



Director's Report

Dear UEL/UNA/UBC neighbours,

Well, I've officially been your elected representative to Metro Vancouver for a year now. Of course, twelve short months ago, I couldn't have imagined how different our world would look today.

Before reflecting back on this past year, I wanted to offer my thoughts on racism and our role in addressing racism. While we may not be subject to as many of the systemic racial injustices as our neighbours to the south (due to social securities such as universal health care and provincial funding of schools), racism absolutely exists here in Canada. My reflections and a challenge to each of you on how we can address this are given in the box to the right.

It has been a great pleasure to serve as your Electoral Area A Director over this past year. The learning curve has been steep (in a good way!), and the deeper I dive into the issues at hand, the more I enjoy it. I feel privileged to have a voice at the decision-making table on issues that are important to our corner of Metro Vancouver, and to the future of the region as a whole. Some of the issues that I have found most engaging include learning from and contributing to the region's Climate Action Committee, the multi-sectoral work being done to create a more affordable, livable, transit-connected and sustainable region, and a push for better sewerage treatment (better = increased energy and water return, and environmental and habitat protection). You can read more about Iona, our wastewater treatment plant later in this report – you'd be surprised at how interesting wastewater treatment can be!

On Racism Here in Canada and Beyond

Diversity is one of our greatest strengths as a community and a country. Violence, hatred and discrimination on the basis of racial identity is unacceptable and has no place in our society (*from the Government of BC Anti-racism website*). I would imagine that most of you agree with this statement, but I challenge each of us to take this a step further.

In some ways, BC's amazing response to COVID19 can be an example of how we address racism. With COVID19, we first needed to accept that the presence of the virus in our communities, even if we couldn't see it. Then, even though many of us didn't think that we were infected with COVID19, we stood up and changed our actions to not only protect ourselves, but also to protect those around us, especially the ones more vulnerable –not because of something they had done, but simply because of who they were: someone older or someone immunocompromised, for example.

Addressing discrimination requires a similar response by each of us. Even though we may not think that we are contributing to racism or other forms of discrimination, we each need to:

- Examine how our own actions, unconscious biases and inherent privileges may be negatively impacting others,
- Create a welcoming community for **all** our neighbours, and
- Speak up when we see or hear discriminatory actions, even if they seem subtle.

BC's Lieutenant Governor, Janet Austin, is asking each of us to pledge to uphold the Canadian values of diversity and inclusion and to oppose racism and hate in all its forms through her [#DifferentTogether campaign](#).

I encourage you all to take this pledge.



Reflecting back on the past year:

Advocating for more sustainable federal funding for regional transportation during a Mayors' Council meeting with Federal Minister Catherine McKenna (center). Photo with Mayors of West Vancouver, and the Cities of North Vancouver and Langley.

Image from February, 2020.

Perhaps the biggest lesson I've come to appreciate more deeply is the number of trade-offs that go into every. Even decisions that seem obvious usually have unintended consequences that need to be understood before the decision is made. *Which groups or individuals stand to gain or lose the most? What lens or perspective is being prioritized, and at what expense (e.g., equity, financial, sustainability or environmental, growth)?*

Behind every big decision made at Metro Vancouver and TransLink, there is a team of passionate experts reviewing data and best practices, getting public opinion, and weighing up the pros and cons. I am in support of the majority of decisions that we are making for the region, and even when decisions are made that I don't agree with, most are made with good intentions but different priorities... and maybe I just need to be more persuasive in my comments and arguments. 😊

Looking ahead, I hope to continue to focus on increasing connection within our community. This will be through formal methods, such as by scheduling community meetings on topics of interest, as well as working to link individuals and groups with shared interests. I welcome your ideas and suggestions. I am also continuing to deepen my understanding of regional planning and services so as to best represent the needs of Electoral Area A, and to help create a region that our children and grandchildren will want – and be able – to call home.

Finally, to all the graduates out there – both high school and university, congratulations on your achievement! I am sorry that the end of this phase of your education has been tainted by the COVID19 restrictions. I have no doubt you are stronger as a result of your resilience and adaptability.

Thank you for your support over this past year, and please reach out with suggestions, questions, or concerns.

All the best,

Jen McCutcheon. (areaajen@gmail.com)



Mayors' Council on Regional Transportation Updates

As BC continues to reopen, TransLink is starting to see signs of ridership recovery across the system. From a mid-April low, TransLink saw week-on-week increases to about 2.5 million boardings in the first week on June.

While this is a welcome sign, boardings are still only at about 33 per cent of last year's levels. TransLink is continuing to build customer confidence in transit through the *Safe Operating Action Plan*, which has increased cleaning and sanitization of transit stations and vehicles, boosted service levels, and recommended that all customers wear a mask, if they are able to.

In addition to the actions taken to date, starting June 15, 2020, TransLink will expand the availability of hand sanitizer dispensers on our system. Dispensers will be installed on the entire RapidBus fleet (including the R4 that services UBC), at key bus exchanges, both SeaBus terminals and at more SkyTrain and Canada Line stations.

Also, just a reminder that bus fare collection resumed on June 1st.



TransLink bus and SkyTrain services resuming using the Safe Operating Action Plan
Image: TransLink

For more information and safety tips, visit translink.ca/COVID19.

Community Town Hall Meetings



UEL/UNA/UBC Zoom Town Hall Meetings
Image: Marcin Pachcinski, Metro Vancouver

On April 28th and June 3rd, I hosted virtual Town Hall meetings for residents of UBC/UNA/UEL. Both events saw high attendance and good feedback. While our main speaker, Dr Patricia Daly (Chief Medical Officer for Vancouver Coastal Health Authority) was unable to join us at the last minute for the June 3rd meeting, we enjoyed a good conversation with Provincial Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) David Eby, UBC President Santa Ono, RCMP Staff Sergeant Chuck Lan, University Neighbourhoods Association (UNA) Board Chair Richard Watson, and UEL Community Advisory Council Chair Claire Huxtable. We also welcomed the new UNA Chief Administrative Officer, Sundance Topham.



If you were unable to join and would like to listen to a recording of the session, you can find it [here](#) (audio only). Participants had a few follow up questions, which are answered on page 7 of this newsletter. A more extensive list of Q&A's came out of the first meeting and can be found on my website (<http://www.areaajen.ca>).

The next UBC/UEL/UNA Town Hall will likely be in July. Stay tuned for more details!

The next virtual Town Hall will include a presentation and discussion on affordable housing in the region, as well as time to hear from/ask questions to local leaders. Please stay tuned for more information on this. If you do not get my updates directly from me, email me and I will add you to my distribution list (areaajen@gmail.com).

Pacific Spirit Regional Park Updates – Increased Coyote Activity

As mentioned in the June virtual Town Hall, coyote sightings in and around Pacific Spirit Regional Park have increased this spring. In general, the policy across Metro Vancouver region is for humans and coyotes to co-exist, as they have done for decades. Stanley Park Ecological Society provides the following suggestions for successful co-existence with our wily neighbours:



Coyote in Rhododendron Woods (UBC/UNA).

Image: Jen McCutcheon

You can report coyote sightings by calling 604-681-9453. Also, please report aggressive coyotes to the Ministry of Environment at 1-877-952-7277.

If you see a coyote, be big, brave and loud

- Stand tall with arms overhead
- Yell "Go away coyote"
- Stand your ground and never run

Never feed coyotes

- Seal garbage and compost securely
- Remove ripe garden veggies and fruit
- Store pet food and feed pets indoors
- Fed coyotes can become aggressive

Pet safety

- Keep cats indoors, especially at night
- Leash dogs and supervise closely
- Never let dogs interact with coyotes
- Pick up small dogs if coyotes approach

Pacific Spirit Regional Park challenge: How many different animals can you spot on the Metro Parks physical distancing signs? Email me your answer (areaajen@gmail.com).

Correct answers win a prize!



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)

Walking, biking or driving along University Blvd in the UEL, you can't help but notice the colour bursting from the central boulevard. Over the past two years, the UEL has been expanding their efforts to fill these beds with wildflowers. The area is aptly and affectionally known as "Butterfly Boulevard" and has the goals of increasing biodiversity and pollen availability, addressing climate adaptation, and creating a beautiful space. I'd love to see more natural, wildflower-filled spaces across UBC/UNA/UEL.



Wildflower gardens on University Boulevard in the UEL

Image: Jen McCutcheon



Hawthorne neighbours gathering to play instruments during the 7pm cheer on Main Mall

Image: Conor Provenzano/UTown

If you happen to be walking near Main Mall in the UNA's Hawthorne Neighbourhood around 7pm, you may just stumble upon a musical treat – the 7:00 pm cheer for frontline workers has evolved into a bit of a musical jam session! Neighbours bring out their instruments and find a physically distanced spot on Main Mall or join from their balconies. While some play, others listen and sing along as they can, and the kids cartwheel and dance in the background. For many, this evening ritual has become an important way to connect and check in on each other, while maintaining physical distance. Instruments vary each evening, but may include violins, saxophones, guitars, trombones, drums, ukuleles, pan flutes and bagpipes. Warren McKinnon, one of the "regulars", has even written a song about the pandemic, called "Isolation Blues".



Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade to Enhance Biodiversity

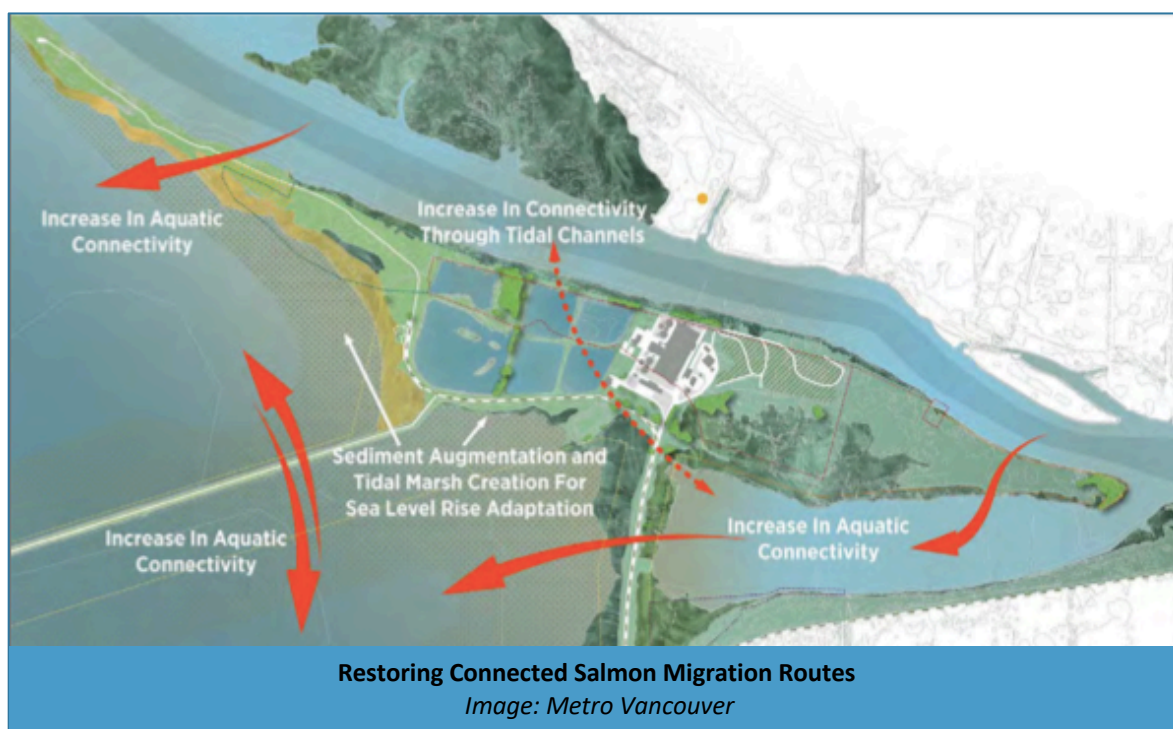
When you flush at UBC or in the UEL, wastewater makes its way through the sewer system to the Iona Island Wastewater Treatment Plant in Richmond. OK, I know what you are thinking... “I’d rather not think about what happens to our wastewater.” That’s what I initially thought, but having learned a little about the energy generation, salmon and wildlife habitat restoration and water quality enhancements planned for the new Iona Wastewater Treatment plant, I changed my tune. I thought you may also be interested in learning more, too.

Metro Vancouver is advancing one of Canada’s most dynamic and transformative urban sustainability projects – the Iona Island Wastewater Treatment Plant Project. This new plant allows for a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to improve the ecological health of the Fraser River Estuary and restore ecological diversity. Tertiary wastewater treatment is proposed to minimize water quality impacts on the estuary and the Salish Sea.

The plant has been designed to enhance wildlife habitat, support biodiversity and restore one of the world’s most important rearing habitat for juvenile salmon at the mouth of the Fraser River.

The new plant will:

- Remove barriers to allow juvenile salmon easier access to estuary
- Improve effluent quality resulting in a healthier Salish Sea for all aquatic life
- Restore critical salmon habitat which will in turn support southern resident killer whale populations
- Breach existing causeway and jetties to reconnect the river and the sea





The new plant will also seek to maximize resource recovery by:

- Producing biomethane for injection into the natural gas grid and offsite use
- Reclaiming tertiary-level treated water for irrigation and industrial uses
- Capturing energy for on-site heating and cooling needs with enough excess heat to supply a district energy system, heating up to 50,000 apartment units
- Testing whether wastewater biomass can be converted into a low-carbon biofuel - a pilot project for hydrothermal liquefaction is already underway



The new facility is surrounded by Iona Beach Regional Park, which provides crucial habitat for rare or at-risk plants and wildlife, and protects one of the few undeveloped areas of the estuary. The following ecological and park improvements are included in the design:

- Enhanced intertidal areas
- Improved connectivity between river and ocean for species and sediment movement
- Increased freshwater inputs into the estuary
- More trails, boardwalks, bike routes and viewing platforms

You can read more about this project [here](http://www.metrovanancouver.org/services/liquid-waste/projects-initiatives/iona-island-wwtp-project/Pages/default.aspx):
<http://www.metrovanancouver.org/services/liquid-waste/projects-initiatives/iona-island-wwtp-project/Pages/default.aspx>



Follow up from questions asked at the June 3 Town Hall

If you missed the virtual Town Hall on June 3, you can listen to an audio recording [here](#). The following are a few questions, responses and additional links that may be helpful for residents.

Question 1: Are there ways that residents can volunteer to support and be connected to other residents?

- Volunteer opportunities: <https://www.bc211.ca/> Safe Seniors, Strong Communities Program. Seniors are matched up with people who want to help them in their communities, BC wide.
- There is also a [Van Westsiders United](#) Facebook group that provides resources and boosts local business.

Question 2: I can't get back to work until my child's daycare reopens, but it is looking like we will not be able to get our daycare spot at UBC daycares until at least the end of summer, if not later. Is there anything that can be done about this?

- Based on current public health advice, you are able to return your children to their child care provider, if you choose to do so. If your child care provider does not have available space [please request a temporary emergency child care space](#). Tier 1-3 workers can all use this link now.
- More information on childcare guidelines can be found here:
 - <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/caring-for-young-children/child-care-response-covid-19/child-care-response-covid-19-provider>
 - Review the [Request Temporary Emergency Child Care for Essential Service Workers](#) for the list of prioritized roles
 - If a facility receiving Temporary Emergency Funding has available child care spaces **providers may, but are not required to**, offer those spaces to families in other fields of work who are unable to care for their children at home during this time
 - Eligible families will continue to receive the [Affordable Child Care Benefit](#), if your provider is open and charging you a fee
 - Families must follow the provided [health and safety guidelines](#)

Question 3: Potential for a provincial or federal database that tracks incidents and statistics of RCMP or police brutality or use of force data that specifically tracks gender, race, and location?

- In BC, there is room for improvement around data transparency. The links below provide best available statistics, which include some but not all of the data requested in the question.
- The coroner tracks sudden and unexpected deaths in our province. There is a category that tracks "first nations decent". This category is there because First nations asked for this.
- Deciding how someone belongs in a specific racial category can be sensitive. The BC Human Rights Commissioner is currently looking into this issue and will potentially be providing recommendations to the province about how we can respond to the call and provide the transparency to the public.
 - <https://opcc.bc.ca/reports/statistics/>
 - <https://iiobc.ca/publications>
 - <https://www.crcc-ccetp.gc.ca/en/annual-reports>



Question 4: Is Vancouver Public Library (VPL) Open?

From VPL's website: We're now offering a limited takeout service of library materials at 5 locations for those who really want to borrow physical books and movies. VPL Takeout is being offered on a rotating basis, one day a week at five VPL locations throughout the city: Central Library, Hastings, Kitsilano, Renfrew and South Hill branches.

<https://www.vpl.ca/takeout>

My Recent and Upcoming Meetings

Metro Vancouver Board Budget Workshop

Friday, June 5, 2020

Finance and Intergovernment Committee

Friday, June 12, 2020

Climate Action Committee

Friday, June 19, 2020

Metro Vancouver COVID-19 Response Task Force

Wednesday, June 3 and June 17, 2020

CAC Meeting

Monday, June 15, 2020

UNA Board Meeting

Tuesday, June 16, 2020

Fraser Valley Regional Library Board

Wednesday May 20, 2020

TransLink Mayors' Council

Thursday, June 25, 2020

Metro Vancouver Board Meeting

Friday, July 3, 2020

UBC/UEL Virtual Town Hall

Date TBD

Stay tuned!

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/en/About-Us/Governance-and-Board/Mayors-Council.aspx

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