



Director's Report

Dear neighbours in the UNA, UBC, and UEL communities,

As a long distance runner, this stage of the pandemic reminds me of uncomfortably tough final ten kilometres of a marathon. The feeling of uncertainty about how much further it is to the finish line; whether or not I *can* make it to the finish line; and the sense that I have made it this far into a tough race, so there is no way I am *not* going to make it to the finish. At that stage of a race, getting to the finish line requires sticking to your race plan, staying mentally positive, and often finding small things to celebrate along the way.

From my conversations with many of you, I know that I am not alone in vacillating between a feelings of hope and ennui as the days get longer and the provincial vaccine plan slowly gets rolled out, while also occasionally feeling tired from running what can seem like an endless race.. But just as every marathon, this pandemic race *will* end, and to muster the mental energy to get to the finish line, it can be helpful to break the “race” into smaller pieces. This can mean catching up to an athlete in front of you or acknowledging and celebrating reaching another kilometer marker. In the pandemic, this can mean finding something nice to look forward to and celebrating little milestones.



Getting through the pandemic one day at a time by finding small things to look forward to – in this case, a new haircut to support Wigs for Kids



Last chance to back out of cutting our hair!

One of those small milestones that my daughter and I set out to accomplish together was to grow out our hair long enough to be able to donate it to Wigs for Kids. It has taken a while, but this past month, we each had 10 inches cut off to contribute to a wig (it takes donations from nearly a dozen people to make just one wig). This gave us something to look forward to and to take our minds off – at least for a short time – the endless and mundane nature of the pandemic. Maybe there are things you are setting a goal to work towards during the pandemic? Other ideas for keeping our spirits up and finding small things to look forward to, are planning a walk in a local location that you haven't been to in a while, or catching up with a friend you haven't seen recently.

We are so fortunate to have such beautiful natural spaces in our 'backyard' and spending time in nature, especially with a friend or family member is good for so many of our body systems (and in line with COVID guidelines). Having something – even something small – to look forward to can help you get through that next “mile” in this long race.

These are just a few small ideas and I am not an expert in mental health. However, at my next engagement session, we will hear from experts and from each other about how we can best cope and connect safely during this stage of the pandemic. This interactive session will be on February 22, and you can read more about it on page 2 below. I hope you can join, and please pass along the information to anyone who may be interested in attending.



Hang in there, neighbours – we will make it to the end of this COVID race, one day, or one kilometre at a time. As always, if you have questions, concerns or ideas, or just want someone to talk to, feel free to reach out to me directly at areaajen@gmail.com,

All the best

Jen McCutcheon

Jen McCutcheon, Metro Vancouver Director for Electoral Area A

Upcoming Engagement Session on Feb 22: COVID Coping, Connecting and Community

Join us on **Monday, February 22nd from 7:00 pm - 8:15 pm** for an engaging and participatory discussion about how each of us can best cope with the mental health consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We will hear from researcher Dr. Jenkins and retired family physician Dr. Nathanson and have a chance to connect and engage with others in our community on this topic.

Zoom link: <https://ca01web.zoom.us/j/6044516562>

COVID Coping, Connecting and Community



Dr. Emily Jenkins is an Assistant Professor in the School of Nursing at UBC. She is studying the mental health impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic



Dr. Shel Nathanson is a Clinical Associate Professor teaching in the UBC Faculty of Medicine. He is a retired family physician and resident of the UBC/UNA community.

Monday, February 22nd 7:00 pm - 8:15 pm **Zoom link: <https://ca01web.zoom.us/j/6044516562>**
Hosted by Jen McCutcheon, Metro Vancouver Director for Electoral Area A



Átl'ka7tsem / Howe Sound UNESCO Biosphere Region Nomination

Did you know that we are well on our way to having a UNESCO Biosphere Region within view from the UBC Peninsula? Thanks to the hard work of the Howe Sound Biosphere Region Initiative Society, a nomination package is now in its final stages of review with UNESCO in Paris.

Over the past year, the Canadian Commission for UNESCO (CCUNESCO), has received and reviewed the extensive submission nominating the Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound Region to be designated as a UNESCO Biosphere Region. In September 2020, confirmation was received from Sébastien Goupil, Secretary-General of the Canadian Commission for UNESCO (CCUNESCO) that the nomination package had been forwarded to UNESCO in Paris for review by

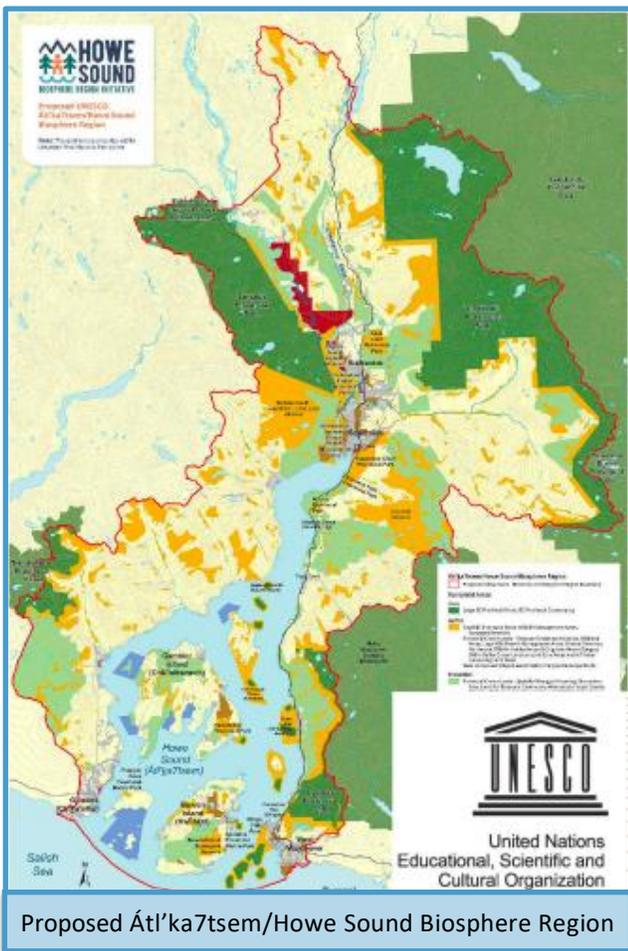
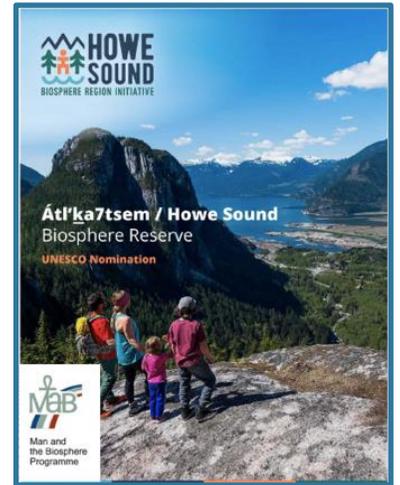
the International Advisory Committee. At a meeting last fall, CCUNESCO's Sébastien Goupil stated:

"On behalf of the Canadian Commission for UNESCO, I am pleased to confirm submission of the nomination dossier for the proposed Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound Biosphere Region to UNESCO for consideration. I would like to congratulate you on this important milestone in your efforts to achieve the prestigious UNESCO designation."

If successful, this area would become Canada's 19th UNESCO Biosphere Region. The recommendations from the UNESCO review panel will be known in April or May 2021. All being well, formal designation would be announced in the fall or winter of 2021, and I will be sure to let you know when we hear any more news.

While there are many reasons to protect and celebrate this unique corner of the region, there is one particular species that I would like to draw your attention to – the glass sponge reefs.

Howe Sound's glass sponge reefs are of global ecological significance. While individual glass sponges are found worldwide, glass sponge reefs have only been found in the Northeast Pacific. Scientists have likened the discovery of glass sponge reefs in B.C. to discovering a herd of dinosaurs





on land. They provide habitat for over 84 species of fish and invertebrates and according to Fisheries and Oceans Canada, the Howe Sound reefs are some of the most biologically productive ever discovered. They provide essential ecological services for Howe Sound by filtering over 17 billion litres (6,800 Olympic swimming pools) of water every day. It would take the reefs just two hours to pump the equivalent of Metro Vancouver’s daily wastewater volume and they remove 436 kg of total organic carbon from the water each day.

Learn more about the ecology of Átl’ka7tsem/Howe Sound: <https://www.howesoundbri.org>

Mayors’ Council on Regional Transportation Updates

TransLink Expands Battery-Electric Bus Fleet

In January, TransLink announced that it is expanding its battery-electric bus fleet with 19 new Canadian-made buses. These zero-emissions vehicles will help TransLink meet its Low Carbon Fleet Strategy goal of reducing its greenhouse gas emissions by 45 per cent by 2030. The buses are expected to roll out on Route 100, connecting Vancouver’s Marpole Loop and New West’s 22nd Street station in 2022. And when they’re in service, this will be TransLink’s first non-trolley all-electric route. You can watch [this](#) short video to find out more, or [read more about TransLink’s Battery-Electric Bus Pilot here.](#)



Metro Vancouver’s first non-trolley, all-electric bus route

Winter Service Changes

On January 4, TransLink reallocated service to the bus routes that need it the most. Changes were made to bus routes serving the UBC area:

- 33 29th Ave Station / UBC
- 49 Metrotown Station / Dunbar Loop / UBC
- 68 UBC Exchange / Wesbrook Village
- 84 UBC / VCC-Clark Station
- 99 Commercial-Broadway / UBC (B-Line)



While TransLink brings its systems back online following a ransomware attack, its Trip Planner and Next Bus services are showing scheduled times only. Real-time information is unavailable, so plan your trip online before you go and be prepared to wait a few minutes whatever the weather.

[Find the most up-to-date information about service changes here](#)



Community Connections

This section aims highlight awesome community initiatives. Please send me your ideas about people who are going out of their way to make our neighbourhoods even better. I know there are lots of examples and I'd love to hear from you about some of them (email me at areaajen@gmail.com).

For this month's community connection story, I reached out to a few residents to see if they had anyone in mind that I could showcase. Within a day or two, I had an email back from a few residents from the Chancellor neighbourhood of the UNA who were keen to highlight the ongoing efforts of one of their neighbours, Keith Switzer. I don't know Keith personally, but by all accounts, he is one of those human beings who is always thinking of others and is first to lend a hand or to spread kindness. Here is a specific example that his neighbours shared, but by the sounds of it, there are many other examples they could have chosen.



EAA resident Keith Switzer is always on the lookout for ways to help neighbours

"Throughout the pandemic, one of our neighbours has been out of the country. Keith has gone above and beyond for his neighbour. He continues to monitor the security of her home, assists with coordinating access for annual Strata inspections and maintenance to the unit. Keith keeps in regular email communication with his neighbour, giving her peace of mind during her absence throughout the pandemic. This communication has also helped make sure that Strata and safety operations can continue uninterrupted, even in her unit.

Kelley Pabst, Strata chair for Keith's building described Keith in this way: "To me, this is an example of neighbours helping neighbours and very 'old school'. Keith does this all naturally, is very generous of his time, and a great member of the Chancellor House community. His actions exemplify what it means to be a good neighbour."

Thanks Keith! I think we are all feeling a little stressed these days, and your example of the small but important ways that we can share kindness is helpful to all of us."

If there is someone or something in your neighbourhood who you would like to see featured in this section, please let me know. It is often the little things that brighten our days, and I believe that we all benefit from hearing about these heart-warming stories.

2021 Electoral Area Committee Work Plan – Consideration of Project Priorities for UBC/UNA and UEL

The Electoral Area Committee is the Metro Vancouver standing committee that I chair, and it provides advice and recommendations directly to the Metro Vancouver Board on policies, bylaws, plans, programs, budgets and issues related to Electoral Area A services and administration.

Each year, the Committee adopts a work plan that reflects issues and projects that are expected to be dealt with by the Committee. While many of the 2021 work plan items deal with the rural portions of the Electoral Area, there is one item that is directly related to UBC, UNA and UEL residents – the consideration of priority projects for UBC, UNA and the UEL to be funded by the Community Works Fund.



The Community Works Fund is funded from federal gas tax dollars and is delivered to all local governments in B.C. through a direct annual allocation to support local priorities. In Electoral Area A, these funds are allotted based on the proportion of population in each community. Based on the 2016 Census, UBC (including UNA) represents 79.7% and UEL represents 18.8% of the total Electoral Area A population. Thus UBC/UNA and UEL will have approximately \$630K and \$150K, respectively, to put toward potential projects.



Most recently, in 2018, the Community Works Fund was used to support pedestrian and cycling improvements to the Wesbrook Mall and University Boulevard intersection, and to pay for green infrastructure to mitigate storm water impacts from climate change in the UEL. More information: http://www.metrovancouver.org/boards/ElectoralArea/EA_2018-Mar-7_AGE.pdf#page=139

Projects priorities are identified through an advisory group local residents and representatives from the UNA, UBC, and the UEL. In the coming months, we will set up an advisory group to help identify priority projects, likely focusing on projects related to sustainability and climate change. I will keep residents apprised of discussions related to potential Community Works Fund projects as we move forward in the process.

Take Care in Pacific Spirit Park: Woman Assaulted on Midday Run



Whenever possible, walk or run with a buddy (while still respecting COVID precautions)

University RCMP would like to remind the public and students to be vigilant of their surroundings after a student was assaulted and robbed while out for a run in Pacific Spirit Park in late January.

On January 27, 2021 around noon, a UBC student was jogging on the Lily of the Valley Trail in Pacific Spirit Park (between University Blvd and 16th Ave) when she was approached by an unknown man who struck her without warning and then fled with the woman's cell phone.

Constable Christina Martin of the University RCMP reminds the public to be aware of their surroundings at all times:

"If you are jogging or walking with ear buds, keep the music volume low, if possible, exercise in pairs or in populated. Also, let someone know your route and when you're going (or share your GPS) and be aware of noises and of others around you."

You can read more on the [UBC RCMP Website: http://bc.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/ViewPage.action?siteNodeId=2087&languageId=1&contentId=68095](http://bc.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/ViewPage.action?siteNodeId=2087&languageId=1&contentId=68095)



Climate Action Webinars

Metro Vancouver is hosting a series of webinars focused on the *Clean Air Plan*, which will be the next iteration of the region’s plan to manage air quality and greenhouse gases over the next decade, and *Climate 2050*, which will guide policy and actions across the region to reduce carbon emissions and prepare for the effects of climate change over the next 30 years.



Metro Vancouver has set the goal of a carbon neutral region by 2050 and the target of a 45% reduction in emissions from 2010 levels by 2030. What’s the path forward to ensure our region Infrastructure, ecosystems, and communities resilient to the impacts of climate change?

Join these webinars to learn about climate actions already underway in our communities and what’s coming next. Topics include carbon neutral modelling, energy, nature and ecosystems and more.

Register for upcoming webinars and view recordings of previous webinars:
<http://www.metrovancouver.org/services/air-quality/climate-action/climate2050/learn/climate-action-webinar-series/>

Canada Plastics Pact

On January 27, 2020, the Canada Plastics Pact (CPP) was officially launched as a new cross-sectoral non-profit organization working to bring about a circular economy for plastics in Canada.

The National Zero Waste Council and Metro Vancouver played leadership roles in the development of the CPP and were among the 40+ organizations engaged at its outset. Though not signatories, Metro Vancouver and NZWC will participate as “Implementation Partners” – a category including non-profit, government and civil society organizations that will lend their expertise and connections to help set the strategic agenda and collaborate to tackle systemic barriers necessary to achieve the CPP 2025 targets.

The Canada Plastics Pact is the tenth national pact to join the Ellen MacArthur Foundation’s Global Plastics Pact Network. The Pact brings together key players to collectively work towards ambitious 2025 goals:

- Eliminate unnecessary and problematic single-use plastic packaging
- Ensure all plastic packaging is reusable, recyclable, or compostable
- Increase the reuse, collection, and recycling of plastic packaging
- Increase recycled content in plastic packaging

Learn more: <https://plasticspact.ca/>





Metro Vancouver Board Approves Inclusion of Childcare Space In All New Affordable Housing

I am happy to report that at its January meeting, Metro Vancouver Board unanimously approved a recommendation to include childcare facilities in all new affordable housing developments at MVHC. A number of board members spoke to the critical importance of addressing the childcare issues as part of the region’s effort to address the affordability crisis that or region faces.

Established in 1974, Metro Vancouver Housing (MVH) provides affordable rental housing primarily geared towards families, seniors, and people with special housing needs. MVH currently provides affordable homes to over 9,400 people in 3,400 units provided on a rent-g geared-to-income or low-end-of-market rental basis. As one of the region’s largest affordable housing providers, MVH recognizes the need and opportunity to renew and expand its housing portfolio to support resolving the region’s affordable housing crisis.



The Metro Vancouver Housing 10-Year Plan includes a commitment of approximately \$190 million over the next decade to support the renewal of existing stock and develop 1,350 new and redeveloped units.

Jen's Board and Committee Appointments for 2021

Below are the boards and committees that I will be serving on this year.

- Metro Vancouver Regional District (MVRD) Board of Directors
- Mayors' Council for Regional Transportation at TransLink
- Climate Action Committee, MVRD
- Finance and Intergovernmental Committee, MVRD
- Chair of the Electoral Area A Committee, MVRD
- COVID19 Task Force, MVRD
- Mayors’ Committee, MVRD
- E-Comm Board of Directors
- Human Resources Committee at E-Comm
- Fraser Valley Regional Library Board of Directors
- Joint Regional
- Planning Committee for TransLink



Links & Connections

[Jen McCutcheon’s Website](http://www.areaajen.ca)
www.areaajen.ca

[Jen McCutcheon’s Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/AreaAJen)
www.facebook.com/AreaAJen

[Metro Vancouver](http://www.metrovancouver.org)
www.metrovancouver.org

[Mayors’ Council on Regional Transportation](http://www.translink.ca)
www.translink.ca

[Union of BC Municipalities](http://www.ubcm.ca)
www.ubcm.ca

[University Neighbourhoods Association](http://www.myuna.ca)
www.myuna.ca

[University Endowment Lands Administration](http://www.universityendowmentlands.gov.bc.ca)
www.universityendowmentlands.gov.bc.ca

[UEL Community Advisory Council](http://www.uelcommunity.com)
www.uelcommunity.com