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UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
DALLA LANA SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Centre for
Occupational
Disease
Prevention



Centre for
Research Expertise
in Occupational Disease

Research that makes a Difference

OEH SEMINAR SERIES

“Practices and Inspiration for Sustainable Transportation Equity: Case Studies from Canadian Cities”

January 17, 2025

12:00 – 1:00 PM



Speaker

Dr. Meghan Winters

Professor Faculty of Health Sciences,
Simon Fraser University CIHR/PHAC
Applied Public Health Research Chair



Transportation paved the way for colonization — it can also support reconciliation

Published: September 27, 2023 4.25pm EDT

A stretch of Highway 16 near Prince George, B.C., known as the Highway of Tears, where several Indigenous women and girls have gone missing. THE CANADIAN PRESS/Jonathan Hayward



Health begins where we live, work, learn, and play.



Transportation is the backbone of a city.
It is what connects people to the places they want to go, the people they need to see, the opportunities of city life.

Interrelated themes of urban built environments, mobility, active transportation, road safety, population health, equity, and public policy.

Partnership and collaboration are a central value.



[REACH Cities](#)

Advancing research, tools, and partnerships that increase the gender equity in urban environments



[Mobilizing Justice](#)

Towards evidence-based transportation equity policy.



[YOUTH.HOOD](#)

Youth, social-connectedness, and neighbourhood design in South Vancouver



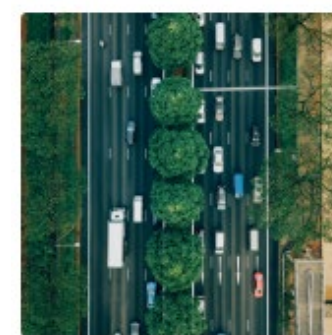
[INTERACT](#)

INTERventions, Research, & Action in Cities Team



[Bike Score](#)

Partnership with Walk Score to create a neighbourhood metric for bikeability



[Road Pricing](#)

The effects of road pricing on transportation and health equity



[Seniors' Transportation](#)

Examining alternative community-based transportation services for older adults in British Columbia



[Mapping Bicycle Facilities Across Canada](#)

The Canadian Bikeway Comfort & Safety (Can-BICS) Classification System and Open Street Maps (OSM)



[WalkRollMap & BikeMaps](#)

Crowd sourced mapping resources to make city environments safer and more accessible active modes



[Micromobility](#)

Readiness for Shared Micromobility: Public Perceptions in Metro Vancouver



[Mid-Sized Cities](#)

Impacts of Bicycle Infrastructure in Mid-sized Cities Study (IBIMS)



[Bike Share](#)

A collection of bikes share projects



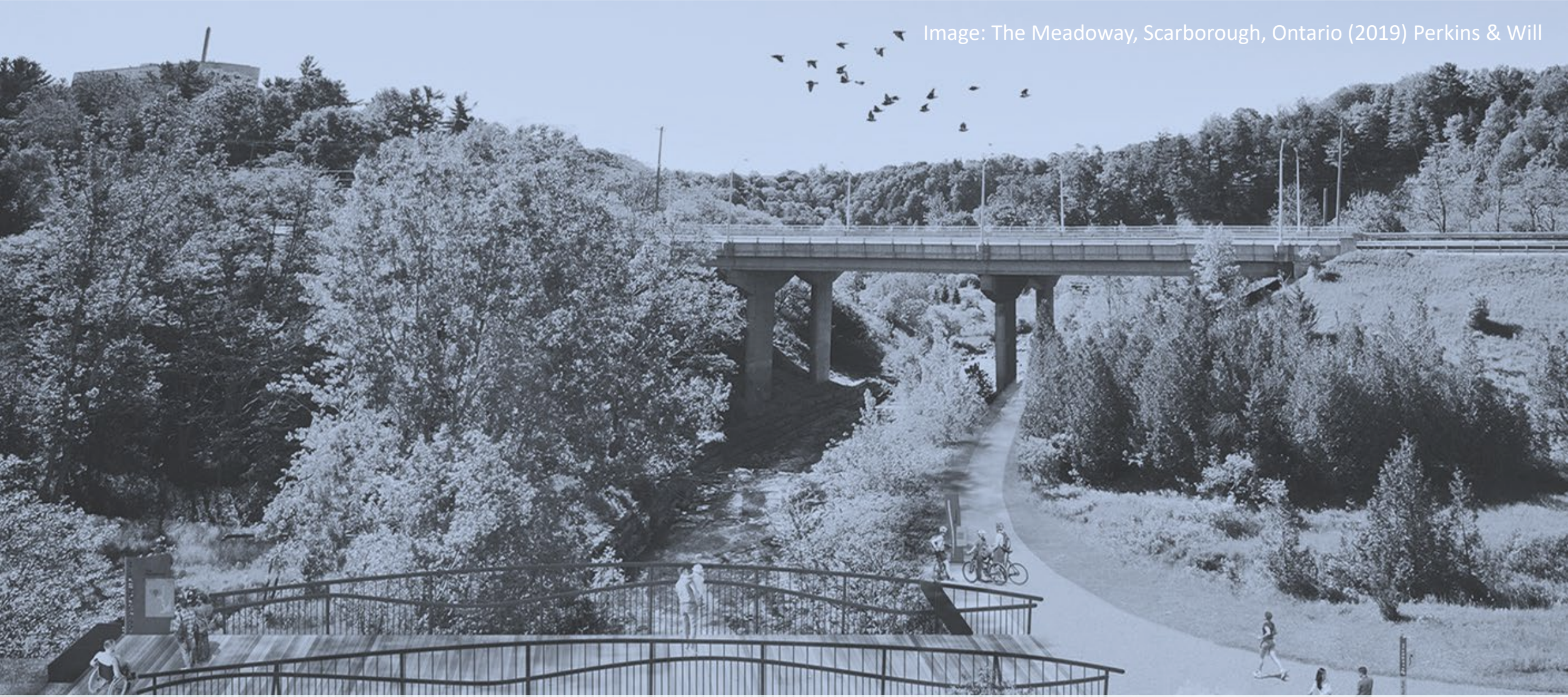
[Pedestrian Safety](#)

Identifying Unmarked Crosswalks at Bus stops



[Social Connectedness](#)

Supporting Social Inclusion and Well-Being in Metro Vancouver

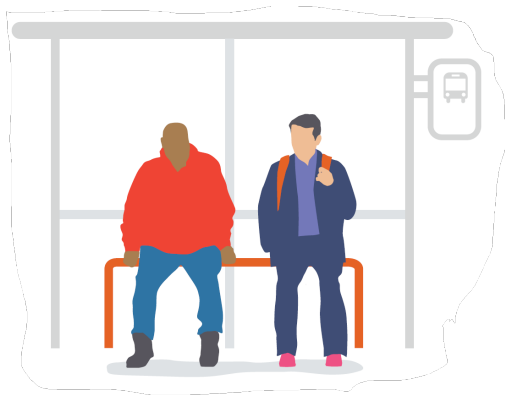


Transportation systems are embedded in making **sustainable, resilient, and equitable cities.**

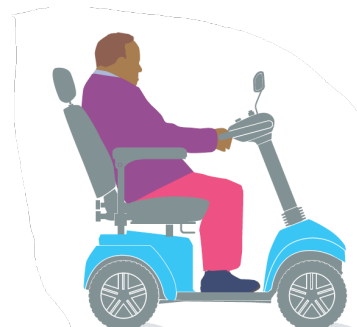
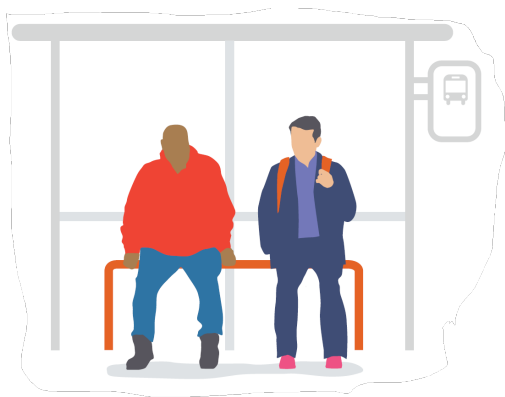
Over 1 million Canadians live in transportation poverty.



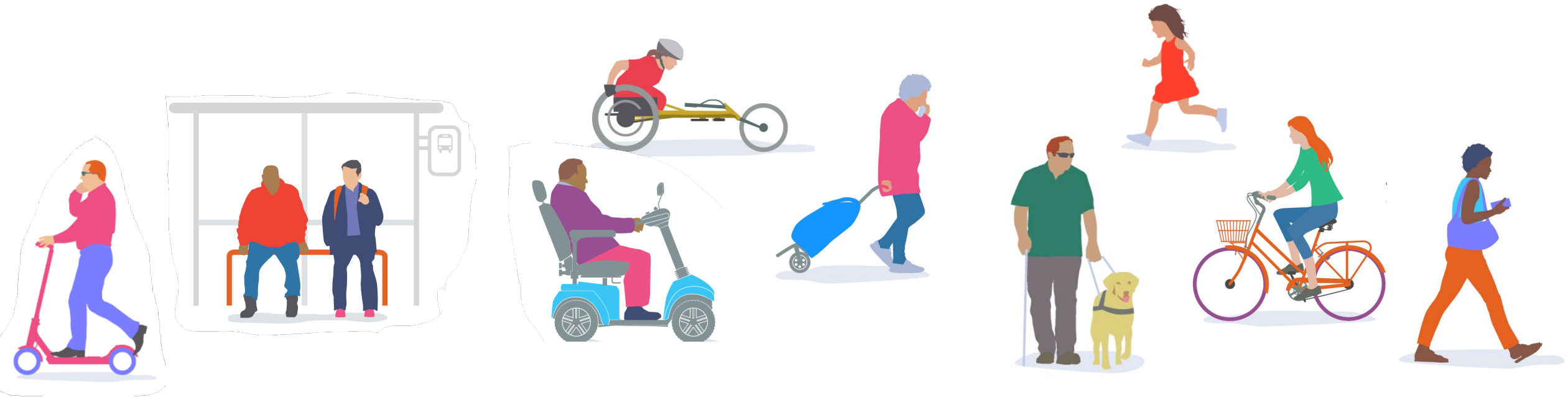
Governments are making major investments in active transportation and transit.



Cities are putting equity on their policy agendas.



Cities have the opportunity to build transportation systems that work for everyone.



**How can we move
transportation equity from
rhetoric to reality?**

Poll

How would you rate your level of experience with transportation equity?

- Answer options: Green machine, Inspired intermediate, trusted trailblazer

**What does transportation
equity *really* mean?**

TRANSPORTATION EQUITY

Equity is...

- 1 | not the same as equality.
- 2 | about people.
- 3 | intersectional.
- 4 | about process and outcomes.
- 5 | linked to systems of power.



**How are cities formalizing
equity commitments into
policy?**

EQUITY POLICY SCAN

shortlist

	City	Province	Equity Policy Document Name & Link	Year	2021 CSD Pop
1	Vancouver	BC	Equity Framework	2021	662,248
2	Ottawa	ON	Equity & Inclusion Lens	2018	1,017,449
3	Halifax	NS	Diversity & Inclusion Framework	2018	439,819
4	Edmonton	AB	Art of Inclusion + Equity Toolkit	2019	1,010,899
5	New Westminster	BC	Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Anti-racism framework	2022	78,916
6	Victoria	BC	Equity Framework	2022	91,867
7	Saskatoon	SK	Triple Bottom Line Framework + Equity Toolkit	20/21	266,141
8	Montreal	QC	Solidarity, Equity and Inclusion Plan: So No One Is Left Behind	2021	1,762,949
9	Burnaby	BC	Social Sustainability Strategy	2011	249,125
10	Oshawa	ON	Equity & Inclusion Lens	2021	175,383
11	Stratford	PEI	Diversity & Inclusion Plan	2018	10,927
12	Moncton	NB	Social Inclusion Plan	2016	79,470
13	London	ON	Community Diversity & Inclusion Strategy	2017	422,324
14	Newmarket	ON	DEI Plan + Lens	2021	87,942
15	Hamilton	ON	EDI Handbook	2019	569,353
16	County of Kings	NS	Toward Equity and Diversity: A Strategy for Belonging	2021	62,914
17	Calgary	AB	Gender Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy	2019	1,306,784
18	Windsor	ON	Diversity & Inclusion Initiative	2018	229,660
19	Vaughan	ON	DEI Plan	2021	323,103
20	Markham	ON	Diversity Action Plan + Anti-Black Racism Plan	2022	338,503
21	Toronto	ON	Youth Equity Lens	2014	2,794,356
22	Mississauga	ON	Workplace Diversity & Inclusion Strategy	2017	717,961

Ten considerations for the development of municipal equity policies in Canada

1. Start with a clear vision for systemic change
2. Ground the approach in local context
3. Centre diverse voices
4. Think critically about language
5. Apply an intersectional approach
6. Audit status quo for opportunities to improve
7. Adopt tools to evaluate equity impacts
8. Create structures for accountability
9. Establish baseline and monitor impacts
10. Embrace a learning mindset

1

**Start with a clear
vision for
systemic change**

“**The Equity Framework is not an action plan.** It is a conceptual, grounding, foundational document, out of which a number of toolkits and action plans flow (...) The Equity Framework lays the foundation for **culture change** within the City of Vancouver as an organization.”

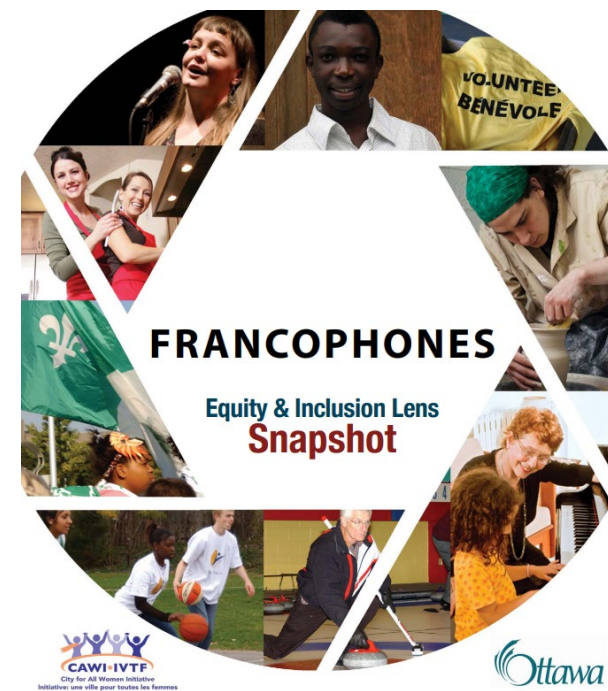
- City of Vancouver Equity Framework, 2021

2

Ground the approach in local context

“The Snapshots are short booklets developed by community leaders to help you learn more about the people in our workforce and in the community who risk exclusion.”

- City of Ottawa Equity & Inclusion Lens, 2018



4

**Think critically
about language**

“ Both diversity and inclusion are also important when embedding equity. **However, they are not able to tackle the dismantling of systems of oppression that equity gets us to.** Equity is the foundation of the Equity Framework; diversity and inclusion support equitable outcomes.”

- City of Victoria Equity Framework, 2022

5

Apply an intersectional approach

“We all have multiple identity factors that overlap and contribute to the ways in which we experience our workplace and city. Depending on how our identity factors overlap, **some of us experience multiple and compounding barriers to inclusion which can limit our options, opportunities and participation.** This is intersectionality.”

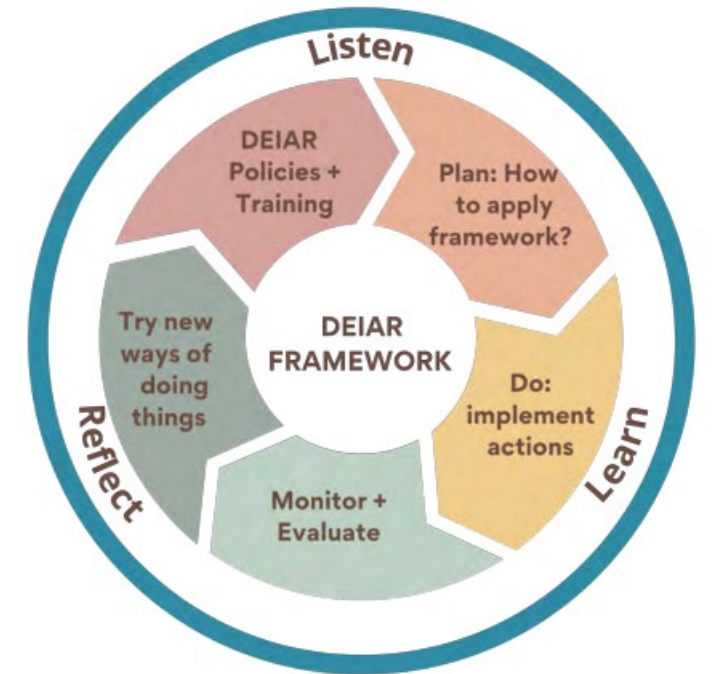
- City of Edmonton's the Art of Inclusion, 2019

8

Create structures for accountability

“Establish an Equity Office with permanent funding. ... Having dedicated staff and resources to advance DEIAR related work internally will **be essential in building capacity within the City** to move the work forward.”

- New Westminster’s Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism Framework, 2022



Ten considerations for the development of municipal equity policies in Canada

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Poll

How often does transport equity come up in your work?

- Answer options: All the time; more and more; rarely

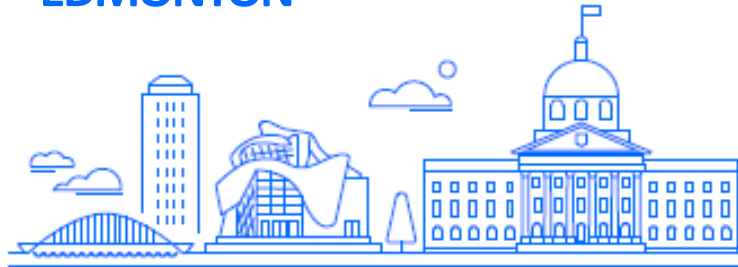
**How can cities
apply transportation equity on
the ground?**

CASE STUDIES

NEW WESTMINSTER



EDMONTON



OTTAWA



CITY SPOTLIGHTS



Leading with local:
County of Kings, Nova Scotia



Harnessing data to drive change:
Oakland, California



Exploring equity across scales:
Toronto, Ontario



Centring community:
Seattle, Washington



Legislating equity into decision-making:
Washington, DC

Promising practices for embedding equity in sustainable transportation interventions

1 

Formalize a city-wide commitment to equity in municipal policies, plans, and strategies.

2 

Integrate equity in transportation-specific policies and plans.

3 

Establish a clear vision for what equity means for transportation.

4 

Mandate systematic equity analysis as part of any municipal decision.

5 

Tap into varied data to identify equity needs.

6 

Apply an intersectional approach.

7 

Support equity analyses with staff resources and data.

8 

Embed equity specialists within work teams.

9 

Convene advisory committees that include representation from structurally marginalized communities.

10 

Rethink public engagement to reach under-engaged groups.

11 

Remove barriers to community engagement.

12 

Prioritize resource allocation in neighbourhoods that need them most.

13 

Support continuous learning across the organization.

14 

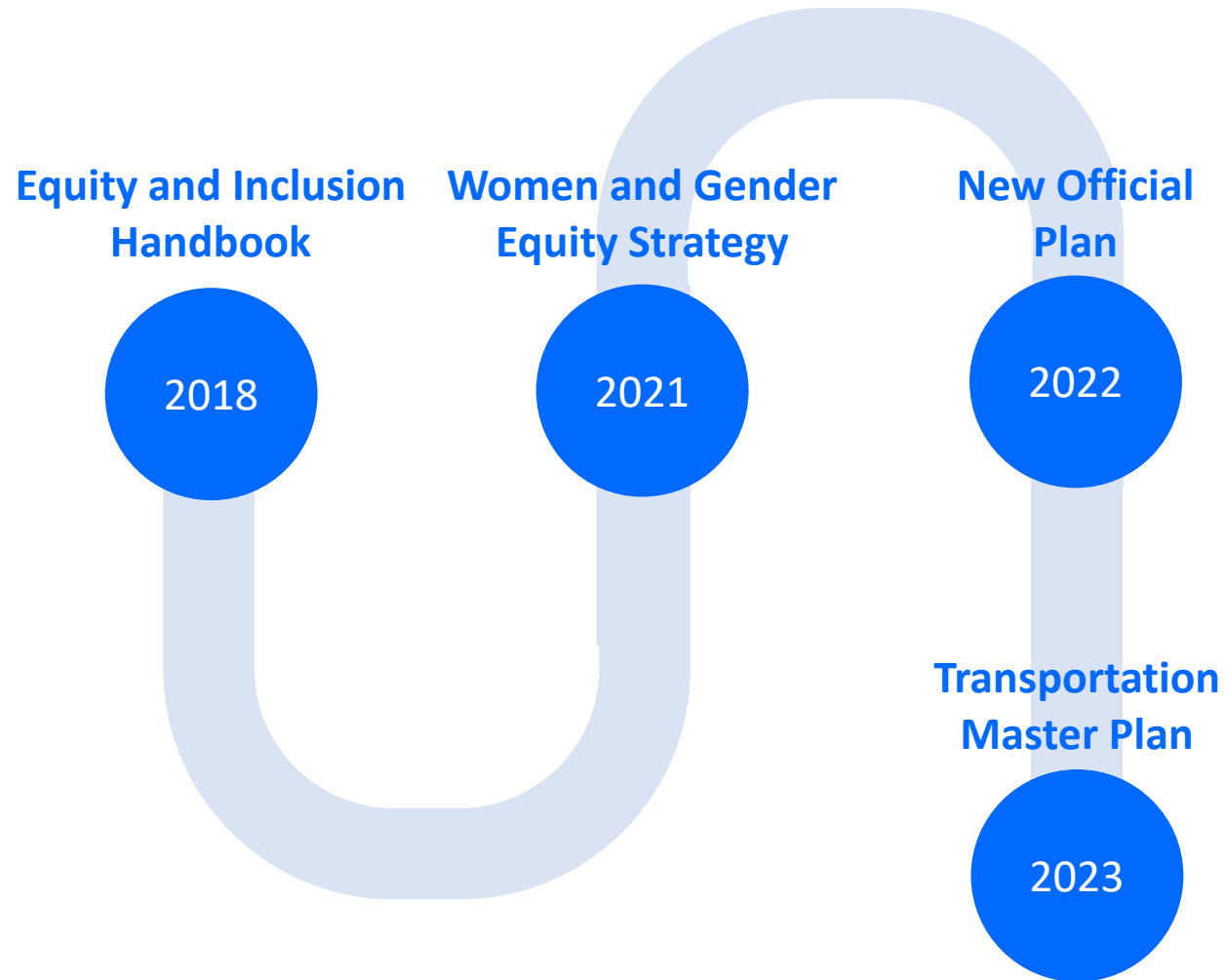
Learn from experimentation.

15 

Audit status quo for opportunities to improve.



OTTAWA



1 Formalize a city-wide commitment to equity in municipal policies, plans, and strategies



2 Integrate equity in transportation-specific policies and plans.

“The map of Equity Priority neighbourhood is something that people can really grab on to. Otherwise, it’s a lot harder.”



5 

Tap into varied data to identify equity needs.

12 

Prioritize resource allocation in neighbourhoods that need them most.

NEW WESTMINSTER

“I think we’re getting much better at...identifying communities that don’t normally come out, that don’t normally talk to us, don’t have the privilege of knowledge, time, childcare, to go to an event. We need to go to them.”



10 

Rethink public engagement to reach under-engaged groups.

11 

Remove barriers to community engagement.

EDMONTON

“There’s a lot of frustrations of trying to fill in the GBA+ section or understand how it does and doesn’t apply to projects. But again, **even though it has been challenging, I think we’re still in a lot better place.**”

- Staff, Edmonton



4 

Mandate systematic equity analysis as part of any municipal decision.

6 

Apply an intersectional approach.

15 

Audit status quo for opportunities to improve.

“Equity is one of these journeys, where it’ll be lifelong learning, especially to address our biases. You know I’m a White woman with privileges, and so it’s just a constant, constant learning... And I think our leaders...throughout the corporation continually listen and learn.”

–Staff, Edmonton



What opportunities can public health practitioners seize to action on equity?



Laura Chow, Vancouver Coastal Health

Public Health Opportunities to

RUN GUIDE RIDE ALONG

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Learn from experimentation.

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Public Health Opportunities to

RUN

British Columbia

June heat wave was the deadliest weather event in Canadian history, experts say

The largest increases in deaths due to the heat wave were seen in New Westminister, Burnaby and Vancouver

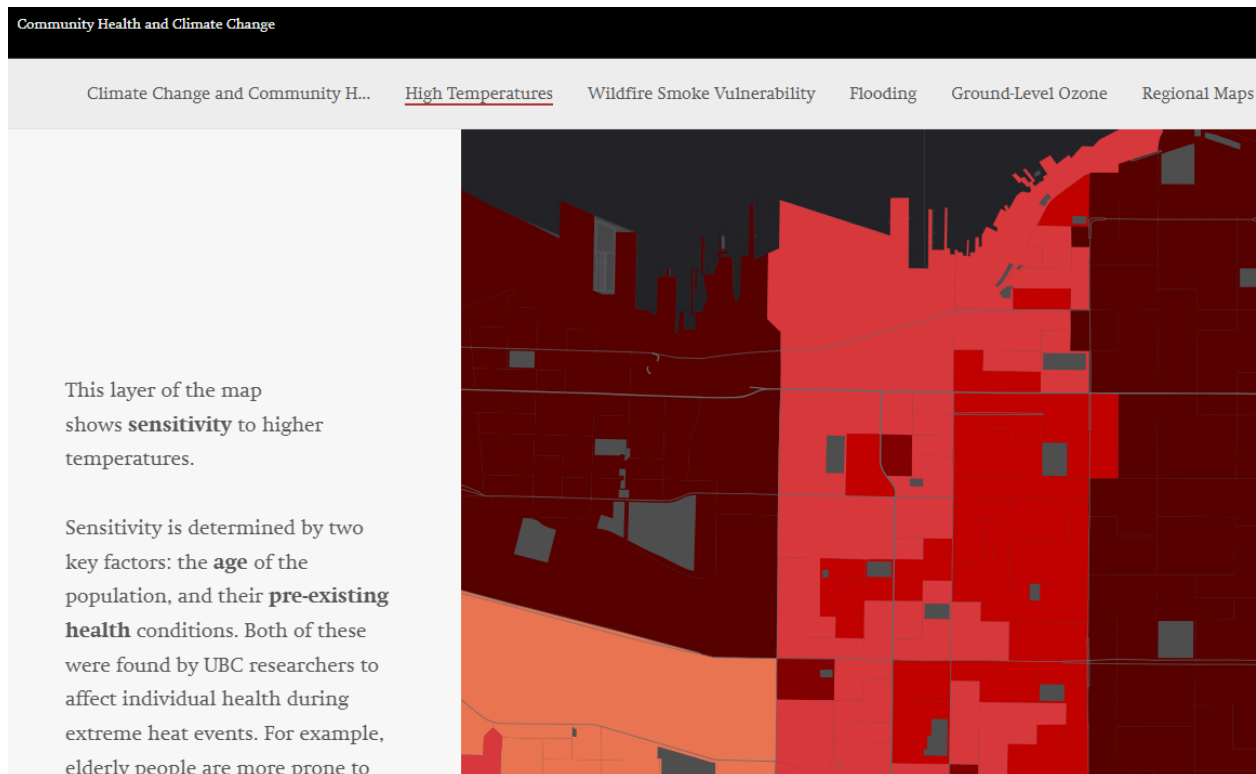


[Michelle Gomez](#) · CBC News · Posted: Oct 02, 2021 4:35 PM EDT | Last Updated: October 2, 2021



Public Health Opportunities to RUN

Climate Change & Vulnerability Maps



Heat Check-In Framework



Transportation and Heat Options

"Some buses are air conditioned, and some are not—but if you have a bus pass you can use the bus to cool down."

Public Health Opportunities to GUIDE

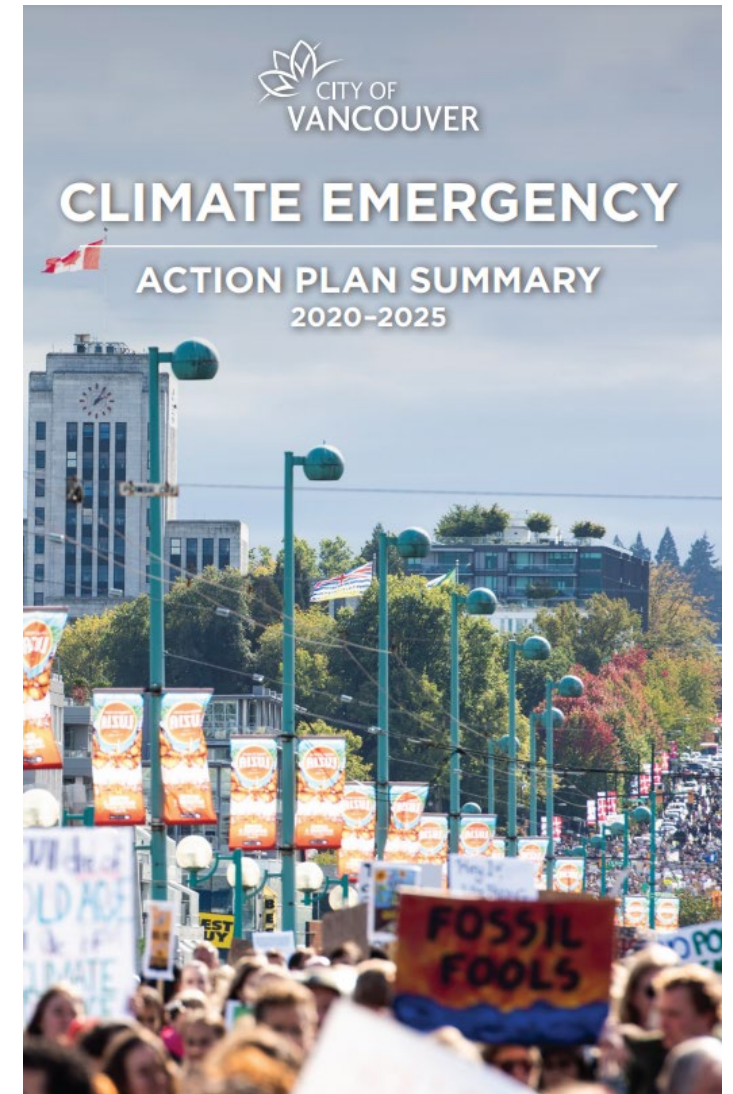


Transport 2050
Draft Regional Transportation Strategy
Summary Document

TRANSPORT
2050

Shape the future of
how we move. And live.

This complex block features a collage of four images illustrating different modes of transportation: a young girl in a pink shirt and green helmet riding a bicycle; a blue bus labeled "E4700SC" and "RIOCENTRO" on a road; a person in a wheelchair with a purple bag; and a woman in an orange jacket standing next to a white electric car with a shopping bag. Below the collage is a green footer with the text "Transport 2050 Draft Regional Transportation Strategy Summary Document" on the left, "TRANSPORT 2050" in the center, and "Shape the future of how we move. And live." on the right.



Public Health Opportunities to RIDE ALONG

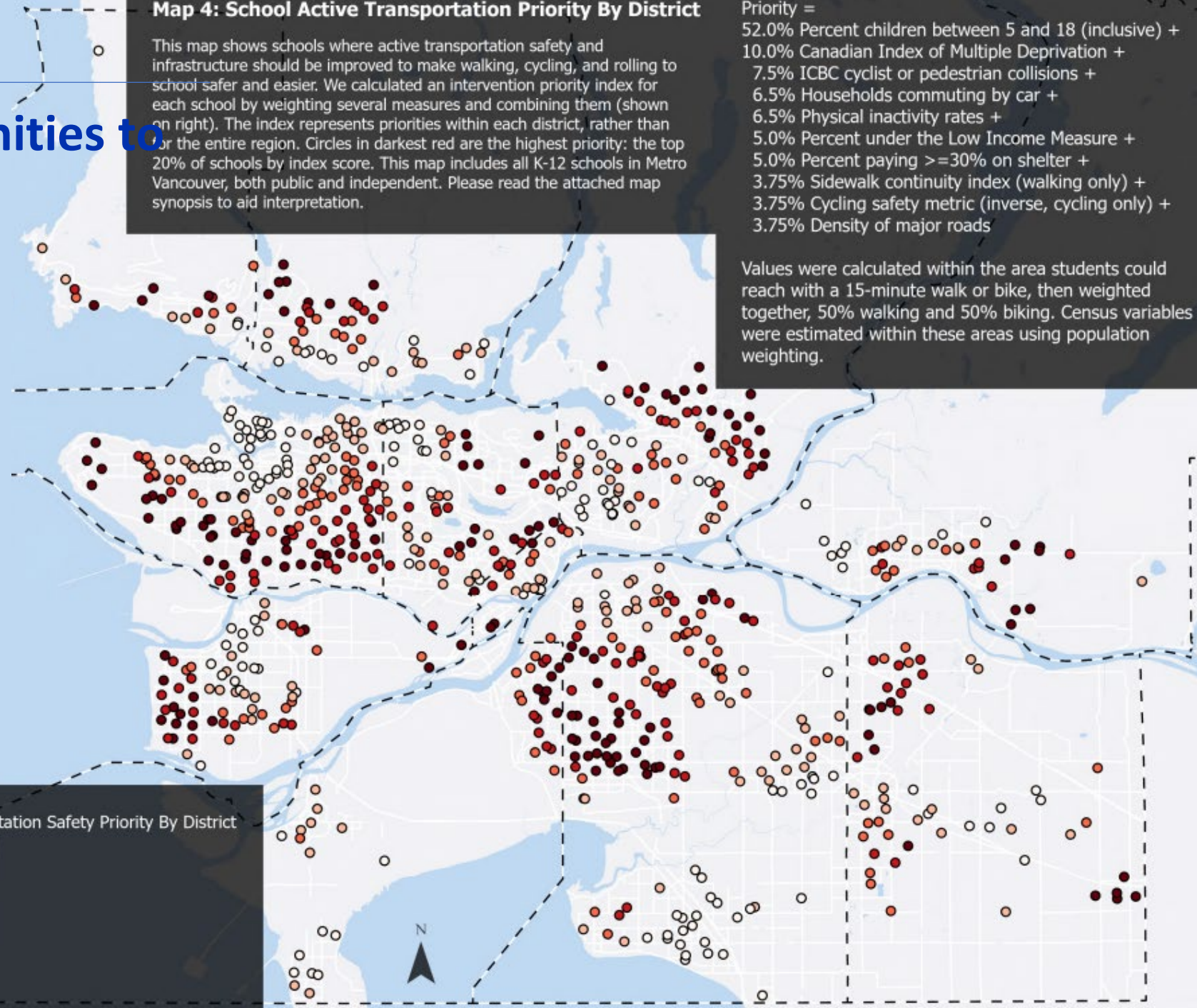
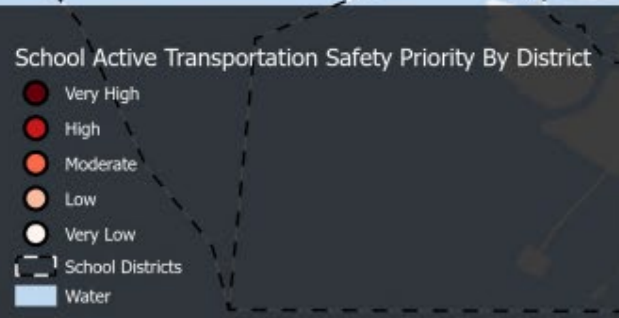
Metro Vancouver Social Equity Mapping Project

Map 4: School Active Transportation Priority By District

This map shows schools where active transportation safety and infrastructure should be improved to make walking, cycling, and rolling to school safer and easier. We calculated an intervention priority index for each school by weighting several measures and combining them (shown on right). The index represents priorities within each district, rather than for the entire region. Circles in darkest red are the highest priority: the top 20% of schools by index score. This map includes all K-12 schools in Metro Vancouver, both public and independent. Please read the attached map synopsis to aid interpretation.

Priority =
52.0% Percent children between 5 and 18 (inclusive) +
10.0% Canadian Index of Multiple Deprivation +
7.5% ICBC cyclist or pedestrian collisions +
6.5% Households commuting by car +
6.5% Physical inactivity rates +
5.0% Percent under the Low Income Measure +
5.0% Percent paying $\geq 30\%$ on shelter +
3.75% Sidewalk continuity index (walking only) +
3.75% Cycling safety metric (inverse, cycling only) +
3.75% Density of major roads

Values were calculated within the area students could reach with a 15-minute walk or bike, then weighted together, 50% walking and 50% biking. Census variables were estimated within these areas using population weighting.



Public Health Opportunities to RIDE ALONG

TransLink's TravelSmart4Kids:
A Regional Travel Strategy for
Kids 12 & Under



Poll

What role do you feel you can take most often?

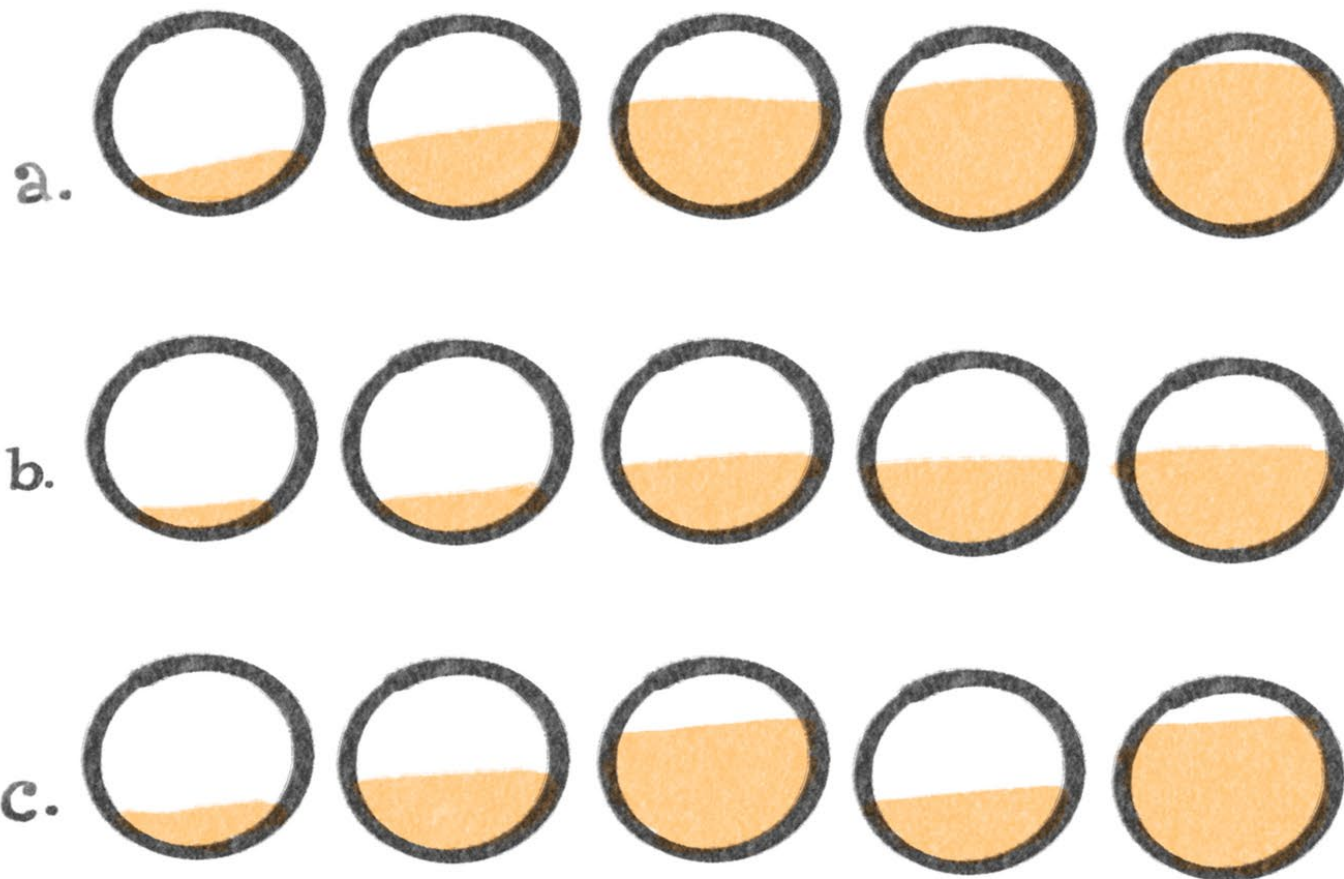
- Answer options: Run (leading the work); Guide (letter writing / commenting on plans / strategies); Ride along (advisory groups)

LOOKING FORWARD

Advancing transportation equity is an ongoing journey, and there is still much to learn, change, and do.



ALL OF THESE ARE PROGRESS.



CONTACT US

national@teaminteract.ca



teaminteract.ca/piste

INTERACT



Mitacs



Possible discussion prompts for the audience

- What are some other promising practices for transportation equity from your own experience?
- What are governments not paying enough attention to when it comes to equity policy? What are they missing?
- If you were ten times bolder what big idea would you recommend to advance transportation equity?

OTTAWA

2018

Equity and Inclusion Handbook

- Based on Ottawa's original Equity and Inclusion Lens Guide (2010, updated 2015).
- Guided staff to question their assumptions and identify their position with power structures.
- Provided checklists that ask questions designed to help staff identify and mitigate inequities in their work.
- Developed data-driven profiles of structurally marginalized communities in Ottawa, identified key issues they face, and relevant City initiatives.

2021

Women and Gender Equity Strategy

- Recommended the creation of a new section for equity implications in corporate reports, with a focus on issues related to gender, race, and Indigenous peoples.
- Called for the application of an intersectional equity lens to City work, using the new Official Plan (OP) as an example where women's transportation and housing needs could be explicitly addressed.

2022

New Official Plan

- Identified gender and racial equity as a cross-cutting policy issue and integrated those dimensions in implementation policies throughout the OP.
- Directed the Transportation Master Plan update to consider equity, particularly in transit planning for different groups of women.
- Adopted the concept of 15-minute neighbourhoods as a core policy framework that could improve access to opportunities for structurally marginalized communities.
- Set a target for majority sustainable mode share.
- Established a growth strategy that prioritized infill density over new greenfield development.

2023

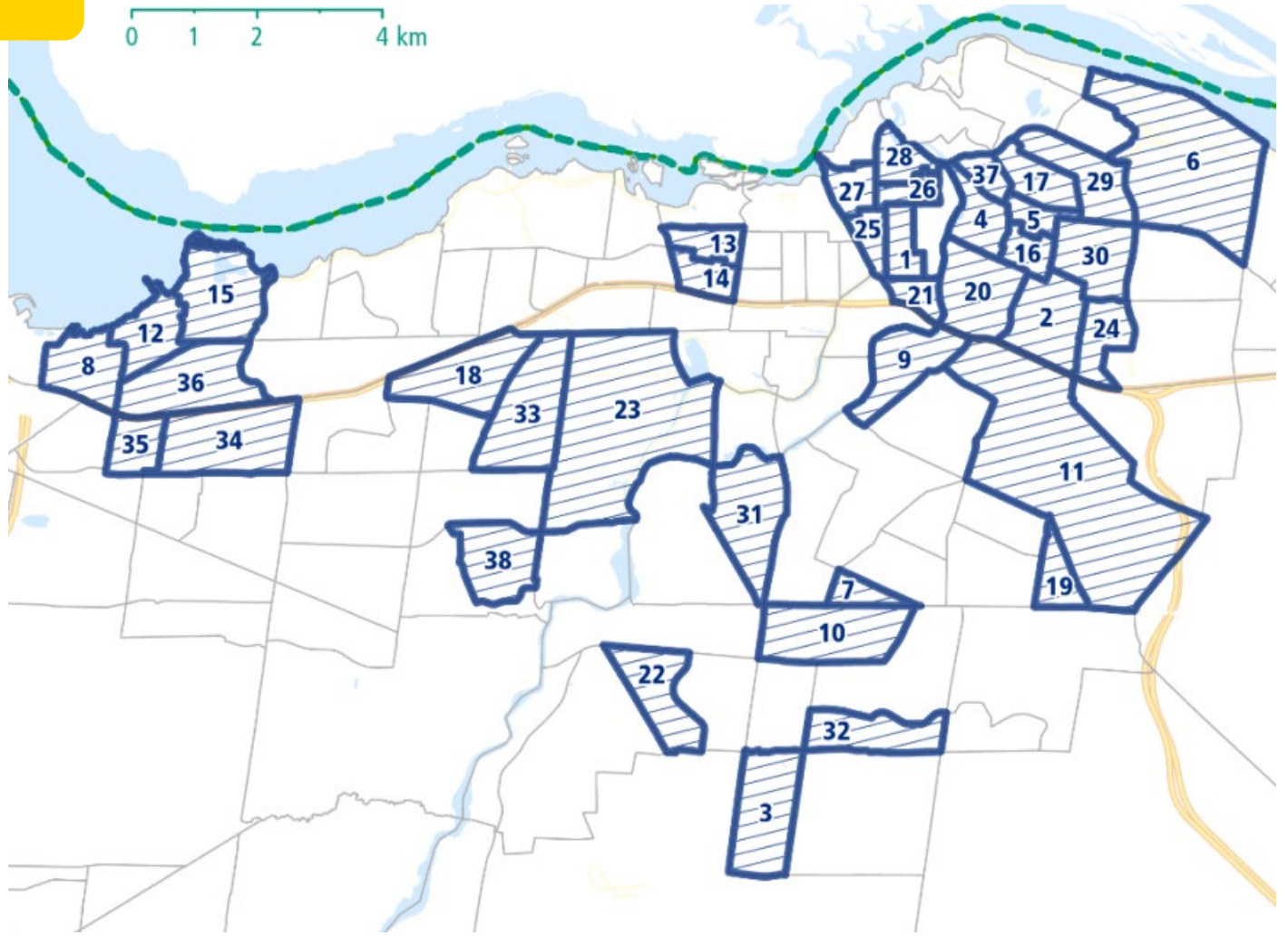
Transportation Master Plan - Part 1

- Anchored in the concept of reducing mobility poverty and transportation barriers for structurally marginalized communities.
- Identified priority neighbourhoods for investments in new and improved transportation infrastructure.

MAINSTREAM EQUITY IN POLICY

MAP INEQUITIES TO GUIDE INVESTMENT

“The map of Equity Priority neighbourhoods is something that people can really grab on to. Otherwise, it’s a lot harder.”



CONSIDER EQUITY IMPLICATIONS WHEN PREPARING CORPORATE REPORTS

“If you decide not to fill it... it will generate even more questions about your plan, so you would rather fill it.”
–Staff, Ottawa



EMBED EQUITY SPECIALISTS IN TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS

“There’s a position that’s focused on **gender equity**. I think having somebody whose job it is to...make sure that those considerations are being brought into all aspects of the way that the city does business and does planning, it’s **probably a major reason for why we’re starting to see these things happen.**”

—Consultant, Ottawa



Public Health Opportunities to

RIDE ALONG

Skeena Terrace Planning Program

