

March 24, 2024

To the members of the Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee. I am writing to you as a resident of old north and resident physician in the emergency medicine program at Western who formerly served as a paramedic with Middlesex London Paramedic service from 2006-2018. After having reviewed the vision and proposed options outlined in the mobility master plan (MMP) I am concerned London is at risk of continuing to pursue a vision of transportation infrastructure that is expensive, unsafe, inequitable, and inefficient. I am asking the members of the SPPC to view this report not through the lens of a collection of councillors struggling to manage a number of high-priority challenges, but from the perspectives of individuals who are tasked with shaping London for generations to come. With this perspective in mind, my hope is that you will consider a true *mode shift* to a model of transportation design that will revolutionize the way people travel in the London and introduce a paradigm that is based upon sustainability, efficiency, equity, and safety. With this approach London will be a more liveable city for all and a compelling location business and travel. In order to achieve such a mode shift, Option 3 must be a minimum target.

If we're really going to tackle this problem in a sustainable way London's vision has to be grander and invert our funding priorities. A true mode shift requires a vision for transit that aims to be amongst the best in the world and funding will need to flow from increasing vehicle capacity to building a comprehensive transit system. That plan will need to accommodate the growth that we're targeting and will need to grow alongside it, including consideration for alternate modes of transit despite the awesome scalability and flexibility of buses. To optimize this mode shift we will also need an expansive and integrated active transport system to capitalize on efficiency and individual experience with the side effect of improved health outcomes.

If we create a reliable, frequent, and comprehensive transit service, and truly integrated active transportation network we can then partner with employers and devise a plan for them to subsidize transit use by their employees and while showing employers how much value they can unlock by reducing the land they allocate to parking. This creates new opportunities for housing growth and intensifies our commercial/industrial growth in a way that means less green space development and less demand for infrastructure expansion. It ultimately also makes London a much more desirable municipality for employers who are looking to build in a new centre.

### Why Mode Shift?

- 1. Cost savings:** Mode shifts can lead to cost savings for both individuals and cities. For individuals, opting for public transportation, walking, or cycling can be more cost-effective than owning and maintaining a private vehicle. For cities, investing in public transportation and active transportation infrastructure can be more financially efficient compared to building and maintaining extensive road networks for cars.
- 2. Increased productivity:** Efficient and reliable public transportation systems can improve overall productivity by reducing travel times and congestion. When people can rely on public transit to commute efficiently, they spend less time stuck in traffic and have more time for work, leisure, or other productive activities.
- 3. Reduced healthcare costs:** Mode shifts that promote active transportation like walking and cycling can have positive impacts on public health. Encouraging physical activity through active transportation can lead to reduced healthcare costs associated with sedentary lifestyles, obesity, and related health issues.
- 4. Improved air quality:** Shifting away from private cars and promoting sustainable modes of transportation can help improve air quality by reducing vehicle emissions. This, in turn, can lead to health benefits and cost savings associated with lower pollution-related healthcare expenses.

**5. Boosted local economy:** Investments in public transportation and active transportation infrastructure can stimulate local economies. Improved transportation options can attract businesses, enhance access to job opportunities, and increase property values around well-connected transit hubs.

### **Cities Who Have Embraced Mode Shift**

One recent example of a significant mode shift includes Paris, France, who over the last 15 years implemented a series of significant adjustments to their transportation system that has revolutionized the way people travel and the livability of the city. Paris implemented mode shift initiatives for several reasons, driven by various factors and goals:

**1. Environmental concerns:** One of the primary motivations for mode shift in Paris is the need to address environmental challenges, particularly air pollution and carbon emissions. Shifting away from private vehicles toward more sustainable modes of transportation, such as cycling, walking, and public transit, helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve air quality.

**2. Sustainable urban development:** Mode shift aligns with Paris' vision for sustainable urban development. By prioritizing active transportation and public transit, the city aims to create more livable, pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods, reduce traffic congestion, and create a healthier urban environment.

**3. Public health:** Encouraging active transportation, such as walking and cycling, promotes physical activity and improves public health. Paris recognizes the importance of promoting healthier lifestyles and reducing sedentary behaviors associated with car dependence.

**4. Enhancing mobility and accessibility:** Improving public transportation and active transportation options helps enhance mobility and accessibility for all residents. By providing efficient, reliable, and affordable alternatives to private cars, Paris aims to ensure that transportation is accessible to everyone, regardless of income or ability.

**5. Quality of life:** Mode shift initiatives are also aimed at improving the overall quality of life in Paris. By reducing traffic congestion, noise pollution, and the dominance of cars in the urban landscape, the city aims to create more pleasant and vibrant public spaces that prioritize people over vehicles.

**6. Economic benefits:** Mode shift can bring economic benefits to the city. By investing in public transportation, cycling infrastructure, and pedestrian-friendly spaces, Paris aims to attract businesses, tourism, and investment. Additionally, reducing reliance on private cars can result in cost savings for individuals and the city, such as reduced spending on infrastructure maintenance and healthcare costs related to pollution and sedentary lifestyles.

Overall, Paris implemented mode shift initiatives as part of its broader commitment to sustainability, public health, improved mobility, and creating a more inclusive and livable city for its residents and visitors.

Some key actions Paris has undertaken include:

**1. Extensive cycling infrastructure:** Paris has significantly expanded its cycling infrastructure, including the implementation of over 1,000 kilometers of bike lanes, bike-sharing programs, and bike parking facilities. The city's bike-sharing program, Vélib', is one of the largest in the world and encourages residents and visitors to choose cycling as a mode of transportation.

**2. Pedestrianization:** Paris has been actively pedestrianizing certain areas, particularly in the city center. Prominent examples include the transformation of the banks of the Seine River into pedestrian-only areas, car-free zones in historic neighborhoods like Le Marais, and the designation of car-free days in some parts of the city.

**3. Introduction of low-emission zones:** Paris has implemented low-emission zones (LEZs) in an effort to combat air pollution. These zones restrict the entry of high-polluting vehicles into the city center, encouraging the use of cleaner and more sustainable modes of transportation.

**4. Expansion of public transportation:** Paris has continually invested in its public transportation system, with an extensive network of metro lines, buses, trams, and regional trains. The city has expanded metro lines, improved connectivity, and introduced new rolling stock to enhance the quality and capacity of public transport services.

**5. Car-sharing and car-free initiatives:** Paris has launched car-sharing programs, such as Autolib' and Free2Move, to encourage car-sharing and reduce private car ownership. Additionally, the city periodically organizes car-free days, where certain areas are closed to private vehicles, promoting alternative modes of transport and reducing car dependency.

**6. Encouraging electric mobility:** Paris has been proactive in promoting electric mobility. The city has established charging infrastructure for electric vehicles and introduced incentives for the purchase of electric cars, including subsidies and exemptions from congestion charges.

These initiatives reflect Paris' commitment to mode shift, with a focus on promoting active transportation, improving public transit, reducing car dependency, and mitigating environmental impacts. The city's efforts align with its goal of creating a more sustainable, livable, and pedestrian-friendly urban environment.

Several cities around the world have undergone significant mode shifts for transportation over the past two decades. Here are a few notable examples:

**1. Copenhagen, Denmark:** Copenhagen has made remarkable progress in promoting cycling as a primary mode of transportation. The city has invested heavily in cycling infrastructure, including dedicated bike lanes, bridges, and parking facilities. As a result, the percentage of trips made by bicycle has significantly increased, making Copenhagen one of the world's leading cycling cities.

**2. Bogotá, Colombia:** Bogotá implemented a transformative Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system called TransMilenio, which has revolutionized public transportation in the city. The BRT system provides efficient, reliable, and affordable transportation options, reducing car dependency and improving mobility for residents.

**3. Curitiba, Brazil:** Curitiba is renowned for its innovative and efficient bus rapid transit system known as the Rede Integrada de Transporte (RIT). Curitiba's RIT system has helped reduce traffic congestion, decrease air pollution, and improve access to public transportation, making it a model for other cities around the world.

**4. Seoul, South Korea:** Seoul has undergone a significant mode shift by investing in a comprehensive public transportation system. The city has expanded its subway network, increased bus services, and implemented smart transportation technologies. These initiatives have led to a decrease in private car usage and a shift towards using public transportation.

**5. Portland, Oregon, USA:** Portland has prioritized sustainable transportation options and has been at the forefront of promoting cycling, walking, and public transit. The city has developed an extensive network of bike lanes, pedestrian-friendly streets, and a well-connected light rail system, encouraging residents to choose alternative modes of transportation.

These examples demonstrate how cities can successfully implement policies and infrastructure improvements to encourage mode shifts towards sustainable and efficient transportation options. The specific initiatives and approaches taken by each city may vary, but the common goal is to reduce reliance on private cars and promote more sustainable modes of transport.

## **Conclusion**

Thank you for accepting my letter. I am imploring you all to consider a vision for London that is more sustainable, more efficient, more equitable, and safer for all Londoners and the generations to come. The vision I am proposing will require courage, but the alternative of the status quo is rife with economic, health, and climate burdens for generations to come.

If you have any questions regarding how aggressive you will have to be in order to achieve any degree of success, I ask you to consider the following: Is the transit system that will result from this plan one upon which I would depend to achieve my day to day tasks, regardless of where I live in the city? And, is the infrastructure that will result from this plan one that I would entrust to provide my children safe active transportation both within their neighbourhood and throughout this city? If you can answer yes to both of these questions, you can rest assured that you are expressing adequate courage and vision to serve Londoners for generations to come.

Thank you for taking the time to review my submission. Please feel free to contact me should you have any further questions.

Sincerely,

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