

ELECTORAL AREA A Director's Update

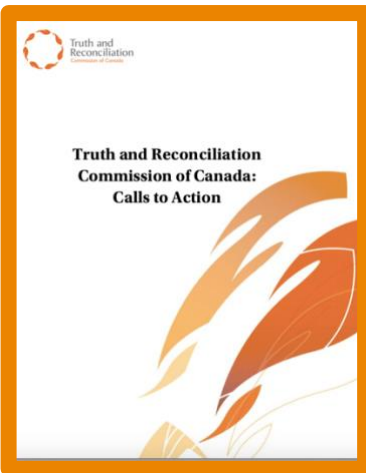
From Jen McCutcheon, Director, Electoral Area A

June
2021

Director's Report

Hello UNA/UBC/UEL neighbours,

What a month. As an immigrant to Canada, I very regularly reflect on how fortunate we are to live in this beautiful country. Having said that, the events of the last month have shone a light on areas where we have a lot of work to do as individuals, as governments, and as a society. The recent terrorist attack on an innocent Muslim family in London Ontario was tragic and horrific, and highlights yet again the significant work needed to overcome racism here in Canada. The discovery of the remains of 215 children at the former Kamloops Residential School has really shaken our country. My heart breaks for the families of these children, and all survivors of Canada's residential schools. In addition to our collective grief, I very much hope that each of us will act on these raw emotions to work towards truth and reconciliation with our Indigenous neighbours.



June marks National Indigenous History Month and I challenge each of you (and myself as well) to use this time to learn more about Indigenous history in our country. This is also a good time to become familiar with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and specifically their [calls to action](http://trc.ca/assets/pdf/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf), which you can read here: (http://trc.ca/assets/pdf/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf)

In lighter news, this week marks the move to Stage two of BC's Restart program. Our progress to this stage is in large part as a result of our strong commitment to getting vaccinated. Thank you to everyone who has been vaccinated – you are not only protecting yourself but enabling all of us to move towards a more connected way of life. Many of us are still waiting for our second dose. Please make sure that you do get that second dose. New [research](#) out of the UK suggests that especially with the Delta variant (the variant that has been so devastating in India), a second dose is necessary to prevent COVID19 infections. Let's all continue our push to get everyone fully (two doses!) vaccinated as soon as we can.

All the best,

Jen McCutcheon

Jen McCutcheon, Metro Vancouver Director for Electoral Area A (www.areaajen.ca or areaajen@gmail.com)



Musqueam community members lined SW Marine Drive with 215 orange shirts. photo by UBC



Increased Speed Contributing to Increased Traffic Incidents on the UBC Peninsula

In the last month, the UBC detachment of the RCMP has noted an increase in motor vehicle collisions. The collisions have involved pedestrians being struck as well as single vehicle collisions that have caused property damage and driver/passenger injury. Unfortunately, two weeks ago we had a fatal single vehicle collision involving a motorcycle. Speed has been a factor in most of the collisions along the major roadways of the UEL. The RCMP have substantially increased their presence and traffic enforcement in the last few weeks and this will be continuing for the foreseeable future. Last Sunday, traffic officers wrote 27 violation tickets in a single afternoon.



"Superhabits" Single Use Items Campaign

Feeling proud of how you've been reducing single-use items in your life? Looking for tips on how you might do more? You may be on the verge of becoming an everyday superhero whose Superhabits — like bringing reusable bags to the store, opting out of disposable cutlery, and packing lunch in a reusable container — will help save the day.

Each year, Metro Vancouverites dispose of almost 1 billion single-use items — that's 440 bags, straws, utensils, cups and containers per person. Single-use items are used for a short time but have a lasting impact on our environment. They cost taxpayers millions annually to collect from public spaces, are prevalent in marine litter, and are not commonly recycled or reused. Reducing these items are one simple but significant way to take climate action.

How can you take action?

- Visit [Superhabits.ca](https://superhabits.ca) for tips to on how you can reduce single-use items and start a Superhabit. There, you can also learn about single-use item reduction throughout the region and using reusables safely during COVID-19.
- [Celebrate your Superhabits](#) on social media using the hashtag #CelebrateSuperhabits. Whether it's sharing your own action, giving kudos to a friend, or thanking a business for making it possible to reduce single-use items, every Superhabit deserves to be celebrated!

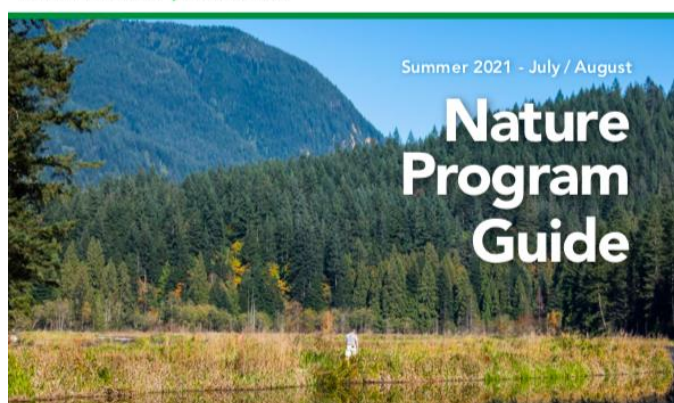




Nature Program Guide for Metro Vancouver Parks

Are you looking for more ways to get out and enjoy local parks and natural spaces this summer? The latest edition of the Regional Parks nature program guide is filled with high-quality nature programs, guided walks and activities – with adjustments to ensure that you and those around you stay COVID safe.

metrovanancouver | REGIONAL PARKS



- Enjoy an evening gazing into the sky for 'shooting stars.'
- Recharge in nature with the comfort and safety of small group hikes. Learn some of the secrets of west coast rainforests with a knowledgeable park interpreter as your guide.
- Join a webinar to find out about woodpeckers, coyotes, bats or bears – then head out on a walk with a park interpreter to look for wildlife signs.

You'll find all this and more in the Metro Vancouver Parks summer guide. Look for programs right here in Pacific Spirit Regional Park, or use this as a way to

explore other parks around Metro Vancouver.

http://www.metrovanancouver.org/services/parks/ParksPublications/PRK_NatureGuideSummer2021.pdf

Update to our Metro Vancouver Strategic Plan

Metro Vancouver's Board of Directors recently updated its *Board Strategic Plan*, paying special attention to the topics of resilience, equity, reconciliation and prosperity.

The plan is the Board's guiding document, and in February, halfway through the Board's four-year mandate, a two-day workshop was held to assess whether the [existing plan](#) needed an update.

The [May 2021 Update to the Board Strategic Plan](#) represents a minor adjustment, as it was felt the original plan still reflects the Board's aspirations and commitments to financial sustainability, climate action, affordable housing and the importance of regional parks.

The main updates to the MV Board Strategic Plan include:

- Heightened focus on resilience planning, including a broadened scope of resilience beyond natural and environmental conditions
- Recognition, in policy development and planning, of the disproportionate impact of change on different populations





- Importance of encouraging innovation in the delivery of services to contribute to regional resilience and prosperity
- Direction to explore pathways to reconciliation with First Nations, and a land acknowledgement to recognize and respect the shared territories and diverse and distinct Indigenous Peoples of our region

The updated *Board Strategic Plan* will provide Metro Vancouver with a path forward in a constantly changing landscape.

Regional Parks Annual Report

I thought that Metro Vancouver did an excellent job keeping our regional parks open and visitors safe throughout 2020, providing an essential service to residents despite the numerous challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Regional parks experienced unprecedented visitation last year, with almost 16.5 million visitors connecting with important protected natural areas — a 38% increase over 2019. With visitation records set at 15 regional parks and



three regional greenways, Metro Vancouver worked diligently to meet visitor needs and ensure residents continued to have places to be safe outdoors and reap the health benefits of nature. It is worth noting that Pacific Spirit Regional Park received by far the most visits of any regional park — 3,921,100 in total, up 45% from 2019.

Parks programs were delivered in innovative ways, allowing 5,629 people to take part in 310 programs, events and outreach activities, while close to 2,500 volunteers and park partners contributed more than 8,000 hours to stewardship, education and interpretive programs. All of this was achieved while adhering to COVID-19 protocols.

As part of Metro Vancouver's mandate to protect natural areas, nearly 240 hectares of parkland were added to the system in 2020. The Metro Vancouver Board of Directors supported this important function by adding \$4 million to the [Regional Parks Land Acquisition Fund](#).

Read more about the state of regional parks in the [2020 Regional Parks Annual Report](#).

<http://www.metrovanancouver.org/services/parks/ParksPublications/RegionalParksAnnualReport2020.pdf>



TransLink Updates

New CEO for TransLink



TransLink's new CEO, Kevin Quinn

On May 18, TransLink introduced Kevin Quinn as its next Chief Executive Officer. Kevin previously led the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA), one of the largest multi-modal transit systems in the United States, which has strong parallels to TransLink's system. Kevin will lead TransLink's post-pandemic recovery, with an emphasis on rebuilding ridership and achieving financial sustainability, starting July 19. I had the pleasure of serving on the part of the recruitment process and was very impressed with Kevin during the interview process. You can learn more about Kevin in this interview: [Hear from Kevin in this TransLink interview](#)

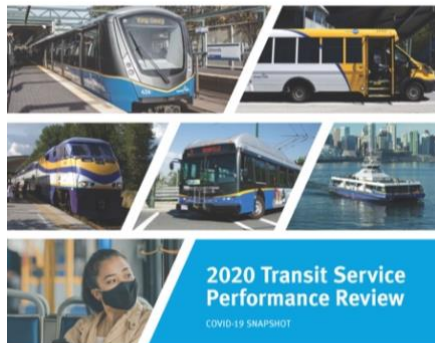
Broadway Subway Construction Underway

Construction of the Broadway Subject Project has officially begun. The 5.7 km SkyTrain extension will connect the existing VCC-Clark Station in East Vancouver, along Broadway, to a new station at Arbutus. Now that construction has started, there are a number of changes to street use.

[Keep up-to-date with the project and street changes on the Broadway Subway Project website](#)



Construction has begun on the Broadway SkyTrain extension to Arbutus St.



2020 Transit Service Performance Review

Throughout 2020, TransLink kept buses and SkyTrains running to support essential trips – and the organization has just released a snapshot of its service-use data. TransLink's report shows that even at the lowest point of the pandemic, approximately 75,000 people still relied on transit every day, and TransLink's ridership retention rate was second among the 10 busiest systems in North America. The two busiest routes in Vancouver both serve the UBC area: 99 B-Line along Broadway and the R4 RapidBus along 41st Ave.

[Dig into the transit data on TransLink's website](#)



Community Connections

This section highlights awesome community initiatives. Please send me your ideas about people who are going out of their way to make our neighbourhoods even better. I know there are lots of examples and I'd love to hear from you about some of them (email me at areaajen@gmail.com).

Over the past year, I have had the opportunity to meet a number of wonderful people who have moved to our communities in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. As many of us who are not originally from Vancouver know, moving to a new place can be a challenge, and I can't imagine how much more difficult such a move would be during the pandemic. For this month's Community Connections, I had the chance to learn more about one of our new residents, a gentleman with quite an impressive background and story – Jean Damascene Makuza.

Jean moved to the UBC Peninsula from Rwanda on December 19th 2020. He came with his wife and 3 children: a son of 10 years, and two daughters of 8 and 4 years. Jean Makuza came here to complete his PhD at UBC in the School of Population and Public Health. Here is a summary of my interview with Jean.



What challenges and opportunities are you experiencing related to coming here with your family and having to balance all the challenges of a move, family obligations, and the demands of your PhD program?

Makuza: When you arrive in a new environment, you cannot lack challenges but as human being, you have to look for solutions to them. One of the challenges I had on arrival was mind-changing – for example, everyday domestic tasks, like food preparation, clothes washing, hygiene of the house for myself and my family members, when back home we had people to help every time. In addition to that, changing my life from government civil servant to student, where I have to attend school every day and devote three-quarters of my time to studies, while before I had to work and could take more time for relaxing. Lastly, Rwandan weather is different from Canada weather, so it was not easy to adapt to it. Contrary to challenges, there are several opportunities that we have to exploit, including living with your family in a country with high quality of education, which is a privilege. Attending one of the best universities worldwide where I can connect with

different researchers, students and lecturers has helped me increase my knowledge, opportunities and even friendships.

How has COVID impacted your time here in BC?

Makuza: As with other people, my time here in BC was impacted by COVID-19 by delaying my adaptation to BC life. In the same way, online participation in courses did not facilitate much interaction with others and it limited course understanding and connection with other people. Lastly, spending 14 days in quarantine was a challenge especially when you have children.



What are some of the things that you have liked best about being here on the UBC Peninsula?

Makuza: Since I arrived in UBC Peninsula, I have liked several things. First of all, the welcome to my family from every part of this Peninsula: neighbours, teachers at my children's school, lecturers and students at UBC all received us in good manner and I was happy for that. Secondly, the environment around the UBC Vancouver campus makes life easy: transport is easy, food is affordable and not really different from that of my country, there are different places for taking rest like parks and sports areas, all of which makes the UBC Peninsula an excellent place to live. Lastly, the institutional organisation allows for better services has made me a UBC Peninsula lover.

What do you miss most about life in Rwanda?

Makuza: After about six months abroad, I miss interaction with my people including my relatives, friends and workmates. I miss also my daily work, which I liked a lot. I cannot forget the tropical weather of Rwanda, which attract many tourists.

I understand that you were part of the Rwanda Ministry of Health's Joint Task Force for COVID-19. Can you tell us a little about that experience and how similarities or differences between the COVID response in Rwanda and here in BC?

Makuza: As a medical doctor working in public health, I was among healthcare workers who intervened in response to COVID-19 from the first case in Rwanda to when I stopped my work to continue my studies in December 2020. During this period, I got more experience in prevention and control of COVID-19 including management of suspected and confirmed cases, prevention measures among general population like non-pharmaceutical methods and vaccination. There are a lot of similarities and a few differences between COVID response in Rwanda and in BC. Among similarities I can cite case management and preventive measures among the general population: social distancing, wearing masks, decreasing movement among population, curfew, quarantine and testing for travellers, and vaccination. Among few differences, there seemed to be more serious cases in Rwanda than in BC which has an impact on patients' outcome and transmission of COVID-19 in the general population. Another difference is the general population is responsible, people obey preventive measures in Canada more than in Rwanda, where Government needs to put supervisors, police agents and educators for reminding people to observe those preventive measures.

What do you plan to do once you finish your PhD?

Makuza: After finishing my PhD, I plan to use the knowledge gained to educate students so they can help in prevention of different diseases. As researcher with expertise in epidemiology, public health and biostatistics, I am planning to conduct different researches in matters of prevention and control of diseases on a national as well as global level. With connection with different experts known internationally, I am planning to collaborate with them to find solution to global health problems especially in developing countries. This could be done in Rwanda or elsewhere.



Jean Makuza: father, PhD student ,
and fairly new member of our
UBC/UNA/UEL community



In addition to working on your PhD here, what else are you and your family enjoying doing with your time here?

Makuza: I and my family are enjoying participating in different activities related to promotion of good health, including sports like soccer and running, volunteering to help people in need, making new friendships during the weekends among UBC students and other BC residents, and spending more time with our children.

Appointment to the Board of Directors for the Zero Emission Innovation Centre

I am both excited and humbled to announce that I have been appointed by the Metro Vancouver Board of Directors to the inaugural Board of the new Zero Emissions Innovation Centre.

For Metro Vancouver to be successful in achieving its ambitious target for the region to reach carbon neutrality by 2050, a new level of innovation and collaboration is warranted. The Metro Vancouver Zero Emission Innovation Centre (MV ZEIC) as a member of the Low Carbon Cities Canada (LC3) network, is well-placed to contribute to the work envisioned in *Climate 2050*. LC3, which was announced by the federal government in March 2019, has the goal to accelerate urban climate solutions through capacity building, de-risking and demonstrating innovative greenhouse gas reduction solutions. MV ZEIC's initial endowment of \$21.7 million and its independent non-profit status will enable it to advance solutions outside the regular scope of local government activities. The MVRD Board has the opportunity to guide the work by appointing a representative to the MV ZEIC Board of Directors. At the May board meeting, I was appointed to this inaugural board.

You can read more about MV ZEIC here: <https://www.renewablecities.ca/dialogues-projects/metro-vancouver-zero-emission-innovation-centre>



In other news, I was also recently acclaimed as a Director at Large on the Lower Mainland Local Government Association, the regional area association of the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM). LMLGA represents 33 local governments (from Pemberton to Hope) and 3 regional districts. I look forward to contributing to meaningful policy development and advocacy work within our region and beyond.



UNA Events and Programs: Read with Me

The UNA continues to offer a wide array of programs and events for residents of our communities. You can find out more about all their upcoming programs here: <https://www.myuna.ca/news-events/>
One specific program that I wanted to highlight this month, it is the new Read with Me program.



Reading opens new worlds, brings laughter, and sparks imagination. This program will introduce your child to the pleasures of reading for enjoyment. Hawthorn resident and UNA volunteer, Lee Weinstein, will use his experience as a literacy teacher to engage young readers in the joys of reading and put them on the path to becoming lifelong readers. This program is appropriate for someone who is ready for easy chapter books (Stone Fox by John Gardiner is an example). A book has not yet been chosen for this program but participants will receive a free copy at the first session. The UNA has taken careful considerations following B.C. Recreation and Parks Association (BCRPA), WorkSafe BC (WCB) and B.C. provincial government guidelines in creating protocols to be able to approach re-opening safely and reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19.

Regional Economic Prosperity Service “Digital Economy” Report

The Regional Economic Prosperity Service provides entrepreneurs and businesses exploring the opportunities of locating their operations in the Metro Vancouver region with the comprehensive, customized service required to make this decision. The Metro Vancouver region is renowned for its livability, diverse communities and talented workforce. Metro Vancouver’s population growth has been above the Canadian average in nine of the past 10 years, largely driven by immigration. Approximately 35,000 new residents join the region every year and as of 2016, immigrants account for over 40% of the population.

The objective of the service is to attract new strategic investment to the region that will generate a shared prosperity across the region – providing new economic opportunities for residents and businesses in a way that is consistent with regional environmental and social objectives.

In Metro Vancouver’s Regional Economic Prosperity Service’s first technical paper, [Preparing Metro Vancouver for the Digital Economy](#), they outline key considerations for the region as we transition to an innovation-driven digital economy.





The paper goes into detail on four economic development strategies:

- investing in our people
- catalyzing innovation
- building capacity in key industries
- increasing our global connectedness

In order to advance regional prosperity through strategic investment, the service intends to focus on key industry clusters that are concentrated in the region with productive advantages in order to support and grow export-oriented opportunities.

These industries include trade and transportation, digital media and entertainment, green economy, high-tech manufacturing, telecoms and software, life sciences, apparel, and agritech.

The service has also produced a clean transportation sector profile, which identifies emerging and mature clean transportation firms in Metro Vancouver, discusses our region's areas of specialization and explores the innovation ecosystem.

The [Regional Economic Prosperity Service](#)'s work to date has involved working with partners in the region to build out the region's value proposition in order to attract the right investment and ensure economic resilience and a prosperous future for all residents now and in the future.

You can read more about the Regional Economic Prosperity Service here:

<http://www.metrovanancouver.org/services/economic-prosperity/Pages/default.aspx>

Vaccinations and BC's Restart Program

As a Public Health professional, I am delighted with the strong response of British Columbians to get vaccinated. It is because of this combined effort that we are now able to slowly begin to return to a more connected way of life.

If you have not yet been vaccinated, or if you were vaccinated before April 9, please make sure that you register with BC's online registration system. Our COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective, and in addition to preventing each individual from getting sick with COVID 19, they help our entire communities stay safe, even for those who are unable to be vaccinated for medical or age reasons. Click [here](#) to register (www.gov.bc.ca/getvaccinated).

For details on BC's restart program, click here:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/covid-19/info/restart>



Vaccine dose one DONE!!!



Jen's Board and Committee Appointments for 2021

Below are the boards and committees that I serve on. Feel free to reach out to me if you would like to learn more.

- Metro Vancouver Regional District (MVRD) Board of Directors
- TransLink Mayors' Council for Regional Transportation
- Climate Action Committee, MVRD
- Finance and Intergovernmental Committee, MVRD
- Chair of the Electoral Area A Committee, MVRD
- Metro Vancouver Zero Emission Innovation Centre
- Mayors' Committee, MVRD
- E-Comm Board of Directors
- Human Resources Committee, E-Comm
- Fraser Valley Regional Library Board of Directors
- Joint Regional Planning Committee for TransLink
- Ocean Watch Action Committee
- Lower Mainland Local Government Association (LMLGA) Executive Member at Large

Links & Connections

[Jen McCutcheon's Website](http://www.areaajen.ca)

www.areaajen.ca

[Jen McCutcheon's Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/AreaAJen)

www.facebook.com/AreaAJen

[Metro Vancouver](http://www.metrovancouver.org)

www.metrovancouver.org

[Mayors' Council on Regional Transportation](http://www.translink.ca)

www.translink.ca