



Mobility+1: Rethinking the Right-of-Way Regional Leadership Workshop

Executive Summary

Organized by Rethinking the Right-of-Way (ReROW), a University of British Columbia (UBC) transdisciplinary research group, this one-day leadership engagement workshop aimed to initiate conversations about the multi-sectoral issues in the public right-of-way. Held at UBC Robson Center on October 4th, 2024, this invite-only event was targeted to members of TransLink's Regional Transportation Advisory Council (RTAC), and they were instructed to bring a "+1" from outside of the mobility sector. We were joined by twenty-six leaders representing a variety of contexts and a diversity of perspectives. The workshop was facilitated by Dr. Kelly Clifton, Professor in the School of Community and Regional Planning at UBC and ReROW Lead.

Roundtable 1: What are the opportunities and challenges that your organization faces in the ROW?

Across the different tables, we found that many communities are facing similar challenges, although framed in their own unique context. One of the biggest issues is the lack of a coherent vision for streets that considers all the functions and users, not just mobility, which tends to govern most of planning, design, and operations of the right-of-way. To help foster this vision and collaborate within and outside of the mobility sector, there needs to be mechanisms for more coordination, political and public support, and interdisciplinary perspective.

Roundtable 2: Where are the knowledge gaps? How can research inform practice?

One of the common gaps was the lack of quantitative and qualitative data about the space allocation and other characteristics of streets, who is using the right-of-way, for what purpose, and when. Many called for a wide range of performance measures that help guide planning and operations decisions, beyond vehicle level of service.

In terms of research needs, cities struggle to make the case for changes in the right-of-way or articulating the value of enhancements like street trees or non-motorized infrastructure. There was strong interest how research might support the qualification and quantification of these benefits (and costs) of these interventions and understanding the trade-offs between competing interests.

There is also interest in how to better coordinate land development and transportation investments, as there are places in the region with density but no transit and vice versa. The new Provincial legislation around transit oriented area planning is creating questions about how to best balance these systems.

There was an expressed need for more support for the planning and design guidelines for new mobility, particularly micromobility. Similarly, questions about goods movement surfaced including freight routes, vehicle types, regulations, and delivery patterns.

Leaders want more evaluation of the impacts of interventions and more pilot studies and demonstration projects. These not only inform and guide the next steps; they also help to build



political and public support. Speaking of public support, agencies also struggle with public engagement and want research to provide better information about what strategies are effective, how engagement changes projects, and how they can engage with equity-deserving groups and other groups often absent from the process.

Agencies also need more tools to guide decisions and help make difficult trade-offs. Models of demand, optimization and finance were some of those mentioned in the workshop. In addition, many asked for visualization aids that could better communicate visions and plans to the public and elected officials.

Open discussion: How can we work together on these issues? What are the opportunities for partnership?

There was broad consensus about continuing these discussions and growing the partnership with ReROW researchers. Events, such as workshops and symposia, were mentioned as an important way to bring us together around focused topics. Also, there are a number of professional conferences where faculty research could be presented and shared (e.g., CTA, CIP, ITE).

There were lots of ideas about working together. Agencies value the opportunity to work with students, who are their future workforce, but cautioned for the need for preparation and thoughtful partnerships. Project outcomes could be improved if researchers could serve on project or policy advisory committees. Likewise, research projects would benefit from having the perspective of practitioners providing input.

There was an expressed need to understand how these partnerships might work. There is the opportunity to provide some case studies on successful partnerships (e.g. Dr. Bigazzi's e-bike evaluation with Saanich & MOTT) and perhaps those that were not.

Finally, bringing in various interest holders for the ROW is critical for success. All recognized the need to have broader inclusion in this partnership from outside of the mobility sector. Many suggestions were made representing private and public interests.

Next Steps

At the request of participants, a follow up workshop will be held on May 2, 2025, at UBC Robson Center. The goals are threefold – learning more about faculty research expertise and experience; developing and prioritizing research needs together; and identifying next steps in advancing these to projects. We will reach out with an invitation soon. Please see rerow.ubc.ca for more information.

A UBC-hosted listserv (REROW-COMMUNITY@lists.ubc.ca) was created to foster ongoing discussions and to share information. You may join this mailing list by sending an email to: listserv@lists.ubc.ca. In the body of the email write: subscribe REROW-Community. Do not have any other text or signatures in the body of the email.

A full summary of the workshop findings is available for all participants.