

2010

Active Transportation at
Camosun



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Executive Summary

Introduction

Camosun is planning expansion at both campuses (Lansdowne and Interurban) in the near future, which will put continued pressure on the college's already strained transportation and parking infrastructure. In an effort to avoid having to expand parking facilities, the college decided to look for ways to better manage their current infrastructure, a process known as Transportation Demand Management (TDM). Camosun commissioned a local consulting group to draft a TDM masterplan for the college, using results from a series of workshops and surveys issued to the college population.

Purpose

The TDM masterplan identified increasing participation in active transportation (walking, cycling, etc.) methods as a possible approach to alleviating transportation pressures. The objectives of this report are to (1) establish if there is potential for an increase in active transportation participation at the college, and (2) if so, provide specific recommendations on how to achieve this increase.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the research conducted, the following conclusions are drawn:

- 1) Camosun currently has satisfactory facilities and support for active transportation
- 2) Other institutions have increased active transportation levels via TDM
- 3) A significant amount of the college population has expressed a willingness to change commuting habits
- 4) Most people who can walk to Camosun already do so
- 5) There is opportunity for a significant increase in cycling levels (especially at the Lansdowne campus)

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the report, and the conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are offered:

- 1) Form a college-sanctioned cycling advisory committee and appoint a coordinator. The committee will be responsible for the maintenance and improvement of all cycling-specific facilities/amenities at the college.
- 2) Develop a partnership with all adjacent municipal governments and community groups with the intent of improving cycling and pedestrian infrastructure surrounding both campuses.
- 3) Work with the neighbouring University of Victoria to learn from their TDM approach and adopt successful active transportation policies.

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Introduction

Background

Camosun is a rapidly growing community college. Expansion is planned at both campuses (Lansdowne and Interurban) in the near future, which will put continued pressure on the college's current transportation and parking infrastructure. Expanding Camosun's current parking and roadway infrastructure would be an extremely expensive and inefficient process. Increasingly, institutions are looking for ways to better manage their current infrastructure in an effort to avoid having to build more, a process known as Transportation Demand Management (TDM).

Transportation Demand Management at Camosun

In the fall of 2008, Camosun began a TDM evaluation. The college held a series of workshops to identify the interests and concerns of various stakeholders including faculty, students, area residents, and the Victoria Transport Policy Institute (VTPI), a local consulting group. Camosun also issued a campus-wide survey regarding the commuting habits of students and faculty, and subsequently released a report detailing the survey's results and summarizing participants' comments.

Camosun commissioned the VTPI to draft a TDM masterplan for the college, using the results from the workshops and surveys. The Camosun College Transportation and Parking Management Plan (CCTPMP) was completed in June 2009. The college then released an Implementation Plan shortly afterwards based on the VTPI's recommendations.

Purpose

The CCTPMP identified increasing participation in active transportation (walking, cycling, etc.) methods as a possible approach to alleviating transportation pressures. The implementation of this recommendation, however, was not discussed in great detail. The objectives of this report are to (1) establish if there is potential for an increase in active transportation participation at the college, and (2) if so, provide specific recommendations on how to achieve this increase.

This report is an independent study prepared by a second-year Geography student at Camosun. The report is being written as a term paper for a Camosun College English 251-Technical Communications class, at no monetary expense to Camosun College, nor the author.

Scope

Due to lack of available financial information regarding budget allocations to active transportation investment, this report's recommendations are not based on financial feasibility; instead, recommendations are based on the likelihood of achieving an increase in active transportation participation. While explicit costs are not taken into account, reasonable judgment is used when evaluating a recommendation's feasibility.

This report focuses mainly on cycling in terms of active transportation, as it is, by far, the most popular method. Furthermore, other forms such as skateboarding or rollerblading, require similar infrastructure to that of cycling. Walking is also considered, however, people's walking habits are almost entirely determined by proximity to their destination, and therefore, difficult to influence.

Existing Active Transportation Conditions at Camosun

In a recent comparison of colleges and universities in BC, Camosun met the requirements to be rated "Good" in terms of quality of bicycle facilities. These requirements include ample bicycle racks, shower and locker facilities, and good website resources (Craig, *College and University Comparative Report 9*). To date, both Camosun campuses have similar cycling facilities and amenities. Here is a breakdown of the physical infrastructure at each campus:

Lansdowne

- 236 bicycle rack spaces (<20% covered)
- Shower and changeroom facilities
- Lockers
- Bike Lane on east entrance (Foul Bay Rd.)
- Compact, walkable campus

Interurban

- 210 bicycle rack spaces (<15% covered)
- 18 spot covered, secure bike parking locker
- Shower and changeroom facilities
- Lockers
- Shoulder bike lane on main entrance (Interurban Rd.)
- Walkable campus
- Multi-use paths that connect nearby institutions (Vancouver Island Technology Park, Pacific Institute for Sport, Layritz Park) (Litman 19)

Other resources offered at the college include

- A cycling section on the transportation page of the college website

- outlines facilities available to cyclists
- provides cycling-related online resources
- The Bike to Camosun Network program
 - encourages students/faculty to cycle to campus and track their progress
- The Camosun College Cycling Club
 - organizes rides and events around campus

One challenge with promoting active transportation at Camosun is the fact that there are two separate campuses, and active transportation participation levels at each campus are largely influenced by their respective locations. The Lansdowne campus is centrally located near the Victoria/Saanich/Oak Bay border. It is in a mid-density residential neighbourhood serviced by many major transportation corridors including Shelbourne Street, Richmond Road, Lansdowne Road, and Foul Bay Road. It is near a major commercial centre, Hillside Mall, and is only approximately 5 kilometres from downtown Victoria. The Interurban Campus is located in a rural area of Saanich, approximately 12 kilometres from downtown Victoria. Interurban Road is the main corridor that connects the campus to the nearest commercial centre, Tillicum Mall.

Transportation Survey Results

In the fall of 2009, Camosun issued an online survey to students and faculty to determine current transportation habits at the college. Not surprisingly, the majority of respondents reported driving to campus. Cycling accounted for 6.1 percent of trips to Lansdowne, and 2.8 percent of trips to Interurban, while walking accounted for 5.1 percent of trips to Lansdowne and only 1 percent of trips to Interurban (see Appendix A) (Schaefer 16). The effect of the campus locations is very evident in these figures.

In order to reduce parking demand, a modal shift from single occupancy vehicles to active transportation methods is the ideal situation. When asked if high gas prices have caused respondents to consider alternative transportation methods, 26 percent of staff, 25 percent of faculty, and 12 percent of students reported considering bicycling to campus, while 7 percent of staff, 3 percent of faculty, and 4 percent of students also considered walking to campus (Craig, *Transportation and Parking Survey Comments Report 9*). Although these statistics are being influenced by financial incentive (high gas prices), they show that there is, indeed, a willingness to change commuting method amongst the college population.

The question then, becomes: *What are the barriers to changing commuting habits?*

Barriers to Active Transportation at Camosun

Survey respondents were asked to identify the factors limiting their participation in active commuting. The results are identified in the following graphs.

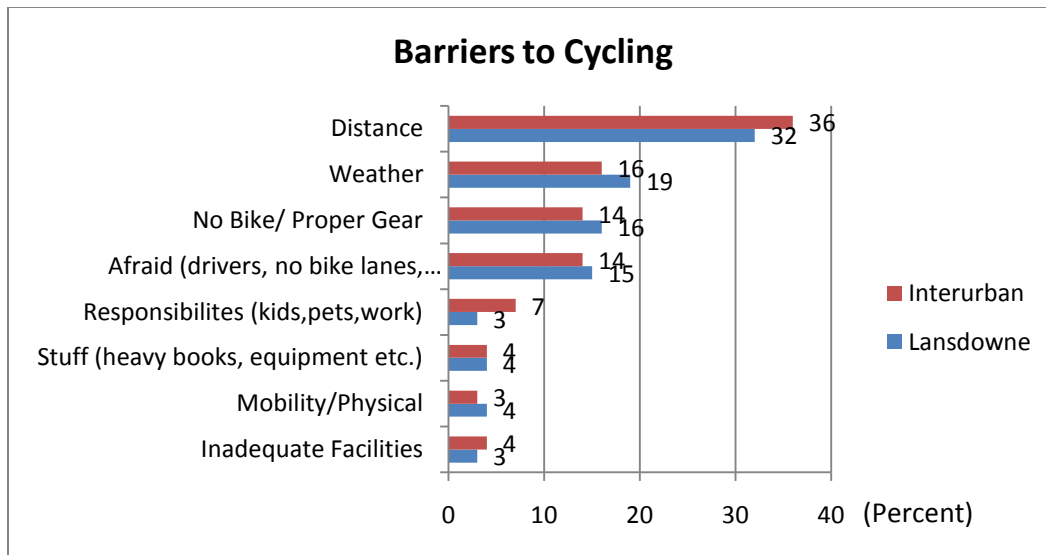


Figure 1: Barriers to Cycling Identified by Percentage of Survey Respondents (Craig, *Transportation and Parking Survey Comments Report 11*)

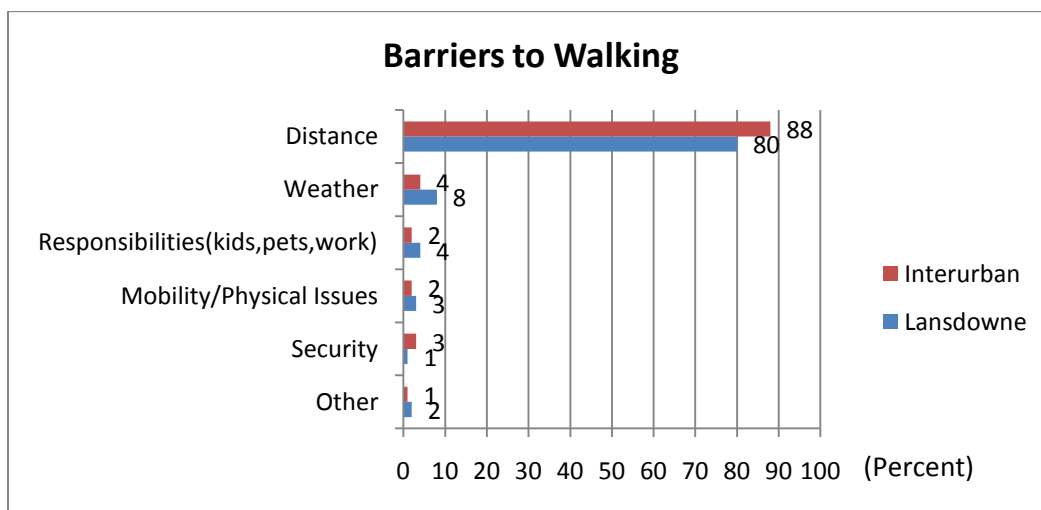


Figure 2: Barriers to Walking Identified by Percentage of Survey Respondents (Craig, *Transportation and Parking Survey Comments Report 10*)

About half of the barriers to cycling identified are things beyond the control of the college. Distance and weather cannot be influenced, and responsibilities and mobility/physical issues are difficult to influence because they are subjective and must be addressed on an individual basis.

This leaves a lack of bikes/gear, fear of cycling on the road, the need to carry many books, etc., and inadequate cycling facilities, as potential areas for improvement identified by the college population themselves.

Distance was overwhelmingly identified as the main limiting factor to walking. Weather was a very distant second. These two barriers accounted for approximately 90 percent of responses, suggesting that there are few influenceable barriers to walking, and that the vast majority of people who can walk to school are already doing so.

Figure 3 (below) lists only a sample of potential solutions to the identified barriers, and is only meant to show that potential solutions do exist. The most appropriate solutions for Camosun would have to be identified by the college itself after financial analysis.

Barrier	Potential Solution
Lack of bike or proper gear	Provide discounts at bike shops Offer bicycle bursaries
The need to carry many books, etc.	Provide lockers for cyclists Offer utility cart rentals
Inadequate cycling facilities	Continue to improve facilities Distribute information on current facilities
Fear of cycling on the road	Work with local governments to establish bicycle lane/routes to campus

Figure 3: Identified Barriers to Cycling and Potential Solutions

Case Studies: the University of British Columbia and the University of Victoria

In the college and university comparative report, only two institutions in BC received “Excellent” ratings for bike facilities: The University of British Columbia (UBC) and The University of Victoria (UVic).

The University of British Columbia (Vancouver Campus)

UBC is a leader in terms of amenities offered to cyclists. The university has had its TREK TDM plan in place since 1997, and as of 2008, over 1600 people cycled, and 1000 people walked to campus (University of British Columbia 24). The university offers cyclists an extensive list of amenities including ample bike parking, shower facilities, a bike kitchen, and a student-run bike shop. The campus also has a bicycle co-op, where members can borrow any of the co-op's 50 bike fleet for use around campus, and a cart lending program which lends utility carts to cyclists or pedestrians for use on campus (Transport Canada). TREK's coordinator, Carole Jolly, says that forging relationships with local government and with student and community groups is key to the program's success (Transport Canada).

The University of Victoria

UVic has a very bicycle-friendly campus, due in large part to the efforts of the university's cycling advocacy group, the Bicycle Users Committee. The committee receives funding from the university as well as from various fundraising initiatives. Its mandate is to promote cycling and facilitate the improvement of cycling facilities on the campus (Bicycle Users Committee). The UVic campus now boasts over 2900 bicycle parking spaces and 68 bicycle lockers, as well as other amenities such as several shower and change room facilities, and towel service (Transport Canada). The university is currently installing a "bike kitchen", which provides students with tools to perform general maintenance on their bikes, including a pressurized air hose for inflating tires.

UVic's SPOKES program is a student-run, non-profit group that repairs donated bicycles and loans them to students for a semester. SPOKES also offers inexpensive repairs and maintenance classes to students (Bicycle Users Committee).

Since the inception of UVic's Travel Choices TDM program in 2003, the university has seen a modest increase in pedestrian and cyclist traffic. The percentage of the school's population that walks to campus increased from 9 percent in 2004, to 11.2 percent in 2008, while the percentage of cyclists increased from 5.3 percent in 2006, to 7.1 percent in 2008 (Transport Canada).

It is important to note that both of the above institutions are much larger in terms of population and area than either of the Camosun campuses. However, their successes, if applied on a smaller scale, may also be beneficial at Camosun.

One area that Camosun is lacking compared to the above institutions is in the establishment of a dedicated active transportation committee or coordinator. According to the authors of *Transportation & Sustainable Campus Communities*

“Unless someone has responsibility for these areas it is very easy for bicycling and pedestrian infrastructure to fall through the cracks. A comprehensive program that improves and maintains paths, parking and other infrastructure, and promotes walking and bike riding requires dedicated staffing. The most successful programs do have dedicated coordinators” (Toor 68).

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the research conducted, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. Camosun currently has satisfactory facilities and support for active transportation commuting.
2. Other institutions have achieved success in increasing active transportation levels via TDM
3. A significant amount of the college population has expressed a willingness to change commuting habits
4. Most people who can walk to Camosun already do so
5. There is opportunity for a significant increase in cycling levels (especially at the Lansdowne campus)

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the report, and the conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are offered:

1. Form a college-sanctioned cycling advisory committee and appoint a coordinator. The committee will be responsible for the maintenance and improvement of all cycling-specific facilities/amenities at the college. As well, the committee will develop various initiatives to help minimize the barriers identified by the college population.
2. Develop a partnership with all adjacent municipal governments and community groups with the intent of improving cycling and pedestrian infrastructure surrounding both campuses.
3. Work with the neighbouring University of Victoria to learn from their TDM approach and adopt successful active transportation policies.

Implementation of these recommendations will ensure that active transportation promotion at Camosun College is done in an organized, proven, effective way. This will surely lead to increased active transportation participation levels, and will help to manage current and future transportation demand at Camosun.

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Appendix A

Usual Mode of Travel by Role and Primary Campus

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Appendix A

Usual Mode of travel by role and primary campus (Schaefer)

	Student		Faculty		Staff/Admin		Total	
	Interurban	Lansdowne	Interurban	Lansdowne	Interurban	Lansdowne	Interurban	Lansdowne
Car	354 64.20%	318 52.20%	65 87.80%	52 66.70%	65 78.30%	89 77.40%	484 68.40%	459 57.20%
Bus	173 31.40%	229 37.60%	4 5.40%	7 9.00%	10 12.00%	11 9.60%	187 26.40%	247 30.80%
Bicycle	12 2.20%	29 4.80%	5 6.80%	13 16.70%	3 3.60%	7 6.10%	20 2.80%	49 6.10%
Motor- cycle	4 0.70%	6 1.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	3 3.60%	0 0.00%	7 1.00%	6 0.70%
Walk	6 1.10%	27 4.40%	0 0.00%	6 7.70%	1 1.20%	8 7.00%	7 1.00%	41 5.10%
Other	2 0.40%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	2 0.30%	0 0.00%
Telework	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	1 1.20%	0 0.00%	1 0.10%	0 0.00%
Total	551 100.00%	609 100.00%	74 100.00%	78 100.00%	83 100.00%	115 100.00%	708 100.00%	802 100.00%

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