

# Transit Oriented Planning

Quesnel is a city of 11,000 in BC's central interior. The city's air quality, which is among the poorest in the province, is a major concern to its residents. To address this problem, the city chose to use its Official Community Plan (OCP) to encourage public transportation as an environmentally friendly alternative to the automobile. Quesnel's public transportation strategy reflects three smart growth objectives:

- encourage mixed uses
- increase density
- provide transportation options.

## Mixed Use Development

Quesnel's OCP encourages a mix of land uses in the downtown and commercial centres. Mixed-use, commercial/residential, developments allow people to meet most of their daily needs with minimal use of the automobile. It also helps create vibrant neighbourhoods.

To encourage mixed-use developments, Quesnel's OCP includes two specific provisions. First, all multi-family residential developments in the downtown must include ground-level commercial space. Second, zoning for medium density residential areas permits commercial and institutional development that might be well suited to the neighbourhood, such as small business, medical, or daycare facilities.

## Increase Density

Increasing residential density near commercial areas brings more people closer to where they work, so they might be able to ride a bicycle or walk to work rather than drive.

Quesnel plans to use two strategies to increase density. First, the OCP encourages infill and redevelopment of existing medium density residential areas before any new areas are designated for similar development. Densification of existing urban areas not only saves infrastructure costs, but also helps make public transportation viable.

Second, Quesnel uses density bonuses as an incentive to increase density near existing commercial areas. Density bonuses are given to developments that, among other criteria, are built within a five minute walk of the downtown core or the West Quesnel commercial area.

## Transportation Options

Quesnel's transportation strategy has focused on improving transit, bicycle, and pedestrian routes. Transit service was expanded in 2001 with the introduction of fixed route, scheduled service. Following the introduction of the new service, transit ridership increased from 8,600 in 2000/01 to 34,000 in 2001/02. It has since grown to 64,000 in 2005/06. Quesnel is also one of the few communities in B.C. with signal priority for transit vehicles at one city intersection. The city's transportation and land use policies help to make transit a more viable option for residents. Quesnel

continues to work with BC Transit to enhance the transit system and to identify potential new transit markets.

Quesnel's OCP supports the use of "alternative development standards" and "neo-traditional" planning principles to improve the quality and accessibility of bicycle and pedestrian routes. Providing convenient and safe pedestrian and bicycle connections between amenities throughout the city encourages people to walk, bike, or take transit rather than drive.

## **For More Information**

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