

Subject: [Fwd: Cost of Cars to Transit]

Date: Wed, 21 Nov 2001 14:40:44 -0800

From: Brian Platts <brian_platts@telus.net>

To: Corrie Kost <kost@triumf.ca>

Subject: RE: Cost of Cars to Transit

Date: Wed, 21 Nov 2001 09:31:51 -0800

From: Ernie Crist <CristE@district.north-van.bc.ca>

To: "Dave Sadler" <davesadler@telus.net>, FONVCA <fonvca@fonvca.org>, Mayor and Council - DNV <Council@district.north-van.bc.ca>

CC: Directors Team <managecomm@district.north-van.bc.ca>

Dear Mr. Sadler:

As a long time observer of this and previous Councils I am sure you are familiar with at least some of the many initiatives and resolutions I have submitted to District Council regarding the transportation issue. Still I thank you for the information. During the last Council meeting one Councillor at least recognized that unless the transportation issue is resolved we are nothing more than a third world country.

Yours truly,

Ernie Crist

-----Original Message-----

From: Dave Sadler [<mailto:davesadler@telus.net>]

Sent: Wednesday, November 21, 2001 12:23 AM

To: FONVCA; Mayor and Council - DNV

Subject: Cost of Cars to Transit

> *Worth Sharing. Certainly the situation in Vancouver area is not much*
> *different than in Seattle. This just out from the Seattle Weekly.*
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> _____
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> *Published November 15 - 21, 2001*
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> *Road Hogs*
> *Think transit is expensive? Check out the cost of cars.*
> *BY KEVIN FULLERTON*
> *SO YOU'RE a do-good liberal who always supports public transportation with*
> *your vote, but some days you read the newspaper and feel like a schmuck.*
> *Cost overruns, inexplicable planning, lack of ridership--we spend so much*
> *on*
> *buses and rails, and seem to get so little. You're tired of the smirks you*
> *get from the cynics when you bring up the social costs of preserving our*
> *car*
> *culture. But are the bleeding hearts the only ones who can justify the*
> *costs*
> *of public transit?*
>
> *Absolutely not, say researchers who analyze the comparative costs of*
> *public*
> *transportation and car commuting. Even the barest of financial*
> *comparisons,*
> *they say, show that each dollar spent on public transit gives back much*
> *more*
> *than a dollar invested in highways and other car-conducive infrastructure.*
> *Think of it this way: Public transit may be the hard-luck brother who hits*

> you up for the occasional loan and embarrasses you at polite gatherings,
but
> driving a car is like having a drug habit. Addicts never count the costs
of
> their habit because that would be far too depressing.
>
> The Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) says we spend about \$26 billion
> locally, or 25 percent of our personal incomes, just for the privilege of
> moving around. And it's not light rail that's eating a hole in your
pocket.
> We each paid about \$5,400 in 1998 to drive a car, but only \$690 to fund
> buses, ferries, and other public transit, the PSRC calculates.
>
> Think the price is worth it for all that individual mobility? Those
numbers
> don't even begin to get at the real costs of cars, says PSRC's Ralph
> Cipriani. "We pay for unprecedented mobility, comfort, and privacy in ways
> that are not always apparent," says Cipriani. "Most [people] generally
> consider the costs associated with maintaining and improving roadways,
> building sidewalks and bike paths, buying buses and operating transit
> routes. . . . In fact, these direct public expenditures by government are
> only a small portion of the total cost of transportation."
> Parking is one of the biggest hidden costs of driving. In many cases, your
> car costs more sitting still than it does running down the street. A 1996
> report from Northwest Environment Watch estimated that a parking space
adds
> about 10 cents per mile to the cost of a daily commute. A typical
commercial
> development dedicates more space to parking than it does to offices and
> stores. That drives up construction costs, in some cases as much as 18
> percent, which means your rent, plate of pasta, and coffee cost more. But
> the cost of parking gets even more personal: Chances are your employer
could
> pay you as much as \$2,000 more per year for what it costs to hold a
parking
> space for you.
>
> Drivers can't even enjoy the smug satisfaction that they themselves are
> paying for the convenience of their cars. The U.S. Department of
> Transportation estimates that roadway-user fees and taxes (such as the gas
> tax and vehicle registration fees) pay for only about 60 percent of public
> expenditures for roadway construction and repairs. The rest has to be paid
> for by the public at large through sales and property taxes.
>
> Residents of cities that have made heavy investments in public transit,
such
> as New York City, pay \$2,500 less per year for mobility than do residents
of
> car-dependent cities like Houston, points out Peter Hurley of the
> Transportation Choices Coalition. Seattle's per-household costs are closer
> to Houston's than New York's.
> Cipriani says the road warriors are losing the battle to provide an urban
> infrastructure that allows us the freedom of movement we cherish as
> Americans. "The current system of financing transportation, both roadways
> and transit, is not serving us well. It is an overly complex and
inefficient
> financing system, which does little to provide the public sector with
> adequate resources to expand and improve all forms of transportation,"
says
> Cipriani.
> Any way you slice it, says Transportation Choices' Hurley, it's far
cheaper
> to add a bus or rail rider to the daily commute than another driver.

"People

> *who tend to be ideologically opposed to paying more for public transit*

don't

> *have good economic arguments that stand up," says Hurley.*

>

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