

US / Canada Trip

My four week trip to North-West America (Portland, Vancouver, Victoria and Vancouver Island, Seattle, North California and San Francisco) to study sustainable transport solutions has been a great success. I managed to travel on or observe approximately 30 modes of public transport including:

- SkyTrain (rapid transit)¹
- Bay Area Rapid Transit²
- Aerial Tram³
- Tram²
- Light Rail³
- Metro/Light Rail²
- Monorail⁴
- Cable Car²
- Street Car³
- Regional Rail¹
- Rail Car (heavy rail)⁵
- Amtrak (heavy rail)
- SeaBus (ferry)¹
- Car/Passenger Ferry⁵
- Passenger Only Ferry²
- Regional Airport Bus
- Double-Decker Bus⁵
- Conventional Bus
- Articulated Bus
- Trolley Bus^{1,2,4}
- Coach
- Taxi
- Sea Plane⁵
- Short Haul Plane
- Long Haul Plane

I was involved in a series of planned meetings with the following organisations:

- City of Portland Office of Transportation
- TriMet (District of Oregon - Transport)
- Seattle Department of Planning
- Seattle Chamber of Commerce
- Washington State Dept of Transportation
- San Francisco Water Transit Authority
- San Francisco Dept of Environment
- Surrey Board of Trade (British Columbia)
- City of Port Moody (British Columbia)
- British Columbia Rapid Transit Company
- Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority (Trans-Link)

I engaged in many impromptu discussions with:

- Deckhands and Ferry Captains
- Conductors and Train Drivers

And visited the SkyTrain operations centre.

¹ Vancouver

² San Francisco

³ Portland

⁴ Seattle

⁵ Vancouver Island

Victorian Election

Being away since November 1, I missed most of the Victorian Election Campaign (although I did manage to vote at our San Francisco Consulate). On return I noticed a strong emphasis on the environment by one major party and on public transport by the other. Given that the transport sector accounts for around 25% of our GHG production, by improving our public transport system we can also improve our environment.



Ferry approaching the Port of San Francisco. Picture taken from the ferry bridge.

Obesity Debate

Sadly obesity is an obvious problem in the US and apparently Australia is not far behind. The Age (26-11-06) reported our PM as saying: *"The reasons for it I think are obvious – the lack of exercise and bad diet for many people ... the Government can do a lot, but I do hope the community doesn't see obesity as a problem that can simply be solved by government regulation."*

The fact is governments can and should intervene through the design of better cities that improve health and reduce obesity and diabetes.

We know the solution. It's through Transit Oriented Development (TOD), where our towns & cities are based around quality transit systems which reduce the dependence on cars and encourage walking and cycling. We know it works because there is an excellent example in Melbourne. TOD also encourages better social streets where people can walk their pets and talk to their neighbours.

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