



FACTS IN FOCUS

Facts in Focus



2018

DID YOU KNOW?

The Congestion Paradox

Driving is the default way most Kelowna residents get around. In fact, we collectively drive to the moon and back twice every weekday, own more vehicles per person than any other city in Canada, use an estimated 340,000 parking spaces to store them. This is comparable to the living space of all the homes in Kelowna.

As it stands right now, many Kelowna residents have reported through surveys that driving is the only viable option they have for getting around. They are also concerned about future growth, traffic congestion and its influence on their quality of life.

In response the City is developing *Our Kelowna as we Move*, the City's new Transportation Master Plan for the next 20 years. The Plan's initial phase included the development of vision and goals. While there was strong support for the direction of the plan, there were three feedback themes identified that this Facts in Focus will explore, including; the challenges of expanding roadways, the transportation budget, and the draft Transportation Master Plan vision.

We need to find ways to ease the impact of traffic congestion on our city's economy and quality of life. For many, choices are increasing, with new active transportation routes, transit and shared mobility services making travel easier. However, many of us travel mostly by car and the idea of expanding roads to reduce congestion can be attractive. This Facts in Focus explores the challenges with this approach.



Transportation was identified by 39% of respondents as important issue facing Kelowna in the 2017 Citizen Survey.

WHY NOT BUILD A BYPASS?

A bypass around Kelowna will not relieve congestion as only 10% of traffic on Highway 97 is passing through the city.

Most traffic is going to destinations along the highway. Half of all jobs are within 800m of Highway 97.

The Cost of Building More Roads

Through the Transportation Master Plan consultation some residents asked about the potential to make significant investments in new roadways to reduce congestion. While roadway investments will be part of any future balanced transportation plan for Kelowna, expanding roadways in an attempt to eliminate congestion has significant challenges and will likely not achieve its goals.

When a new road opens or an existing road is expanded, people adjust their routines and lifestyles over time; travelling more often and further than before. This rebound effect, called 'induced demand' by economists, can consume much of newly constructed capacity, reducing the benefits of roadway expansion projects.

Some cities have attempted to stay ahead of rising travel demand by continually investing in new roads, but Kelowna's geography makes this difficult. Steep hillsides, lakes and protected agricultural lands limit where roads can go along the edges of the city. In the core, where the majority of destinations are located, there is often little room to widen roads without buying land, tearing down homes, or disrupting local businesses.

The cost to widen a major road in the core has been estimated at \$26 million per kilometre. Significant tax increases or new sources of revenue would be required to undertake a large scale expansion the road network. Wider, faster roads would also negatively impact the core residential neighbourhoods that have the highest potential to move people more sustainably.

Building more roads may ease the pressure for a short time, but will also make Kelowna a less attractive, and healthy place to live in the future.

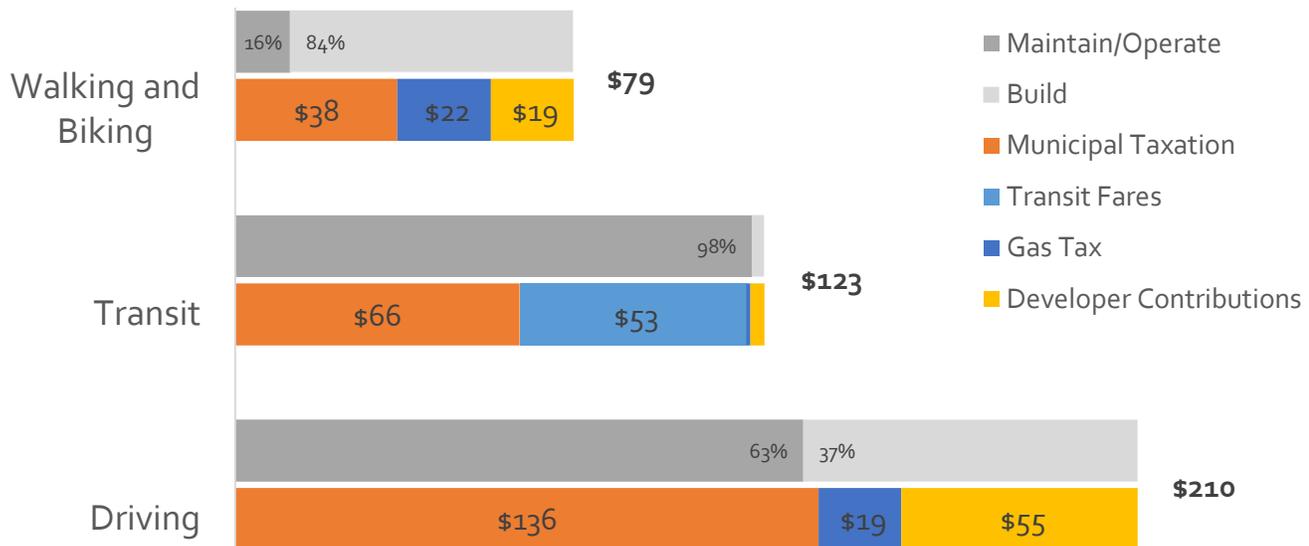


The Budget for Transportation

Transportation Master Plan engagement feedback included questions on what sources of funding are used for transportation and what types of projects that money is spent on. Since the makeup of projects changes each year, the snapshot of transportation funding and spending presented below is over a 10-year timeframe, consistent with the City’s 2018 Financial Plan and current 10-Year Capital Plan.

Every year the City spends approximately \$40 million dollars on transportation. This includes items such as the construction and operation of roads, sidewalks, street lights, bike paths, and public transit. It is paid through a mixture of property taxes, developer contributions, transit fares, and grants. Spending by senior government agencies like BC Transit or the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure is not included.

Budgeted Municipal Spending (Millions), 2018-2027



The City receives roughly \$5 million in fuel taxes from the federal government each year, which is equal to about one-fifth of our annual spending on roads. The rest of the funding comes from property taxes and development contributions.

Investments to support walking, cycling and transit make up a little less than half of expenditures with the remainder of funding going towards the road network. This reflects the City’s existing goals to increase the viability of sustainable and active transportation travel options and provide basic walking and cycling infrastructure in parts of the City where they are absent.

Nearly two-thirds of spending on roads is for operating and maintenance. This number is expected to rise over time as our road infrastructure ages. The remaining portion, roughly \$80 million, is allocated for building new road infrastructure.

Through the upcoming Transportation Master Plan, we will need to consider what projects, programs and policies will be prioritized and funded. Where we spend our limited resources will be an important conversation within the Transportation Master Plan process.

OUR KELOWNA AS WE MOVE – DRAFT VISION STATEMENT

“Kelowna will be a city with vibrant urban centres where people and places are conveniently connected by diverse transportation options that help us transition from our car-centric culture.”

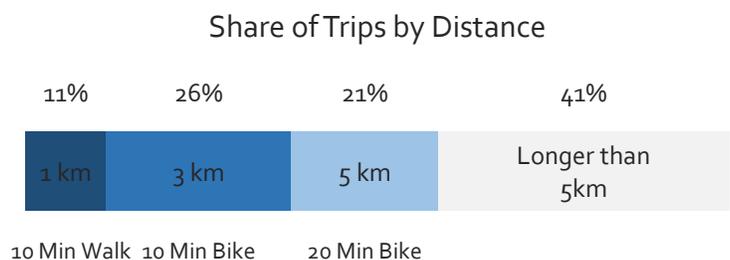
Transportation Master Plan Vision

During the first phase of public consultation for the Transportation Master Plan, Kelowna residents were asked for their input on the vision statement. Of more than 500 responses; two-thirds supported the vision. However, amongst those who opposed the statement, some were concerned about the term “car-centric culture” seeking clarification of what was meant by the term.

Shifting away from our car-centric culture does not mean banning cars. Cars and trucks will always have an important role in daily life in Kelowna. Many trips will always be more convenient in a personal vehicle. As well, people living in some neighbourhoods, especially on the edges of the city, will continue to depend on private vehicles for most of their travel.

However, accommodating all our future travel by car is unrealistic and we will need to shift, over time, to other travel options for some trips. Fortunately, most trips Kelowna residents make are less than five kilometres – short enough to walk or bike. For longer trips, transit can be a viable alternative to driving, depending on destinations, routes, and schedules.

Transitioning from our car-centric culture means giving more choices to as many people as possible, so that driving does not always have to be the default option. Not everyone has to make the switch in order for everyone to benefit from less congestion. A small decrease in traffic volumes on busy roads can lead to a bigger decrease in travel time.



Next Steps

The vision of *Our Kelowna as we Move* is to make it easy for more people to choose more active, healthier and sustainable travel options, and as a consequence, drive less. It is a vision that recognizes that changes to how we move are required to accommodate future growth in our community in a way that enhances our quality of life. The development of a balanced transportation system will involve improving our streets, however, building our way out of congestion is not possible. In long run, we will have as much traffic as we build room for. Giving people more convenient choices to get around is the only way to solve the congestion paradox.

The next phase of *Our Kelowna as we Move* will look at existing and projected future conditions, as well as land use scenarios being proposed through the Official Community Plan Update and their impact on the transportation network. For more information about public engagement and to stay up to date on the process, visit kelowna.ca/imaginenext.