



Creating a Mobility Advocacy Plan

Project process and takeaway lessons for other business districts

April 2018

The Strathcona Business Improvement Association plays an important role in the business development, neighbourhood planning, safety, security and street enhancement in Strathcona. The SBIA represents over 720 business and commercial property owners in the Strathcona neighbourhood in Vancouver.

With grant support from the Real Estate Foundation of BC, the SBIA undertook a unique project to develop a Mobility Advocacy Plan (MAP Strathcona) for our business district. Intended as a learning guide for other BIAs, this case study outlines our objectives, project process, results, and lessons learned.

MOTIVATION

We routinely heard from business members about:

- Parking concerns
- Bike rack requests
- Curbside needs for loading and goods movement

Furthermore, new developments, technology, policies, and area plans were coming up within and adjacent to Strathcona, bound to impact mobility in the neighbourhood. We saw an opportunity to create a comprehensive transportation strategy with business needs in mind.



PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- Establish a **strategic advocacy approach** to improve multi-modal transportation issues in our neighbourhood
- Develop a **creative engagement strategy** that engages at least 150 people, specifically targeting SBIA members
- **Educate SBIA members** on upcoming transportation and mobility changes in the area and increase awareness of impacts they can expect
- Determine the **top 3-5 existing transportation concerns and desired outcomes** for our business members and others in the community.
- Create an **implementable plan** with prioritized actions that build on engagement process outcomes
- Involve both members and minimum 10 **key transportation stakeholders** in the problem solving and action development
- Be seen as a **collaborative partner** by municipal and transportation authorities in the region

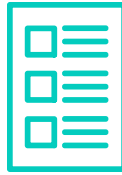
PROJECT PROCESS

PREPARATION

What we did



Narrowed down project scope, objectives, and budget. Created Request For Proposals for consultant services.



Issued RFP and selected consultant. Finalized the project deliverables.



Assembled project Advisory Committee of local transportation experts and stakeholders.

What we asked

Which transportation modes can the SBIA have the biggest impact on? Which modes are most important to our different industry sectors? What are the known concerns and desired outcomes related to these transportation modes?

Which RFP proposal demonstrates the best understanding of the project and our needs? Is the proponent's past experience aligned? Is the proposed project approach likely to be successful?

Would there be interest from your organization to have a representative sit on our project Advisory Committee? Here is why we think your input would be valuable and where our objectives may be aligned.

Who we engaged and how

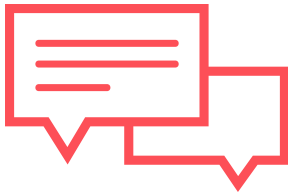
City of Vancouver - gained the City's perspective on the value of a BIA-led transportation consultation. SBIA staff ran workshops with internal SBIA Sustainability Committee to determine priorities and project scope.

Posted RFP to BC Bids website and shared among networks. SBIA Sustainability Committee completed evaluation of the 6 submitted proposals. Sub-committee conducted interviews with top two candidates and made final selection.

Sent e-mails to gauge interest. Held in-person meetings to review commitment, project schedule and objectives. Participants included City of Vancouver, HUB Cycling, Vancouver Economic Commission, and Modo. Also approached BC Trucking Association, Strathcona Residents Association, and TransLink.

CONTEXT DEEP DIVE

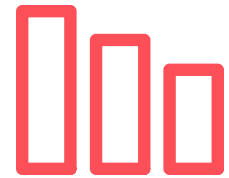
What we did



Key informant interviews to determine the pressing mobility issues in Strathcona from various stakeholder perspectives.



Developed a Project Backgrounder of upcoming mobility changes in the neighbourhood and expected impacts.



Member survey to assess and prioritize mobility challenges and explore opportunities to address them. Initial interviews and project backgrounder informed survey questions.

What we asked

What are the most pressing transportation and mobility issues in Strathcona from your perspective? What recommendations (program, policy, or action) do you have for addressing the issues you identified?

What's the current state of transportation in Strathcona? What new plans, projects, and policies are going to impact Strathcona businesses in the coming months and years?

Survey structured around key question: From your business's perspective, what are the most important mobility issues MAP Strathcona should focus on? (Drag and drop ranking question with 9 choices) Asked further questions on top 3 priorities.

Who we engaged and how

Created targeted list of stakeholders. Sent introductory e-mails and requested to set up an interview time. Mix of phone and in-person interviews. 20 participants, including City of Vancouver Transportation Planning, TransLink, HUB Cycling, VEC, Modo, Port Metro Vancouver, large area employers and more.

Background research and data collected by project consultants. Backgrounder document utilized lots of graphics and short text. It was made available on our website, circulated to SBIA membership via our e-newsletter, and print copies were made available at all subsequent events.

Targeted SBIA members via e-newsletter, postcard, direct e-mail outreach and door-to-door. Focused on top 30 members most likely to be engaged (based on past engagement) to leverage this group to reach other members. Kept close track of industry sector participation and targeted underrepresented sectors.

IN-PERSON ENGAGEMENT AND WORKSHOPS

What we did



Bike Along Workshops to assess cycling needs and opportunities in partnership with HUB Cycling.



Pop-up MAP Strathcona engagements at events, including 1. Strathcona Street Party, 2. Powell Street Festival, and 3. AGM networking session.



Future Strathcona Mobility and Transportation Forum: Half-day event to review preliminary action ideas and solutions and discuss implementation priorities.

What we asked

Which street is the best potential North-South bike route connection between Union Bikeway and the Alexander St Bikeway? What other cycling needs exist for the area?

1. Series of questions to rate walkability of East Hastings 2. How did you get to the festival today? Anything you noticed about getting here or moving around in the area that could be improved? 3. How would you solve the transportation issues facing the Strathcona area?

What are the priority solution ideas in three breakout table topics: Active Transportation and Transit, Parking and Goods Movement, and Planning and New Developments.

Who we engaged and how

Conducted a ride assessment with SBIA staff and HUB Cycling volunteers. Set Bike-Along Workshop date for mid-week lunch time with complimentary lunch provided. Email outreach to recruit SBIA members for workshop. Stopped to collect comments during ride and held post-ride debrief lunch with maps for writing comments.

First two pop-ups targeted event-goers via booth activities. Feedback was collected from a wide range of community members and general public. Social setting of AGM pop-up was an opportunity to talk in-depth with members not previously engaged and generated innovative action ideas.

Invited survey respondents, workshop participants, transportation stakeholders and sent SBIA e-newsletter. Selected a "breakfast" 7:30am -10:30am time frame. Facilitators and experts at each table with action idea sheets printed. Participants asked to discuss, add, and rank ideas. Moved through choice of 2 table topics.

CREATING THE PLAN

What we did



Compiled all data and engagement notes. Additional consultation with underrepresented groups.



Draft of Mobility Advocacy Plan created by consultants. Several review stages by project committees and staff.



Approval of MAP by SBIA Board. Launch Event and Information Session for SBIA members.

What we asked

Has the membership been adequately represented in the consultation? Based on all the engagement outcomes what are the top preliminary actions?

Are the actions in our draft plan implementable and measurable? Is there a clear road map in place for the SBIA and implementing partners?

Does the SBIA Board approve the MAP Strathcona Plan? For members at the launch event: Which quick-start actions are you happy to see in the Mobility Advocacy Plan?

Who we engaged and how

Conducted additional phone outreach with the underrepresented goods movement sector to learn more about specific goods movement challenges in the area. Staff and consultants vetted the top preliminary actions emerging against past engagement results. Also reached out to potential future implementing partners for their thoughts on specific actions.

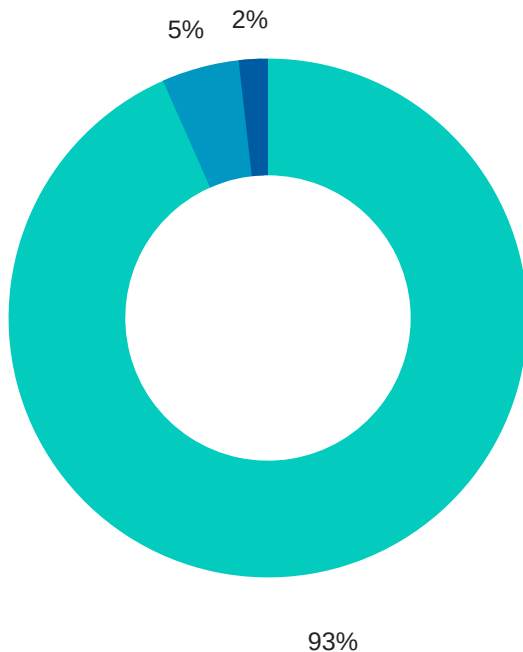
The draft was circulated and reviewed by SBIA staff and both the project Advisory Committee and the SBIA Sustainability Committee at both in-person meetings and by e-mail review and comments. Staff compiled and reported feedback for consultants and several rounds of drafts were produced.

Engaging the Board throughout helped make adoption of plan a smooth process. Recruited speakers of relevant mobility initiatives to speak at the Launch event: City of Vancouver Parking Department, Mobi Bike Share, TransLink's TravelSmart Program. Event postcard mailed to all members and outreach via e-newsletter and e-mail.

PROJECT COSTS

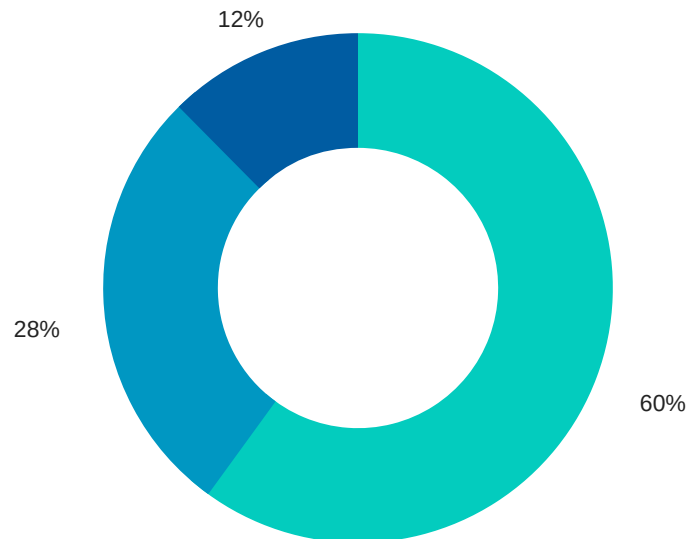
Expenses

Consultant fees	\$46,400
Event costs	\$2,400
Printing costs	\$900



Time Spent

Consultant Hours	435
SBIA Staff Hours	200
Partner In-Kind Hours	90



The total project cost was \$89,000. Cash expenditures made up over half, with the majority going to consultant services and the remainder to event logistics costs and printing costs. The SBIA received a grant of \$20,000 from the Real Estate Foundation of BC for the project, which contributed towards the consultant fees. The rest of the budget was calculated as in-kind expenses, including 200 SBIA staff hours spent on the project, and an estimated 90 hours of in-kind time provided by contributing project partners.

Maximizing Consultant Services

The SBIA worked highly collaboratively with the selected proponent to gain maximum benefit from their services. Our role included joint project management, assistance in research and interviews, support for planning and execution of engagement events, the lead on member communications and outreach, planning and running project committee meetings, and compiling and reviewing feedback. The consultant services included in-house graphic design for all communications and document materials, resulting in time and cost savings.

PROJECT RESULTS

20

key informant interviews - decision makers, mode experts, major employers, SBIA members

16

participants in 2 bike ride assessment workshops – in partnership with HUB Cycling

55

unique SBIA businesses engaged in the project

19

key transportation stakeholders involved via Advisory Group, interviews, and Forum Event

16

actions determined, including 7 quick-starts, 8 medium-term, and 1 spot improvements action

73

MAP Strathcona Survey responses, including employees and non-member businesses

36

participants at the Future Strathcona Mobility and Transportation Forum

260+

people participated in some form of engagement

6

project related meetings between Project Advisory Committee and SBIA Sustainability Committee

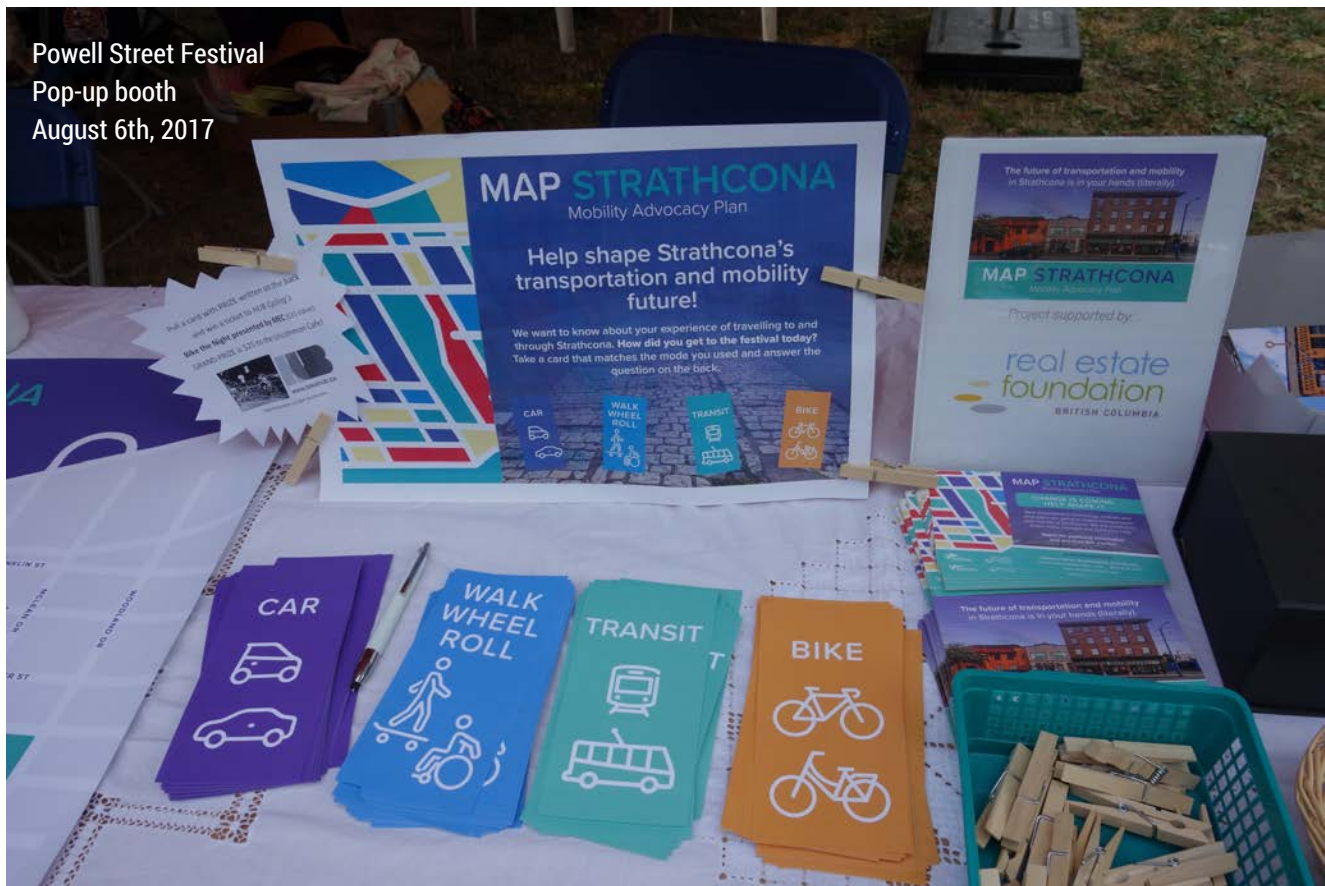
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people attended the Mobility Advocacy Plan Launch Event and Information Session



Future Strathcona Forum
October 25th, 2017

Powell Street Festival
Pop-up booth
August 6th, 2017



Over the 8 month project period the SBIA engaged with over 260 people, including 70 SBIA members from 55 unique businesses. Our members had a lot to say when it came to getting to, moving through, and parking and staying in our area. It was a powerful topic for getting members together to work on common goals.

Engagement results confirmed the area has three dominant (and interconnected) transportation and mobility issues:

- Parking – limited long-term parking options for employees, but also short-term for customers
- Active transportation (cycling and walking) – connections, safety, infrastructure and amenities
- Goods movement – deliveries, shipping, traffic congestion

The engagement process also helped highlight solution and opportunity areas that respondents felt presented the best opportunities for change.

The final Mobility Advocacy Plan document achieves the objective of an implementable plan with prioritized actions that build on engagement process outcomes. The MAP identifies 16 phased actions for the SBIA to pursue over the strategy's seven-year planning horizon. The MAP is a community-based vision and action plan that the SBIA and implementing partners will pursue to achieve shared mobility objectives for the Strathcona area.

CREATING A CLEAR ROAD MAP

Example MAP Quick-Start Action Page

Part of achieving an implementable plan was developing a clear road map for current and future SBIA staff for the different actions. Succinct action pages are a strength of the final plan.



District parking pilot

OVERVIEW:

Work with City and development partners to pilot a new district parking approach to structured parking that would “bundle” a range of more flexible and adaptive vehicle and bicycle parking options in a single facility (e.g., one-way and two-way carshare, tenant parking, public parking, bicycle storage, etc.). The concept could potentially reduce building parking requirements (and development costs).

OBJECTIVES SUPPORTED:

- Improve employee transportation options
- Improve active transportation facilities and connections

Action linked to plan objectives

LEVEL OF EFFORT:



Expected level of SBIA effort required to undertake action

IMPACT POTENTIAL:

Medium - Low

Potential positive impact to High/Medium/Low number of SBIA members

This action would have cumulative impacts over time should the district parking approach prove attractive and effective for developers and the City, but any new development would likely only have positive impacts for SBIA members located close by to the development.

POLICY CONNECTIONS:

This action is supported by several key policy documents, including:

- *Downtown Eastside Neighbourhood Plan* – 11.2.8
- *Greenest City Action Plan* – Key Strategies to 2020



Related policies that the action supports

TIMING AND FIRST STEPS:

How to get started and any relevant timing considerations

This action could be initiated relatively quickly by SBIA. A preliminary meeting with City of Vancouver staff (Area Planner, Parking) and potential project partners (e.g., Modo, Evo, Car2Go) and advisors (e.g., Urban Development Institute) to work through the concept and identify potential development partners would be the first task. There was considerable interest in the concept at the Future Strathcona Forum with the City of Vancouver, implanting partners and representatives from the development community.

SBIA ROLE:

Advocate



Expected SBIA involvement, e.g. advocate role or manager role

SBIA's role is anticipated to be limited to convening initial meetings and, potentially, identifying possible development partners. Later exploration and negotiation of the option would be between the City of Vancouver, project proponent/developer, and parking facility partners.

PARTNERS:

The potential implementing partners for this action

City of Vancouver (Downtown Eastside Area Planner, Parking), parking facility partners (e.g., Modo, Evo), potential development partners, EasyPark

MEASURING PROGRESS:

The following indicators could be monitored to track implementation progress.

- Number developers seeking information, or interested in piloting district parking approach.
- Number of “bundled” district parking structures developed.



Suggested metrics or indicators to track progress on action

TAKEAWAY LESSONS

Advocacy Role most likely to be successful if we:

- Align actions with existing plans (e.g. Transportation 2040)
- Demonstrate community/member support
- Build a network of relationships with implementing partners

Strengthened relationships with local transportation stakeholders can open doors for tangible mobility improvements

Voiced that we are taking a stake in transportation issues in our neighbourhood and invited experts to the process

Included on planning conversations for relevant projects at much earlier stages

Initiated conversations between the City and businesses affected by new bike route designs along Alexander St near Hawks Ave

City altered designs to accommodate important loading bay for goods movement needs at Powell St and Hawks Ave

We can play a valuable connector role between businesses and other institutions and existing resources

Proactively asked members about desired future Mobi Stations during engagement

Held walk-through with Public Bike Share and made connections with Mobi Bike Share staff at our Forum Event

Able to provide MAP engagement results and feedback on the topic directly to the decision-makers

Continuing to make connections between Mobi/Public Bike Share and property owners interested in hosting stations

Positioning ourselves as a test-bed and demonstrating a willingness for pilots is a method for action

Piloting new approaches to on-street parking, including flexible time limits and variable rates, was determined as a MAP action

The City was considering a no time-limit metered parking pilot, and saw alignment to pilot this in Strathcona

Resources for evaluation, including video and data analysis in parking pilot areas, have been designated

The context of our wider mobility plan is advantageous for the pilot project communications to our membership

FINAL THOUGHTS

Project Challenges

At first, goods movement stakeholders were a challenging group to engage with. This included member businesses with fleets and 3rd party goods movement businesses involved in shipments and deliveries in the neighbourhood. An intention to do some "ride-alongs" with drivers for first-hand experiences never materialized. Instead, additional outreach to a targeted goods movement stakeholder list was conducted, resulting in some additional interviews with that group.

A challenge of the Future Strathcona Forum engagement event was that just over half of the attendees were transportation experts and partners, outnumbering the number of SBIA members and business voices in the room. The Sustainability Committee was aware of this and helped guide the consultants to further validation of all project findings against member survey results, and supplemental engagement with the under-represented goods movement sector.

Momentum and Accountability

Continuing to build momentum with the quick-start actions will be critical to the ongoing success of the Mobility Advocacy Plan. This includes allocating adequate staff time and resources internally, continuing to build a network with implementing partners, and facilitating connections for our business members to existing resources. For example, sustainable commuting resources for employees or new technologies available to improve mobility challenges.

The quick-start action "State of the Streets" is the built in monitoring action that will help keep us accountable to members. The idea is to provide an annual "State of the Streets" update at the AGM to inform members on MAP Strathcona action implementation and impacts. Using the first survey as a baseline, we plan to repeat a short version of it each year to measure progress towards the objectives in the plan.

The Mobility Advocacy Plan is to function as a working document. With the built in yearly review and presentation of work, along with communications throughout the year, there is flexibility to make adjustments based on member feedback and new opportunities that come up.

To read *MAP Strathcona: Mobility Advocacy Plan* visit strathconabia.com/programs

Have additional questions about this project? Please contact johanna@strathconabia.com