

To Burnaby Mayor & Council,

I was reading an article the other day about how Burnaby Heights businesses are advocating against Bus Rapid Transit along Hastings; you can find this article on Burnaby Now. They apparently would prefer the alignment move south along Boundary Road.

As someone who frequents the businesses along Hastings, I would visit them much more often if I could reliably get there by bus in a reasonable amount of time, and not get stuck in traffic.

I was curious, so I counted the number of parked cars on both sides of the road between Esmond and Willingdon, the stretch in question, on Google Maps; I came up with around 100 total.

I also took a look at the number of businesses along this route that have dedicated parking in the back of their establishments, off the street. Most of them do, and there are also a fair number of existing surface parking lots along this stretch, as well as at least one parking garage.

I understand that businesses are worried about losing access to parking. That said, we also have to remember that the R5 Rapidbus is one of the top 10 busiest bus routes in Metro Vancouver. It saw 4.36 million(!) boardings in 2022, and moves over 13,600 people on a given weekday. With improvements along the corridor, this is only set to grow, allowing more people to access businesses along Hastings.

Every time someone parks their car along this busy corridor, they back up traffic substantially. Every time someone finally leaves their parking spot, they cause every driver along that lane to grind to a halt, stopping traffic entirely. We have to think about this pragmatically: is this really fair and equitable? Should a small number of people be allowed to do this, especially along a major road? There are maybe 100 people parked along that stretch at a given time, but every Rapidbus could be carrying well over 100 people, and they go by every few minutes during rush hour.

I've heard the argument that parking spots are better for seniors, but I don't think that's fair at all; if anything is unfair towards seniors that don't drive. Many are on fixed incomes, and can't afford \$10,000/year to have a car. Many aren't very mobile, and can't drive. Translink provides great accessibility options, such as kneeling buses and Handydart services, but that's less useful if the buses are always stuck in traffic.

Simply put, I don't think it's a good idea to route BRT down Boundary Road, especially if we're planning on eventually making the R5 into a proper BRT service. We need reliable bus services along Hastings, services residents and businesses can rely on. Allowing inefficient parking along a busy street is akin to allowing parking along a highway; it just doesn't make sense to begin with.

We need solutions, and BRT handily solves traffic congestion for transit users. It provides a viable alternative to driving, and it's much better for the planet. I would expect Burnaby councilors to support this kind of thing.

Sincerely,

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