



STAFF REPORT

DATE: June 10, 2022

FILE: 0540-04 EASC

TO: Chair and Directors,
Electoral Areas Services Committee

FROM: David Leitch
Chief Administrative Officer

RE: **CORTES ISLAND ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROJECT**

PURPOSE

To consider the draft Cortes Island Active Transportation Conditions Report produced by Urban Systems as a deliverable for the Cortes Island Active Transportation Planning Research and Data Collection project.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At its April 28, 2021 meeting, the Regional Board considered the attached report and passed the following resolution:

Anderson/Abram: SRD 385/21

THAT the Strathcona Regional District submit an application to the 2021 Active Transportation Planning program for grant funding to conduct supplemental Active Transportation research, data collection and mapping for Electoral Area B, and

THAT the Regional District commit to any associated ineligible costs and cost overruns.

This application was successful and the SRD was awarded \$20,000 in grant funding from the Union of BC Municipalities Active Transportation Planning program. Urban Systems Ltd. Was subsequently retained to conduct a research and data collection study of the active transportation facilities on Cortes Island. The study launched in January 2022 with a survey, a virtual engagement session with area stakeholders, an in-person workshop on Cortes Island, and a community lunch with the Klahoose First Nation.

This project, which included in-field data collection combined with input received through the projects engagement process, is now complete and the draft report identifies locations of concern and a general understanding that currently there are no adequate on-road or roadside active transportation facilities which is a considerable barrier to active transportation use across the island. Major roads were identified as areas of most concern, representing a need for active transportation facilities connecting the islands three main village areas, as well as, expressed interest in connections from Squirrel Cove and Klahoose First Nation to the Whaletown Ferry. 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 offer narrow shoulders, no lighting, debris, and asphalt in poor condition that can be a risk for people on bicycles as well as motorists.

Conclusions of the report acknowledged that the Siskin Forest Trail network, with multiple trail heads, combined with a relatively attractive terrain, makes commuting by foot and bicycle around the southern part of Cortes Island a realistic travel alternative. However, it also notes a gap in the trail network between the north side of the Siskin Forest Trail and the core of Manson's Landing Village with the potential to expand this network to better connect and integrate with services available in Manson's Landing. Additionally, a desired connection between Linnea Farm and existing trail facilities in Kw'as Park and onwards to Comox Bay Road were identified with a potential opportunity to improve connectivity between this community amenity and attraction. The report further highlights a strong 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 potentially mitigated through separate walking or dedicated cycling facilities, will require sizable investments. Lowering posted speeds or travelled speeds and the implementation of traffic calming measures was also identified as a means to improve safety for those travelling by active means. In support of the above, the development of policy in the Official Community Plan for Cortes Island is likely to further 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.

The Draft Cortes Island Active Transportation Conditions Report is provided for the Committee's information.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the report from the Chief Administrative Officer be received.

Respectfully:

Dave Leitch
Chief Administrative Officer

Prepared by: Meredith Starkey, Manager, Planning and Parks

Attachments: Draft Cortes Island Active Transportation Conditions Report, June 7, 2022