



Director's Report

Dear neighbours in the UNA, UBC, and UEL communities

As we make our way through the tenth month of the pandemic, I trust that you and your loved ones are staying healthy and managing to connect, at least virtually.

I've followed the pandemic response here in BC very closely, in part because it has dominated our media, but also because of my graduate training in public health. It is fascinating to think back on how many times I needed to explain to friends what public health was when I left BC in 2006 to study public health in Boston. Now, basic public health and epidemiology are part of daily household conversations.

A friend from graduate school recently likened an ideal pandemic response to an orchestral performance, and I wanted to expand on this analogy. As BC residents, each of us is a member of an orchestra, and in this pandemic, Dr. Bonnie Henry is our conductor. We would be hard pressed to find a more qualified conductor for our orchestra. Dr. Henry has been at the centre of a number major international public health interventions – including working for the World Health Organization on polio eradication in Pakistan and the Ebola outbreaks in Uganda, and for Toronto Public Health, leading

their severe acute respiratory disease (SARS) and H1N1 outbreak responses. Dr. Henry and her highly educated and experienced team of experts have dedicated their lives to public health, and their pandemic response is a continuation of the principles and practices that they have followed for years. The team has access to data, information, studies, and decision-makers from across the country and around the world, and they are constantly determining and tweaking the best BC response based on this information.

As members of this orchestra, we are each given sheet music to rehearse. As we practice our parts, we can play around with the notes, improvise and ask questions about the rhythm or timing. As citizens living through this pandemic, we have the right to question the orders and guidelines given. Questioning and exploring different points of view is a healthy component of democracy and is absolutely essential in the scientific process. I encourage you to read reliable sources of information about the pandemic and ask questions (whether you think



UNA youth Patricia and Ethan Ho perform with the Vancouver Academy of Music Symphony Orchestra (VAMSO) at the Orpheum earlier this year.

Photo from Patricia Ho.



the current guidelines are too strict or too lenient). However, when it comes to “show time,” that is, whenever we step out of our homes, we each need to play our parts as the written and follow the conductor’s cues. This means following the basic public health rules regarding hand washing; staying home when sick; maintaining two metres of physical distance from others; and wearing a mask in public and when physical distancing may not be feasible; as well as following the orders and guidelines against gatherings and non-essential travel. You can read the latest provincial guidelines [here](#).

As I’ve learned many times in my short tenure in regional government, every decision has consequences and trade-offs. Even, and even choices that seem obvious on the surface, reveal complexity once you understand the various impacts for different stakeholders. Our public health leaders grapple with trade-offs and compromises each day, and I myself have questioned some of their decisions. However, I am confident that we would be hard pressed to find a more professional, compassionate, and perhaps most importantly, data-driven team of experts to lead our response, and even when I internally question the decisions, I trust that the decisions made are done so with more information and expertise than I have, and with all of our best interests in mind.

As our orchestra’s performance drags on, some of us may feel like putting our instruments down and just walking off the stage. Unfortunately, this is not a good option right now. Let’s continue to play our parts, staying focused and in tune, while closely following the conductor. During this holiday season, it will be particularly hard not to improvise as we play our instruments. However, with escalating hospitalizations and daily new cases around 600-700 per day here in BC, and nearby provinces and countries demonstrating how quickly curves can rise, now is not the time to try a ‘B flat’ while the rest of us play a ‘B sharp’!

Our efforts here in BC are working to flatten the curve, and if we are all “100% all in”, I am confident that we can reduce our numbers again. In addition, there is finally a light at the end of this tunnel: safe COVID-19 vaccinations will begin for vulnerable residents and healthcare workers within the next few weeks.

Stay strong, stay connected (but physically apart), and in the words of Health Minister Dix, “If you are questioning whether an activity is or is not allowed right now, please don’t do it!”.

We are constantly influencing those around us with our words and our actions. Be a positive influence for your family, friends, and all those around you.

From our family to yours, we wish you health, peace, and a sense of hope as we look ahead to 2021.



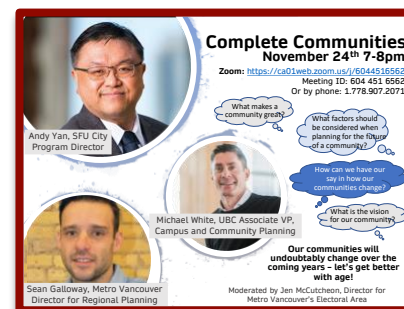
Jen McCutcheon



Follow up from the November Complete Communities Engagement Session

On November 24th, I hosted an engagement session on complete, or healthy communities. If you missed the session, you can listen to an audio recording [here](#). There were some questions that the panel did not have time to address during the session, and they kindly followed up with responses, which you can find on page eight. In addition, I found the ten principles for healthy and livable communities that speaker Sean Galloway (of Metro Vancouver's Regional Planning team) presented to be particularly useful background. These are summarized below.

(Link to audio: <http://www.metrovanancouver.org/services/electoral-area-a/community-information/Documents/2020-11-24-EA-ATownHallMtg.mp3.mp3>)



Ten Principles for Healthy and Livable Communities

1. Design at Human Scale

Ensure the buildings in a neighbourhood are designed to reflect how human beings understand scale. Look for opportunities to use materials (i.e., brick and mortar) that offer texture. A building's design should easily demarcate floors and that the ground floor creates a positive connection with the adjacent street environment (e.g., doors and windows).

2. Provide Choices

Neighbourhoods need a diversity of housing types that will allow people to live through all of their lifecycles in the same neighbourhood. In doing so, people can age-in-place and feel more attached to the neighbourhood through the social capital they have built up over time.



3. Encourage Mixed-use Development

Integrating different land uses and building types allows for more compact neighbourhoods and can better support multiple transportation options, like walking, cycling and transit.

4. Preserve Urban Centres

Explore opportunities to protect heritage, where appropriate and ensure development around heritage respects such features. In addition, by taking advantage of existing centres it can assist with reducing urban sprawl.

5. Vary Transportation Options

Ensure that residents of neighbourhoods have transportation options to meet their daily needs. In doing this, neighbourhoods can be better designed to include a multitude of housing types and promote more physical activity, ultimately creating a much healthier city.

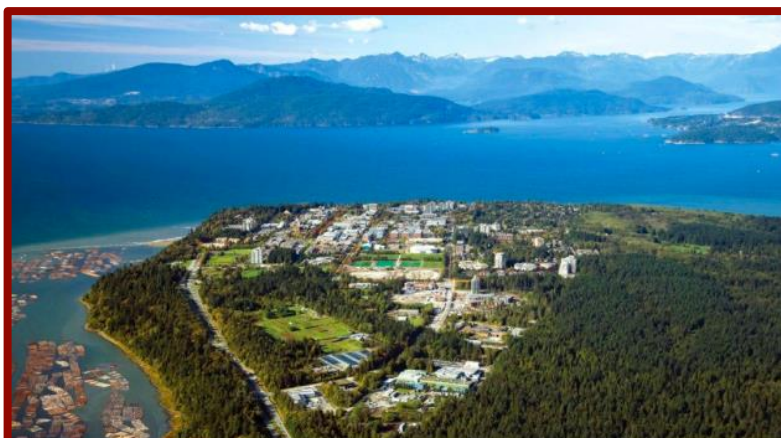


6. Build Vibrant Public Spaces

Public spaces are the cornerstone of every neighbourhood. These are the places where people can come together to participate in community activities and build social connections. In addition, these spaces are some of the most important elements that build the impression of your community when someone visits from another place.

7. Create Neighbourhood Identity

Unique character is an important element to neighbourhood identity. The character is born out of the people who live in the neighbourhood, but more so by the design of the neighbourhood. Good design promotes social connections with one another. Buildings and their architecture also play a key role in defining identity. Through human scale design neighbourhood character can be easily identifiable.



Aerial view of the UBC Peninsula
Photo from <https://i.imgur.com/oVg0epP.jpg>

8. Protect Environmental Resources

A well-designed balance between nature and development preserves natural areas and systems. When people can interact with nature they gain a better understanding of its value. Access to nature also helps with promoting positive mental and physical health for a city and/or neighbourhood residents.
<https://i.imgur.com/oVg0epP.jpg>

9. Conserve Landscapes

Open space, agriculture and wildlife habitat are important for recreation, cultural value and civic image. Opportunities to balance development and these natural spaces need to be considered where it is appropriate.

10. Design Matters

The public street is the living room of every community, with the street being the 'floor' and the buildings the 'walls.' As in our own living rooms, we add furniture and décor to create a cozy feeling and a place we are happy to spend time in. The design of our public streets and spaces are no different. They have immense value to a place's civic image, health and social connectedness. Placing a high value on design ensures a positive outcome in building the strong and healthy neighbourhoods we all desire.

ELECTORAL AREA A Director's Update

From Jen McCutcheon, Director, Electoral Area A

December
2020

Mayors' Council on Regional Transportation Updates



Keep an eye out for a reindeer bus this holiday season. *Photo from TransLink*

Return of the Reindeer Bus!

Have you spotted the reindeer bus yet? Earlier this month, TransLink dressed up nine of its buses as Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner, Blitzen, and Rudolph to spread holiday cheer across Metro Vancouver. Routes vary daily so keep a look out.

Each year, the reindeer bus is also used to deliver staff-donated toys and cash to the Lower Mainland Christmas Bureau to be distributed to low-income families.



Changes to Mask Rules on Public Transit

TransLink customers must now wear masks anywhere they board or wait to board transit vehicles, as well as when they're riding transit. This new rule follows the recent Ministerial Order that masks must be worn in all indoor areas, so make sure you have a mask handy whenever you're on a bus or train, and at all bus stops, bus loops, bus exchanges, stations, and platforms.

About 95 per cent of TransLink customers have been wearing masks, and this is another step to making the transit system as safe as possible for everyone who uses it. You can read more about the new mask requirements [here](#).



Copper protective coating on SkyTrain and buses to test their effectiveness at destroying viruses and bacteria.

Photo from TransLink

TransLink Copper Pilot

TransLink is the first transit system in North America to test bacteria- and virus-killing copper on its high-touch surfaces.

Working with health researchers from UBC, UBC Hospital Foundation, VGH, Vancouver Coastal Health and the Coalition for Healthcare Acquired Infection Reduction Canada (CHAIR), TransLink and Teck have installed copper products and a protective coating called organosilane on SkyTrain and buses to test their effectiveness at destroying viruses and bacteria on transit.

The results of this pilot could have wide-reaching impacts for infection prevention for the transit industry and other industries that rely on shared public spaces. [Read more about this pilot in TransLink's blog](#)

ELECTORAL AREA A Director's Update

From Jen McCutcheon, Director, Electoral Area A

December
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Community Connections

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).

For this month's community connections, I wanted to propose a challenge. Let's see how many homes can brighten up our neighbourhoods with a string or two of lights along your balcony or in your front yard. I think we could all use a little extra sparkle on these chilly dark evenings.



Vancouver's Canuck Place decorated to brighten spirits
Photo from Vancouver Courier

Our family also plans to pick up hot chocolate from our favourite local coffee shop and drive around various neighbourhoods to check out pretty light displays. My favourite display are the more than 60,000 lights shining around Canuck Place in Shaughnessy. You can find out more about their annual light display (and make a donation [here](#) if you have the means). In my days as a physiotherapist at BC Children's Hospital, I would sometimes treat young patients at Canuck Place, and have fond memories of their bright holiday lights that were only outshone by the wonderfully caring staff and families inside. [Here](#) is a map of nice holiday lights around the region.

Regional Greenways Plan Gets Board Support

At our last Metro Vancouver Regional District Board meeting on November 27, 2020, the Board approved the Regional Greenways 2050 plan.

Regional Greenways 2050 is the region's shared vision for a network of recreational multi-use paths for cycling and walking that connects residents to large parks, protected natural areas and communities to support regional livability. This network is complementary to TransLink's Major Bikeway Network. Together the two networks contribute to active transportation infrastructure in the region.



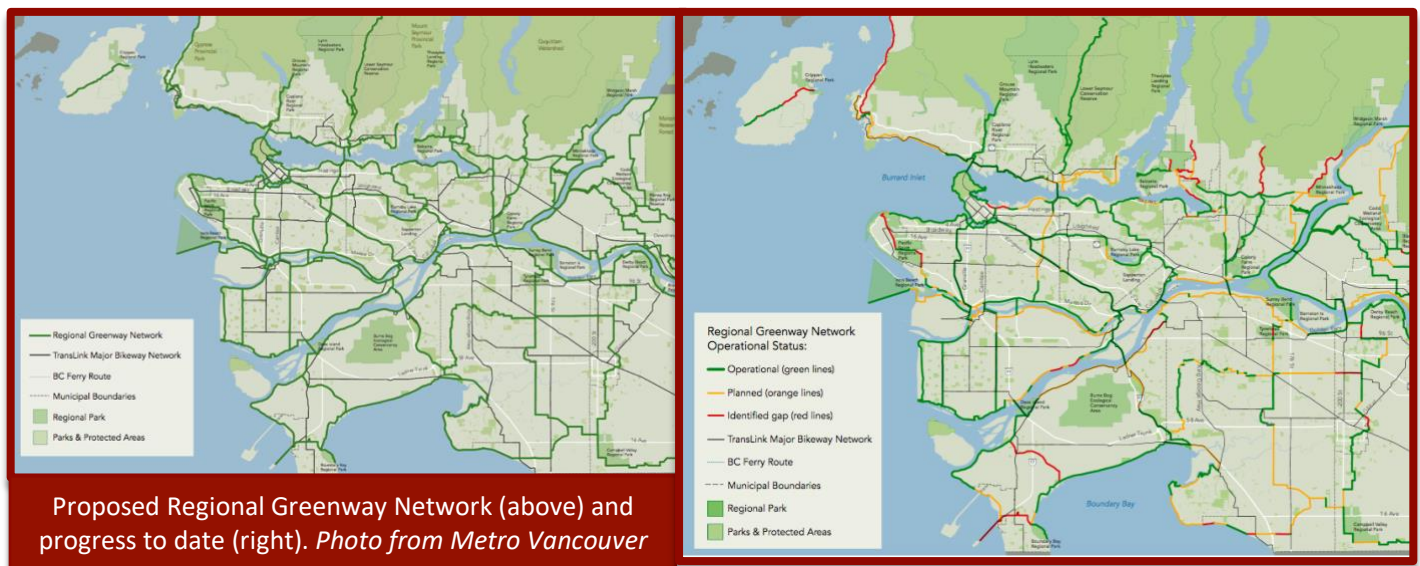
Cyclists enjoying a car-free trail at Boundary Bay Regional Park – part of the Regional Greenway
Photo from Metro Vancouver

The plan contains an implementation plan that charts a path forward that reflects the collaborative governance and funding approach necessary to achieve this vision. Metro Vancouver looks forward to continuing its



collaboration with local governments, TransLink, First Nations, other levels of government and stakeholders to implement this vision.

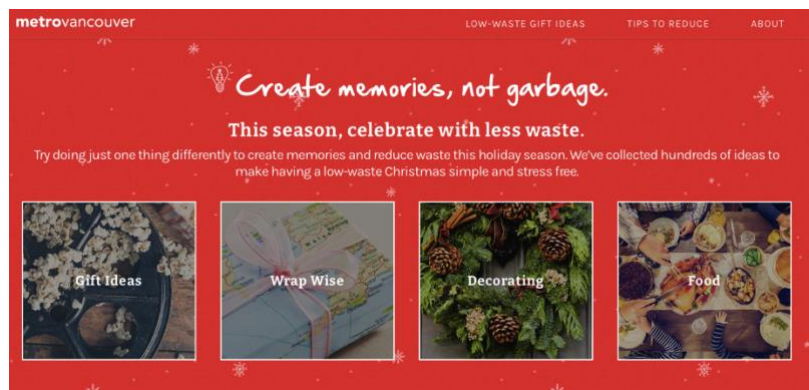
As you can see on the maps below, the plan for the greenway network includes pathways that connect the UBC peninsula with the City of Vancouver and beyond. Once the plan is fully implemented, look at all the places we could bike or walk to on car-free networks.



How can you decrease your waste this holiday season?

The ongoing surge in online shopping-related shipping and packaging materials means creating a holiday with less waste will be about more than just creating lasting memories. Metro Vancouver is helping waste-conscious gift-givers make thoughtful decisions about shipping material, packaging, gifts, decorations, wrapping and more. Here are a few low-waste holiday tips for 2020:

- When it comes to choosing wrapping, choose reusable first, then recyclable. Shiny or textured wrap cannot be recycled.
- Most paper-based items, like those ubiquitous cardboard boxes and glitter-free greeting cards can go in residential mixed paper recycling.





- Plastic shipping materials, like all-plastic bubble wrap and mailers, foam, plastic bags and flexible packaging, may be brought to one of dozens of recycling depots in the region.
- Click [here](#) for more information
- Some shipping materials, especially those made of combined materials like shipping envelopes made of paper and plastic, cannot be recycled.
- Plastics labeled 'biodegradable' or 'compostable' are not accepted for composting or recycling and should be placed in the garbage.

In addition, you can find all kinds of interesting tips, gift ideas and inspiration to minimize waste this holiday season [here](http://www.metrovanancouver.org/christmas) (<http://www.metrovanancouver.org/christmas>)

How to Apply for your COVID-19 Recovery Benefit



On Tuesday our government announced that applications for the COVID-19 Recovery Benefit will be opening on December 18. This benefit will be \$1,000 for families with a household income of less than \$125,000, and \$500 for individuals who earn less than

\$62,000. Click [here](#) for details and links to apply. (<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/economic-recovery/recovery-benefit>)

Additional Questions and Answers Arising from the Complete Communities Panel

The following are questions that were asked at or immediately following the Nov 24, 2020 EAA Engagement Panel on Complete Communities.

METRO: How would the planners recommend promoting purposed-built rental in practical terms? Rental zoning? Housing Agreements? Density bonusing? What are best practices?

All of these are potentially useful tools that local governments have at their disposal to promote affordable housing, including purpose-built rental housing. Below are some links to Metro Vancouver, provincial, and other resources.

1. **Housing Agreements**
Metro Vancouver recently completed a “what works” resource guide for local governments on [Securing Affordable and Special Needs Housing through Housing Agreements](#)
2. **Rental Zoning**
 - a. [Implementation Guideline #6: What Works: Municipal Measures for Sustaining and Expanding the Supply of Purpose-Built Rental Housing \(2016\)](#)
 - b. [What Works – Affordable Housing Initiatives in Metro Vancouver Municipalities \(2012\)](#)



- c. Metro Vancouver Transit-Oriented Affordable Housing (TOAH) Study Phase II: Reducing the Barrier of High Land Cost. *This includes analysis of 4 housing policy tools including Density Bonusing, Residential Rental Tenure Zoning (RRTZ), Inclusionary Housing, Land acquisition, etc.*
- d. Scott-Iversen, E. (2019). Rental revival?: Exploring the potential implications of applying residential rental tenure zoning in Metro Vancouver (Unpublished master's thesis). Vancouver Island University, Nanaimo, B.C.
- e. Making-Rental-a-Reality-Technical-Report.pdf (udi.bc.ca) *This report is from a developer's perspective.*

3. Provincial Information

- a. Incentives for Housing
- b. Zoning for Housing (includes examples of municipalities that have implemented density bonuses)

Additional Resources can be found on Metro Vancouver's Resources for Housing Affordability & Diversity webpage.

UBC: Would you consider conducting a census survey of existing campus residents, to gather their opinions and experiences about which neighbourhoods at UBC have been working the best as complete communities, as well as needs.

UBC conducts periodic surveys of resident, faculty, staff and student views on a variety of issues. For example, a 2018 community survey explored campus residents' satisfaction with living at UBC. The University will explore using similar surveys as part of public engagement for the upcoming Campus Vision 2050 land use planning process.

METRO: Not sure where to get the data but, there is mass exit from downtown core. I am full time in real estate

The data identified during the presentation came from the Greater Vancouver Real Estate Board and StatsCan. To date we have seen the following:

Housing Sold - Metro Vancouver (February 2020 to October 2020):

Single Detached Dwelling: 35.3%

Townhouse 19.9%

Apartment 44.8%

From the statistics, 65% of the units sold during the pandemic period to date are units in denser urban environments, primarily apartments. The statements during the presentation were not specific to downtown Vancouver, but the region as a whole. We are not seeing a mass movement of people out of the region to Abbotsford/Fraser Valley or other lower density environments specifically because of the pandemic.

METRO: How are we justifying densification - where is the population coming from? How are we calculating this? I honestly don't believe that building more will lower housing prices, just by looking at what has happened up until now... Take Richmond for an example, there are so many apartments and condos being built but properties just kept on getting even more expensive...

Every year Metro Vancouver takes in approximately 35,000 people. These individuals come from a variety of places, with the majority arriving by way of immigration to Canada. The remainder are people moving from within Canada, but outside of BC, from the Fraser Valley and from other parts of the Province in that order. The



data is calculated from modelling work that Metro Vancouver undertakes in cooperation with the municipalities in the region along with data from the Census and estimates from BC Stats.

METRO: What rethinking in terms of urban planning is happening due to COVID-19? We are being told that even when we learn to live with COVID-19, other pandemics are likely in our future. What is this doing to thinking about density (which we know increases transmission), the way we design public spaces (fewer people will be able to go to a coffee shop or other public space to "plug in" but may need more green spaces for mental health) and the need for larger units as more people work from home (a trend we know will continue even after the pandemic, or between pandemics).

As with any pandemic it is a moment in time and may or may not have lasting effects. We continue to monitor the situation and look for any potential trends. That being said, most trends will not be seen until well after the pandemic is over. However, what has continued to be consistent throughout history and during this pandemic is that by our very nature we are social creatures and even more so, creatures of habit. We have seen many of the pre-pandemic habits come back into form (i.e., going to restaurants, coffee shops and other social spaces) as restrictions were lifted. As this trend continues to move forward and people look to return to some form of normalcy, many of the things that cities offered pre-pandemic are likely to be reactivated; but we will monitor these situations.

Your question also underlies the larger conversation about space and cities. While it is important to look for opportunities to create space, space is not infinite, both in terms of the physical ability to accommodate everyone, and also in financial terms. Density and other such living forms will be necessary moving forward in an effort to balance the physical and financial abilities to service the residents of the region. There is also a difference between density and overcrowding –to date, dense neighbourhoods across the country are no more of a transmitter of COVID-19 than lower density neighbourhoods. In many respects, the neighbourhoods with greater density have been faring better as residents tend to use outdoor public space more than in lower density neighbourhoods. Overcrowding, which is having too many people in a single room, like multiple generations of families in a single detached dwelling, is where many of the virus transmissions are occurring at a higher rate. As always, we will have to balance our habits, the desire to be socially connected and our financial ability to deliver high quality urban places to live.

Overall, this is a very timely topic that many local governments and planners are trying to understand. Coincidentally, a recent BBC article addressed many of your questions. The article does a good job of providing an overview of the topic and includes links to academic studies and other articles for more in-depth information: <https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20201201-the-surprising-upside-to-living-in-cities>



METRO: What practical ways can we move away (at least partly) from a car-centric region?

Three of the five goals in Metro Vancouver 2040: Shaping our Future, the regional growth strategy, contain strategies and policies to help guide local governments towards a less car-centric region. Please see the links below to the goals and detailed strategies and policies.

Goal 1: Create a Compact Urban Area

Metro Vancouver's population is concentrated in compact communities with access to a range of housing choices, employment, amenities and services. Compact, transit-oriented development patterns help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and pollution, and support both the efficient use of land and an efficient transportation network.

Goal 4: Develop Complete Communities

Metro Vancouver is a region of communities with a diverse range of housing choices suitable for residents at all stages of their lives. The distribution of employment and access to services and amenities builds complete communities throughout the region. Complete communities are designed to support walking, cycling and transit, and to foster healthy lifestyles.

Goal 5: Support Sustainable Transportation Choices

Metro Vancouver's compact, transit-oriented urban form supports a range of sustainable transportation choices. This pattern of development:

- expands opportunities for multiple-occupancy vehicles, transit, cycling and walking;
- encourages active lifestyles;
- improves air quality; and
- reduces energy use, greenhouse gas emissions and household expenditure on transportation.

The region's road, transit, rail and waterway networks play a vital role in serving and shaping regional development by providing linkages among communities and reliable routes for goods movement.

UBC: The planning for "aging in place" is a concept that is of great interest. Would you point to how this concept is being addressed in planning?

Providing the ability to age independently and safely in your home and community is an important part of good community planning. UBC does this by planning for a full range of community services, including retail, health care, recreation, and housing such as Tapestry at Wesbrook Village.

UBC: What is the plan to deal with off-shore investors that invest and continue to invest in the UBC/Vancouver housing market? These people purchase properties but don't actually live here, driving up housing prices. I've seen on the news and heard from people I know that many people who can no longer afford to rent/own in our cities have to move away to other more affordable places.

UBC's Housing Action Plan is part of the University's strategy to enable more of the University community to live on campus. To encourage building a complete community, the Housing Action Plan includes targets for increased rental and student housing on campus, along with market housing policies that prioritize ownership for the UBC community. Regulating foreign ownership in the regional housing market is a provincial and federal jurisdictional issue.



UBC: Does UBC have any sort of policy in place where trees that are cut down need to be replaced? If so, how does/did this work with the sections of forest that were cut down to build Wesbrook Village?

UBC's Land Use Plan is the provincially-approved policy that regulates campus development. The Land Use Plan includes a requirement that all viable mature neighbourhood trees over 15 centimetres diameter-at-breast-height that are removed must be replaced at a 1:1 ratio on campus. This is done by planting new trees across campus in existing and new areas. Through the upcoming Campus Vision 2050 process, UBC will explore new policy approaches to campus biodiversity and urban forest management.

UBC: What efforts are being made to encourage people to live here (rather than purchasing primarily as an investment), particularly in the market housing?

UBC's Housing Action Plan includes a number of measures to build complete communities in campus neighbourhoods:

- For all market housing, faculty and staff have preferential and early access to purchase new units before they are released for sale to the general public.
- The University is working with the provincial government to enable an on-campus home ownership program for tenure and tenure-track faculty.
- Up to 30% of future housing on campus will be rental that prioritizes those who work or study on campus, and at least 20% will be restricted rental for faculty and staff.
- UBC has introduced a rent-geared-to-income program for moderate income staff and faculty households to live on campus.
- Faculty-staff rental development continues, with 155 new units completed on September 1, 2020 and an additional 110 units scheduled for completion in early 2022, bringing the total to 950.

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