

# 2011 AITPM National Conference

**JOHN DEVNEY**

*Creating a Transit Community Culture*

*GHD Pty Ltd*

[john.w.devney@ghd.com](mailto:john.w.devney@ghd.com)

## **ABSTRACT**

A transit community culture exists where the majority of people in a city understand the public transport network, have a positive view of the system and use the services as a genuine alternative to car-based trips. It requires more than just a high quality public transport system, but wide community acceptance that public transport is part of a lifestyle choice for everyone to use.

The challenges in creating a transit community culture are discussed including the cost of providing a high quality public transport system, the poor image of public transport for the wider community, and the difficulty that public transport is not an easy mode to use when compared with the comfort, convenience and privacy of the car.

Three types of transit cultures are identified for metropolitan-wide, placed-based and activity-based communities. For the metropolitan transit culture, five classes are defined based on the annual ridership per capita.

Strategies to create a transit community culture are needed to promote public transport as a lifestyle choice. They include initiatives to engage with the community through a continuing transparent dialogue, to educate the community about their available transit options and to envision a future when public transport is part of everyday life.

## Table of Contents

1. Introduction .....	1
1.1 The Need for a Transit Culture .....	1
1.2 Transit Community Culture .....	2
1.3 Challenges for Creating a Transit Community Culture .....	5
2. Classifying Transit Community Culture .....	7
2.1 Metropolitan Transit Culture .....	7
2.2 Place-Based Transit Culture .....	7
2.3 Activity-based Transit Culture .....	8
3. Strategies to Create a Transit Community Culture .....	9
3.1 Engaging with the Community .....	9
3.2 Educating the Community .....	11
3.3 Envisioning a Transit Community .....	13
4. Conclusions .....	16
5. References .....	17

## Table of Figures

Figure 1 Public Transport Market Share by Country or Region .....	2
Figure 2 Cities with a Very Strong Transit Culture .....	3
Figure 3 Ridership per Capita in Metropolitan Cities in Australasia and North America .....	4
Figure 4 Be Part of the Plan for TransLink, Vancouver, Canada .....	10
Figure 5 Online Forum on Public Transport by Youth for Public Transport .....	10
Figure 6 “Give a Minute” Civic Engagement Tool in the United States .....	10
Figure 7 Key Themes to Support Public Transport in Canada from Transit Vision 2040 .....	14
Figure 8 Ridership Targets from the Transit Vision 2040 in Canada .....	14
Figure 9 Envision Transportation Plan for Minneapolis-St Paul .....	15

## List of Tables

Table 1 Comparison of Ridership per Capita by Country and City Size .....	5
Table 2 Transit Community Culture Classifications .....	7
Table 3 Hierarchy of Communities with a Place-based Transit Culture .....	8
Table 4 Types of Activity-based Transit Culture .....	8

# 1. Introduction

This paper discusses the need for a transit culture in our society and the challenges to establish it. A definition and classification of the different types of transit community culture is provided. Strategies for creating a sustained transit community culture are provided by using innovative methods of engagement, education and envisioning to encourage the use of public transport as a lifestyle choice.

## 1.1 The Need for a Transit Culture

A culture can be defined as a group of people with shared beliefs and practices. In the transportation field, modern society has developed a strong car culture supported by the automotive industry and major investments in road infrastructure. Many papers and articles have been written about the increased role for public transport in order to reduce our reliance of fossil fuels, to minimise our carbon footprint with lower greenhouse gas emissions and to improve the health of our communities. In addition to providing improved public transport infrastructure and services, many academics, professionals and commentators have called for a stronger transit culture in our society. Examples of these opinions are provided as follows:

The following comment in the *Honolulu Advertiser* was written in July 2007:

*“A fixed-guideway system could provide an option other than hopping behind the wheel for every trip. But the work of revamping attitudes toward a more **transit-oriented culture** needs to begin now.”*

Dan Wentzel who is a Los Angeles writer provided this comment about transit culture in 2008:

*“We don’t have a **culture of transit**, but that will come in time. It explains why we can’t get bike lanes either; we don’t have a bike culture. We only have a car culture and it can only change if we get politicians who are brave enough to do what is right. Until then, our news will only show stories like that and people will still be dependent on cars. So we have to build the system, advertise the system, and this will **create a transit culture** which will self-propagate and change our attitudes. I’m not saying that it’s so simple, but it’s better than what we have now.”*

Nick Lewocki in Melbourne wrote the following comment in *The Age* in November 2009:

*“**Public transport's time has come** - We need to put more effort into a building a **public transport culture**. We don't accept it when people vandalise our homes, nor should we accept people vandalising our trains, trams, ferries and buses.”*

J-L Brussac in British Columbia, Canada wrote the following article in *Coquitlam Now* in December 2010:

*“**We need a transit culture** - TransLink's major problem is that B.C. is such a young province that both politicians and the average Joe and Jane Public, especially those born here, don't have a **transit culture**. We had a minister of transportation who apparently had never seen turnstiles until he went to London. We still don't know what grand vision about transit motivates Shirley Bond (Transport and Infrastructure Minister in British Columbia, Canada from June 2009 to March 2011). We don't even know if she has ever used rapid transit, commuter trains or even a bus.*

*By contrast, last year there were elections to regional governments in a well-known European country. Candidates were shown on TV going on the campaign trail not only on chartered buses, but also on subways and commuter trains. Movies taking place in New York, Paris, London, Tokyo, etc. often show the main characters using transit.”*

## 1.2 Transit Community Culture

A transit community culture exists where the majority of people in a city understand the public transport network, have a positive view of the system and use the services as a genuine alternative to car-based trips. It requires more than just a high quality public transport system delivered in collaboration by government and operators, but wide community acceptance that public transport is part of a lifestyle choice for everyone to use. Factors external to the system are important in attracting and maintaining transit ridership, such as socio-economic attributes of the community, the spatial and land use characteristics of the urban area and limitations on public funding that affect what can be delivered.

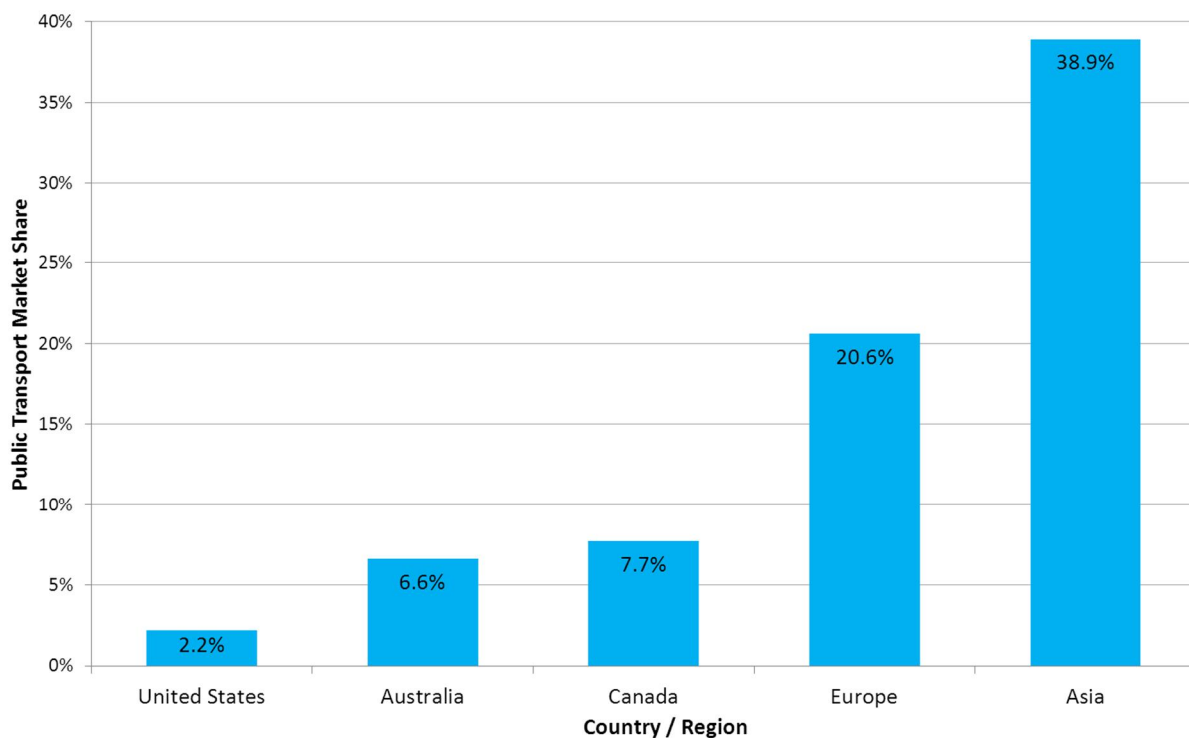
The transit community includes all members in society and it can be broadly categorised into the following public transport markets:

- **People with No Choice.** These are people without access to private vehicles, such as the young, elderly, disabled, low income and new immigrants.
- **People with a Selective Choice.** These are commuters to work and school on weekdays, but they rarely use public transport for other purposes at other times.
- **Lifestyle Choice.** These people choose transit over other modes because they want to reduce their carbon footprint, want to interact socially with other travellers and do not consider travel time, comfort and convenience the most critical factors in their journey.

In order to create a genuine transit community culture, public transport must be a lifestyle choice for everyone and not just those without access to private vehicles or regular commuters.

The percentage of the public transport market can be used to indicate the strength of a transit culture in countries and regions around the world, as shown in Figure 1. Canada and Australia have overall higher public transport usage than the United States, but are significantly behind Europe and Asia.

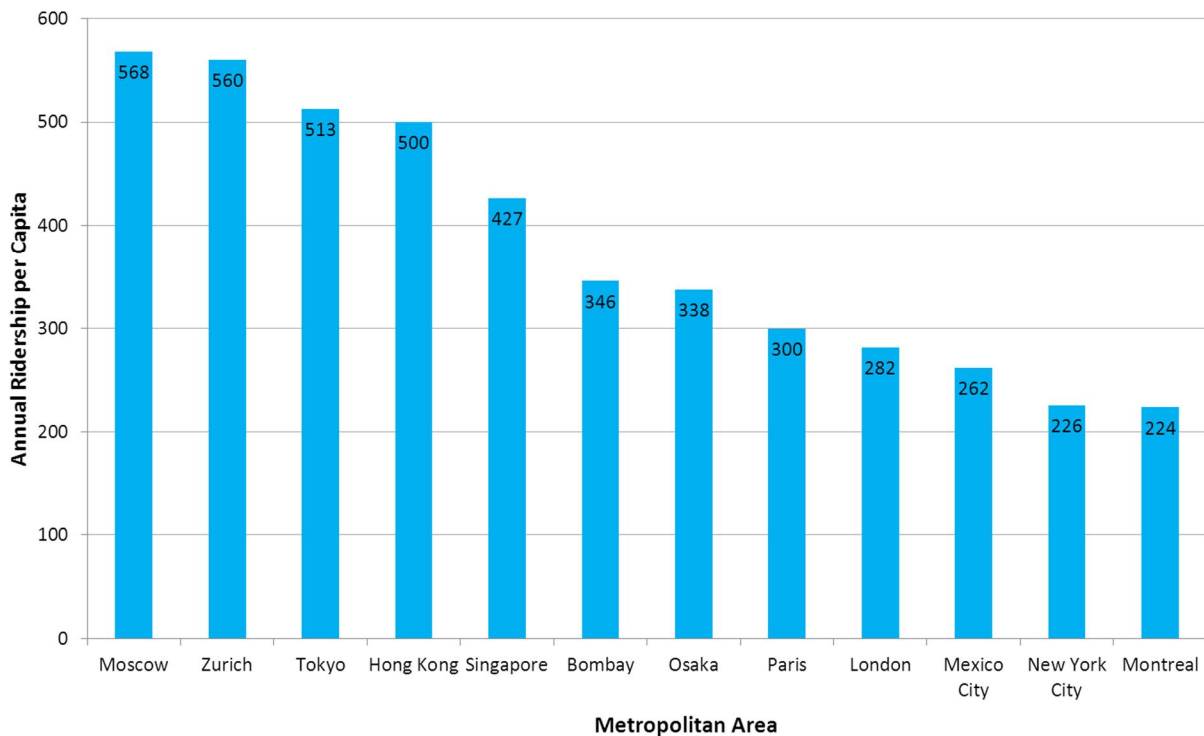
**Figure 1 Public Transport Market Share by Country or Region**



Source: Jeffrey R. Kenworthy, Felix B. Laube and others, "An International Sourcebook of Automobile Dependence in Cities: 1960-1990." and United States Census Bureau.

The annual ridership per capita can also be used to measure the strength of a transit culture. Cities with a very strong transit culture have annual ridership per capita statistics greater than 200 and they are shown in Figure 2 sorted by the annual ridership per capita.

**Figure 2 Cities with a Very Strong Transit Culture**



Source: Estimated from Jane's Urban Transport (1999), US Federal Transit Administration and individual operator reports.

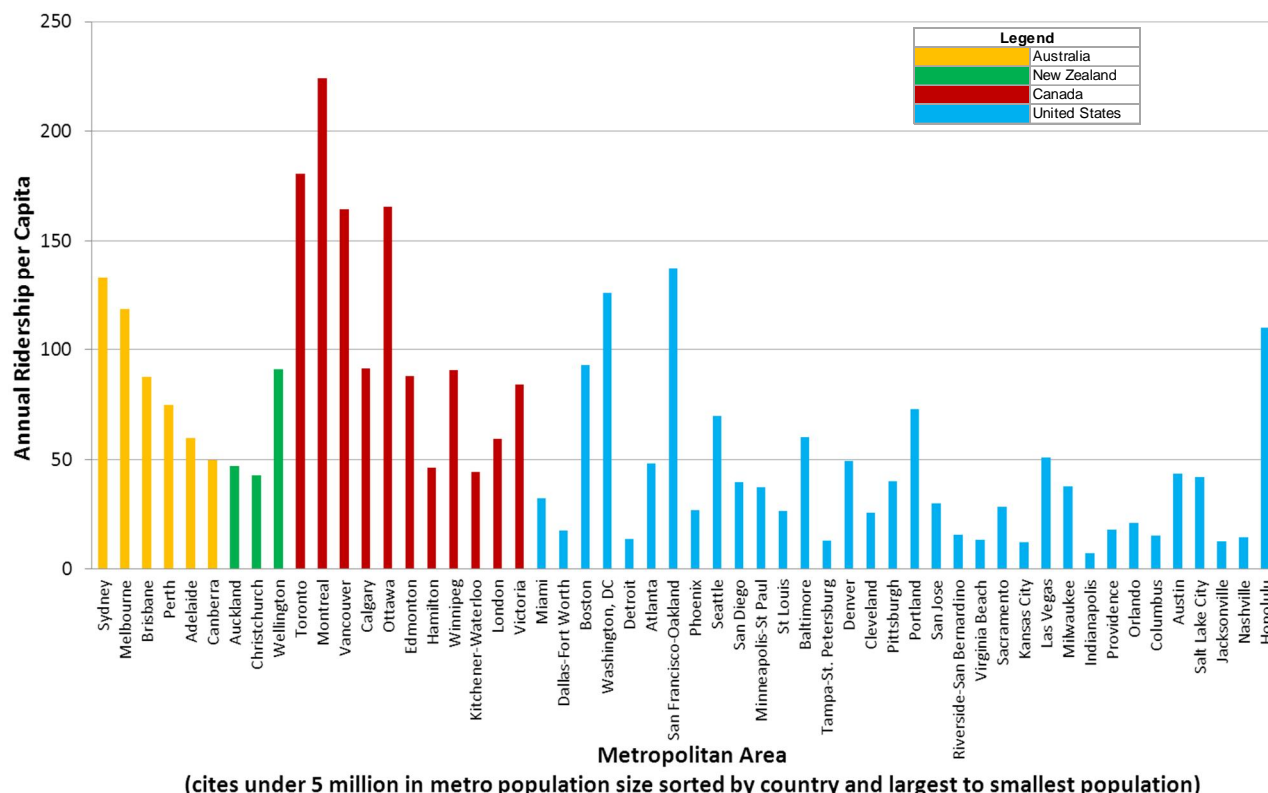
Singapore and Hong Kong have some of the highest transit usage in the world with an annual ridership per capita greater the 400. These cities have a genuine transit culture with high disincentives for car usage. In European cities, the annual patronage per capita ranges from 200 to 300. European and Asian cities clearly have a mass transit culture with much higher patronage.

In the United States, only New York City, San Francisco, Washington, D.C. and Honolulu have a developing or strong transit culture. A very strong transit culture exists in New York City where nearly 4.5 million people use buses, trains and ferries in the transit network for all travel purposes every weekday as part of their lifestyle. This culture is supported with the subway system which is an extensive urban train network with a 24-hour operation.

Canadian cities, such as Montreal, Toronto, Ottawa and Vancouver, have a strong transit culture with over 150 annual riders per capita in each metropolitan area. These cities clearly have a stronger transit culture than most American, Australian and New Zealand cities, with the exception of New York City.

The public transport ridership per capita for a selection of 54 cities with a population between 250,000 and 5,000,000 in Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United States was collated from various sources from 2006 to 2010 in order to show that some key differences in transit culture between these countries. Ridership per capita is calculated in the United States based on the total number of unlinked passenger trips divided by the metropolitan population. Adjustments have been made for the other countries that typically use revenue boardings or linked trips, instead of unlinked trips. The statistics, which are used in this analysis for comparative purposes only, are shown graphically in Figure 3.

**Figure 3 Ridership per Capita in Metropolitan Cities in Australasia and North America**



Source: Statistics obtained from various Internet searches from 2006 to 2010 for metropolitan areas greater than 300,000 and less than 5 million in population.

In Australian cities, the ridership per capita decreases with the population size of the metropolitan area indicating that the larger cities have a stronger transit culture. However, this trend does not exist in New Zealand where Wellington has a stronger transit culture than Auckland with over four times the population. In Canada, Ottawa has much higher per capita transit usage than the other medium-sized cities, such as Calgary, Edmonton and Winnipeg. In the United States, Honolulu has significantly greater ridership per capita and this may occur with the large tourist and visitor population that do not have access to cars.

The ridership per capita for a selection of major cities in Western Europe, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United States were obtained from various sources from 1999 and since 2006. These statistics are summarised for groups of different city sizes in Table 1 and they indicate clear differences in the transit culture in these countries. Western European cities have the strongest transit culture with over 200 passengers per capita. This is expected with the more compact, denser cities and the excellent public transport systems in European cities.

In comparing Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the United States, Canada has the greatest patronage per capita indicating a stronger transit culture than the other countries, whereas the United States has the lowest average ridership per capita. Australian cities had an average of at 76.3 annual rides per capita in 1999 and 87.3 rides per capita since 2008 indicating some growth in patronage towards a stronger transit culture. However, this is still significantly less than comparable Canadian cities that have an average of 112.5 rides per capita in 2006.

**Table 1 Comparison of Ridership per Capita by Country and City Size**

<b>Metropolitan City Population Size</b>	<b>Western Europe</b>	<b>Canada</b>	<b>Australia</b>	<b>New Zealand</b>	<b>United States</b>
<i>Statistics from 1999</i> (Source: <a href="http://www.publicpurpose.com">www.publicpurpose.com</a> and Janes Urban Transport)					
1,000,000 – 5,000,000	200.5	101.4	84.6	31.5	42.3
500,000 – 999,999	171.3	52.5	No data	No data	12.3
250,000 – 499,999	166.0	29.9	55.0	43.0	5.8
Average for all cities greater than 250,000	200.7	80.1	76.2	39.2	34.0
<i>Statistics from 2006 to 2010</i> (from various Internet searches for 54 major cities)					
<b>Metropolitan City Population Size</b>	<b>Western Europe</b>	<b>Canada</b>	<b>Australia</b>	<b>New Zealand</b>	<b>United States</b>
1,000,000 – 5,000,000	No data	165.0	94.8	47.3	42.0
500,000 – 999,999	No data	97.5	No data	No data	37.6
250,000 – 499,999	No data	58.4	49.8	67.0	No data
Average for all cities greater than 250,000	No data	112.5	87.3	60.4	41.3

In addition to statistics, such as modal share percentages and annual ridership per capita, the strength of a transit culture in a city can be identified anecdotally through other indicators.

- A high newspaper readership base for the daily commuters;
- Wide use of in-vehicle advertising in buses and trains;
- Use of buses and trains in movies and street theatre; and
- The transit system is an icon used for promotion and tourism with transit memorabilia and souvenirs with a transit system logo that is sold to tourists and visitors.

### 1.3 Challenges for Creating a Transit Community Culture

Many challenges exist in creating a transit community culture. The general public in the countries with a strong car culture, such as Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United States, have an overall public transport mode share of less than eight percent of all trips because public transport is inconvenient, expensive, slow, unpredictable, dangerous or not accepted due to peer pressure.

Various factors affect the public transport usage between cities and countries to create different transit cultures, such as:

- The quality of transit system with the condition of the infrastructure, network design, frequency and speed of the services and the types of vehicles;
- Urban form, geography and population density;
- Transit system governance. For example, many Canadian cities have transit systems funded and

operated by local government, whereas in the United States regional transit authorities operate the public transport system with funding from the State and Federal government;

- Societal attitudes and local traditions. In some cities, previous generations had a strong transit culture and the many parts of the system have been maintained, such as the tram network in Melbourne and the streetcar network in Toronto;
- Demographics of the population and the current economic conditions; and
- Climatic issues. With over six months of winter weather throughout the year, Canadians have a more difficult access to bus stops and stations. However, these poor walking conditions may possibly make them more hardy and willing to experience some discomfort to access and use public transport. In Australia and most of the southern United States, the weather is typically warmer throughout the year and therefore car travel is typically not affected by severe weather conditions.

Public transport in a society where a car culture dominates has generally a poor image and a negative stigma. It is considered the mode for people without cars and those who are socially and economically disadvantaged.

People with access to cars have to be convinced about the benefits of using public transport with direct routes to their destinations, fast travel times and short waiting times, reliable services, clean and safe vehicles and waiting areas.

Some academics, such as Dr Paul Mees, believe that the level of transit patronage is primarily a function of the quality and quantity of the services rather than socio-economic or demographic factors. However, during the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, several major and costly public transport infrastructure projects were built in Australia, such as the Perth – Mandurah railway, the Epping – Chatswood rail link in Sydney and the expansion of the Brisbane busway network. Patronage on these projects has been generally very good, but these major infrastructure investments have yet to transform these cities to have a strong transit culture. These projects are based on the theory that “build it and they will ride it” which is valid to some extent, but it requires more than new infrastructure and vehicles with more frequent and reliable services to get people motivated to change their behaviour and views about public transport. Building new infrastructure and implementing new services is only part of the solution to attract and sustain public transport ridership. A successful public transport community requires a strong transit culture in addition to the quality infrastructure and services.

Three elements of a public transport system are the infrastructure, the vehicles and the services. If these are of a poor quality, the general public will have a poor image of it. Furthermore, public transport is not easy to use when compared to the comfort, convenience and privacy of the car. Social and behavioural aspects need to be addressed to create a transit community culture, such as encouraging people:

- to walk to a transit stop, either a bus or tram stop, a train station or ferry terminal;
- to share the waiting space and vehicle with others; and
- to wait for a transit service.

Walkability is the key to get people to access and accept public transport for improved health and well-being reasons as well as for transport purposes.

Finally, it is easy to discourage users from public transport with one bad experience using the system, but it is much more difficult to get new riders and to maintain patronage without significant service improvements and promotional campaigns.



## 2. Classifying Transit Community Culture

Transit community culture can be classified broadly into three types of communities, namely:

- **Metropolitan** which represents all people in the wider community using the transit system;
- **Place-based** which is for residents, employees and visitors who have easy walking and cycling access to a transit hub or station surrounded by higher density mixed-use development; and
- **Activity-based** for groups of people who use mass transit for a specific trip purpose or event.

### 2.1 Metropolitan Transit Culture

The first type of transit culture is metropolitan or system-wide which is determined on the broad community, such as socio-economic and demographic attributes and the urban spatial characteristics.

In order to understand and analyse the differences in transit culture in cities, five types of transit community cultures have been classified using ranges of annual ridership per capita as the indicator. The classifications are provided with examples of metropolitan cities in Table 2.

**Table 2 Transit Community Culture Classifications**

Class	Transit Culture	Annual Ridership per Capita	Examples of Metropolitan Areas
A	Very Strong	Greater than 200	Moscow, Zurich, Tokyo, Hong Kong, Singapore, Bombay, Osaka, Paris, London, Mexico City, New York City, Montreal
B	Strong	150 to 200	Toronto, Ottawa, Vancouver
C	Developing	100 to 150	Sydney, Melbourne, San Francisco-Oakland, Honolulu, Washington, D.C.
D	Poor	50 to 100	Wellington, Brisbane, Perth, Adelaide, Calgary, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, Portland, Seattle
E	Very Poor	Less than 50	Dallas-Fort Worth, St Louis, Miami, Phoenix

### 2.2 Place-Based Transit Culture

The second type of transit community is described as “place-based transit culture” or more commonly known as a transit-oriented development (TOD). In 2007, the Chair of the Queensland Government TOD Taskforce provided three characteristics for a successful transit-oriented development, namely:

- High quality public transport infrastructure with frequent, suburban and reliable services;
- Higher density and mix of land uses within a walkable distance of the transit station; and
- High quality urban design that is attractive with safe access for pedestrians and cyclists.

*“One ‘characteristic’ that wasn’t included was a ‘**public transport culture**’. It is critical that creating TODs is not just about constructing physical infrastructure, building and spaces; but also about fostering generational change; to promote a community and culture that proactively reduces their automobile dependence and prioritises walking, cycling and travelling via public transport.”*

Transit-oriented communities are more than urban developments around high frequency transit nodes. Transit-oriented developments are compact mixed use residential and employment areas designed to maximise the efficient use of land through high levels of access to public transport. Within the TOD precinct, a transit community exists to encourage residents, workers and shoppers to use public transport more often and to drive less.

In order to understand and analyse transit culture at a location, five types of place-based transit communities or transit-oriented developments based on the level and type of development built around the transit node have been established and are provided in Table 3.

**Table 3 Hierarchy of Communities with a Place-based Transit Culture**

Type	Type of Transit Community	Land Use and Public Transport Attributes	Transit-oriented Development Examples
1	Central Business District	High rise offices and hotels with a CBD rail and/or bus network	CBDs in all major cities
2	Major Regional Centre	High density office and residential with a major bus and/or rail interchange	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bondi Junction, Parramatta, Hurstville and Chatswood, NSW</li> <li>• Eglinton/Yonge in Toronto, Canada</li> </ul>
3	Suburban Retail Centre	Medium density residential and retail centre with a bus and/or rail interchange	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dandenong, Victoria</li> <li>• Upper Mt Gravatt, Queensland</li> <li>• Joondalup, Western Australia</li> </ul>
4	Inner Urban	Medium density with “brownfields” development around a transit station	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kelvin Grove, Queensland</li> <li>• Subiaco, Western Australia</li> </ul>
5	Outer Suburban	Lower density with “greenfields” development around a transit station	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarkson and Wellard, Western Australia</li> </ul>

## 2.3 Activity-based Transit Culture

The third type of transit community is labelled as “activity-based transit culture” and the different types that exist are provided in Table 4 with examples of the marketing tools used to support and encourage the transit culture to these activities.

**Table 4 Types of Activity-based Transit Culture**

Type of Activity	Transit Community Location	Tools to Support the Transit Culture
Business	Business parks; CBD offices	Company travel schemes; flexible work hours
Educational	Universities and colleges	U-Passes; special university shuttle buses
Recreational	Sporting stadia and major entertainment venues; sites for the Olympics and Commonwealth Games	All-inclusive tickets with public transport fares included in the admission fee; special public transport services provided exclusively for spectators to the events

### 3. Strategies to Create a Transit Community Culture

Three broad approaches are proposed to engender a transit culture in a community. These strategies are focussed on the community as customers and changing their perception of public transport. They do not require new infrastructure, vehicles or services.

#### 3.1 Engaging with the Community

Engagement with the community is critically important to listen to the community to understand and appreciate their needs, aspirations and travel requirements in a changing urban society. It means simply being open to listen and not to judge the ideas and feedback from the community. Simply being heard on a wide range of transport and planning issues is a way of getting the community to contribute positively to the development of future plans and to gain acceptance of existing plans and programs.

The following types of engagement are required:

- Small group consultation to obtain the views of all members in the community;
- Large scale community wide consultation used to engage the general public with particular plans and issues; and
- On-going communication through the Internet via social networks, blogs and website news pages to hear about the issues with public transport.

Planners and government agencies need to appreciate the generation change that the younger generations are in contact through social media and internet communications while the elderly may not be getting the message through the Internet, but are most in need of public transport when they can no longer drive a car. Engagement must be inclusive of all groups who do not have access to computers or mobile phones and must reach out to all generations.

Community wide dialogue through on-going workshops and forums and customer interviews are important to engage with the existing and potential public transport customers. Examples of large scale community engagement programmes that were held in Australia in the last decade are:

- Melbourne 2030 community consultation in 2001;
- Dialogue with the City in Perth in 2003 which led to the Network City metropolitan strategy in 2004 and the Directions 2031 strategy in 2009; and
- Cityscape Neighbourhood Planning by Brisbane City Council in Brisbane in 2004 and 2005.

Government should also encourage an informed rationale debate from public transport interest groups, such as the Public Transport Users Association in Victoria and Action for Public Transport in NSW.

In recent years, new forms of innovative engagement tools have been created through the internet via blogs and special websites which encourage anyone and everyone to contribute to the development of transit plans and strategies and to give their views. Jarrett Walker has established an excellent blog website, at [www.humantransit.org](http://www.humantransit.org), that encourages interested public transport enthusiasts and the professional and academic community to exchange ideas and solutions about public transport issues.

Examples of other websites that are used for community engagement are provided here.

- In Vancouver, Canada, TransLink conducted a web-based public consultation program in 2009, known as Be Part of the Plan. It was used to engage the public with the development of the long term transit strategy. The general public was also invited to be part of an on-line advisory panel. The webpage for this community engagement tool is shown in Figure 4.

**Figure 4 Be Part of the Plan for TransLink, Vancouver, Canada**



Source: [www.translink.ca/en/Be-Part-of-the-Plan.aspx/](http://www.translink.ca/en/Be-Part-of-the-Plan.aspx/)

- Youth for Public Transport (Y4PT) was established by Ms Alessandra Gorini in Karlsruhe, Germany in 2009. Y4PT is a group of young people who are promoting alternatives for sustainable urban mobility throughout the world. Y4PT has been fostering a transit community culture by using a website, as shown in Figure 5, to encourage young people to share their ideas and experiences about public transport via an online forum.

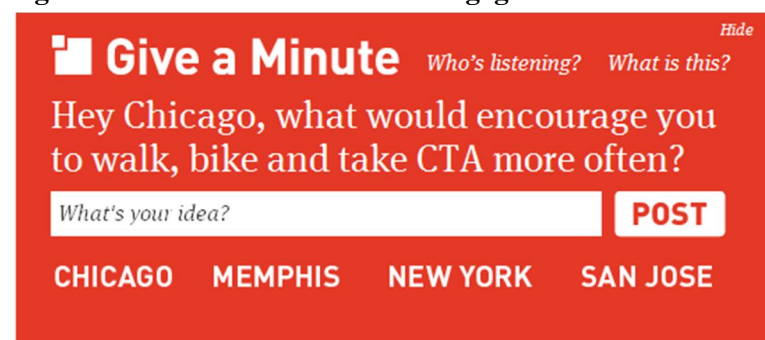
**Figure 5 Online Forum on Public Transport by Youth for Public Transport**



Source: [www.youthforpt.org/?p=3234/](http://www.youthforpt.org/?p=3234/)

- The “Give a Minute” website, as shown in Figure 6, was established in 2010 by in partnership with CEOs for Cities and the Rockefeller Foundation. In New York City, it was used to engage residents about PlaNYC 2030 and the concept was fully supported by the New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg. The website is designed to be a virtual suggestion box and residents respond via text, Twitter or a website post. The ideas are then aggregated on Post-It note style graphics on a giant digital whiteboard.

**Figure 6 “Give a Minute” Civic Engagement Tool in the United States**



Source: [giveaminute.info/](http://giveaminute.info/)

## 3.2 Educating the Community

The general public need to be educated about their public transport choices with easy to understand information. They also need to have innovative options to encourage them to use public transport. The message needs to be communicated clearly for existing and potential customers in a language and format that they can easily understand.

Programs for the next generation of public transport users need to consider the following groups.

- All schools to universities;
- New residents in cities; and
- New businesses and new employees.

### Student Communities

In Vancouver, Canada, a discounted U-Pass was introduced to encourage university students into the “habit” of using public transport with fare incentives. Students are entitled to discounted transit passes with post-secondary students paying \$30 per month for a system-wide U-Pass compared with \$81 for a monthly pass. When the scheme was announced in 2010, British Columbia Transportation and Infrastructure Minister Shirley Bond said: *“Not only will the U-Pass BC Program make transit more affordable for post-secondary students, it will create a **transit culture** resulting in more people leaving their cars in the driveway, leading to less congestion and reduced greenhouse gas emissions.”*

In Dortmund, Germany, ‘Semesterticket’ is a discounted student semester travel pass that has been available since 1994. The discount price is based on a contract between the local student federation and the public transport operator. A public transport surcharge has been added to student federation membership fees so that public transport operators ultimately do not record any loss of revenue.

### New Public Transport User Community

The public transport market is always changing and the information needs to be easy to access and very understandable for the diverse ethnic and language cultures that exist in the multi-cultural metropolitan cities in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It must also address the emerging markets for public transport, with a greater population of elderly people will be reliant on public transport. Many “baby boomers” will become dependent users of public transport in the next 20 years.

At TransLink in Vancouver, Canada, the website has an on-line resource, known as Transit 101 which is a video log or vlog that uses a YouTube-style training video that explains the transit system to new users. The following text is used to introduce the Transit 101 videos with an informal friendly tone:

*“Get the inside scoop on travelling by transit. Our short videos will tell you about transit zones, how to buy tickets, where the security phones are and lots of other handy hints, like using your mobile phone to find out when the next bus is coming. So sit back, press play and get ready for some useful tips for your next transit trip!”*

Other website tools are on-line community newsletters, blogs and user forums. In Vancouver, Canada, “The Buzzer” is a regularly updated webpage and blog that provides news about events in the community that would attract or affect customers. The site also encourages community comments about the public transport system, including issues, good and bad experiences and new ideas. In Los Angeles, USA, MetroRiderLA is a blog that promotes, supports, and critiques a transit-oriented lifestyle. It was created to inform the people of Los Angeles about their public transport system and to create a forum where news, information and dialogue are used to encourage a transit-oriented mobility. In 2009, a group of individuals in Richmond, Virginia established TransitTalk to be a forum to promote public transport through increased community awareness. The TransitTalk website is used to invite people to become public transport advocates in the Richmond Region.

Websites for public transport information must be easy to navigate, attractive to view and provide useful information. Much research has been conducted on useful websites for public transport passengers and many of them are being refined to adapt to the changing needs of the customers.

### **Business Communities**

Company travel schemes that promote public transport usage for employees, visitors and clients can be designed to improve the business accessibility and reduce business costs, with reduced investment in parking areas, running costs for a fleet of company vehicles and with regard to reimbursing mileage allowances and other travel costs. Other reasons for businesses to promote public transport for their employees are to:

- Attract new employees with improved accessibility to the company premises;
- Improve employee punctuality due to fewer delays caused by traffic congestion;
- Reduce time lost for home-work journeys;
- Improve productivity through less time being lost and the reduction of stress;
- Improve the health and well-being of employees resulting in lower rates of absenteeism;
- Reduce traffic congestion in the vicinity of the business;
- Show corporate environmental awareness with a green and socially responsible image; and
- Improve mobility for a business's various clients, suppliers and partners.

Some examples of businesses working together with the transit authority to achieve a higher public transport usage are provided as follows:

- In London, England, the Westfield shopping complex which was funded jointly by Transport for London and the property developers opened in October 2008 with the completion of several major transport infrastructure projects including four London underground stations. The shopping centre achieved a very high public transport mode share.
- In Brazil, employers must contribute to the cost of employee travel to work via public transport by providing transport vouchers which can be worth the equivalent of 6 percent of the worker's salary. The employer receives a tax break on the amount of money spent on the scheme.
- In Washington, D.C., an 11 percent modal shift from the private car to public transport was attributed to the US Federal Government providing tax incentives for employers to provide benefits to employees who use public transport.

Employment-centred transit works where the public transport services are designed to be closer to the doors of the businesses than the homes in residential areas. Company travel schemes must also be designed to cater to the needs of employees. For example, in a business park located outside the city, the timetables should be adjusted to suit the worker start and finish times in order to make public transport more attractive for employees. For CBD businesses, flexible working hours or offering the opportunity to work from home occasionally will encourage employees to use public transport.

In San Ramon, California, an outer suburban office park applied a new approach, known as the "Marci Option" to obtain a 33 percent public transport mode share of the 30,000 workers at Bishop Ranch where the corporate offices of Chevron Petroleum are. The program is named after Marci McGuire who is the program manager. She has fostered an attitude at the business park as *"a culture" where it is cool to have a bus pass.* The three key elements of her program to encourage public transport usage are:

- A high frequency bus network has been designed to terminate and originate within a few blocks of

all the 30,000 jobs in the business park. The businesses bought a fleet of buses and worked with the city and county transit agencies to subsidise both bus routes and bus passes for workers. Thirteen different bus routes operate to the business park with connections to the local BART train stations and other regional express bus routes.

- The program promotes the benefits of a transit culture, such as improving physical and mental health. On the Bishop Ranch website, it is also advertised as a competitive advantage.
- Although there are 500 businesses at the park, a single office takes pride in its ability to get people onto public transport through the coordination team led very enthusiastically by Marci.

Marci McGuire considers transit as a lifestyle choice rather than a sacrifice. If saving money is the main motivation to attract new riders, it does not work. However, if the objectives are to reduce employee stress, to promote the health benefits of walking to a bus stop and to have more time to relax while travelling, the program is more likely to be successful. The program also provides flexibility with free taxi rides if personal emergencies require a trip home during the middle of the business day.

Several other major businesses in the United States have established proactive work place travel schemes to encourage employees to use public transport. The Best Workplaces for Commuters (BWC) is a public-private partnership that was established in 2002. BWC assists participating employers by offering public recognition and promotion, technical assistance, training, Web-based tools, and forums for information exchange. Since October 2007, Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR) has managed the Best Workplaces for Commuters program. As part of the BWC application, employers must agree to ensure a minimum level of employee participation, designate a central point of contact for employee questions and provide an emergency ride home for participating employees. The scheme provides several commuter and corporate benefits, such as:

- Attracting and retaining good employees and reducing turnover rates and having increased worker productivity, and help employees arrive at work relaxed and on time;
- Solving parking problems and reducing the demand for limited or expensive parking;
- Reducing income taxes for employees and payroll taxes for companies;
- Reducing the environmental impacts, such as greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution;
- Showing leadership and corporate citizenship for the company to be a competitive leader; and
- Reducing the demand for imported fuel with less car use.

### 3.3 Envisioning a Transit Community

In order to achieve a strong transit community in the long term, a community must envision their future public transport system. Envisioning means that the wider community seeks a shared vision to image the possibilities for the long term. It takes more than just investment in public transport infrastructure and services to change attitudes to use transit more often and for it to be an accepted part of the culture within a community. Vision statements are important parts of the envisioning process. A vision statement in any recent urban transport strategy aspires that a significant proportion of metropolitan travel will be by public transport with less private car use and consequently less traffic congestion.

The vision statement from the Hampton Road Regional Transit Vision Plan is provided as:

*“An integrated public transit network will provide Hampton Roads with transportation choices, thereby ensuring greater mobility, economic development, environmental protection, energy independence and quality of life.”*

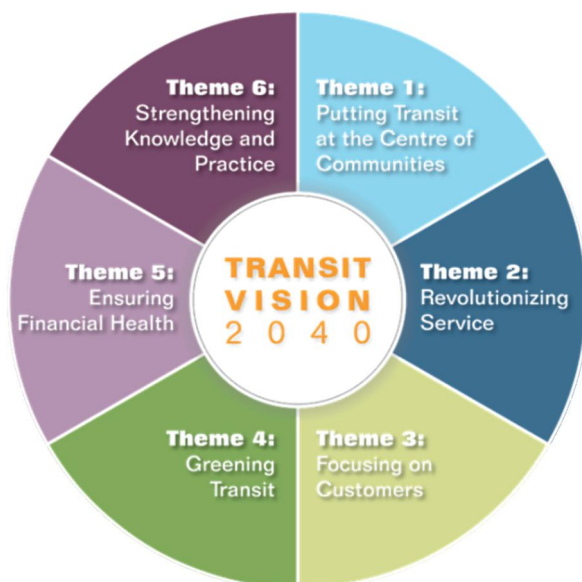
In 2009, the Canadian Urban Transit Association (CUTA) provided the following vision statement in

### *Transit Vision 2040 for the Next Generation:*

*“Vision 2040 defines a future in which public transit maximizes its contribution to quality of life with benefits that support a vibrant and equitable society, complete and compact community form, a dynamic and efficient economy, and a healthy natural environment.”*

In Transit Vision 2040, CUTA developed the vision policies around six themes as shown in Figure 7.

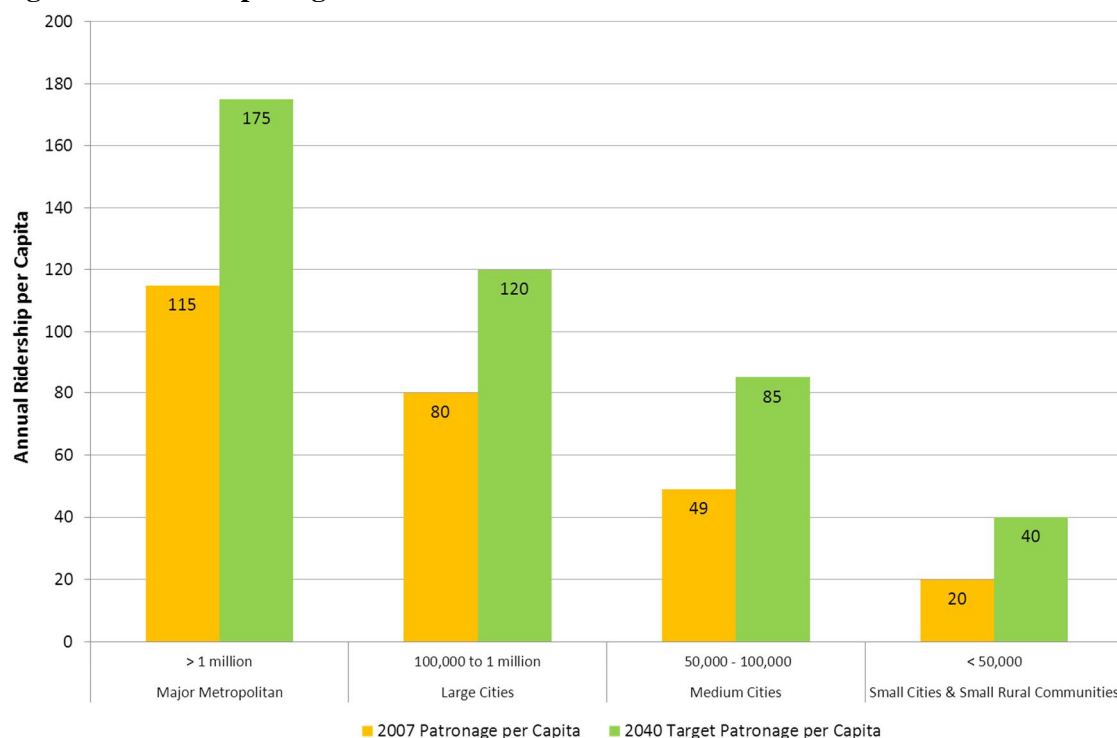
**Figure 7 Key Themes to Support Public Transport in Canada from Transit Vision 2040**



Source: Transit Vision 2040, Canadian Urban Transit Association, 2009.

Vision 2040 provided ridership targets based on ridership per capita for different sizes of cities as shown in Figure 8 in which the 2007 averages and the 2040 targets are compared.

**Figure 8 Ridership Targets from the Transit Vision 2040 in Canada**



Source: Transit Vision 2040, Canadian Urban Transit Association, 2009.

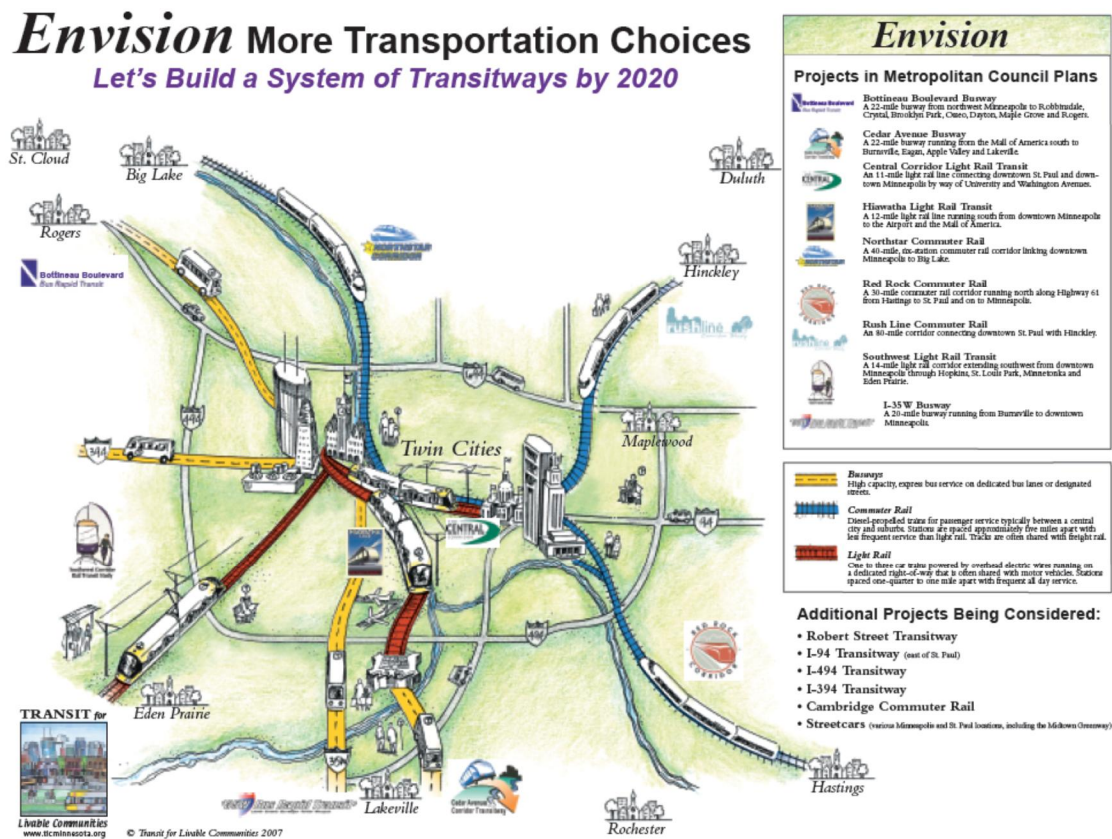


In recent years, many cities in the United States have developed long term transit plans through an envisioning process. Transit visions have been prepared for the following American cities:

- Atlanta, Georgia
- Detroit, Michigan
- Durham, Raleigh and Chapel Hill, North Carolina
- Santa Ana, California
- Tampa, Florida
- Washington, D.C. with the WMATA Long Term Vision Plan
- Minneapolis-St Paul, Minnesota
- Virginia Beach and Hampton Roads, Virginia

In Minneapolis-St Paul in the USA, Envision Transit was established that developed the long term transit plan as shown in Figure 9. This type of diagram is useful to simplify the concepts of the future transit system to the community.

**Figure 9 Envision Transportation Plan for Minneapolis-St Paul**



Source: [http://tlcminnesota.org.phntemp.com/Resources/Policy\\_Briefs](http://tlcminnesota.org.phntemp.com/Resources/Policy_Briefs), Envision Minneapolis, USA, 2007.

The Hampton Roads Regional Transit Vision Plan (HRRTVP) considered a vision for public transport to 2025 and beyond where the community could “visualise what may be possible for the region’s transit services. It provided a concept for a regional rapid transit network that connects major employment and population centres in Hampton Roads. It envisions thoughtful and coordinated land use planning combined with specific transit modes that improve mobility options for the public. The purpose of HRRTVP is to provide a long-term framework for transit development, not a definite set of approved projects. As the region selects projects for further study, planners, elected officials, and the public will collaborate to define the specific requirements, alignments and transit modes in accordance with local land use planning, alternatives analysis, environmental considerations and available funding.”

In Canada and Australia, long term visionary public transport strategies have been developed in the following cities:

- Long-Term Vision for the Perth LRT Network, known as The Knowledge Arc Light Rail, which was developed by Peter Newman and Jan Scheurer in April 2010;
- Transport 2040 A Transportation Strategy for Metro Vancouver, Now and in the Future, and
- Toronto 2030 which is a transit enthusiast's vision for a long term "fantasy" transit system in Toronto, Canada. It was prepared by Dieter Janssen of the John H. Daniels Faculty of Architecture Landscape and Design at the University of Toronto in June 2009.

## 4. Conclusions

A transit community culture with a highly sustained patronage requires more than high quality public transport system with infrastructure, services and promotion. Strategies and policies are needed to encourage public transport as a lifestyle choice.

A comparison of the public transport patronage per capita in similar cities in Australia, New Zealand, the USA and Canada was conducted to demonstrate the challenge to create a transit community culture in these countries.

Three types of transit cultures are described for metropolitan, place-based and activity-based communities. For the metropolitan transit community culture, a classification scheme from A to E is proposed to be used in benchmarking similar cities. Cities with a classification of C for a "Developing" transit culture can aspire to have a higher classification in the long term. These cities should learn from the attributes of the cities with the higher classification of transit culture.

Place-based transit culture is classified into different types of transit-oriented development communities. Activity-based transit culture is identified for different types of activities or transit markets.

Transit ridership is often considered to be affected by outside factors beyond the control of political decision-makers, public transport planners and operators. However, a quality public transport system must be provided to achieve a stronger transit culture. The transit system must be reliable with excellent on-time running, accessible with good disabled access to stops and stations, and frequent services operating at least every 10 minutes.

A stronger transit community culture can be achieved with the following strategic policies:

- **Listen to the community** and engage with all people at an early stage in the planning process;
- **Inform the community** to educate them about new options to use public transport; and
- **Empower the community** to develop a future vision by having a "transit first" attitude in which the funding priorities for public transport infrastructure and services are higher than the needs of the car culture.

The following initiatives should be considered in promoting a strong transit community culture:

- Make public transport easy to take by improving the legibility of the public transport system with simple and consistent branding for the information, identity and the image.
- Plan, design and implement the public transport system with the highest quality infrastructure, vehicles and information. The product must be of the highest standard to encourage and sustain patronage.
- Do not oversell public transport when it cannot "deliver" the reliable, fast and frequent transit services on a clean, safe and comfortable network. It is important to gain trust with the community and the customers by providing transit services that the public can rely on.

- Focus the marketing and promotion on easy to understand messages and information that is customised for the diverse community with different educational, language and cultural needs; and
- Continue to engage with the community openly and transparently on all public transport proposals and plans to change the network.

Politicians must be willing to change and provide leadership where the private sector cannot do it. They must support guiding principles that the “car is not king” and will not be part of society in the long term. The planning should not be based on election cycles or immediate issues or crises. When a vision is developed and adopted by the wider community, planners and politicians, it is very important to “stick to the plan” through to implementation.

Most importantly, the basic requirement of a strong transit culture is to “make taking transit easy” which is a slogan used by many involved in transit marketing. This requires initiatives that make the planning, development and implementation a future public transport system easy through engagement, education and envisioning. These strategies are needed in order to generate a positive perception towards public transport and to create a strong transit culture in the community.

## 5. References

- American Public Transportation Association, 2010 Public Transportation Fact Book, 61<sup>st</sup> Edition, April 2010.
- Canadian Urban Transit Association (CUTA), Transit Vision 2040, Toronto, Canada, 2009.
- Envision Midway Stakeholders Committee. *Envision Midway – A Collaborative Planning Project, Overview of High-Capacity Transit Station Location Criteria*, Meeting 1, May 21, 2008.
- Honolulu Advertiser. *Statistics Show Need for New Transit Culture*, Monday 2 July 2007.
- Katter, Richard. *Transit-oriented development: an opportunity to shape SEQ’s communities of tomorrow*, THG, Paper presented at International Cities Town Centres and Communities Society, Deakin University, Geelong, Victoria, Australia, October 2009.
- Margonelli, Lisa. *How to Create a Culture of Public Transit: The “Marci Option”*, The Atlantic magazine, April 2011.
- Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, Province of British Columbia, *U-PASS BC to Save Students on Transit Fares*, News Release, 9 June 2010
- Newman, Peter. *Why Do We Need a Good Public Transport System?* Curtin University Sustainability Policy (CUSP) Institute, Western Australia, April 2010.
- PICS SmartCard Inc. *Creating a Long-Term Transit Culture among Students, Ensuring Secured Fare Media in a Successful U-Pass System*, November 2006.
- Setty, Michael et al. *The Transit “Field of Dreams:” If You Operate It, Will They Ride?* Public Transit US, Special Report 3, August 2005.
- Taylor, Brian and Fink, Camille. *The Factors Influencing Transit Ridership: A Review and Analysis of the Ridership Literature*. UCLA Department of Urban Planning Working Paper, 2003.
- UITP, *Linking the Business Community and Public Transport*, UITP Focus Paper, April 2011
- Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) in partnership with Hampton Roads Transit (HRT) and Williamsburg Area Transit Authority (WATA). *Hampton Roads Regional Transit Vision Plan*, February 2011.

## Websites

<http://www.answers.com/topic/mass-transit-in-new-york-city#ixzz1KfiRKqZV>

<http://www.aptnsw.org.au/> Action for Public Transport in NSW, Australia

<http://www.bestworkplaces.org/>

<http://www.bishopranch.com/transportation/>

<http://www.envisionmidway.com/default.aspx/>

<http://envisiontransportation.com/> A community conversation about transport options for Virginia Beach, USA.

[http://globizen.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/06/toronto\\_gta\\_subway\\_map\\_2030\\_dieter\\_janssen\\_full.jpg/](http://globizen.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/06/toronto_gta_subway_map_2030_dieter_janssen_full.jpg/) Toronto 2030 Transit Fantasy Subway Plan.

<http://www.humantransit.org/> Transit Blog by Jarrett Walker

[http://tlcminnesota.org.phtemp.com/Alternatives/rail\\_alternative.htm](http://tlcminnesota.org.phtemp.com/Alternatives/rail_alternative.htm). Transit for Liveable Communities and a rail transit vision for Minneapolis-St Paul, Minnesota.

<http://www.good.is/category/transportation/> Walker, Alissa. *GOOD* magazine, January 26, 2011.

<http://www.janeswalk.net/walkability>

<http://metroriderla.com/about/> A blog for public transport commuters in Los Angeles

<http://metroriderla.com/2008/06/23/daily-transit-links-roundup-for-62308/> Dan Wentzel's comments

<http://www.philadelphiaspeaks.com/forum/philadelphia-transportation-septa/1186-mass-transit-101-everything-you-need-know-about-public-transportation-philadelphia-region.html>

<http://www.ptua.org.au/> Public Transport Users Association, Victoria, Australia

[http://www.pps.org/transportation/transit\\_friendly\\_community/](http://www.pps.org/transportation/transit_friendly_community/)

<http://www.transittalk.com/index.php/about-us/>

<http://www.transittalk.proboards.com/> The Transit Coalition on-line discussion board

<http://www.thesocietypages.org/thickculture/>