CORTES ISLAND ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION CONDITIONS REPORT

Final, June 29, 2022

Strathcona REGIONAL DISTRICT

URBAN SYSTEMS

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The smallest region within the Strathcona Regional District (SRD), Electoral Area B, encompasses all of Cortes Island. The SRD is comprised of four electoral areas, a treaty First Nation and five member municipalities.

The SRD is scheduled to begin its update to the Official Community Plan (OCP) for Cortes Island in the next year. To help prepare for this update, the SRD was successful in retaining a grant through the Union of BC Municipalities' Active Transportation Planning grant program. This grant program helps local governments add active transportation elements into planning documents (such as an OCP) and to identify opportunities to improve existing active transportation networks. The UBCM grant award has fully-funded the development of this report.

Active Transportation is a broad term to encompass any form of human-powered transportation – including walking, cycling, or rolling.

Figure 1: Cortes Island and Area Context

The purpose of this project was to gather information on existing conditions of active transportation infrastructure and related road safety conditions for those travelling by active means on Cortes Island. The focus of this report is understanding these conditions and is not focused on recommendations or strategic priorities.

Building an understanding of active transportation conditions was done through data collection and community consultation, including a road safety input opportunity. The inputs of these steps provided a general understanding of active transportation 'gaps' on Cortes Island.

Two Days of Field Data Collection

92 Responses to an Online Survey

Online Road Safety Mapping (Input opportunity)

42 locations of concern added

Two Workshops

(one in person, one virtual)

One Community Meal with Klahoose First Nation

The input and materials gleaned through this process are intended to inform the process to review and update the *Area B OCP* and will complement the extensive work completed through the *Cortes Island Transportation Demand Study* (2017) which explored strategies to increase and enhance transportation options on Cortes Island. Included in the recommendations were several active transportation improvements, including active transportation end-of-trip amenities (e-bike charging, bike repair stations, bike parking), and pedestrian and cycling safety improvements, including trail connections.

Although roadways on Cortes Island are under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI), the SRD is responsible for developing and maintaining parks, and trails that connect parks, waterfronts, and villages. Through the Parks service, the SRD also supports amenities that may support active transportation users at regional parks, including bike racks, public washrooms, seating, and wayfinding. Understanding active transportation behaviours and community interests is important for the development of an OCP as it can designate areas of interest for future park and/or trail dedication; identify key destinations and areas of anticipated growth which in turn informs where new active transportation routes and amenities may be needed; and sets land use policies in support of active transportation activities.

Figure 2: Intersection of Cortes Bay Road and Seaford Road, Cortes Island

2.0 TIMELINE

The project timeline is shown below with reference to foundational work completed in 2017, and upcoming strategic planning work anticipated through the upcoming OCP process.

3.0 UNDERSTANDING CURRENT CONDITIONS: ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

ISLAND LANDSCAPE

Cortes Island is a diverse island, rich in natural features and recreational opportunities with a selection of marine, lake and forest parks and trails to attract hiking, mountain biking and watersports.

The Klahoose First Nation traditional territories span from Cortes Island to Toba Inlet. The Nation's primary village site, Squirrel Cove, is home to approximately seventy-five full-time residents who live and work on Cortes Island and in the surrounding areas.

Three distinct village centres provide services to approximately 1,000 full time residents: Whaletown, Squirrel Cove, and Mansons Landing. These three village centres trace back to a history of having three separate marinas and local postal services, among other village services, and retain their own distinct characters today. Prior to roadways being constructed in the 1970's, these communities were accessed by boat, and marine access to each remains in place. Distance from the ferry terminal at Whaletown to the island's largest service and village area, Mansons Landing, is approximately 13 kilometers. The Distance between these core communities is well beyond reasonable walking distance, and beyond comfortable cycling distance for most – especially when taking hilly terrain and steep grades found across the island into consideration.

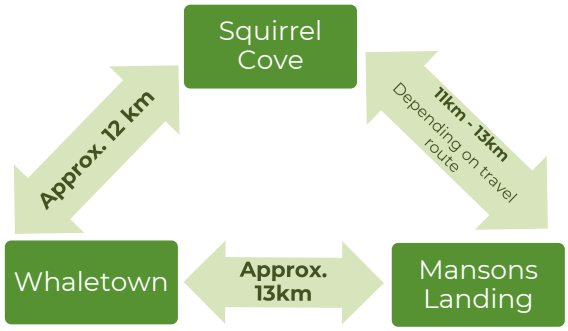


Figure 3: Approximate Travel Distance Between Village Areas (Post Office Locations)

The SRD, in partnership with several community groups and individuals, develops and maintains a growing system of parks and trails. On Cortes Island, the SRD Parks Service manages 11 parks and several trails that connect to various amenities across the island but are primarily recreational in nature – reflecting the rural character of the island's existing active transportation facilities.

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES

Road safety and accommodation for people walking and cycling on Cortes Island is predominantly facilitated through road signage, wayfinding, and the available trail networks. Other supportive amenities such as bike racks and benches can be found across the island, however, they are limited and predominantly provided in semi-public or private spaces, such as at local businesses and marinas. In the centre of Mansons Landing two pedestrian crossings and a roadside gravel pathway are provided. In general, people walking and cycling along island roadways are confined to narrow shoulders or must share the roadway with motor vehicle traffic. Lack of roadside facilities, combined with longer travel distances between key destinations, result in unfavourable conditions for travel by active modes.

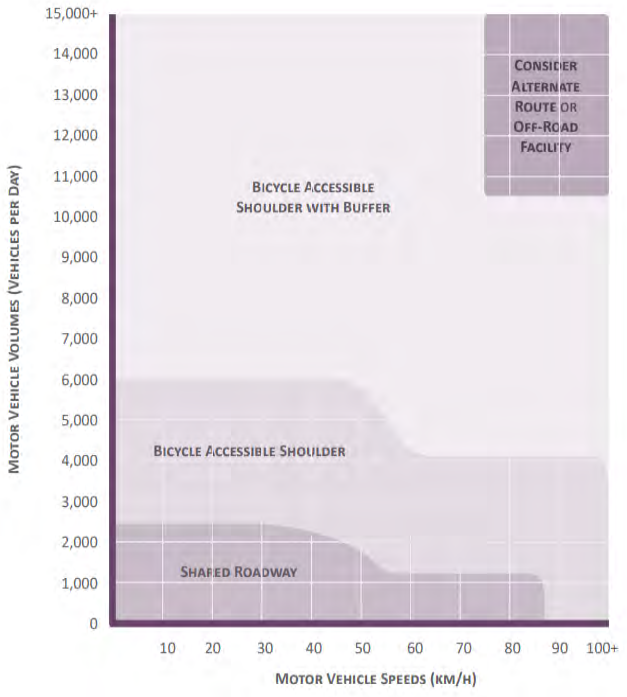
Marine access through beach pathways and trailheads, as well as boat launches and marinas are also available. These marine accesses are provided federally, regionally and through private marinas. Although this study has focused on active transportation related to walking, cycling and rolling, active transportation does also include water-based travel that could be further considered as a travel mode in the development of the OCP update.

Further descriptions of active transportation facilities and gaps in accommodations for people travelling by active means are described in the following sections.

Active transportation **facilities** are referenced throughout this report which refer to infrastructure that supports people travelling by active means. This can mean signage, bicycle parking, roadway shoulders, crosswalks, etc.

Survey respondents and participants in workshops specific to the active transportation conditions assessment project often referenced roadway shoulders as bicycle facilties however there are no painted shoulders and inadequate shoulder space for safe cycling on roadways across the island.

The *BC Active Transportation Design Guide (2019)* provides provincial guidance on recommended policies, specifications, standards, and guidelines to be followed in the development of active transportation facilities in British Columbia. The *Guide's Bicycle Facility Selection Decision Support Tool (Rural Context) Figure D-30* is shown to the right to demonstrate where and when a shared roadway may be an appropriate cycling facility.



EXAMPLES: ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION EXISTING CONDITIONS

Reference: Suggested Speed Signage

Reference: Bicycle Parking at Mansons Hall

Reference: Suggested Speed Signage Approaching Village Area

Reference: SRD Trailhead and Network Map (one example as this signage varies)

Reference: Roadside Pathway, Mansons Landing

Reference: Common Roadside Wayfinding

Reference: Person cycling along roadway shoulder (chip seal)

Reference: Rough Asphalt Condition

Reference: Common Roadway Shoulder Condition, Asphalt

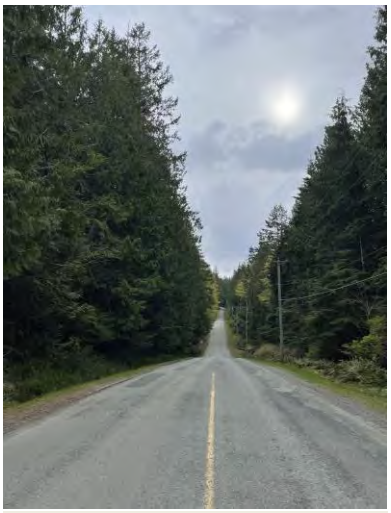
Reference: Common Roadway Condition, Gravel

Reference: Pedestrian Oriented Beach Access

Reference: Pedestrian Travelling Along Narrow Road Shoulder

Reference: Shoulder Parking Area, Mansons Landing

Reference: Trailhead and Parking Area, Whaletown Commons



Reference: Example of Grade or Terrain Along Roadways

ROAD SAFETY

Though the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia provides formal road safety data in larger jurisdictions, this data is not available for Cortes Island. Therefore, a mapping exercise was undertaken as part of this project's online survey which allowed individuals to identify locations of concern in relation to active transportation on Cortes Island. Mapped results for both walking, and cycling are shown separately and are available in **Appendix A: Survey Results Summary.** The combined mapping input results for both walking and cycling are shown below and indicate clusters of concerns along Whaletown Road and Carrington Bay Road, Gorge Harbour Road at Seaford Road, and Sutil Point Road south of Mansons Landing.

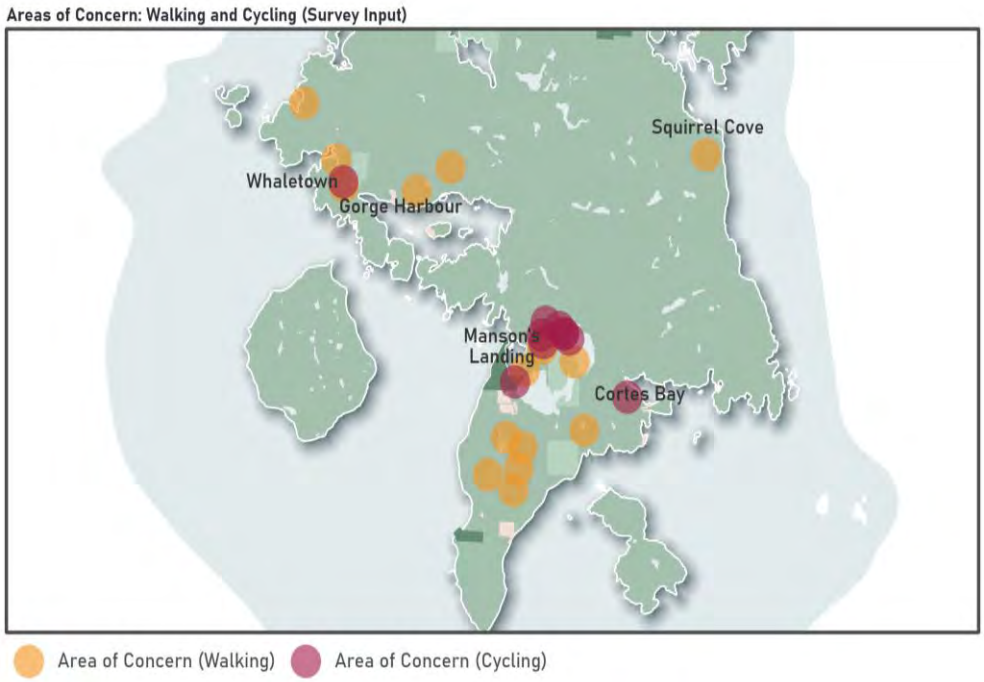


Figure 4: Areas of Concern (online input opportunity results)

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATON GAPS

In-field data collections, combined with input received through the project's engagement process have identified locations of concern (as shown above) and a general understanding that, currently, there are no adequate on-road, or roadside active transportation facilities resulting in a considerable barrier to active transportation use across the island. Major roads such as Whaletown Road, Gorge Harbour Road, Seaford Road, Sutil Point Road, Cortes Bay Road, Bartholomew Road, and Squirrel Cove Road were identified most as areas of concern, representing a need for active transportation facilities connecting the islands three main village areas. In addition, there was expressed interest in connections from Squirrel Cove and Klahoose First Nation to the ferry terminal in Whaletown. For this reason, these main roadways are understood to be the largest gap – with most other roadways having more comfortable conditions for sharing the road. However, all roads are characterized by narrow shoulders, no lighting, debris, and asphalt in poor condition that can be a risk for people on bicycles as well as motorists. It should also be noted that not all roads on the island are paved with some gravel roadways present.

Identifying specific gaps is a challenge when few facilities are in place. However, primary locations of concern have been further identified as gaps below. These locations generally fall into the following categories and are further described below.

GAP TYPE NO. 1: TRAILS

There are approximately 55km of trails of various classifications on Cortes Island. Of particular importance to the community south of Mansons Landing is the Siskin Forest Trail network. With multiple trailheads and a relatively attractive terrain, this network makes commuting by foot and bicycle around the southern part of Cortes Island a more realistic travel alternative.

Trail Connection, Gap no. 1: Siskin Trails Connection

Between the north side of the Siskin Forest Trail and the core of Mansons Landing village is a gap in the trail network. There may be an opportunity to expand this network to better connect and integrate with services available in Mansons Landing.

Trail Connection, Gap no. 2: Linnea Farm Connection

Through the project's workshop sessions, participants identified a desired connection between Linnea Farm and existing trail facilities in Kw'as Park and onwards to Cortes Bay Road. This could be an opportunity to improve connectivity between this community amenity and attraction, and the larger recreational network. Ultimately providing an alternative to locations of concern along Seaford Road between the Farm and

Mansons Landing – a narrow, higher activity, area - with parking demands in peak months that create increasingly dangerous conditions for all road users (identified in Pedestrian Gaps - below).

Traffic calming measures consist of devices that reduce motor vehicle speeds (speed humps), and/or reduce motor vehicle volumes (traffic diversion), thereby making a roadway safer and more pleasant.

GAP TYPE NO. 2: ROAD SAFETY (SPEEDS)

Many local governments across British Columbia, have expressed an interest in having the authority to establish reduced default speed limits within their jurisdiction. Reducing default speed limits has many benefits, including reducing vehicle operating speeds, improving road safety, and improving overall livability. It can have safety benefits in terms of fewer collisions, as well as less severe collisions when they do occur. Lower speed limits can also reduce risks to people who travel by active means, particularly along narrow roadway shoulders.

Figure 5: Informal Resident-Created Speed Reduction Signage, Whaletown Road.

Roadways and speed limits on Cortes Island are under the authority of the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MoTI), with default speed limits set within the BC Motor Vehicle Act (BC MVA).

Signage along the main roads includes Ministry speed limit signs and “children playing” signs to warn vehicles to slow down, particularly at approaches to village areas. Further, unofficial road signs were seen near residential clusters, indicating that residents in the community feel that travelled speeds are currently unsafe. See **Figure 5**.

Road Safety Gap No. 1, POSTED SPEEDS:

The gateway posted speed on Cortes Island is 60km/h. Some residents and survey respondents shared that travelled speeds were perceived as being too fast.

There may be opportunity to fill this road safety gap through an island-based speed reduction campaign (i.e. Fifty is Nifty, Twenty is Plenty, etc.). However, these campaigns are generally to promote, or celebrate, jurisdictions successfully reducing posted speeds. Speed reader boards in locations of high concern may also be an opportunity.

Figure 6: Gateway speed signage at Whaletown Ferry Terminal

Road Safety Gap No. 2, TRAFFIC CALMING: Some drivers tend to travel faster than the posted speed limit, and even those that travel at or below the posted speed can intimidate people walking, cycling, or

otherwise sharing a roadway as 50 or 60km/hr motor vehicle speeds on shared roadways present considerable safety concerns, particularly trucks and other large motor vehicles. Exploring opportunities to lower travelled speeds through traffic calming in high activity areas (such as Mansons Landing), may increase the attractiveness and perception of safety of travelling by active means or spending time within busy village areas, particularly during peak activity periods. It is understood that this would need to be pursued in close consultation with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure.

GAP TYPE NO. 3: PEDESTRAIN FACILITIES

Facilities to accommodate pedestrians travelling outside of the trail network are minimal. Dedicated on-street pedestrian facilities include two crosswalks along Sutil Point Road connected by a gravel pathway on the south side of Beasley Road. These facilities help to accommodate a safe experience for pedestrians accessing key destinations in Mansons Landing but are not found elsewhere on the island. Along the rest of the island, pedestrians have no dedicated right-of-way to travel by foot. This requires pedestrians to risk travelling along the side of the road which presents risks of pedestrian-vehicle conflicts.

Figure 7: Pedestrian with stroller walking along roadway shoulder

It is recognized that providing roadside facilities across the island would improve the attractiveness of walking and cycling. However, given the distances between key destinations and the resources required to build a roadside pathway network, the primary gaps have been identified below. It should be noted that main roadways offer no pedestrian facilities and, therefore, all main roadways present "gaps" in active transportation facilities.

Pedestrian Facility Gap No.1, ROADSIDE FACILITIES, MANSONS LANDING

Recognized as the highest concentration of community amenities, the lack of roadside pedestrian facilities within the area presents a notable gap. This area, which includes the island's elementary school, childcare facilities, skate park, grocery services, visitor information, farmers markets, etc.

Providing roadside pathways, clearly delineated from parking areas or open shoulders, would improve the safety and overall village experience for people wishing to travel by active means.

Pedestrian Facility Gap No.2, ROADSIDE FACILITIES, HAGUE & GUNFLINT LAKES

Seaford Road in proximity to both Hague Lake and Gunflint Lake is a higher volume roadway with seasonal parking overflow challenges. Reduced visibility along the road, combined with narrow shoulders being used for parking, and higher volumes of traffic result in conditions that present safety concerns for all road users. Lack of roadside facilities or shoulder space along these extents presents a considerable gap in connectivity and concerns for safety from these destinations, including integration with Kw'as Park, to Mansons Landing and beyond.

Pedestrian Facility Gap No.3, ROADSIDE FACILITIES, GORGE HARBOUR

Whaletown Road, roughly from Robertson Road to beyond Whaletown Commons was identified as a primary gap and key connection between the Commons and destinations along Hunt and Robertson Roads. A roadside pathway could provide improved connections between these island amenities.

Pedestrian Facility Gap No. 4, PEDESTRAIN CROSSINGS

There are currently no marked crossings of roadways where the trail system intersects a roadway or at any destinations beyond Mansons Landing. The lack of crossings presents a gap in locations where trails continue on both sides of the roadway, or where parking facilities or other activity areas may be on the opposite side of the road. Any new crossings would need to be done in close consultation with MOTI and would likely need to meet the Ministry's warrant process. Lack of marked crossings is currently a gap that, if filled, could better integrate existing trail network and future roadside pathways.

The Pedestrian Crossing Control Manual for British Columbia outlines the requirements for the application of the use of pedestrian crosswalks, special crosswalks, and pedestrian signals. Specific conditions related to crosswalk installations are also included and are often required to pursue a crosswalk treatment along MOTI roadways, this may also be referred to as the **warrant process**.

GAP TYPE No. 4: CYCLING FACILITIES

There are no on-road or roadside dedicated cycling facilities on Cortes Island. Cyclists are therefore encouraged to "take the lane" and travel in the roadway or along the shoulders which, as previously identified, are often in poor condition or have built-up debris commonly brushed to the shoulder of the roadway where cyclists travel. There is a strong desire for safer cycling conditions to access the Whaletown ferry terminal from each of the key village centres.

In addition to the lack of dedicated cycling facilities, topography and distance between key island destinations are barriers to cycling uptake on Cortes Island, however with the growing adoption of electric bicycles, cycling could become a growing mode choice for residents and visitors on Cortes Island.

Unlike identified gaps in pedestrian facilities which are primarily focused in proximity to community amenities, cycling facilities typically cover longer distances. The provision of cycling facilities connecting the three distinct communities, would likely require roadway widening, making this "gap" difficult to address due to the considerable investment required and jurisdictional limitations of the SRD.

Cycling Facilities Gap No. 1, NARROW ROADWAYS

The islands relatively narrow roadways present challenges for people travelling by bicycle. The roadside pathways identified within the pedestrian gaps above, would also present an opportunity at high-activity areas for those travelling by bicycle. However, longer distances between village centres would also benefit from roadside pathways or wider shoulder spaces to better accommodate people cycling over these longer distances. It should also be recognized that while some cyclists are confident sharing the roadway with motorists, others, particularly those travelling with children or inexperienced cyclists, are unlikely to adopt cycling as a preferred mode without adequate separation from motor vehicle traffic. Where shoulders are available, they were seen to have accumulated debris posing a hazard for people travelling on bicycles.

Cycling Facilities Gap No. 2, LIMITED BIKE PARKING

End-of-trip facilities for people cycling can include amenities such as bike parking, e-bike charging, or repair stands. Currently bike parking can be found at key commercial locations, Whaletown Ferry, the elementary school, and in some Provincial Parks. Currently bike racks are not consistently provided at SRD parks or trailheads representing a gap in cycling facilities. The bike racks that were recorded were provided on private property and some were in poor condition. To facilitate a comfortable and secure bike parking, racks should be covered for weather protection, and use design standards as recommended in the *B.C. Active Transportation Design Guide (2019).* Further, as e-bike adoption increases on Cortes Island, providing public charging locations will be crucial in facilitating e-bike use to extend the ranges of these bicycles and offer a viable mode choice on Cortes Island. Public bicycle repair stands are not currently available on Cortes Island.

GAP TYPE NO. 5: MODAL INTEGRATION

Integration Gap No. 1, WAITING AREAS AND CONNECTIONS: School bus services are offered across Cortes Island. However, students required to wait for the bus along roadway shoulders. As previously identified, these shoulders are narrow and, in some case, offer poor visibility. This may reduce the attractiveness of school bus service and act as a barrier. In addition, connections to bus pick-up locations are often made along roadway shoulders. Improving connections and providing wider, safer, waiting areas may be beneficial to the overall integration of active transportation and school bus services. These wait areas could also be used for other island-based shuttle or transport services (current or future).

Integration Gap No. 2, FERRY ACCOMODATIONS:
Currently people who cycle on the ferry do not have comfortable facilities while on board. For example, there are no dedicated bicycle racks on board and bicycles are parked on the deck, exposed to all weather conditions, often with cyclists exposed while accompanying their bicycle. Seating, a covered bike rack, and potential for e-bike charging on board would improve the overall ferry experience for people cycling. In addition, while there is bicycle parking provided at the Whaletown ferry terminal, no long-term secure bicycle parking is provided, nor charge facilities for e-bikes.

Integration Opportunity: While modal integration can be complex, the concept of mobility hubs - amenities to facilitate active transportation users accessing key destinations can create connectivity for different travel modes to come together through a suite of mobility services and amenities. In the context of Cortes Island, a mobility hub could include e-bike charging services, bike racks and/or secure bike parking, seating and wayfinding and accompany waiting areas for students or other informal ride sharing systems and may help address several gaps as identified above. While further study would be required, Mobility Hubs would likely be best located at key intersections and activity areas including village areas and the Whaletown Ferry Terminal.

GAP TYPE NO.5: EDUCATION AND PROMOTION

In the past, bicycle skills training has been provided on Cortes Island as part of summer youth programs. However, a broader bicycle skills training approach has not been undertaken leaving a gap in cyclist and driver education. Broader orientation to the trails network and opportunity to encourage youth to participate in mountain biking was also identified by Klahoose First Nation and was seen as an economic opportunity demonstrating a current gap in training and promotion.

2.3 ORGANIZATIONAL ROLES

The SRD does not have a transportation service on Cortes Island, which limits the authority and responsibility of the SRD to address transportation concerns within the community. However, transportation is an essential component of land use planning and policy development, and support for active travel modes is a clear benefit of community parks and trails. Therefore, the SRD considers transportation in land use decisions and maintains a strong working relationship with other government and community organizations with a role in transportation, as detailed in **Figure 8** below.

Strathcona Regional District (SRD)	• Official Community Plan • Zoning Bylaw • Community Parks and Trails
Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI)	• Roadways and shoulders • Speed limits
BC Ferries	• Ferry services and scheduling • Ferry terminal services and amenities
Community Associations/Organizations	• Education and Awareness • Advocacy

Figure 8: Roles in Transportation, Cortes Island

Improving active transportation on Cortes Island will involve collaboration between the Strathcona Regional District, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, BC Ferries, and the dedicated community organizations which already advocate for improved conditions and access across the island. This is a strong foundation, and these efforts are well recognized.

There is strong community support to improve the safety of pedestrians and cyclists and decrease dependence on the private automobile. Public consultation for this project revealed a strong desire for the SRD to provide and operate a linear park system (i.e. pathways) to support active transportation through roadside pathways, improved crossing locations (if allowable), and integration with existing trail networks. To achieve this, the SRD will need to:

1. Designate areas of possible future parkland and trail interests within the Cortes Island Official Community Plan (OCP);

2. Ensure policies and objectives within the OCP enable active transport activities and investment in supportive infrastructure;

3. Ensure that regulations within the Cortes Island Zoning bylaw support active transportation and do not create unintended barriers;

4. Prioritize trail segments that would link existing pathways and improve connections to key destinations;

5. Prepare a strategy for investment in the Cortes Island transportation network for consideration as part of the development of the SRD's 5-year Financial Plan; and

6. Identify opportunities for partnership and/or advocacy on matters beyond the SRD's jurisdiction.

Figure 9: Wayfinding at Cortes Bay Road

4.0 WHAT WE HEARD

A series of public and stakeholder activities were undertaken from January to May 2022 with the majority of input gleaned in April 2022. Input was received from residents, community groups and the Klahoose First Nation, a partner in this project, to ensure the report was informed by the community and reflects the needs and ideas of Cortes Island residents.

Promotion of the engagement process was communicated through a community contributor distribution email, SRD led social media promotion, posters at key community destinations and a radio interview with the Cortes Community Radio Society which was broadcast.

A dedicated project page was also available and shared project information, links to surveys, and promoted engagement opportunities.

Figure 10: A Promotional Poster Mounted at Squirrel Cove Store

Community Workshops

Two community workshops were hosted, one virtual and one in-person. The engagement opportunities were all open to the public and specific contributors were invited by email which included:

- Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure
- Friends of Cortes Island
- Cortes Foundation
- Cortes Community Housing
- Cortes Community Economic Development Association

"We need public transit as that also promotes active transportation. If you could bus to the different parts of the island you could then enjoy walks in the different communities. We have a high proportion of seniors on the island who cannot realistically walk or cycle the whole island but would get out walking more if they could bus to the different areas. Many become very limited when they can no longer drive."

- *Survey Respondent*

"Blind corners- often passed by vehicles that enter the lane of on-coming traffic which is very dangerous. I have seen some near misses. Drivers need to be educated with campaigns on how to safely pass bikes- wait til it's safe for them to pull over."

- *Survey Respondent*

"... the Siskin Forest Trail system is the most beautiful and functional trail system I have ever used."

The virtual workshop, held on April 21, had five participants attend. The workshop included a brief presentation on the project process and initial findings (survey input received to date). A fruitful discussion was held following the presentation where participants shared their challenges and opportunities related to active transportation.

The in-person workshop was held at Mansons Hall on April 26 and had attendance from four residents and key community group representatives. This workshop was treated like an Open House, with the opportunity for the project team to listen to the community. Posters and printed maps were provided to facilitate a discussion and to record information of key gaps or challenges. This community discussion provided insight into the ways the community can get involved to advocate, promote, and build active transportation connections and support education on Cortes Island.

Figure 11: In-Person Workshop at Mansons Hall

Key take-aways from the community workshops included:

- Challenges with jurisdictional authority over roads and infrastructure
- Road maintenance is infrequent and does not consider the roadway shoulders (where cyclists and pedestrians travel)
- Road safety education and bike skills training opportunities
- Equity challenges around accessing and travelling on the ferry by bike
- Interest from private landowners and non-profits to build trails to create key trail connections.
- Interest in reducing travelled speeds on Cortes Island
- Improving school bus stops and the ability to carry bicycles on-board
- Opportunity for a public parking social enterprise in Mansons Landing to ease parking congestion and support community, or allow for increased parking and the ability to access Hague Lake and other attractions on foot
- Key areas to improve road safety were the main village areas, and the “Lake Loop” from Linnea Farm

Engagement with Klahoose First Nation

An early conversation with a key representative from Klahoose First Nation occurred in February 2022. The opportunity allowed the SRD and project team members to provide an overview of the project, explore challenges and items the team should be aware of prior to commencing further tasks, and allowed for recommendations of how best to engage the larger Klahoose community.

On May 17, 2022, a Community Lunch and discussion was held between staff at the SRD and members of Klahoose First Nation. Approximately 13 people attended the event.
Comments and concerns raised from members of the Nation regarding active transportation included:

- Concerns for road safety related to walking and cycling – want to be able to enjoy the territory on foot.
- Desire for off-road options that run parallel to the roadway to access key destinations (i.e. ferry).

- Interest in mountain biking trails for recreation and commuting to create a healthy activity for youth and increase tourism.
- Concerns around lack of pedestrian infrastructure and road conditions, wildlife, and terrain.
- Topography is a major barrier, especially with uneven, soft or muddy terrain. Trail-based stairs on steep hills could be a solution.
- Importance of beach access.

Figure 12: Klahoose First Nation In-Person Engagement

Survey Findings

A survey was created and made available on a dedicated project webpage on the SRD's website. The survey was available from April 8 to May 20, 2022. Participants were able to complete the survey online or through hard copies and to be submitted to the SRD. Hard copy surveys were also provided at the in-person workshops. In total, the survey received 92 responses.

The survey included 25 questions, developed to help identify issues, opportunities and community priorities related to active transportation on the island. The survey was also developed to better understand the current travel patterns of island residents as well as future desires for active transportation amenities and infrastructure. The survey was supplemented by an interactive mapping tool allowing participants to provide specific comments by location as shown above in **Section 3: Road Safety** and separated by mode below alongside the survey results related to each mode.

Through findings from the survey, a list of key themes and takeaways have been summarized below. A detailed summary of the survey findings can be found in **Appendix A**.

Key Survey Takeaways

- Active transportation is popular for daily tasks, with 34% of participants identifying that they walk or cycle as their usual mode of transportation on the island. The most common mode of transportation was identified as "driving alone" at 48%
- On average, participants feel safer walking than cycling with 90% of participants identifying that they felt very safe or mostly safe walking.
- 40% of respondents stated they felt unsafe or very unsafe when cycling on Cortes Island.
- The main barriers to walking more includes distance to travel (28%), carrying or transporting too much (28%) and speed of motor vehicle traffic (25%).

- Barriers to cycling more included lack of bicycle routes or pathways (40%), speed of motor vehicle traffic (33%) and the safety of bicycle routes (22%). (**Note:** Reference to roadway conditions in relation to appropriate bicycle facilities has been provided in Section 3.0).

- When asked how likely the respondent would cycle more if provided safe and connected cycling facilities, 56% of respondents indicated they'd be somewhat likely to very likely.

Key Recommendations

- Improving and expanding the trail and path network for both walking and cycling is a clear priority for the community

- When asked about the main transportation challenges on Cortes Island, lack of facilities for walking and cycling were the top-rated options followed by lack of transportation options.

- Improving road safety for all users (62%), improving environmental outcomes (53%) and providing more transportation choices (40%) as the most important transportation benefits participants identified.

5.0 CONCLUSION

Overall, there is community interest and desire to improve the safety and experience for pedestrians and cyclists on Cortes Island. Existing conditions do not provide safe and accessible facilities for people accessing various destinations across the island and there are areas in need of safety improvements. In addition, road safety is a concern that, while it could be mitigated through separate walking or dedicated cycling facilities, will require sizable investments. Lowering posted speeds or travelled speeds was also identified as an opportunity to improve safety for those travelling by active means, combined with a road safety oriented educational campaign.

The island faces challenges of topography and distances between key island destinations in addition to challenges in implementing active transportation improvements on the island's roadways due to their rural characteristics and the jurisdictional complexities.

Development of policy in the Official Community Plan for Cortes Island is likely to further support the SRD's efforts to improve active transportation conditions for the community by setting clear direction for the future of the island through both land use and strategic transportation policy.

Figure 13: Informal Seating at Squirrel Cove

Appendix A

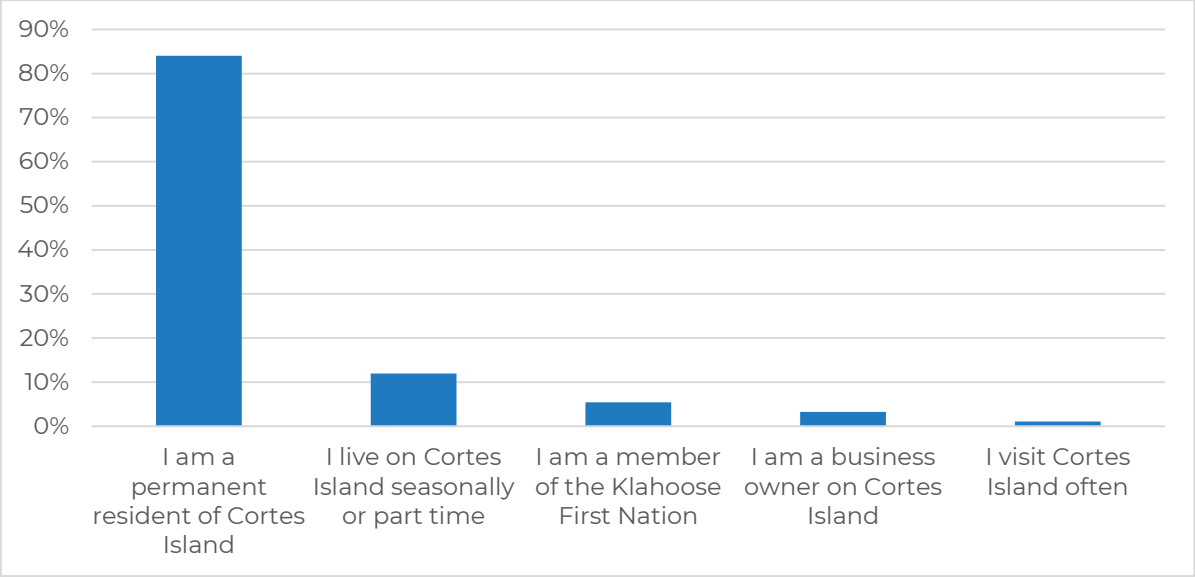
ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION SURVEY RESULTS SUMMARY

APPENDIX A: ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION SURVEY RESULTS SUMMARY

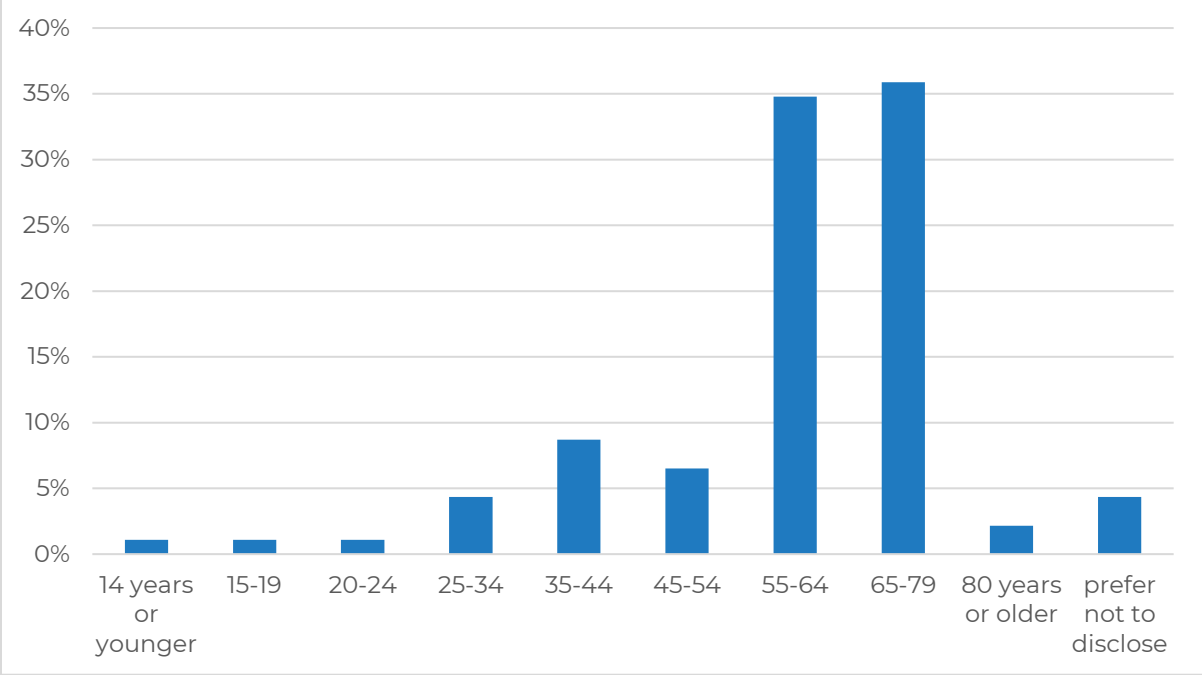
The following summarizes the 92 survey responses received through this active transportation focused survey. The 25 questions posed are provided with results of each demonstrated in a graph format.

ABOUT YOU – PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

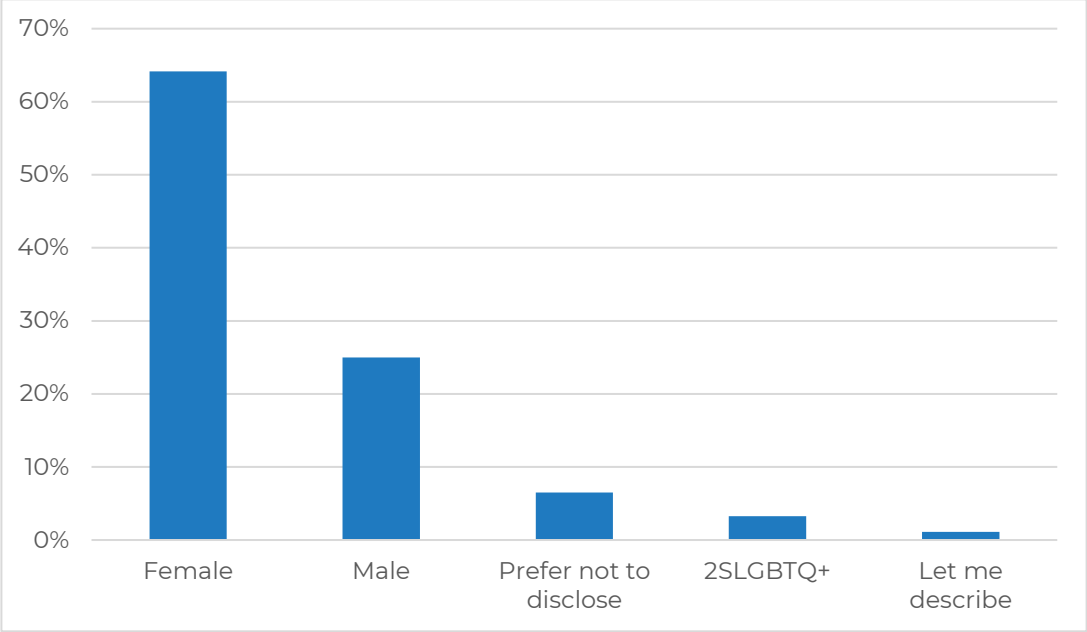
1. **Which best describes you?**



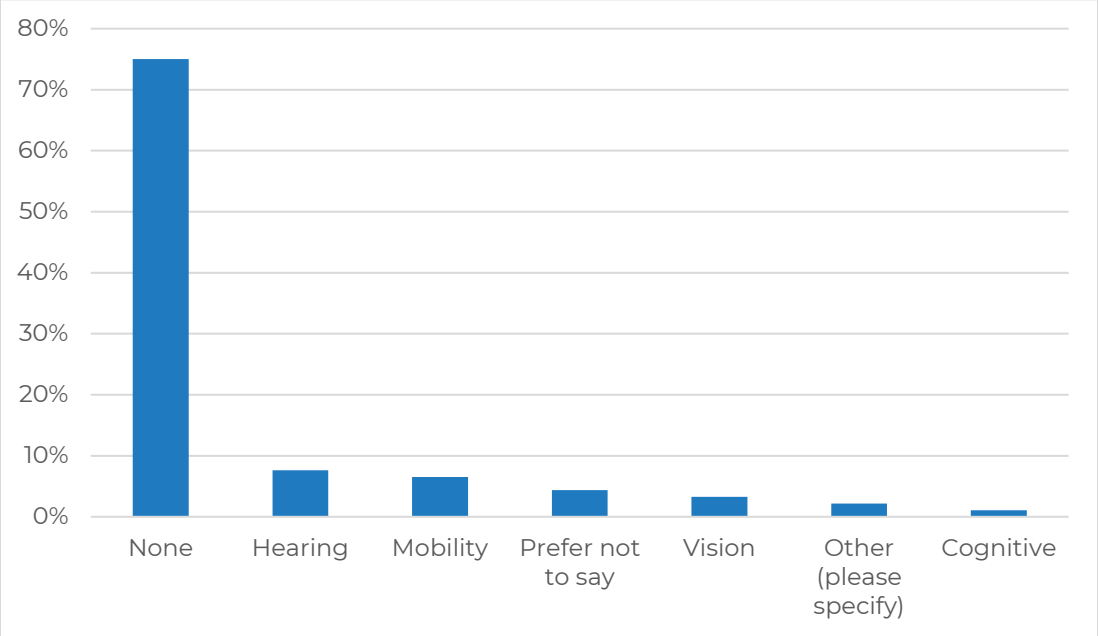
2. **What is your age?**



3. What is your gender?

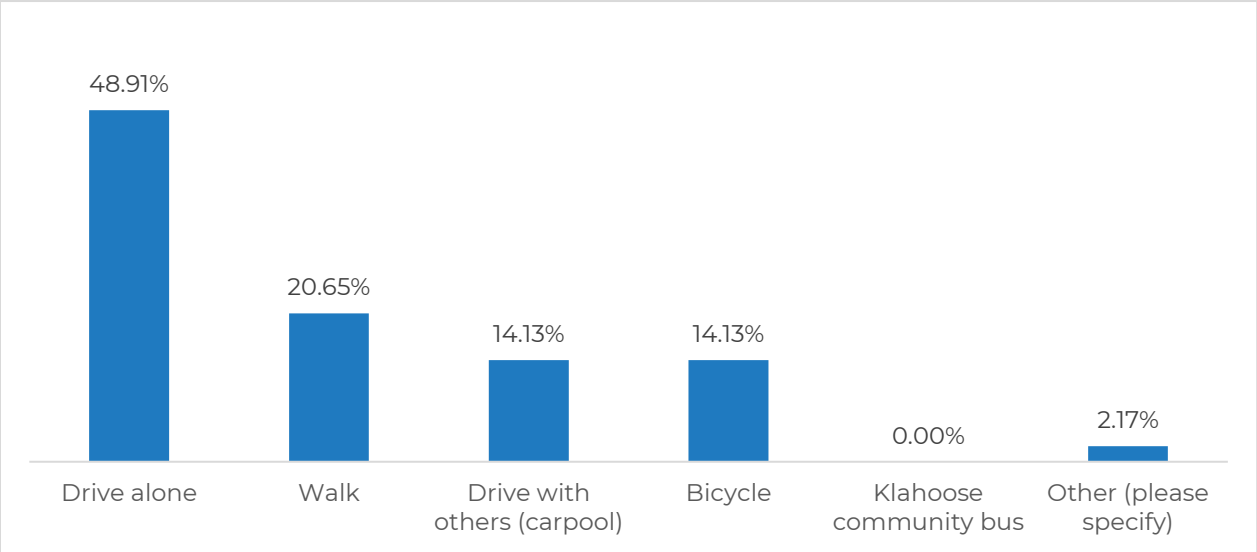


4. Do you have any sensory or physical impairments?



YOUR TRAVEL PATTERNS

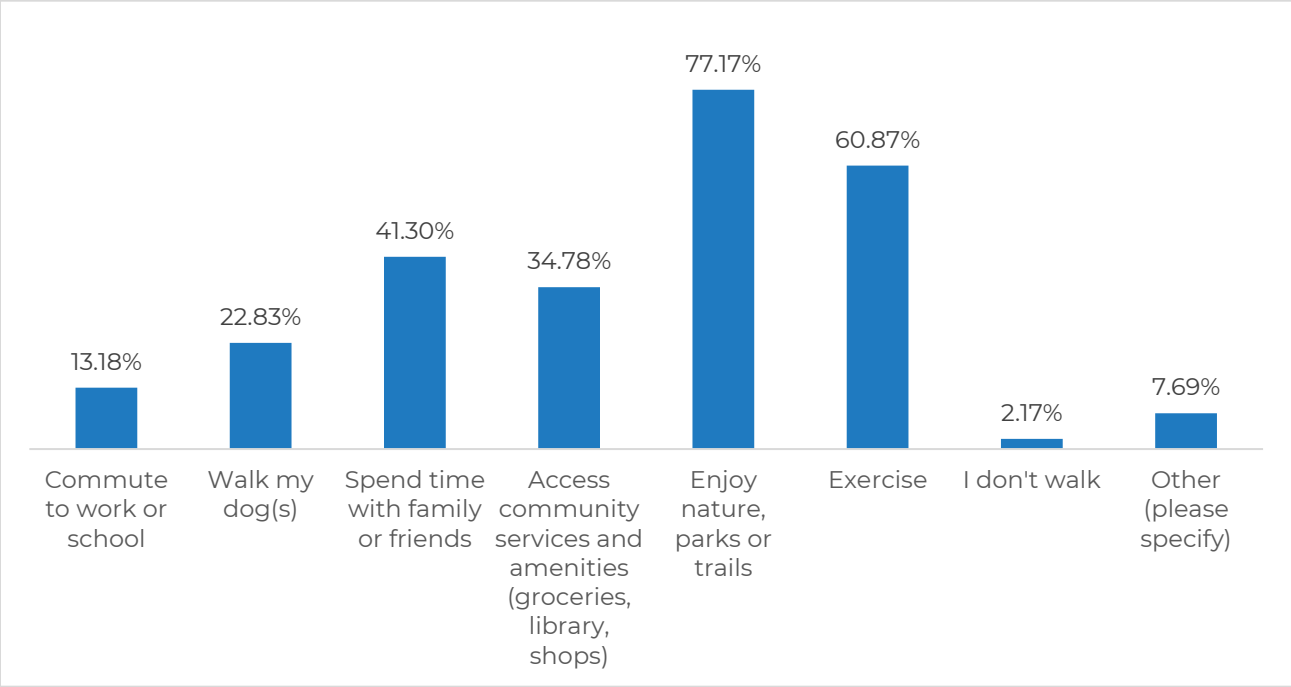
5. On a typical day, what is your usual mode of transportation for travelling on the island?



Other (please specify): Hitchhiking

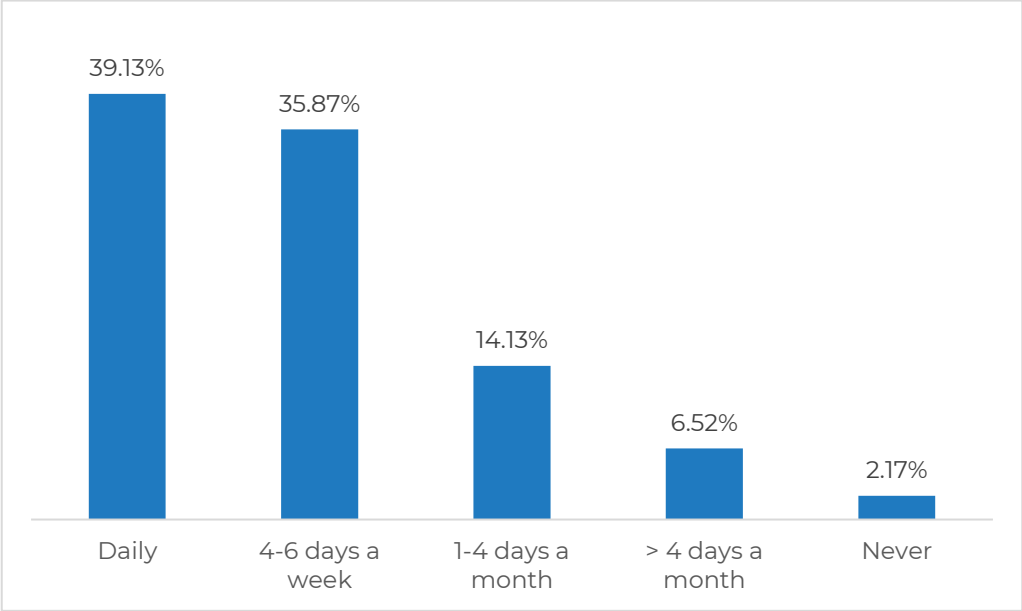
WALKING

6. When I walk, it's to:

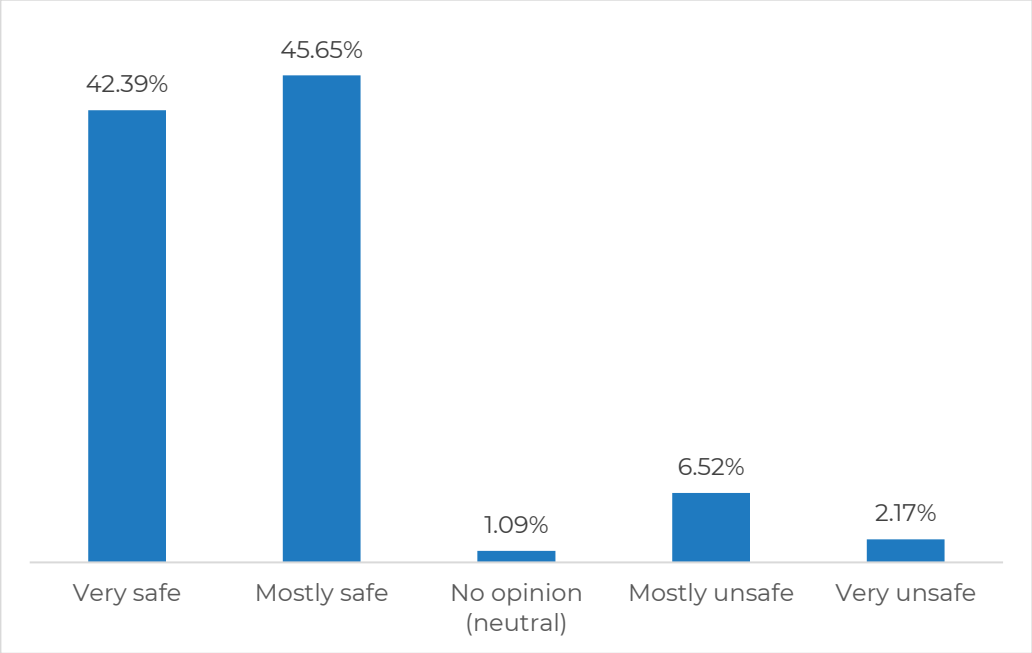


Other (please specify) includes: Walking to ferry and other activities, like household maintenance or work

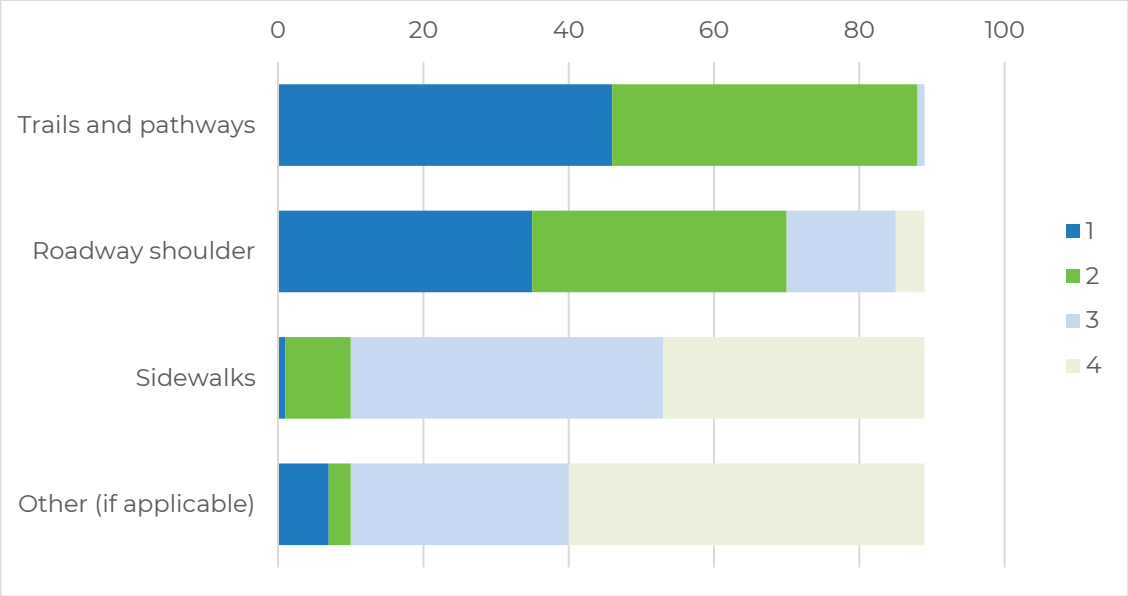
7. In a typical month, how often do you walk?



8. How safe do you feel walking on Cortes Island?

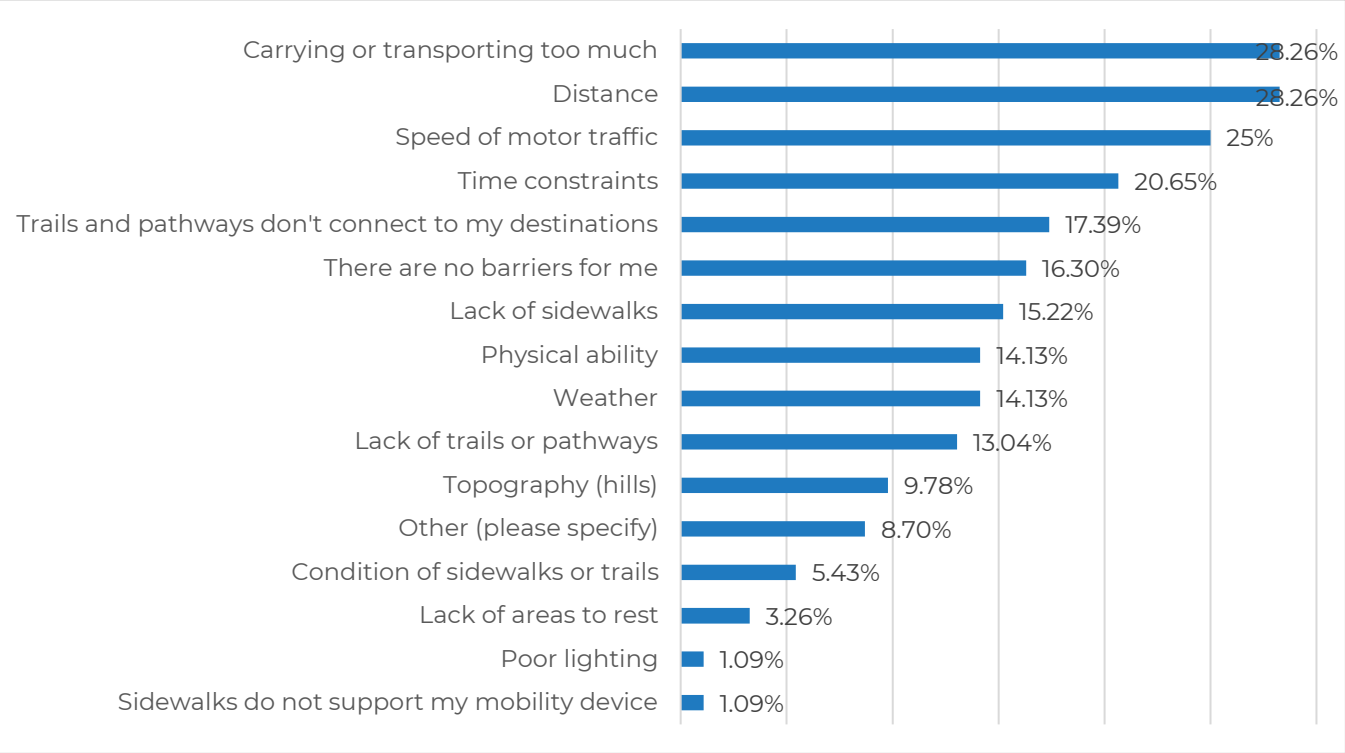


9. What facilities do you typically use when walking on Cortes Island?



Other (if applicable): Some participants indicated that they use the beach as a walking facility

10. What are the barriers for walking more often than you do?



Other (please specify): Related to general safety concerns

11. If you would like to share more information on the barriers you experience when walking on Cortes Island, please share below.

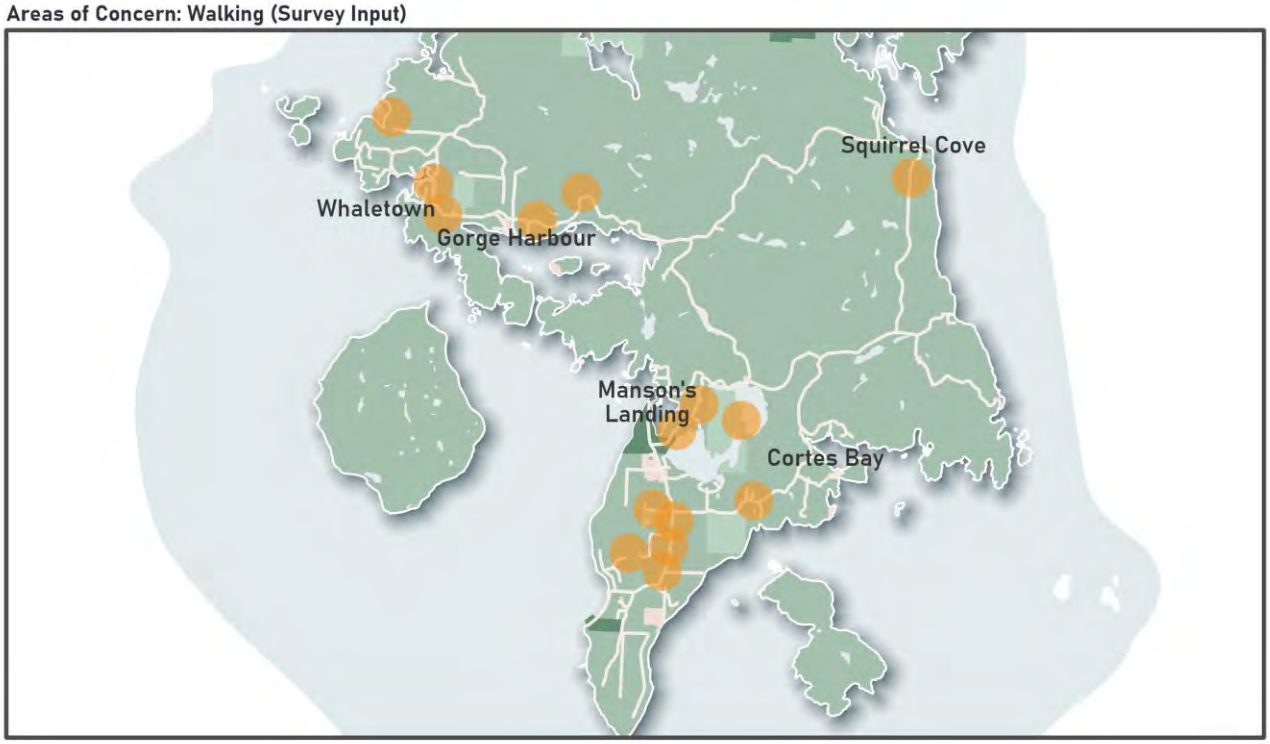
There were 25 participants who completed this section, the common themes have been summarized here:

- Desire for more safe walking trails, separated from vehicles (often comments relate to feeling unsafe walking near traffic)
- 18 out of the 25 comments were in some way asking for more safety measures to be away from vehicles or for trails to be constructed
- Multiple comments regarding better wayfinding, more lighting and other helpful measures
- More connections to and from all parts of the Island

12. Please use this space to indicate specific locations where you have concerns related to walking and trail facilities on Cortes Island.

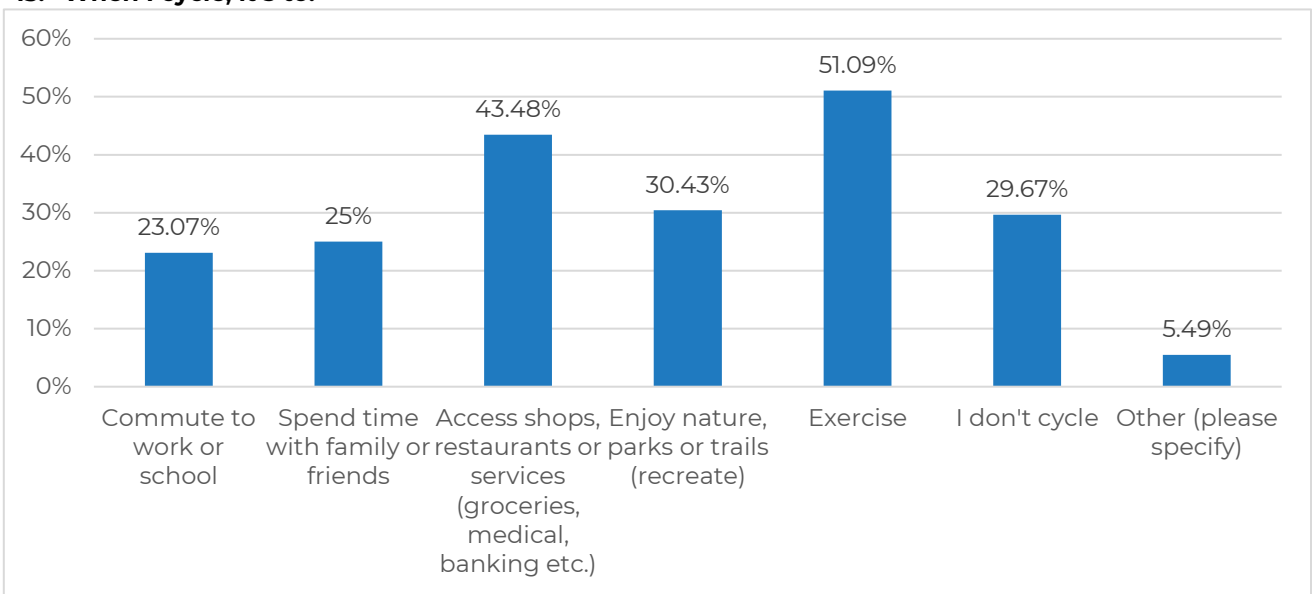
The points indicated below were identified by respondents of the parallel online road safety mapping exercise. This input opportunity accompanied the online survey. The results below are specific to walking.

Areas of Concern: Walking (Survey Input)



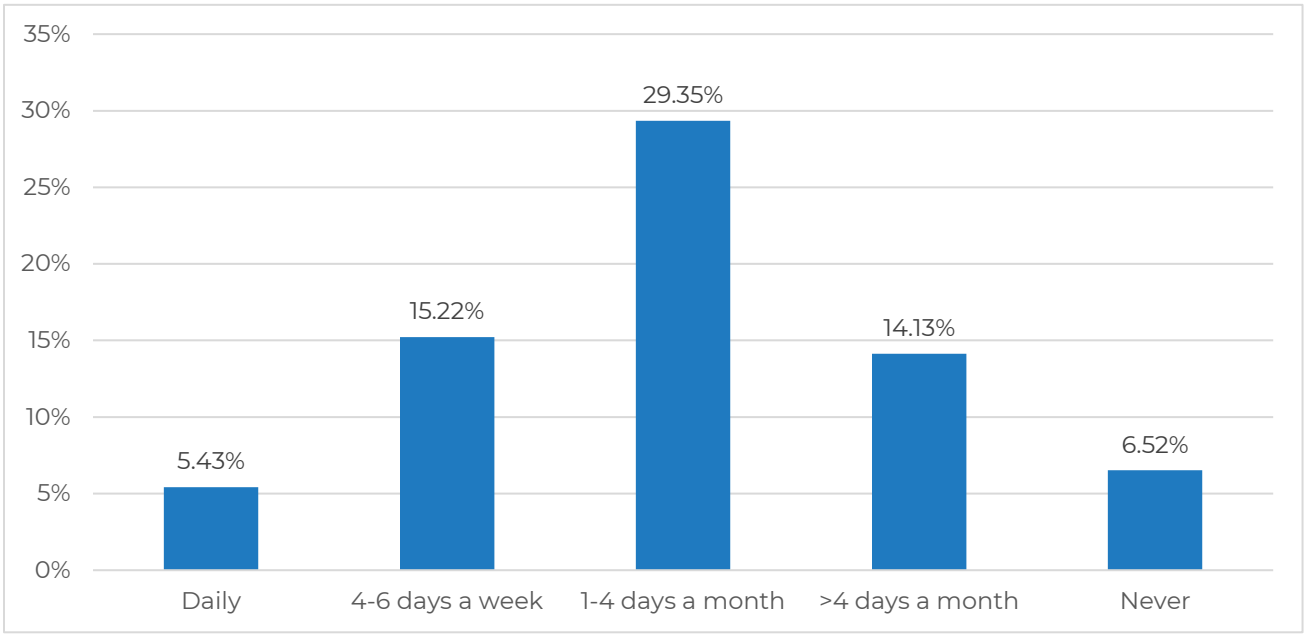
CYCLING

13. When I cycle, it's to:

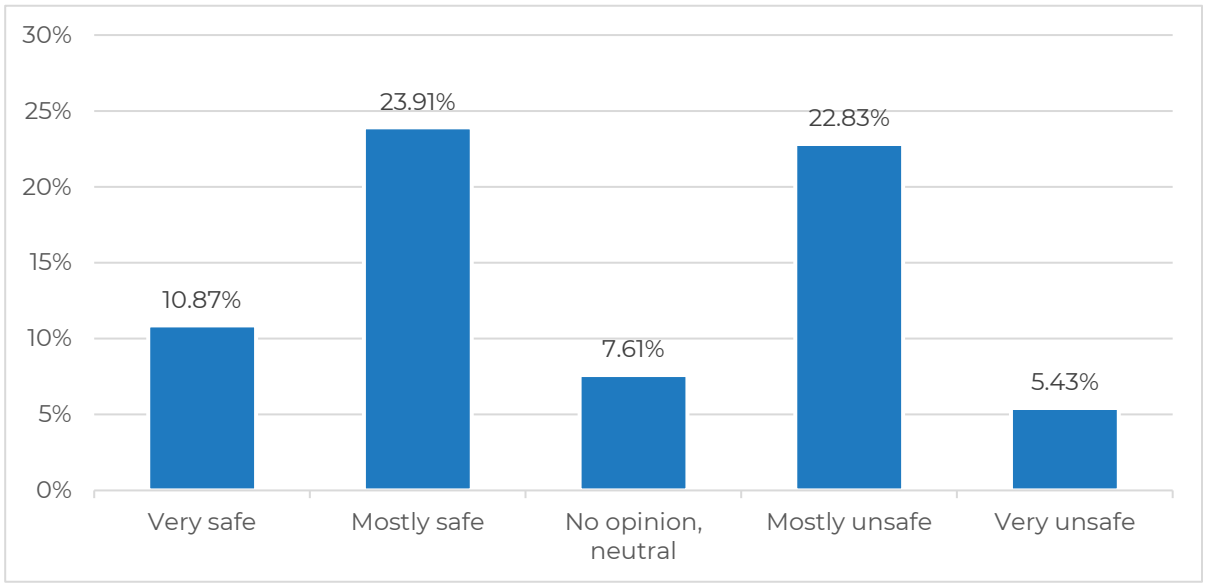


Other (please specify): Clarification that, while respondents may currently not cycle, they would be more inclined to cycle if there were paths, other sited general safety concerns.

14. In a typical month, how many times do you travel by bicycle?

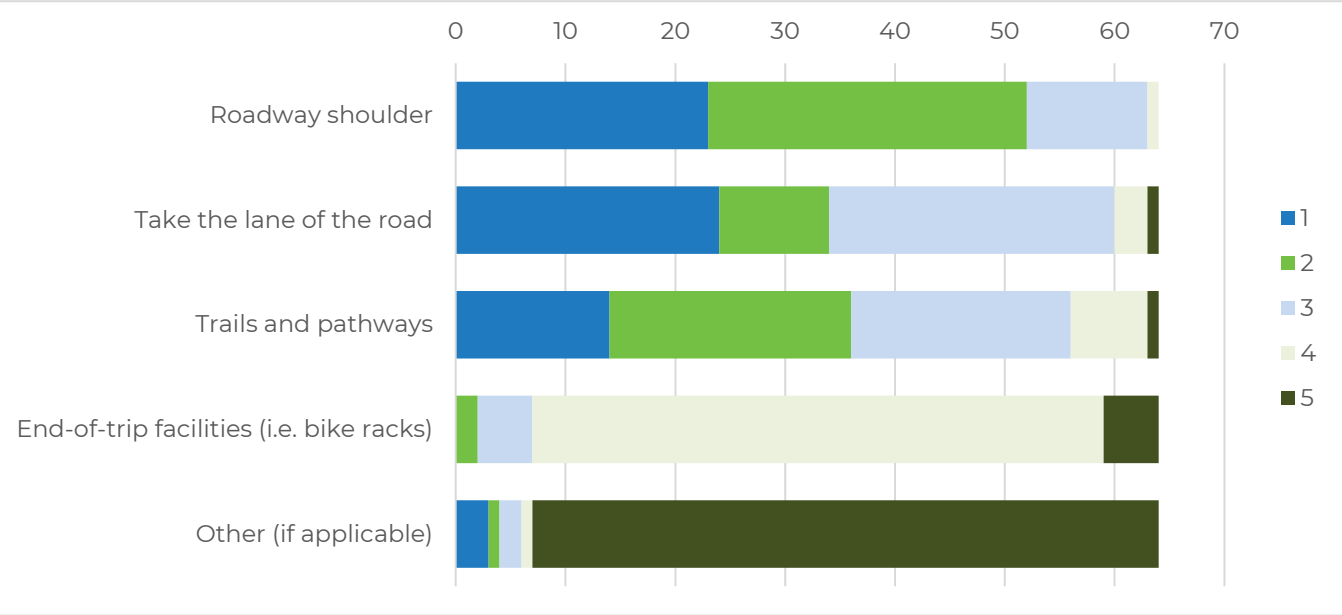


15. How safe do you feel when cycling on Cortes Island?



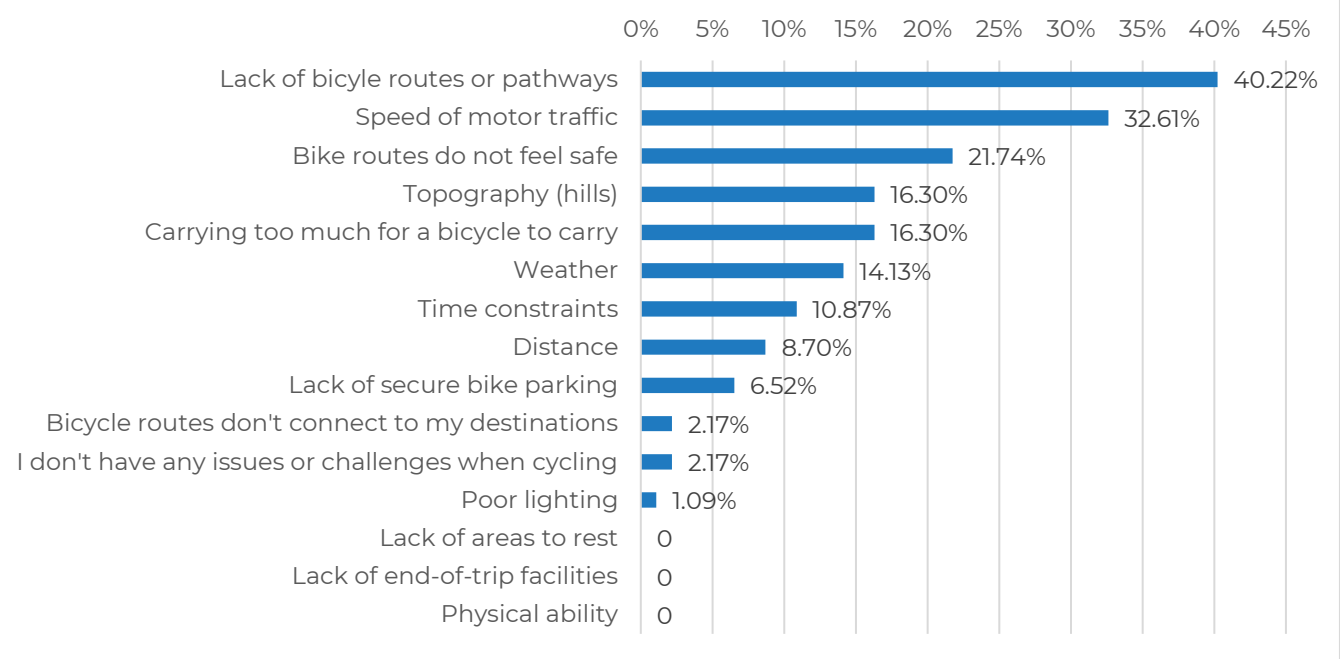
These results demonstrate that 28% of respondents feel **mostly unsafe – very unsafe** indicating a need for improved road safety conditions to better support safe travel by all modes across Cortes Island.

16. What other facilities do you typically use when cycling on Cortes Island?

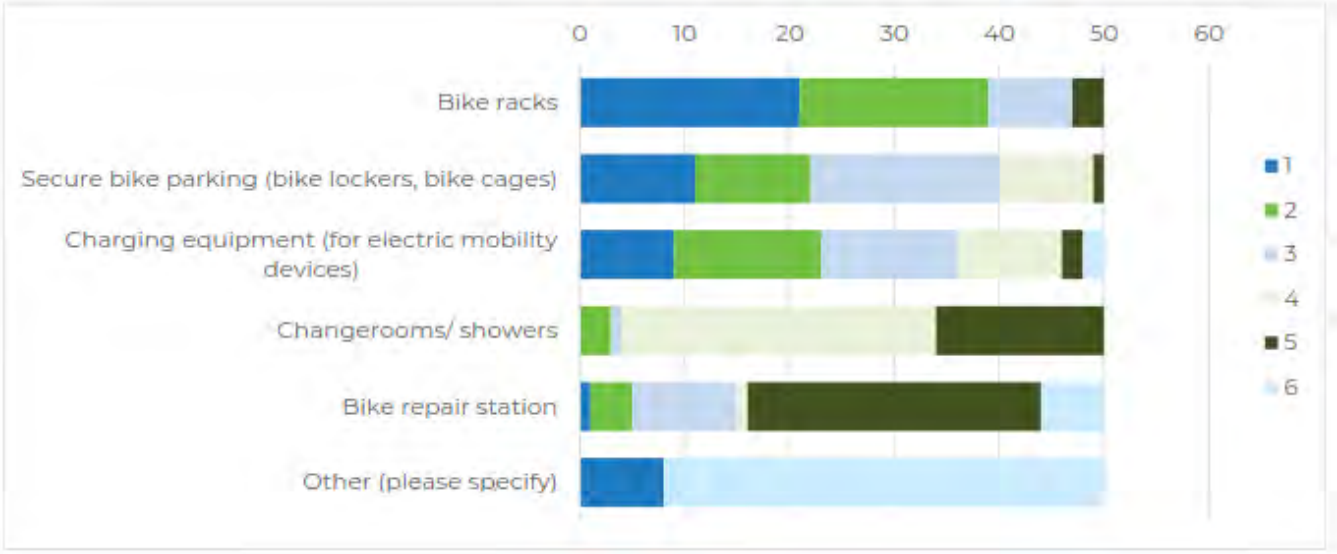


Other responses (if applicable): Extremely narrow shoulder spaces, and the condition of roadway shoulders

17. What are the barriers for cycling more often than you do?

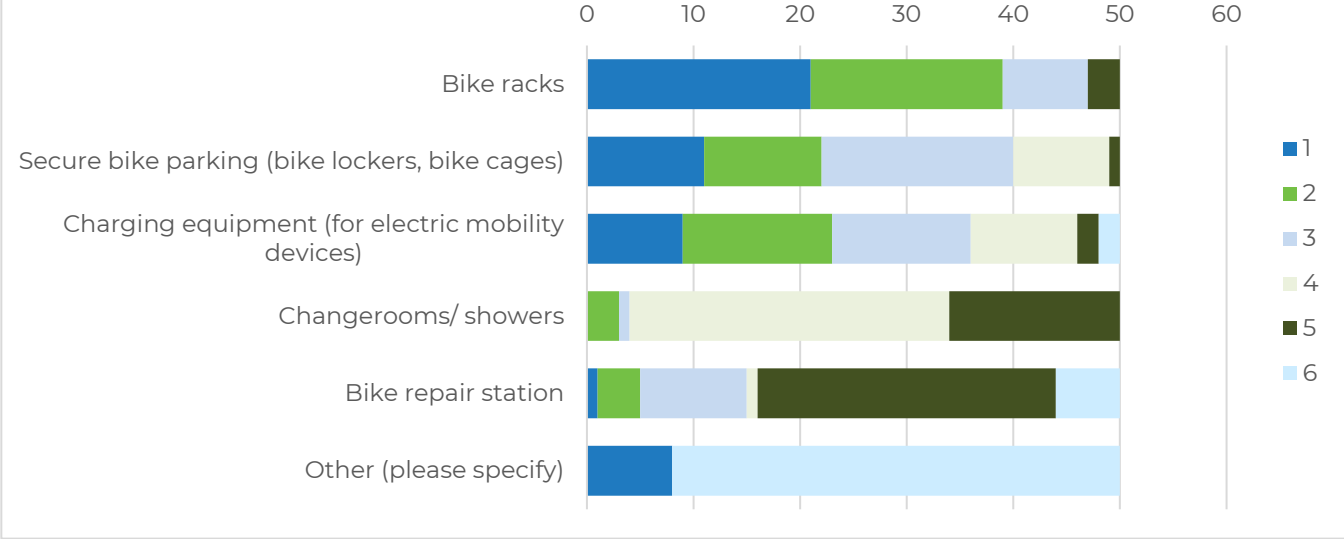


18. **End-of-trip facilities provide amenities at key destinations to support active transportation travel. Rank from the list which end-of-trip facilities should be most considered at key destinations on Cortes Island.**



Other (please specify): End of trip amenities considered nice to have, but not a priority for many participants.

19. **If you would like to share more information on the barriers you experience when cycling, please use**



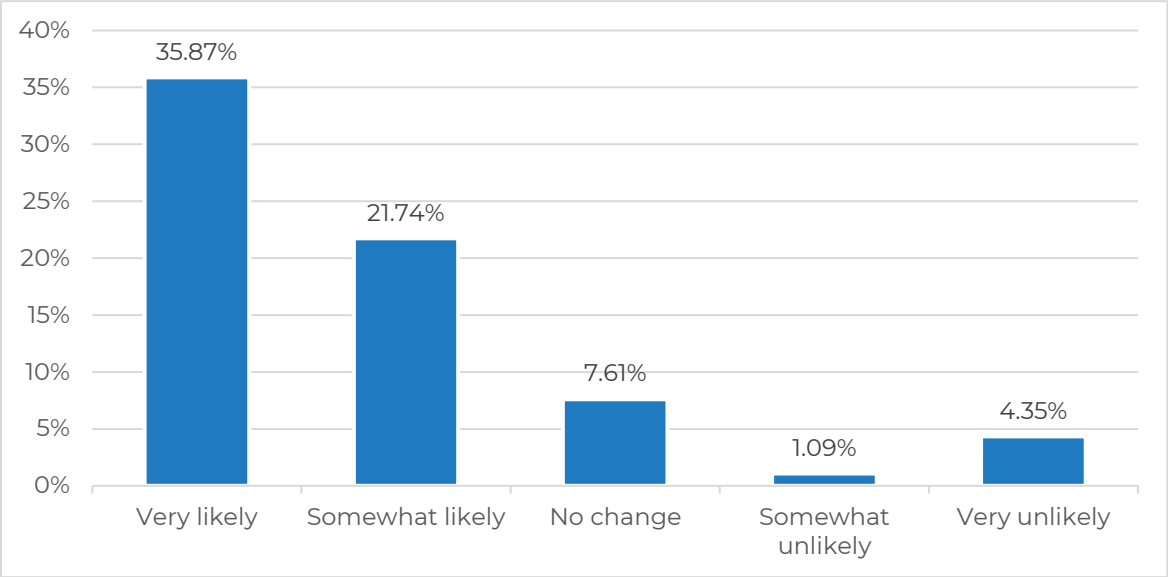
the space below:

There were 28 participants who completed this section, the common themes have been summarized here.

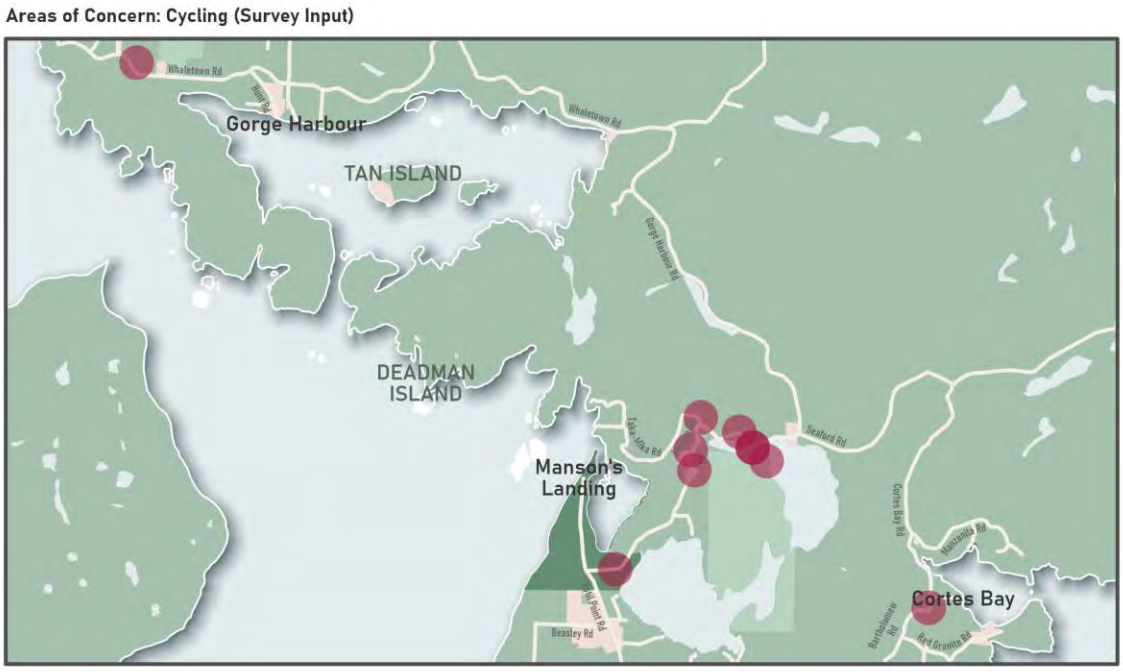
- Many comments generally regarding poor road shoulder maintenance (if there is a shoulder at all)

- Many comments that end-of-trip amenities are nice to have but not needed, prefer focus on trails/ paths
- Safety concerns for cyclists were reiterated, mostly regarding interactions, or proximity, with vehicles
- Comments about the topography of the island and that regardless of cycling infrastructure, they can or would only ride with e-bikes

20. If safe and connected cycling infrastructure was provided, how likely would you be to cycle on Cortes Island more than you currently do?

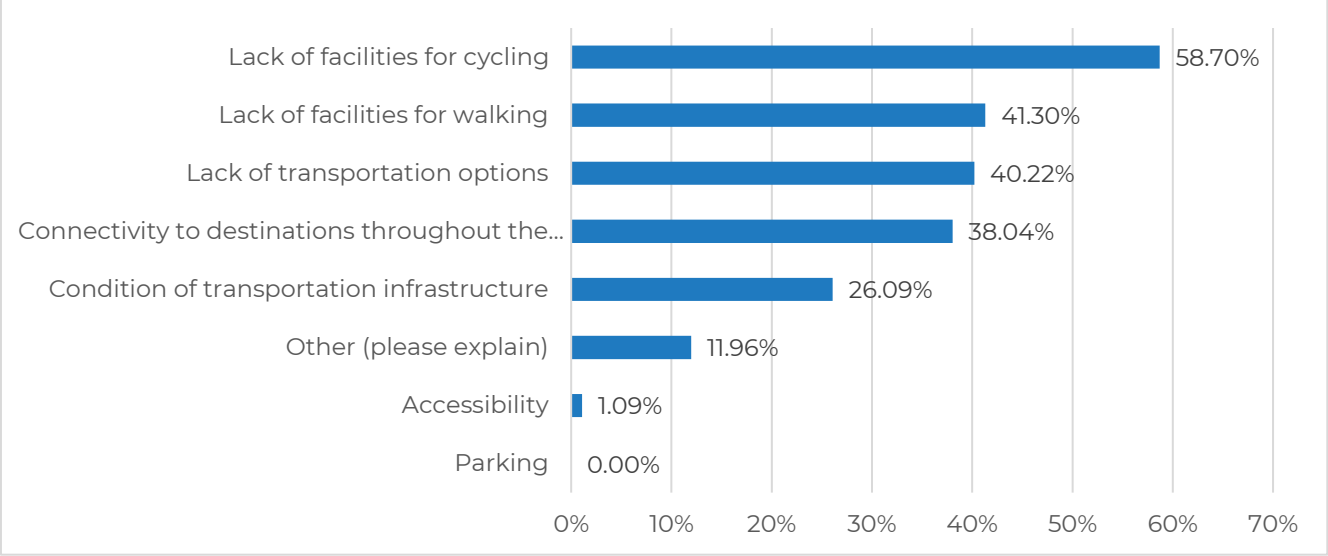


Please use this space to indicate specific locations where you have concerns related to cycling facilities on Cortes Island. The points indicated below were identified by respondents of the parallel road safety mapping exercise. This input opportunity accompanied the online survey. There were no locations identified beyond the area shown.



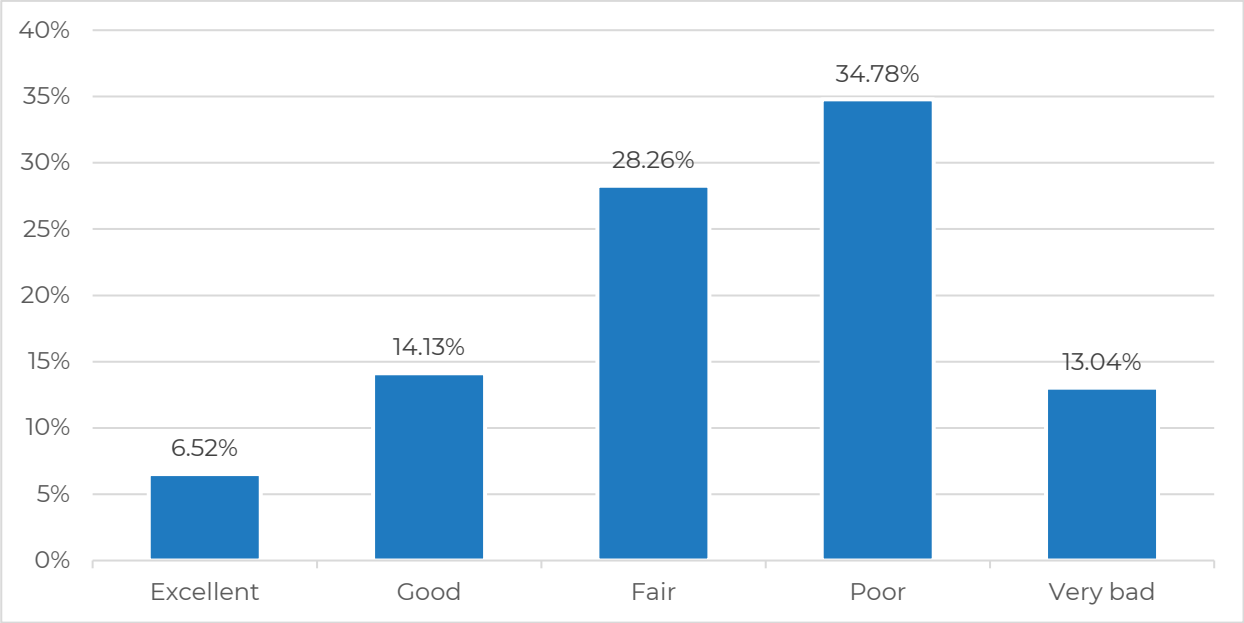
TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY

21. What do you see as the main challenges related to transportation and mobility on Cortes Island?

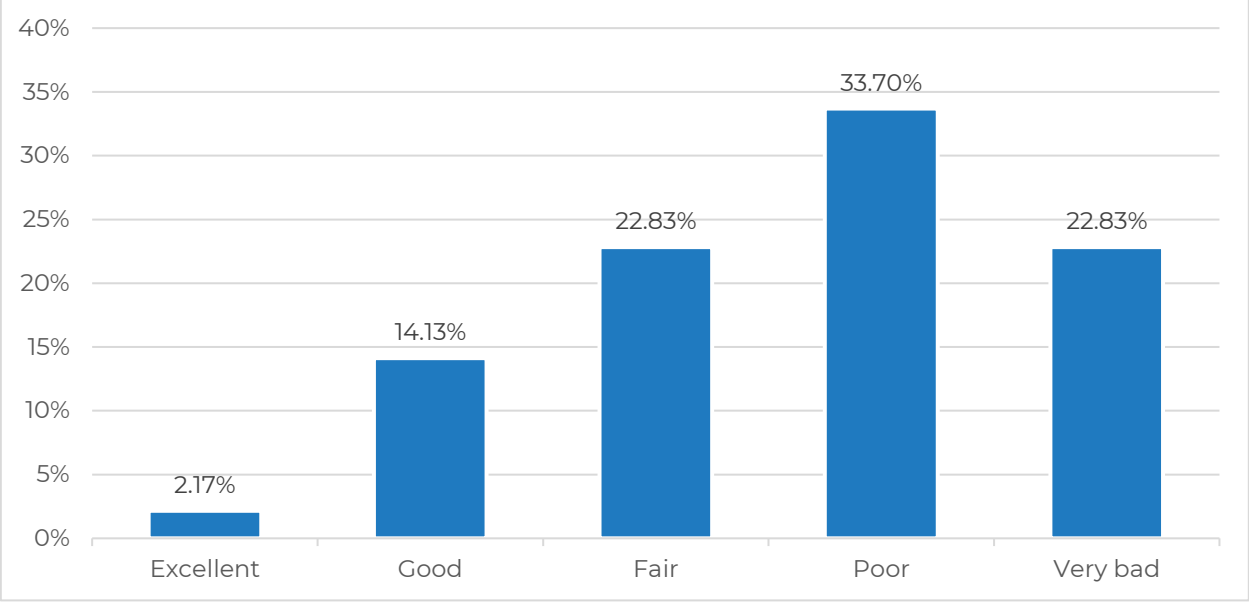


Other (please explain): Transportation options for seniors was identified in "other" responses.

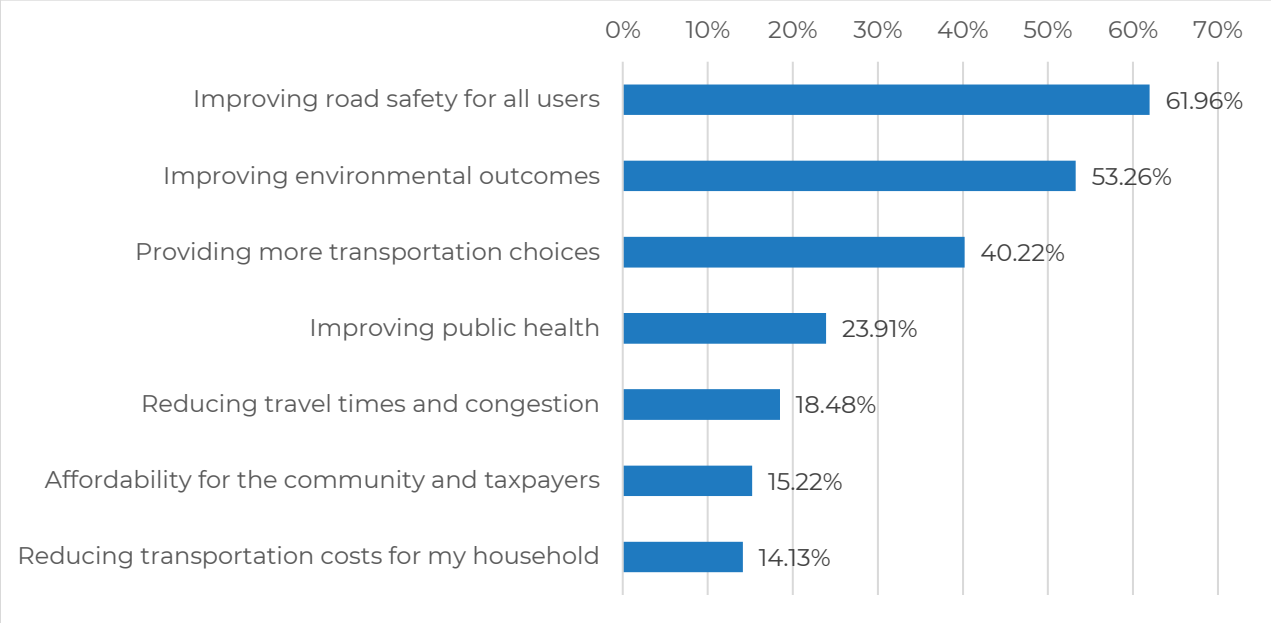
22. How well do you feel the current transportation system is working to support transportation choices that start and end on Cortes Island?



23. How well do you feel the current transportation system is working to support transportation choices that start on Cortes Island and end off Cortes Island?



24. Which of the following potential benefits related to transportation are most important to you?



25. Please share any BIG IDEAS you would have for improving active transportation and mobility on Cortes Island

- Dedicated trails for cyclists and pedestrians (of the 52 comments 15 were related to this topic, this was the most common message)
- Providing public transit
- Connectivity to the ferry is key, and if end-of-trip amenities are to be built, respondents would prefer it at the ferry terminal (focus on seating specifically)
- Bike share program and electric bike facilities