



# BACKGROUNDER #5: How and Why People Travel

**Purpose:** Why is this topic important to the Regional Transportation Strategy?

Understanding how people move around the region today will help us anticipate and plan for how we might travel over the next 30 years. The Regional Transportation Strategy inherits a legacy of transportation investment, land use decisions, and travel behaviours that have been cultivated over generations. Some support progress toward regional transportation goals, but others act as barriers.

## How People Move Today

### Why We Travel

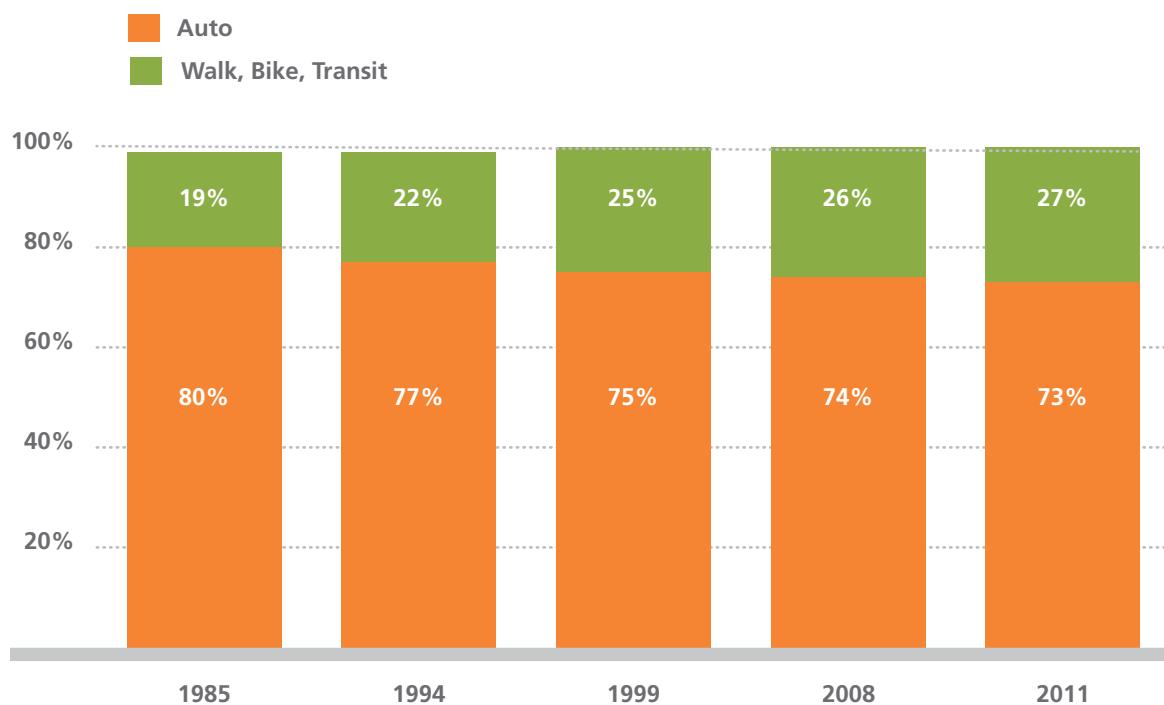
Metro Vancouver residents older than five made a total of 6.1 million trips in 2011. The increase in trips since 2008 was greater than growth in population, indicating that we are making more trips per day. About one-third of all trips are for work or post-secondary, while shopping and personal business accounts for 23% of trips. The mode of travel varies with trip purpose. Transit is the choice for 25% of work /post secondary trips (up from 13% in 1985). By comparison, just 10% of shopping, social, recreation and restaurants trips are by transit.



## How We Travel

Automobile drivers and passengers accounted for 73% of all trips in 2011; a decline from 80% auto mode share in 1985. Since 2008, walking trips have increased in step with population, while transit and cycling trips have increased faster than the population, resulting in a combined increase of non-auto mode trips from 25.5% in 2008 to 26.8% in 2011. The absolute growth in transit trips also exceeded that for vehicle trips in this period, with transit trips increasing by 126,000 and driver trips up by 118,000.

**Figure 1: Metro Vancouver mode share trend, 1985-2011**



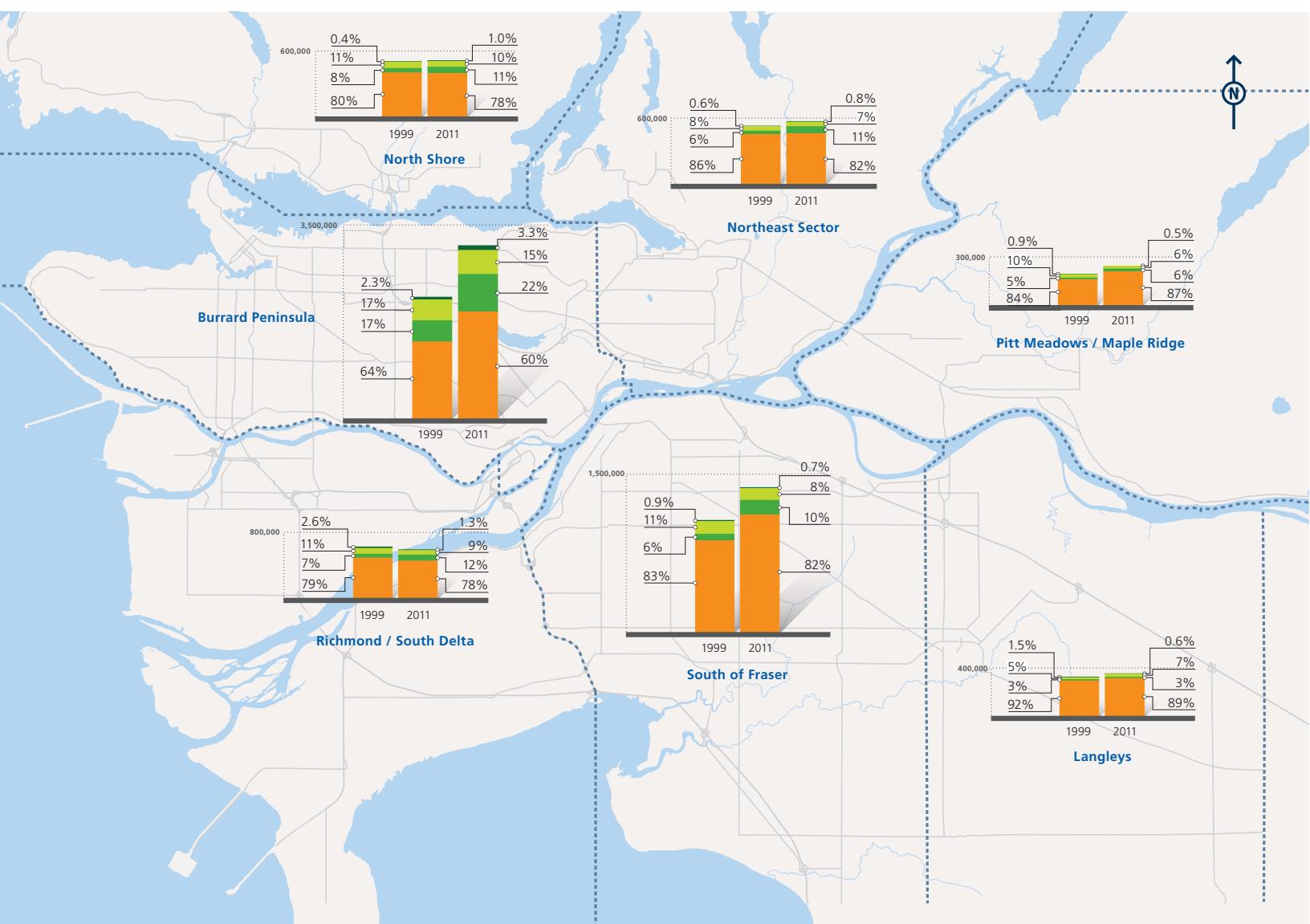
These regional averages tend to hide what is going on at the sub-regional level. While auto mode share has decreased in most sub-regions since 1999, it remained stable in Richmond/South Delta and South of the Fraser, but increased in Pitt Meadows/Maple Ridge. Greater reductions in auto use were achieved on the North Shore and the Burrard Peninsula, with the most significant reduction in auto mode share observed in the Langley and Northeast Sector.

Since 2008, people in Metro Vancouver are making more trips by transit (14%) and by bike (1.8%), with cycling emerging as the fastest growing mode of travel. The fastest growth has occurred in the City of Vancouver, which also has the region's highest cycling mode share. This is likely a reflection of Vancouver's higher-density, mixed-use neighbourhoods and good cycling infrastructure. Walk trips have kept pace with population growth, accounting for about 11% of all trips since at least 1994.

Overall, Metro Vancouver residents are choosing sustainable modes more often. Today, walking, cycling and transit modes are used for nearly 27% of all travel in Metro Vancouver. (The Transport 2040 goal is to make **most trips by walking, cycling, and transit.**)



Figure 2: Sub-regional mode share, 1999 and 2011



### Metro Vancouver Total

Population/Employment (2011)	2,405,000/1,251,000
Number of daily trips by residents (2011)	6,065,000
Growth in trips (1999 to 2011)	9.2%
Share of daily auto driver trips (1999/2011)	57% / 57%
Share of daily auto passenger trips (1999/2011)	18% / 16%
Share of daily transit trips (1999/2011)	10% / 14%
Share of daily walk trips (1999/2011)	13% / 11%
Share of daily bike trips (1999/2011)	1.6% / 1.8%

Total number of trips rounded to the nearest 1,000, and mode shares reported to the nearest integer

### Legend

- █ Bike
- █ Walk
- █ Transit
- █ Auto Driver/Passenger
- Regional Road Network
- Subregion Boundaries

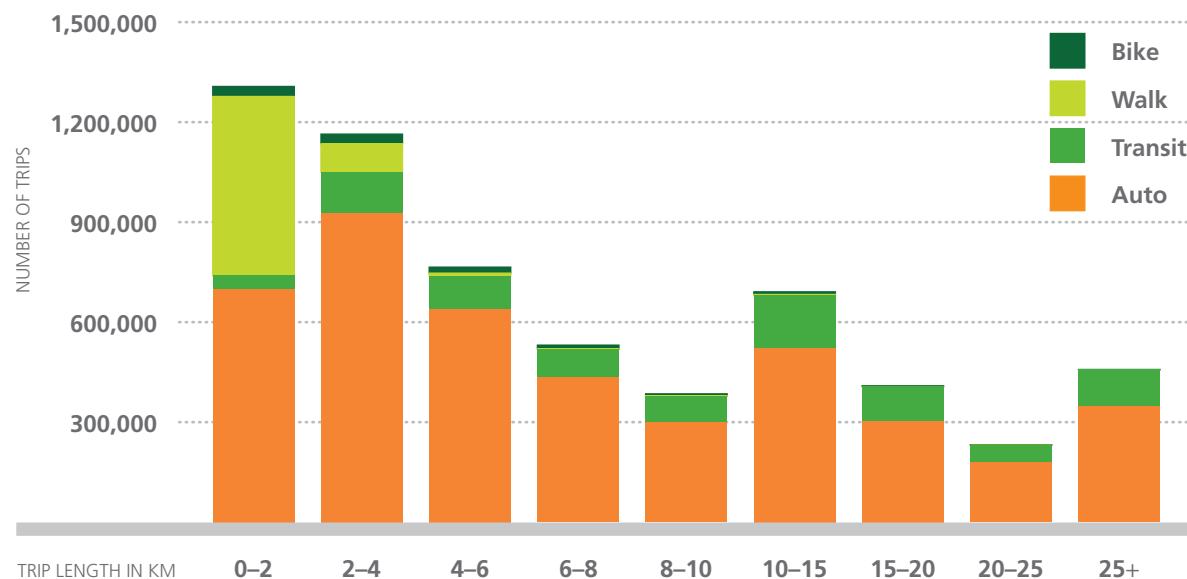


## How Far We Travel

While the share of auto trips has declined, vehicle kilometers travelled (VKT) have continued to grow with population.

Distance is one of multiple factors that influence mode choice. Based on distance alone, trips shorter than 1 km are generally considered walkable; trips up to 5 km are considered bikable; and longer distance trips are best suited to travel by transit or car. As shown in the chart below, most trips made in Metro Vancouver are shorter than 6 km (55%), so many could be suitable for walking or cycling.

**Figure 3: Number of trips by different trip lengths, 2011**





## Where We Travel

Metro Vancouver is a diverse, yet highly integrated region: people travel locally, between communities, and across the region. Where, how, and how much travel occurs depends on concentrations of population and jobs, connectivity and distance between places, and transport options.

A significant amount of Metro Vancouver travel occurs between municipalities and sub-regions. We travel between municipalities about 43% of the time, with most trips to adjacent cities. North of the Fraser, most inter-municipal trips occur between Vancouver and Burnaby, and Vancouver and Richmond. South of the Fraser, most travel between municipalities is to and from Surrey.

The proportion of external trips for commuting (work and post-secondary) are significantly higher than all other trips, indicating a higher propensity for other trip purposes (e.g. school, recreation, shopping) to remain in the home municipality. Overall, most commuters head toward the downtown core in the morning and away in the evening. For example, nearly 80% of all AM peak trips between Surrey and communities north of the Fraser River are leaving Surrey. But commute travel between Surrey and its immediate neighbours is largely balanced, with similar numbers of people travelling to Surrey during AM peak times as away from it.