



Facts in Focus



2018

FACTS IN FOCUS

DID YOU KNOW?

How Transit Can Keep Kelowna Moving

Kelowna is growing, with 50,000 more people projected to move to the city over the next 20 years. While the City is investing in new roads to accommodate growth, there is limited space to widen streets in the city core. This means that not all of the trips taken by these new residents can be accommodated by car.

By enabling more people to share a vehicle, public transit increases the people-moving capacity of our streets. As cities evolve, transit becomes critical to protecting quality of life and sustaining economic growth.

A common theme heard from the public during *Imagine Kelowna, Pick your Path to 2040*, and the Phase 1 engagement for *Our Kelowna As We Move*, was the need to improve transit service in Kelowna, as well as a desire to move towards a mass transit system like those in larger cities.



BC Stats predicts 50,000 people – the equivalent of five Upper Missions - will move to Kelowna in the next 20 years.



Transit carries people 103,000km each day in Kelowna, or two and a half times around the world.

DID YOU KNOW?



The existing bus service on Pandosy St can move about 1200 people per hour, which is more people than an extra vehicle lane would carry.



Buses on Broadway St in Vancouver carry 80,000 people each day, more people than drive on Harvey Avenue.

Photo Credit – Roland Tanglao



The Calgary CTrain carries the equivalent of 16 freeway lanes worth of people into downtown.

Moving People More Efficiently

For Kelowna to grow without worsening gridlock, we need to find ways to move more people in the road space we have available. Public transit is part of the solution. For example, the current bus service on Pandosy Street can move more people than an additional vehicle lane, increasing capacity without having to build or widen streets through one of the City's most dynamic neighbourhoods. By making it easier for more people to choose transit, we are able to free up the road for those who must drive.

In addition to helping with congestion, transit can reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and improve our air quality while improving equity and accessibility for those who cannot or do not drive.

Making Transit Competitive

A successful public transit system is one that is financially sustainable and well-used. The more expensive transit is to build and operate, the more customers it needs to remain financially viable. The environmental benefits will also be limited if it is not well used.

Ultimately, for more people to choose transit it has to be reliable, frequent, fast and less expensive than driving. Since most transit trips begin and end on foot, both the origin and destination have to be within walking distance of a transit stop for it to be a viable option. This range can be extended with options like biking, ridesharing, or park and ride. However, these add to the overall travel time and tend to make transit less competitive with driving.

Kelowna's public transit system currently offers bus service that generally moves with the flow of other traffic. Making transit service quicker, more reliable, and thus more competitive with driving, will require separating transit from other traffic. This can be done by giving transit its own lane or right-of-way and by giving transit vehicles priority at signals.

Separating transit from other traffic will move towards what is often called "mass transit." Mass transit systems tend to be faster, more reliable and have greater capacity than regular bus service. However, they are more expensive to build and operate.

Types of Mass Transit



Streetcar in Portland, Oregon. Photo Credit: Sam Beebe



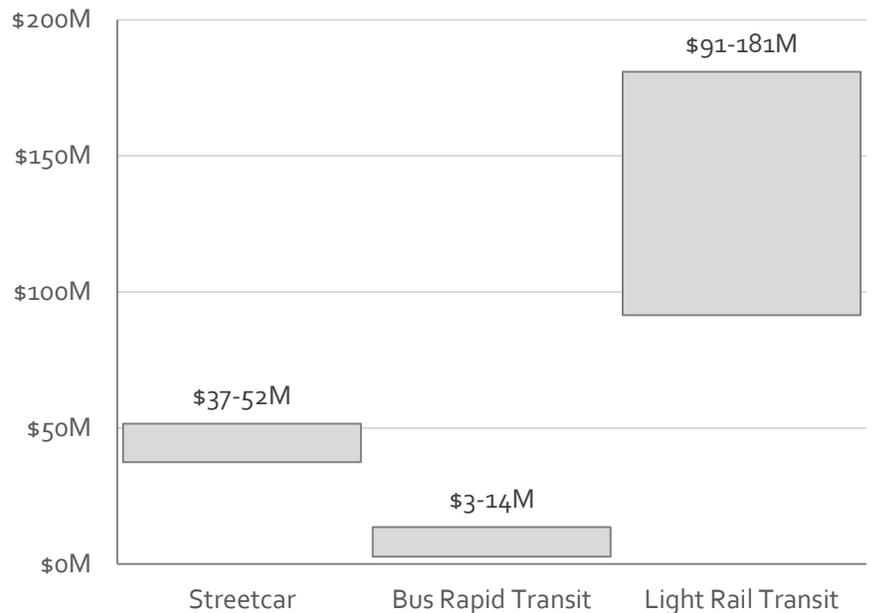
BRT in Eugene, Oregon. Photo Credit: Chris Phan



LRT in Portland, Oregon. Photo Credit: Ian Sane

- **Streetcars** – a type of passenger rail typically consisting of single car trains running along tracks embedded in the road. They usually share lanes with other vehicles and move at the same speed as other traffic.
- **Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)** – a type of bus service that mimics many of the features of rail. The level of separation from other traffic is more flexible than LRT. Buses may share lanes with cars in some locations and be fully separated at others, which means service can be improved incrementally as demand grows.
- **Light Rail Transit (LRT)** - typically consists of one to three-car trains which draw power from overhead cables and run along tracks that are mostly separated into their own right-of-way. Like with streetcars, a complete track system has to be installed before service is opened.

Typical Cost Range per Kilometre



Where Mass Transit Might Go in Kelowna

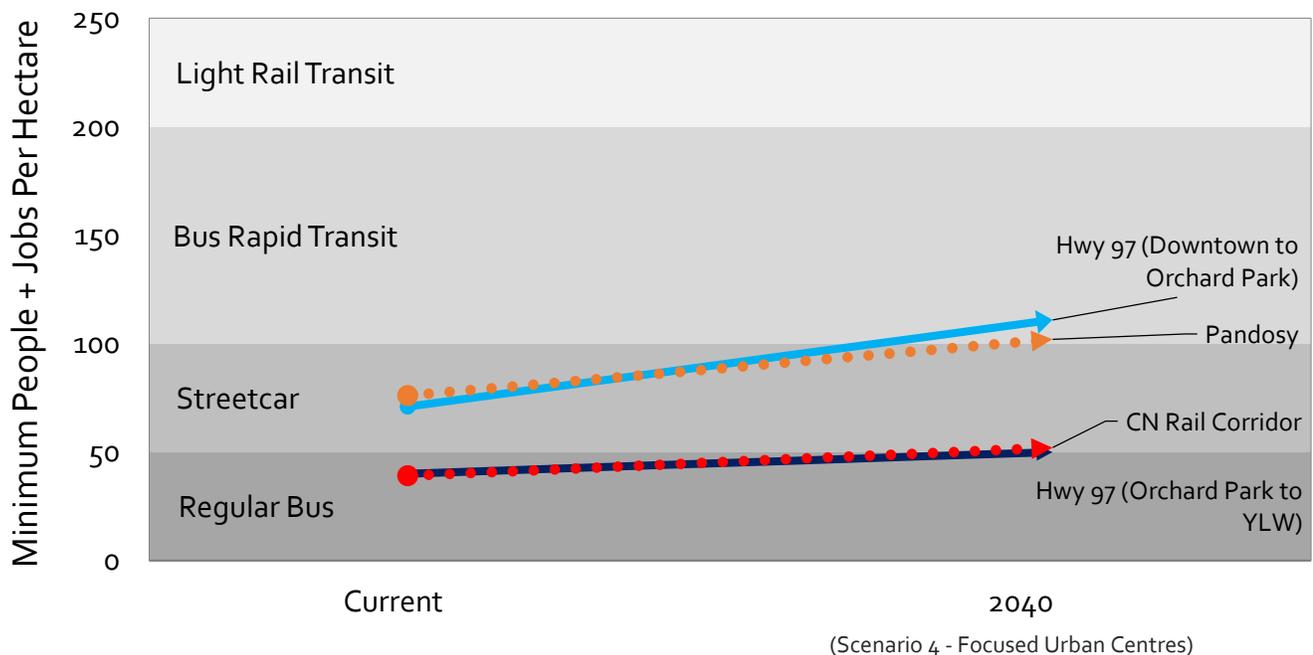
Simply put, mass transit needs a mass of people who live and work close to a corridor. While no detailed study has been undertaken, some commonly suggested corridors for mass transit are:

Harvey Avenue/Highway 97 (Downtown to YLW, 13km) – Harvey Avenue is Kelowna’s spine. There are lots of nearby destinations – half of the city’s jobs are within 800 metres of the highway – but relatively few homes are within walking distance (approximately 15 per cent of residents). Adding more residents nearby would lead to a better balance of people and destinations, increasing the ridership potential for transit.

CN Rail Corridor (Downtown to YLW, 14km) – because this existing right-of-way is largely separated from other traffic, reliable and fast transit service could be installed along this corridor. However, it is often quite far from destinations which tend to be clustered around Highway 97. Significant land use changes would have to occur along the corridor to support mass transit.

Pandosy St (Downtown to South Pandosy, 3km) – major destinations near the corridor include Kelowna General Hospital, the South Pandosy Urban Centre and Okanagan College. There are also a lot of people living nearby. However, there is limited space along Pandosy Street to separate transit from other traffic.

Current and Future Density of Transit Corridors



Next Steps

Public transit is helping move people more efficiently in Kelowna today. By focusing new development around transit corridors and giving buses priority over other traffic at key locations, we can grow ridership and prevent congestion from limiting our prosperity and quality of life. It is unlikely that any corridor in the city will have the density for mass transit to be economically feasible over the next twenty years; however, building on the frequency and reliability of existing bus service can move us incrementally towards mass transit, and help keep Kelowna moving.

A more in-depth evaluation of the potential for mass transit will be included in the *Our Kelowna as we Move*, the City’s upcoming Transportation Master Plan and in *Connecting our Region*, the Regional Transportation Plan.