

Attachment #1

Reallocation of Road Space:

Summary of Assembly Discussions, June 2024

Reallocation of Road Space - Summary of Assembly Discussions

In April and May 2024, the Community Advisory Assembly convened to learn about to the City's climate action goal of road reallocation. It has been noted that place-specific road reallocation proposals are sometimes met with resistance when presented to communities, even though climate action is broadly and conceptually supported. Since the Assembly is reasonably representative of the New Westminster resident population, knowing how the concept of road allocation lands for Assembly members can inform how City staff ought to introduce road reallocation projects in positive ways in the future.

Assembly members received a presentation from a City Transportation Planner and engaged in a question-and-answer period. They then discussed concerns and benefits of reallocating road space, and brainstormed a set of recommendations to City staff, as summarized below.

Concerns about road reallocation initiatives identified by the Assembly:

- Impacts on traffic such as increased congestion, slower commutes for both local and through-traffic on both major roads and local roads as motorists seek alternative routes
- Safety concerns, such as car doors opening into a bike lane or safety for pedestrians alongside electric bikes and scooters
- Unregulated traffic violations such as cars illegally parking or idling in bike lanes, e-bikes or e-scooters on sidewalks
- Potential reduced accessibility for people with mobility challenges, for example due to changes in location of bus stops
- Accommodating population growth while decreasing road space for cars
- Reduced parking space for local residents or for people with limited mobility, or difficulty knowing where to park in re-designed streets
- Construction noise
- Costs of projects
- Insufficient servicing of narrow bike lanes

Benefits from road reallocation projects identified by the Assembly:

- Slower traffic, calmer streets, increased walkability
- Incentivizing the use of active transportation over vehicles, which results in greenhouse gas and air pollutant reductions
- Increased safety for cyclists and children
- Beautification of streets
- Equity benefits as active transportation options are typically more affordable than driving

- Could attract recreational cyclists to New Westminster

The Assembly suggests the following measures to increase access and public understanding and support of road reallocation and active transportation projects:

- Ensure that messaging around road reallocation and the Active Transportation Network Plan communicates the broad range of examples and benefits to appeal to diverse interests and needs (e.g. emphasizing climate action impacts, safety and affordability).
- Share “community impact stories” from community members who have experienced the benefits of road reallocation projects.
- Share messaging around how the active transportation plan can accommodate increased traffic from local and regional growth, and clarify that road reallocation projects are intended for local streets and not thoroughfares.
- When designing for road allocation, prioritize safety and accessibility for pedestrians and people with mobility challenges (e.g. wheelchair-users, people with visual impairments, caregivers, etc.).
- Increase education on regulations and safe practices for all road users (pedestrians bikes, e-bikes, e-scooters, motorists), potentially through a neighbour-to-neighbour program.
- Increase bylaw enforcement for all road users (cars, bikes, e-bikes, e-scooters).
- Explore measures to ease congestion around school grounds at drop-off and pick-up times (e.g. establishing multiple drop-off points, rerouting to less busy roads, etc.).
- Include students and youth with education around active transportation and climate action.
- Promote New Westminster’s bike lanes for the cyclist community across the Lower Mainland, for instance through updated bike route maps and improved signage to indicate bike paths.
- Increase accessibility of e-bikes to facilitate active transportation in New Westminster’s hilly streets.
- Increase street beautification measures to make walking a more welcoming experience.