through media, friends and family. And it's a great way to reconnect with Nature, which is so important right now".

Further, in conversation with Emily Lomax, UNA's Sustainability Coordinator and the engine behind the UNA gardens, she stated that, "because of the nature of gardening – it is outside, people are naturally physically distant, and it is accessible at all times during the day, so it's been the perfect opportunity for people to be outside, to be physically active, and to have a connection with the community, while staying close to home."

When asked about the pandemic specifically, she said: "Especially in the first couple of months, the gardens were a place of solace in the community. As everything was closing down and turning inward, nature and gardens were doing the exact opposite – blossoming and opening up. We've been fortunate enough to be able to keep the community gardens open throughout the pandemic, providing all community members a place to visit to take a quiet moment amidst everything else that was going on."



Food and flowers in one of many beautiful community gardens around our neighbourhoods



There are a number of community gardens across UNA, UBC and the UEL that are already operational or under development. While many of the gardens have plots allocated to a specific household, the Children's Garden, which is located just south of the Old Barn Community Centre offers the opportunity for community members (not just children, and not just members of the UNA) to try their hand at gardening. If you are interested in finding out more about this inclusive opportunity, email communitygardens@myuna.ca.

The UNA has 189 allocated garden plots, and four communal plots (not including the Old Barn Children's Garden, a communal garden). Each garden plot is assigned to one family or household. Perhaps not surprisingly, this year has seen an increase in the requests for a garden plot, with 80 households having already applied this year, compared with 50 applications in the whole year in 2018 and 2019.

There are currently over 180 families on the waitlist for UNA community gardens. Wait times depend on the specific garden the family is hoping to get into. The UNA will have two new plot-allocated gardens coming in early 2021, located along the South Campus Greenway – a part of the neighbourhood is still being developed.

"When you speak to our gardeners, you find that while food growing is a large reason for why they garden, there is often greater meaning and purpose found in the act of gardening itself, and the connection that is found with nature, and with community."

- Emily Lomax, UNA Sustainability Coordinator

For more information about the UNA Community Gardens, email communitygardens@myuna.ca. You need to be a UNA member to have a plot, but all community members are welcome to garden at the Old Barn Children's Garden – you don't have to be a child or a UNA member.

The UEL community is in the formative stages of establishing a community garden the Bridle Path grassy area along Western

Parkway in the multifamily area. A volunteer planning group has been meeting weekly and is working with landscape designers as they move towards a final design. The group will communicate more with the community once the plans begin to firm up.

In addition, Acadia Park offers garden plots for its residents, and as you walk through UBC's academic campus, you'll notice a number of mini food-growing gardens scattered throughout the campus. How many can you find?

In any community garden, please remember to only pick what you have planted.

Happy growing everyone!



In other local news, UNA and UBC are launching a contest to help reducing bike theft on campus. Residents that register their bikes on [529 Garage](#) can win free tune-ups and a bike! 529 is an efficient way of assisting the authorities to identify and recover stolen bikes, and many different cities and intuitions adopted it all over North America. The registration process is fast, free and straightforward. Bring your bike to one of our registration events, and volunteers will register it for you in less than 5 minutes. You can also use this [link](#) to register, and you can pick-up a shield at our registration events or at the front desk or Wesbrook Community Centre. All of the registration events listed below are being set up under strict safe physical distancing guidelines. Any questions can be sent to vicente.regis@myuna.ca.



Register your bike with 529 Garage to help assist officials in getting it back if it is stolen. (Image from 529 Garage)

You can register your bike on/at the following dates, times and locations:

- Tue, 08/18/2020 - from 9 to 11 am – In front of Old Barn Community Centre
- Thu, 08/20/2020 - from 9 to 11 am – Westbook Village (Shrum Lane and Weber Lane)
- Fri, 08/21/2020 - From 2 to 4 pm - Acadia Park Commonsblock
- Tue, 08/25/2020 - from 9 to 11 am – In front of Old Barn Community Centre
- Thu, 08/27/2020 - from 9 to 11 am – Westbook Village (Shrum Lane and Weber Lane)
- Fri, 08/28/2020 - From 2 to 4 pm - Acadia Park Commonsblock

Links & Connections

[Jen McCutcheon's Website](#)

www.areaajen.ca

[Jen McCutcheon's Facebook](#)

www.facebook.com/AreaAJen

[Metro Vancouver](#)

www.metrovancouver.org

[Mayors' Council on Regional Transportation](#)

www.translink.ca

[Union of BC Municipalities](#)

www.ubcm.ca

[University Neighbourhoods Association](#)

www.myuna.ca

[University Endowment Lands Administration](#)

www.universityendowmentlands.gov.bc.ca

[UEL Community Advisory Council](#)

www.uelcommunity.com