



LET'S TALK ABOUT ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION



The last report for Cortes Island (the Active Transportation Conditions Report) identified 6 key gaps. Use dots to indicate which gaps you believe are most relevant today.

GAP 1 TRAILS

1. Formalizing a Siskin Trails connection

2. Formalizing a Siskin Farm connection

GAP 2 ROAD SAFETY

1. Posted speed limits are too high

2. Traffic calming would benefit areas with higher activity

GAP 3 PLACES FOR PEOPLE TO WALK

1. Lack of safe places to walk along roads in village centres

2. Traffic calming would benefit areas with higher activity

GAP 4 PLACES FOR PEOPLE TO BIKE

1. Narrow roadways leave little space to ride bikes

2. Limited bike parking, especially near parks and trailheads

GAP 5 MAKING DIFFERENT MODES MORE CONNECTED

1. Lack of safe waiting areas at school bus pick up locations

2. No bicycle racks and weather-protection for bikes on the ferry

GAP 6 EDUCATION & PROMOTION

1. Driver & bike training provided



Cortes Island

Active Transportation Network Plan

Appendix B | Engagement Round 1 What We Heard Report

Acknowledgments

This What We Heard Report was prepared by ISL Engineering and Land Services Ltd. with input from the Regional District of Strathcona staff and Board, community members, partners, and interest holders.



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Narrow roads and unsafe walking areas are top concerns



Better active transportation options would help meet community needs

Trails are key to how people travel the island



**Active
transportation
options feel safe for
some, but not for
everyone**



**Safety, separation,
and smoother
surfaces get people
travelling actively**

B1. Engagement Overview

This Report Informs the ATNP

This What We Heard Report shares the key themes from community input shaping Cortes Island's Active Transportation Network Plan. The Plan will support safer, easier, and more enjoyable routes for walking, biking, and rolling to everyday destinations—supporting health, affordability, sustainability, and stronger community connections. It will map routes, set project priorities, and prepare one high-priority project for construction, all while reflecting local and First Nations voices.

We Gathered Feedback

To engage residents and gather input, we hosted two pop-up events in July:

- July 18 at the Mansons Landing Farmers' Market from 12:00 to 2:00 p.m.
- July 19 at the Gorge Harbour Farmers' Market from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

These events provided opportunities for community members to share their thoughts in person, ask questions, and learn more about the initiative. In addition, a community survey was open from June 27 to August 1, allowing residents to contribute their feedback online at their convenience, and individual meetings were held with the BC Ministry of Transportation and Transit and with BC Ferries.

Who We Heard From

We engaged with a total of 115 participants through two key channels:

- **Pop-up Event:** 25 participants shared their thoughts in person.
- **Online Survey:** 90 participants contributed their insights digitally.

This blend of in-person and online engagement helped us gather a diverse range of perspectives to inform our next steps.

Participant Profile

From the online survey, we asked several questions to better understand who was participating. Here's what we learned:

- **Residency:** Most participants are permanent residents of Cortes Island, with additional input from business owners and individuals who live on the island seasonally or part-time.
- **Age:** Most participants were 50 years of age or older, offering valuable insights shaped by lived experience and long-term community involvement.
- **Gender:** Over half of the participants identified as women.



LET'S TALK ABOUT ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION



YOUR IDEAS TO IMPROVE ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION ON CORTES ISLAND?

Separate bike
lanes from
main

Road
Signs for
blind corners

Separate
Path Corner
Whole town
to mansions
(not the road)

Slower
speeds in
mansions

Speeding
at Hague
Low Park
Signs say 30 MPH
740 MPH

PLACE POST-ITS HERE

Lower
Speed
Limit

Blind
Corners

B2. What We Heard

Narrow roads and unsafe walking areas are top concerns

Most participants identified two key priorities for improving safety and accessibility in the community: addressing narrow roadways that leave little space to ride bikes and a lack of safe places to walk along roads in Mansons Landing, Gorge Harbour, and Seaford Road, particularly near Hague & Gunflint Lakes.

Better active transportation options would help meet community needs

More than half of survey participants (54%) said they are dissatisfied with the transportation options on Cortes Island, often because there are few choices or they aren't reliable. Another 30% said they feel neutral, showing there is still room to improve and learn more about what the community needs.

Trails are key to how people travel the Island

The trail people mentioned most often was the Siskin Trail, which many said is important for both getting around and for recreation. Other popular trails were the Carrington Trail and the Green Mountain Trail. People also mentioned using other local trails for daily activities. This demonstrates the importance of trails that are connected, safe, and easy to use across the island.

Active transportation options feel safe for many, but not for everyone

Most participants (68%) said they feel comfortable walking and biking on local trails. This means many people see the trails as safe and welcoming for getting around. Some people, however, don't feel as confident, showing there is room to improve active transportation so that everyone feels able to walk, bike, and roll comfortably.

Safety, separation, and smoother surfaces get people traveling actively

The top three changes that would get more people walking, biking, and rolling are: wider road shoulders for better safety and comfort; off-road pathways that keep people away from vehicle traffic; and smoother trail surfaces for easier and more accessible travel.

Specific safety concerns are:

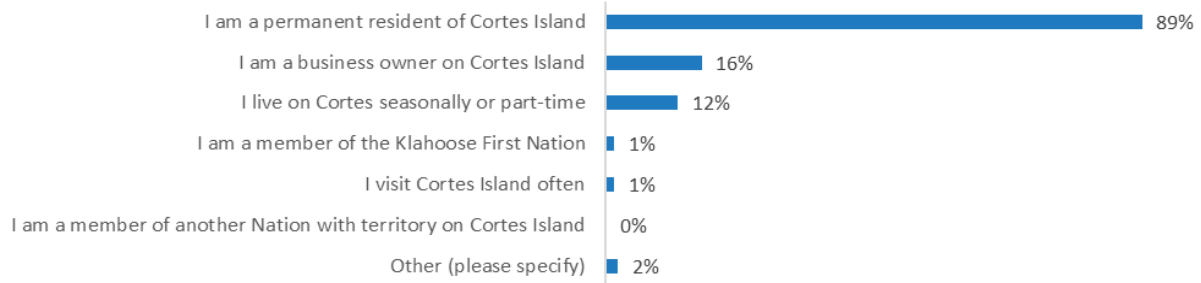
- **Blind corners and poor visibility:** Common across all areas, especially near hills, curves, and intersections. These make it hard for drivers to see pedestrians and cyclists.
- **Speeding vehicles:** Reported frequently near ferry routes, community hubs, and residential areas. Speeding increases danger for all road users.
- **Steep and narrow roads:** Especially challenging for cyclists and walkers.
- **Unsafe crossings and intersections:** Areas like Hague Lake, Mansons Landing, and Hunt Road were flagged for risky crossings and poor signage.
- **Lack of sidewalks and shoulders:** A major concern. Pedestrians often have to walk directly on the road, which is unsafe.
- **Poor road conditions:** Crumbling pavement, potholes, and overgrown vegetation reduce usable space and visibility.
- **Congestion during events and tourist season:** Perception of high traffic volumes during markets and summer months make walking and rolling less desirable.
- **Unsafe passing:** Cyclists are often passed by vehicles in unsafe ways, especially on sections of roads that have limited visibility.
- **Lack of bike infrastructure:** Requests for bike lanes, protected paths, and bike racks were common.
- **Need for better trail connections:** Suggestions included linking trails between Whaletown, Mansons Landing, Squirrel Cove, and Linnea Farm.

The most suggested improvements are:

- **Build safe walking and biking paths:** Connect key areas like the ferry terminal, library, and community hubs.
- **Add traffic calming measures:** Lower speed limits, install flashing lights, and provide better signage near high-use areas, particularly Mansons Landing.
- **Improve school zone safety:** Clearer markings and reduced speed limits near the school.
- **Maintain shoulders and road edges:** Regular mowing and brushing to keep shoulders usable.
- **Enhance parking and signage:** Better parking management and directional signage to reduce congestion and improve safety.

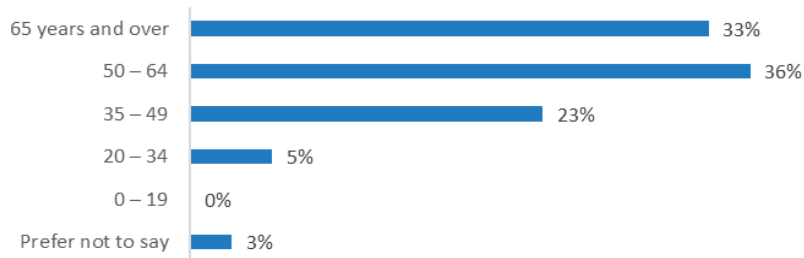
B3. Survey Responses

Which best describes you? (Select all that apply)



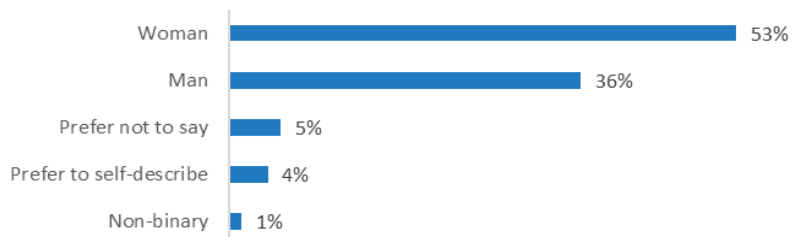
75 responses

What is your age?



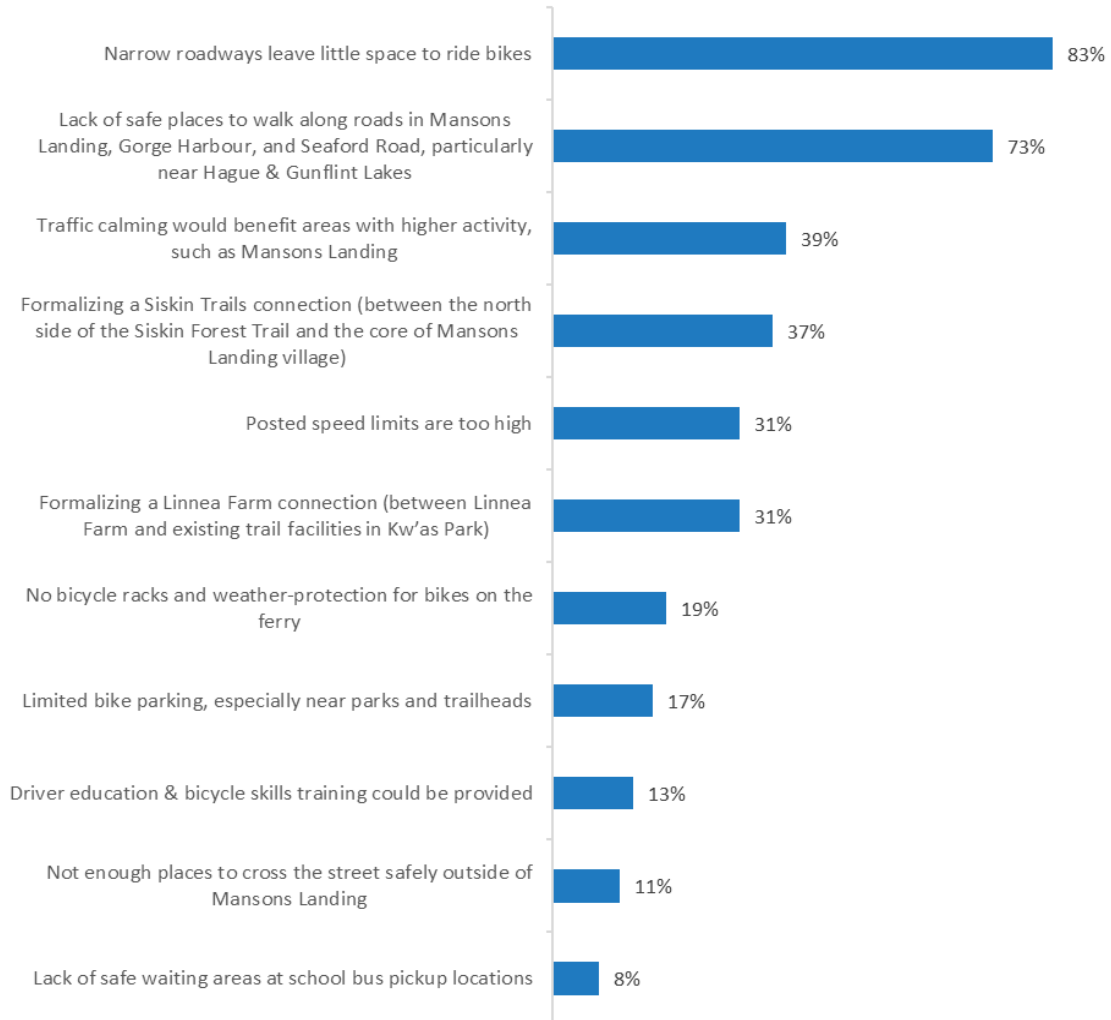
75 responses

How do you identify?



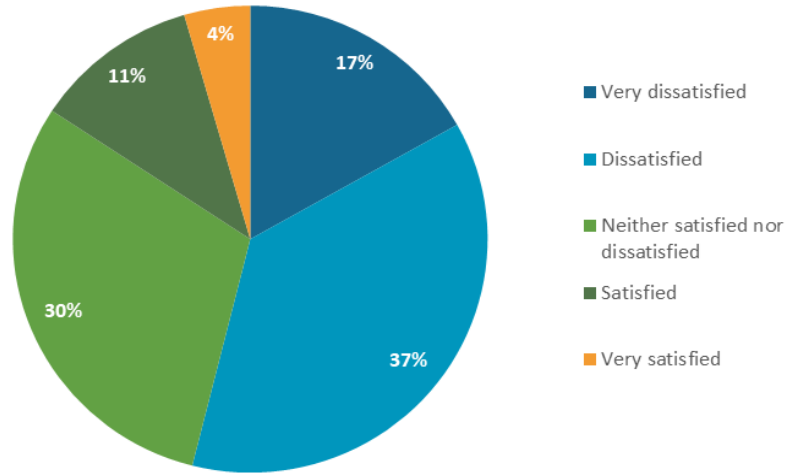
75 responses

Please rank your top five priorities for improvements or changes you'd like to see moving forward.



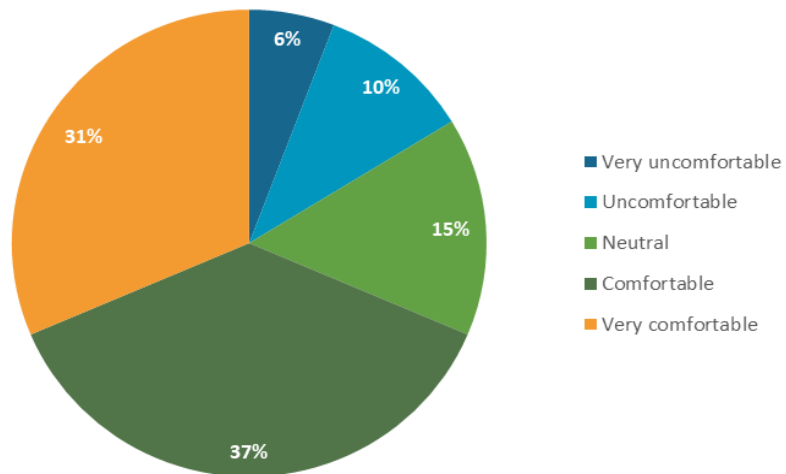
90 responses

How satisfied are you with the quality of transportation choices available on Cortes Island?



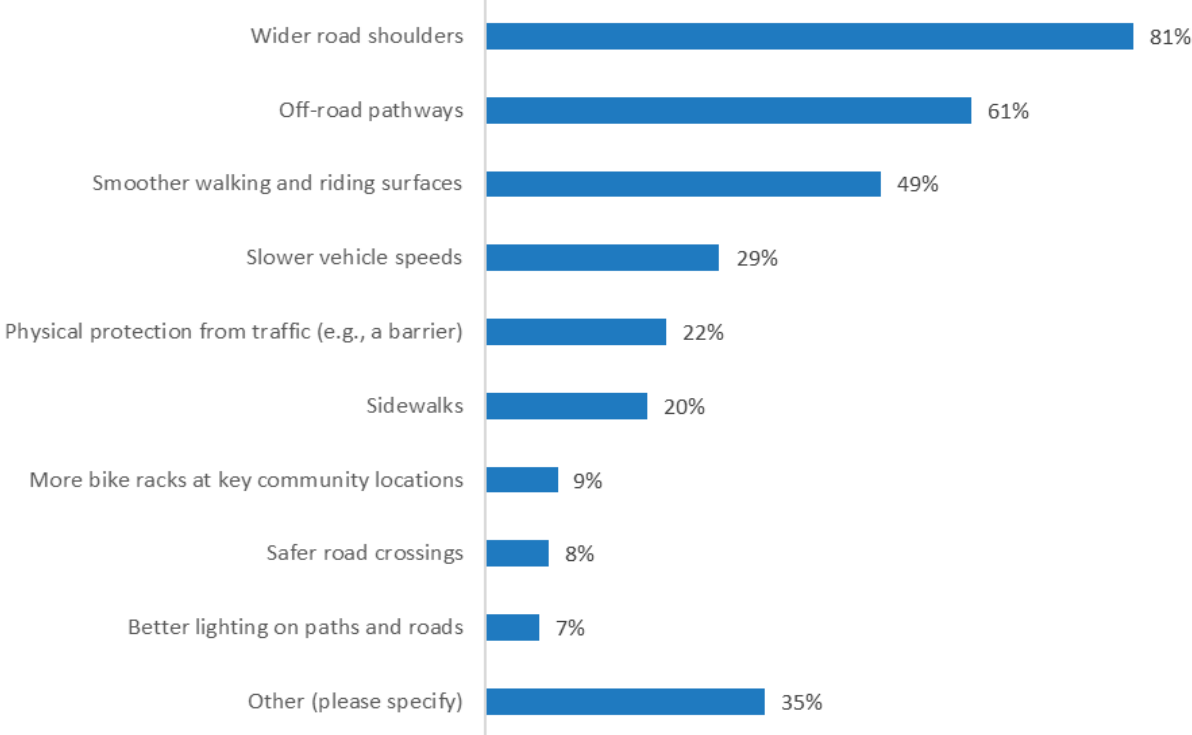
89 responses

How comfortable are you walking and cycling on the trails on Cortes Island?



86 responses

We heard in the last report for Cortes Island (the Active Transportation Conditions Report) that there are several barriers that prevent people from choosing active transportation more often. Which of the following would encourage you to walk, bike, or roll more often? (Select all that apply)



89 responses

Other comments broken out into themes included:

Road Conditions and Maintenance:

- Potholes, cracks, and poor pavement were frequently mentioned as hazards, especially for cyclists and pedestrians.
- Several participants emphasized the need for basic road repairs over surface treatments like seal coating.
- Concerns were raised about crumbling pavement edges, erosion, and unsafe runoff areas.

Walking and Cycling Safety:

- Many comments highlighted the lack of safe road shoulders and hazardous ditches that prevent walking or stepping off the road safely.
- There were calls for dedicated bike lanes, separated paths, and more space for non-motorized users.
- Some suggested direct trail connections between key locations to improve efficiency and safety.

Infrastructure Improvements:

- Bike paths from Mansons Landing to Linea and to the Whaletown ferry.
- Covered, secure bike racks with e-bike charging stations.
- Maps of available trails to support navigation and planning.

Traffic and Driver Behavior:

- Speeding, especially near ferry routes and in areas like Gorge Harbour, was a major concern.
- Speed reduction signage (e.g., “narrow road,” “blind corner”).
- Traffic enforcement and education for drivers on safe passing laws.
- Traffic police presence to address reckless driving.

Education and Advocacy:

- Participants emphasized the need for:
- Education campaigns for both cyclists and drivers.
- Advocacy with the Ministry of Transportation and Transit (MoTT) to address known danger zones.
- A cultural shift toward shared responsibility and safer road use.

Trail Network Connectivity:

- Several comments noted gaps between trail networks, forcing users onto unsafe roads.
- There was interest in increasing managed trails and improving connectivity between them.

Personal Preferences and Limitations:

- A few participants noted that they already walk or cycle as much as they want.
- Others mentioned time constraints or work-related needs that require vehicle use.

Verbatim Comments:

- Less hills? Rest is fine. This isn't the city.
- More direct trails connecting key locations. For example, siskin is lovely but winding forest paths are very slow compared with more direct, road margin, cycling.
- See above, poor state of roads
- Bike lanes on all roads
- using details from the Conditions Report and others that specify top dangerous sections of the road on Cortes and engage in advocacy efforts directed at MOTI (Ministry of Transportation)
- Those ditches on the side of the rd are useless and eliminate any chance of roadside walking
.i grew up here and the reds were fine without those huge ditches

- Bicycle paths from Mansons to Linnaea
- Road shoulders are the priority
- education for cyclists and tourists. Maybe signs on curves and corners like narrow road, blind corner, etc. definitely lines painted on roads.
- enforcement/education of existing safe-passing regulations. Drivers are causing the danger. We should start with modifying their behaviour to make it inline with democratically enacted laws. Other solutions are not sufficient without this first step. Wider roads often increase vehicle speeds. Reducing pollution requires limiting how much new infrastructure we build (we need cultural upgrades)..
- Fewer ditches so roads are less hazardous to walk along
- Fixing the potholes on the roads would be the place to start. Not seal coating
- Filling of potholes and general road repair
- pave the roads
- Slower vehicle Lee speeds in SOME areas. E.g. Gorge Harbor
- Maps of available trails
- Pot holes are very dangerous. Traffic can get very busy, fast, and dangerous. Few drivers are road aware of walkers and bikers. Lots of curves and blind spots, few safe shoulders.
- Better maintained roads
- More space on road shoulder
- lack of connection between trail networks. You have to ride/walk on dangerous road shoulders to get between trails
- I already cycle a lot, I mean a lot. None of these options would make me cycle more though some of them are good suggestions.
- Sutil Point Road requires Road signs for reducing speeds when pedestrians on the road from 745 Sutil Point Road continuing past Hague Lake.
- The roads are in bad shape with potholes and cracks posing a threat to cyclists, especially at night.
- None. I walk as much as I want to and don't wish to walk more.
- Do you include driving as active transportation?
- Separate bike lane from Mansons to the whaletown ferry
- More time, usually require a vehicle for work
- Speeding tickets, traffic police for speeding vehicles through Whaletown- both to and from ferries. This will only get worse with almost double the ferry capacity next year. Many road shoulders have been turned into useless, dry, deep ditches- there's nowhere to step off road when walking (with speeding vehicles wrecklessly driving toward you). Same with cycling

when speeding vehicles approach from behind. Also, pavement edges are broken, crumbled from heavy vehicles and traffic, and in places water running down edges of road have made ruts so there's nowhere safe to veer off into weeds. Scary.

- Education for cyclists and drivers
- secure covered public bike racks with outlets for charging E bikes
- increased managed trails

Do you use trails for everyday trips—like going to school, work, errands, or appointments (i.e., not for recreational walks)? If so, please provide the trail(s) you usually use:

Summary of Most Frequently Mentioned Locations:

- Siskin: 9 mentions
- Carrington: 3 mentions
- Green Mountain: 2 mentions

Summary of Locations Mentioned Once:

- Millenium Trail
- Hanks Beach Trail
- Whaletown Commons
- Hollyhock
- Rainbow Ridge
- Mansons / Manson's Landing
- Hague Lake Beach Trail
- Seascape
- Treedom
- HH Trail (Raven Road)
- Easter Bluff
- Von Donop
- Cable Beach
- Alder Path
- Olmstead Road

Verbatim Comments

- Millenium Trail. Hanks Beach Trail.
- Siskin, hollyhock, any I can
- Cut through whaletown commons to avoid roads
- No and I can't even walk down my road (Bartholomew) as it's too dangerous with no shoulders.
- No
- Hank's Beach trail to ride to my garden from my hoe

- The connecting trail between the end of Olmstead Road and Whaletown Road, though this is on private property and I assume could be cut off by an owner.
- No, I live in Whaletown and the inky trail is the commons.
- No I drive. I would like to cycle but I live near Gunflint lake and it's too dangerous to cycle to Mansons. Potholes are also another reason for not cycling.
- Siskin/rainbow ridge
- All gas tax should go to building safe bike lanes along highways. Starting from the ferry 1km per year or more.
- siskin
- Sometimes Siskin Trail
- Whaletown commons
- Yes. Siskin, Hollyhock, Rainbow Ridge
- To the CoOp from Belwood
- Siskin Forest trails to Mansons to stay off main road
- Siskin trails, rainbow ridge, Manson's park.
- No
- Hague Lake Beach Trail to Austin Road/Manson's Landing
- Siskin
- Siskin Lanes, trail to Mansons Landing from School, Carrington, Green Mountain
- no, when I'm commuting by bike, I want to get there quickly so i take roads and I doubt that any trails would ever increase the speed of the commute.
- No. There are no trails connecting Cortes Bay and the village. I would if I could though
- Yes. Seascape to Mansons. Siskin and rainbow ridge
- Recreation most days treedom and hanks beach trail"
- N/A
- No - they are not streamlined enough
- no
- No because they don't exist where I live
- No
- Yes I use the HH trail from Raven Road as well as Siskin Lane trails to Mansons
- Hanks and Treedom trails to go to appointments.
- Siskin Lane trails
- No

- I bike on the road for errands, but the road is in such poor condition, that to consistently stay near the side of the road feels unsafe. I would use a Siskin Mansons connector if it was more comfortable to bike.
- None.
- carrington bay trails and whaletown commons trails in whaletown, siskin lane trails in mansons ldng/smelt bay
- Yes! Siskin forest trails, mostly. To get to Mansons Landing by bike.
- Siskin, kwas, commons mostly for leasure
- No
- The trails that already exist are totally adequate.
- South end trails
- No
- I use the trails daily, for errands. Siskin Trail and up until the housing development, the trail to the Firehall from Cemetery Road.
- No, just recreational walks
- Don't use trails
- Siskin trails for getting groceries and also recreation.
- No
- Yes. Carrington, Commons, Easter Bluff, Green Mountain, Von Donop, Cable Beach
- Siskin trails
- From this question it would appear that you have never been to this island. The trails don't go from one place to another but rather are contained within forested areas, such as Carrington Bay park.
- No
- siskin trails very occasionally
- There are no trail options on my usual commuting routes.
- Siskin, Carrington, commons
- Private land trail impromptu my house to the hall, clinic and store
- Alder Path (end of Olmstead Rd.)
- Yes, Manson's area and Siskin

B4. Island Wide Mapping Analysis

The mapping comments were reviewed and key themes determined, as well as location specific references where possible.

Blind Corners and Limited Visibility

Steep hills and sharp curves limit sightlines, making it hard for drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians to see each other. Unsafe passing is common, especially near:

- Gunflint Road (including Gunflint–Mansons area)
- Whaletown S-curve
- Carrington Bay Road near Whaletown School
- Cougar Hill (south of the firehall driveway)
- Hague Lake area

Narrow Roads and Lack of Shoulders

Many roads have little or no shoulder space, forcing people to walk or cycle in the travel lane. Commonly mentioned areas:

- Seaford Road
- Sutil Point Road between Highfield and Mansons
- Mansons Hall area (no safe off-road lanes)
- Road to Linnea Farm
- Robertson Road to the Post Office
- Whaletown Road (including ferry to Carrington Bay)

Speeding and Driver Behaviour

High vehicle speeds make narrow, winding roads even more dangerous. Speed concerns were often raised for:

- Hague Lake crossing area
- Carrington Bay Road near the ferry
- Day parking lot to Mansons Landing

High-Risk Areas

Roads near Hague Lake — dangerous for children and families crossing to the beach.

- Ferry terminal approaches — unsafe for cyclists.

- Whaletown to Mansons — multiple blind corners, no shoulders.
- Cortes Bay — dangerous for walking and cycling due to narrow roads and high speeds.

Desire for Safer Infrastructure

Calls for:

- Paved shoulders (like on Quadra Island)
- Off-road walking/biking trails to the library, ferry, and community hubs
- Traffic calming, such as pedestrian-activated lights at Hague Lake and lower speed limits near schools and gathering areas.

Maintain the Island's Character

Some residents stressed maintaining the rural, natural character of the island, opposing urban-style infrastructure like streetlights

B5. Mansons Landing Mapping Analysis

The mapping comments were reviewed and key themes determined, as well as location specific references where possible.

Narrow Roads and Lack of Shoulders

Many participants said roads are too narrow for safe walking or biking, with no shoulders and poor pavement. Specific mentions:

- East side of Sutil Point Road south of Mansons
- Section between Hague Lake and Mansons Lagoon

Blind Corners and Safety at Crossings

- Dangerous curves make it hard for drivers to see pedestrians and cyclists, especially near the lake where families cross.
- Suggestions included seasonal speed bumps, flashing lights, or other calming measures.
- Specific mentions:
- Corner by Hague Lake (crossing to the beach)

Speeding and Traffic Behaviour

Concerns about high speeds, drivers ignoring stop signs, and unsafe passing of cyclists without visibility. Suggestions included lowering speed limits, more stop signs, and better enforcement. Specific mentions:

- Seaford Road and Sutil Point Road intersection (possible 3-way stop)
- School zone in Mansons (speed limit too high coming up the hill)
- Extension of 40 km/h zone to Moon Hill

Pedestrian and Cyclist Infrastructure Needs

Calls for sidewalks, off-road or protected bike paths, crosswalks, bump-outs, and better connection to trails. Specific mentions:

- Downtown Mansons (sidewalks, street calming, crosswalks, bump-outs)
- Bartholomew Road and Cortes Bay Road (protected path suggested)
- Connecting Siskin Trail to Mansons

Traffic Congestion and Parking Issues

Parking on both sides of the road reduces space and creates hazards, especially during busy summer months and Friday Markets. Suggestions included better signage to direct drivers to public parking and expanding parking options. Specific mentions:

- Sutil Point Road (market day congestion)
- Co-op area in Mansons (need parking signage)

Other Infrastructure Suggestions

Requests for bike racks, better parking layouts, and improved identification of school zones. Specific mentions:

- Mansons parking lot (bike racks)

B6. Whaletown Mapping Analysis

The mapping comments were reviewed and key themes determined, as well as location specific references where possible.

Poor Visibility and Blind Corners

Multiple areas have dangerous sightlines due to hills, curves, and double blind corners, making it unsafe for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers. Specific mentions:

- Peak of a hill (blind spot)
- Double blind corner near a participant's home (no shoulder, unsafe for children walking)
- Hunt Road intersection (limited visibility for turning vehicles)

Narrow Roads and Lack of Shoulders

Many roads leading to and from the ferry are narrow, with little or no paved shoulder for walking or biking. Specific mentions:

- Carrington Bay Road
- Whaletown Road
- Harbour Road to Robertson Road
- Roads between Hunt Road and Bodington Road

Speeding and Traffic Volumes

High vehicle speeds, especially on ferry routes, make conditions more dangerous. Concerns are heightened with the anticipated arrival of a larger ferry. Specific mentions:

- Suggested speed limit: 40 km/h from west of Hunt Road to Bodington Road.
- Ferry road (narrow, unsafe shoulders)
- Areas near school bus stops (unsafe for children walking without shoulders)

Congestion and Ferry Traffic Behaviour

Heavy traffic during peak tourist season and ferry arrivals creates unsafe conditions for walking and cycling. Ferry traffic sometimes blocks side road entrances and contributes to congestion.

Other Infrastructure Needs

Calls for:

- Sidewalks along Carrington Bay Road and Whaletown Road

- Wider paved shoulders (similar to West Road on Quadra Island)
- Bike paths along ferry routes so people can leave cars at the terminal and cycle
- Bike storage at ferry terminal
- Trails connecting ferry area to the south end, Linnea, Manson's Landing, and Squirrel Cove

B7. Squirrel Cove Mapping Analysis

The mapping comments were reviewed and key themes determined, as well as location specific references where possible.

Steep and Narrow Roads

Roads in this area are challenging for biking and walking due to steep grades and narrow widths. Specific mentions:

- Steep road near Squirrel Cove
- Narrow section where cars park along the roadside, making it almost single lane on a blind corner

Unsafe for Biking

Narrow roads, lack of visibility, and speeding create unsafe conditions for cyclists. Limited trail connections make it hard to reach other parts of the island without using main roads.

Parking-Related Safety Issues

Vehicles parked along the roadside reduce space for passing and create blind spots. Parking near corners makes roads dangerously narrow.

Need for Bike Infrastructure

Calls for bike lanes to make Squirrel Cove more accessible and safer for cyclists.

Congestion

High traffic volumes and congestion near the dock can make walking and cycling more hazardous.

Mixed Views

A few participants felt that the current infrastructure is adequate or noted that hilly terrain is simply part of island life.

B8. Pop-Up Feedback

We heard from 25 participants at the pop-up event that safer, more comfortable biking conditions are needed. Suggestions included:

- Roads are dangerous to bike – cracks uneven
- Blind corners
- Separate bike lane through Mansons
- Fix Potholes on roads (x3)
- Parking on road shoulders during events limits space to shore road for cars (x8)
- Places for people to bike
- Lower speed limit
- Slower speeds in Mansons Landing extend slow area
- Road caution signs for blind corners
- Separate paths connect whale town to Mansons (not the road)
- Speeding at Hague Lake Park – signs say 30mph to 40 mph
- Widen roads for people biking when repairing roads

B9. Interest Holder Meetings

The BC Ministry of Transportation and Transit (BC MoTT) have jurisdiction over all roads on the island. They told us that keeping the roads in good shape is their top priority, with major work like resurfacing happening on a regular cycle. Seaford Road is next in line for maintenance. While budgets are tight, the Ministry said they can, with the Strathcona Regional District (SRD), add improvements that make walking and cycling safer when road work is already underway. This could include things like wider shoulders in spots with poor visibility, painted crossings in busy areas, and lower speed limits in village centres. BC MoTT noted that speed bumps and sidewalks with curbs are not practical for them to maintain, but that paved shoulders, custom signage, and bike route markings could be possible. They also confirmed they are willing to let SRD take on responsibility for managing beach access points if the community wants to see those improved.

BC Ferries shared information about upgrades at the ferry terminals in Heriot Bay and Whaletown. The work will allow a new vessel, twice the size of the current one, to serve the route starting in spring 2026. The number of sailings will stay the same, but the new ferry will bring better facilities: more space for bicycles, easier boarding for foot passengers, and an improved waiting area on the Quadra Island side. BC Ferries noted that cycling traffic is especially popular in the summer and is growing as e-bikes make the island terrain easier to navigate. They are starting to collect more detailed data on passenger and bike use to help with planning. BC Ferries also said they would be interested in working with the SRD to support applications for funding for things like bike storage at the terminal.