

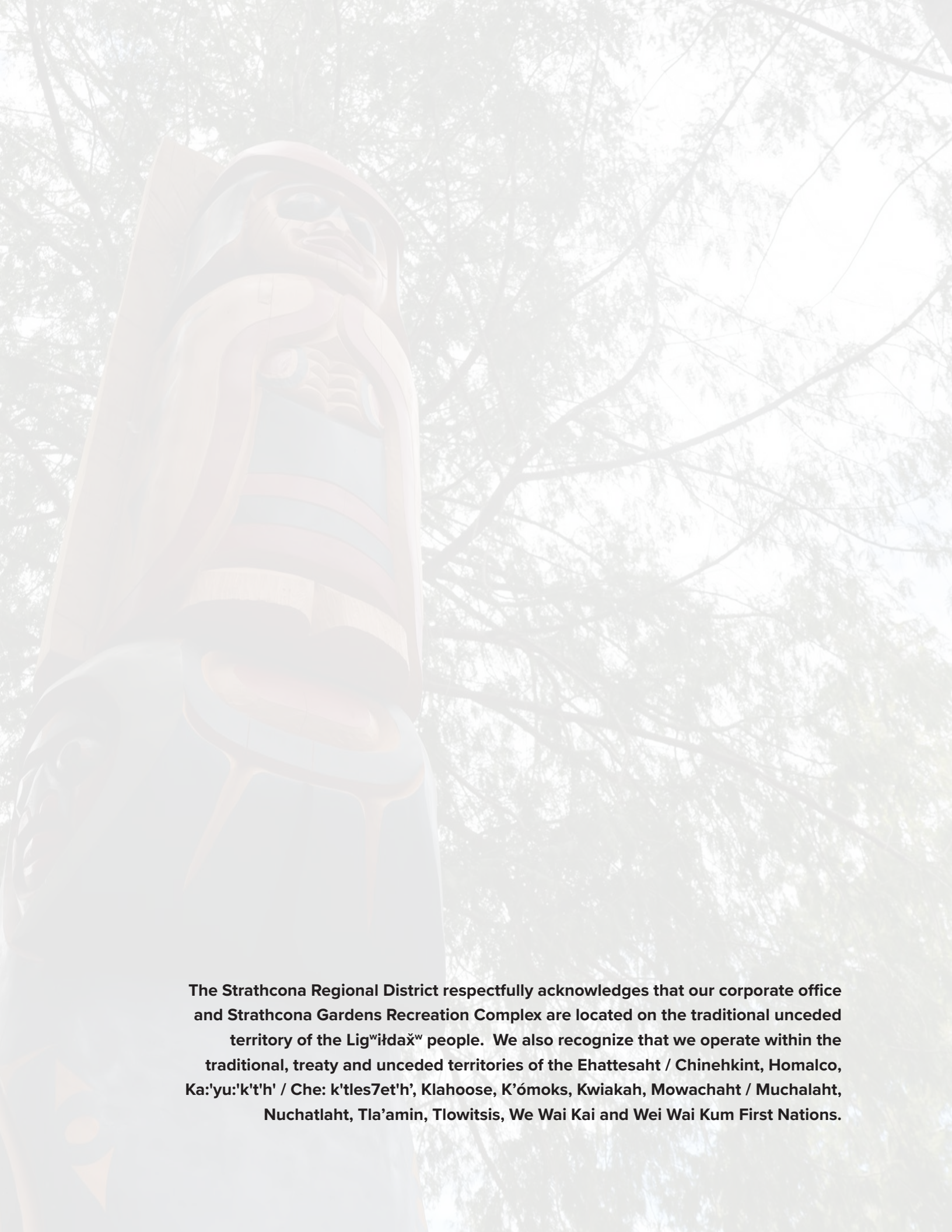


# Cortes Island

## Active Transportation Network Plan

Creating a safe, connected, and welcoming place where walking, biking, and rolling are part of everyday life

March 2026

A large, stylized wooden sculpture of a person in traditional Indigenous attire, set against a background of trees. The sculpture is made of light-colored wood and features intricate carvings, including a large, curved, feathered headdress and a body with horizontal bands. The background is a dense canopy of green trees, creating a natural and serene setting.

**The Strathcona Regional District respectfully acknowledges that our corporate office and Strathcona Gardens Recreation Complex are located on the traditional unceded territory of the Lig<sup>w</sup>itda<sup>x</sup><sup>w</sup> people. We also recognize that we operate within the traditional, treaty and unceded territories of the Ehattesaht / Chinehkint, Homalco, Ka:'yu:'k't'h' / Che: k'tles7et'h', Klahoose, K'ómoks, Kwiakah, Mowachaht / Muchalaht, Nuchatlaht, Tla'amin, Tlowitsis, We Wai Kai and Wei Wai Kum First Nations.**

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## Appendices

**A Background Report**

**B Public Engagement What We Heard Report**

This plan 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.



## There is limited infrastructure for active transportation

People get around by all modes and have to share space on narrow rural roads, often with no shoulder. Some trails provide traffic free connections.

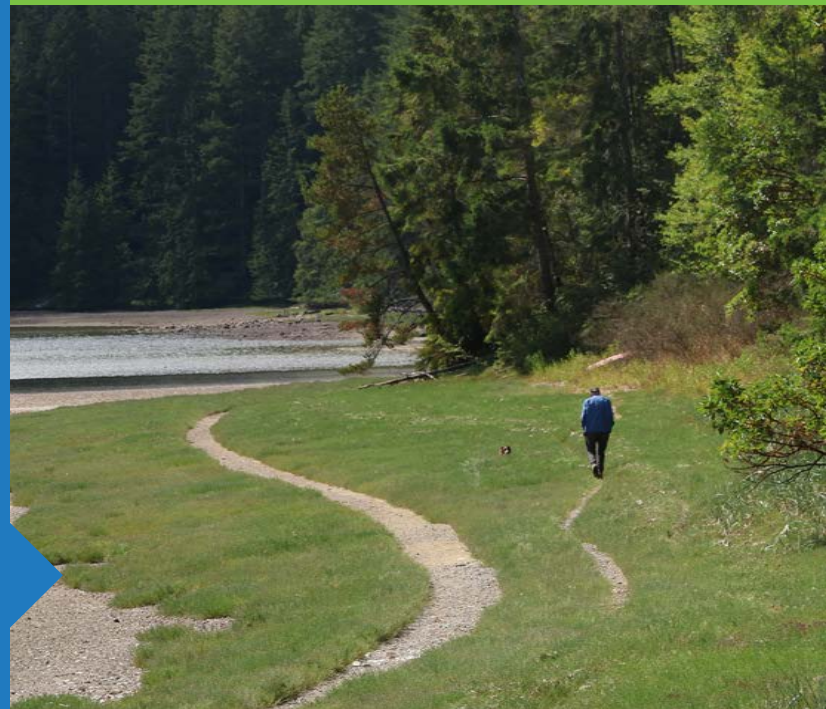


## The roads are all within the Ministry's jurisdiction

The BC Ministry of Transportation and Transit are responsible for the roadways and must be consulted on improvements and ultimately have approving authority.

## There is limited tax base to fund major improvements

While the plan does speak to aspirational solutions such as a cross-island pathway, the practicality of funding that in the near term is limited.



## The plan focuses on community nodes

Community nodes such as Mansons Landing and Squirrel Cove are the focus of the plan as with a small investment, they can have a greater impact.



## The plan seeks small practical and achievable projects

The projects include pathways, trails, bike parking, shoulder widening, reduced speed limits, signage, and wayfinding to provide achievable quick wins.



## The plan sets the Regional District up to apply for funding

Grant providers will want to see that any projects they invest in are part of a larger plan and a coordinated approach to community connectivity. This plan sets the Regional District up for success.





# Where We Are

How the community travels today, how they would like to travel, what barriers exist, and the potential if we address them

## Cortes Island Today

Cortes Island is home to approximately 1,059 residents, representing about 2.2% of the Strathcona Regional District's population. The population is aging, with an average age of 52.2 years, suggesting that accessibility and safety for older adults are key considerations. The community is primarily composed of permanent residents, though some live seasonally or part-time.

Households are small (average 1.9 people) and mostly owner-occupied (73%), with a relatively modest average income of \$41,200 — lower than both the regional and provincial averages. Transportation choices are shaped by the island's rural, dispersed layout and lack of formal infrastructure: 5.5% of people walk and 5.5% bike to work, yet most rely on private vehicles. The three main hubs — Mansons Landing, Whaletown, and Squirrel Cove — are connected by narrow, winding roads with few shoulders and limited transit options, making everyday mobility a central community issue.

## How People Get Around Today

Residents primarily walk, cycle, or drive between key destinations, though the experience varies greatly depending on comfort and safety. Many rely on trails such as Siskin, Carrington, and Green Mountain, which serve both recreational and transportation purposes.

Narrow roadways, lack of shoulders, and poor visibility mean that walking or biking often feels unsafe — particularly around Mansons Landing, Gorge Harbour, Seaford Road, and near Hague & Gunflint Lakes. While 68% of survey participants feel comfortable using local trails, others avoid them due to uneven surfaces, poor maintenance, or gaps in connectivity.

## How People Want to Get Around Tomorrow

The community envisions a safer, more connected island that supports walking, cycling, and rolling for people of all ages and abilities. Residents emphasized the desire for wider road shoulders, pathways separate from vehicle traffic, and smoother, more accessible trail surfaces.

There's strong interest in linking key destinations — such as the ferry terminal, Mansons Landing, Whaletown, and Linnea Farm — through a network of safe, separated routes. Respondents also support traffic calming, lower speed limits, and signage improvements to make active modes more comfortable and reliable. The overall sentiment: active transportation should be an everyday option, not just a recreational activity.

Note: Demographic information derived from 2021 Census Profile Table, Statistics Canada

## Barriers to Walking

Walking is constrained by unsafe conditions along island roads, including:

- No sidewalks or shoulders, forcing pedestrians into traffic lanes
- Poor visibility from hills and blind corners
- Speeding drivers
- Crumbling pavement, potholes, and overgrown vegetation reducing usable shoulder space
- Few marked crossings near destinations

During peak seasons, vehicles parked on road shoulders and additional traffic volumes further limit pedestrian comfort.

## Barriers to Biking & Rolling

Biking and rolling are limited by the absence of bike lanes, narrow and steep roads, and unsafe passing by vehicles. Common issues include:

- No dedicated cycling infrastructure or safe shoulders
- High traffic speeds
- Unmaintained or disconnected trails, forcing cyclists onto main roads
- Surface hazards like potholes and loose gravel make rolling uncomfortable and sometimes dangerous

## Potential for Active Transportation

Despite current challenges, Cortes Island shows potential for active transportation:

- Community support is high — 81% of survey respondents said wider shoulders and 61% said off-road paths would encourage them to walk, bike, or roll more often
- The trail system provides a solid foundation for connectivity, with opportunities to formalize and upgrade key routes like the Siskin Trail and Linnea Farm connections
- Collaboration with BC MOTT and BC Ferries offers a chance to integrate improvements — such as paved shoulders, crossings, and bike amenities — during planned infrastructure work



# Where We're Going

How this Plan supports aligning the Island's active transportation network with the community's vision and broader governmental initiatives

## Local Plans & Policy

Cortes Island is a rural island of about 1,000 residents, centered around Whaletown, Squirrel Cove, and Mansons Landing, with strong natural, recreational, and marine-based amenities and located within Klahoose First Nation traditional territory. Transportation for walking and cycling is largely accommodated on shared roadways and trails, with limited dedicated pedestrian infrastructure and long distances between key destinations. Parks, trails, and marine access are important mobility assets, while active transportation is constrained by safety, distance, and limited facilities, suggesting opportunities for future improvements.

The Cortes Island OCP (2012) establishes strong policy support for active transportation, emphasizing sustainability, health, inclusivity, and maintaining the island's rural character through trails, greenways, and low-impact infrastructure.

A 2022 Active Transportation Conditions Report confirms this direction but identifies major gaps, noting that most walking and cycling occurs on narrow roads with little to no dedicated infrastructure, creating safety concerns and barriers to active transportation use despite strong community interest.

Additionally, the Island's recent Zoning Bylaw Review, while not explicitly requiring active transportation infrastructure, does set the land use context in which these transportation decisions will be made. By clarifying land use patterns and designating parks and public spaces, the zoning bylaw helps identify where active transportation facilities can be most effectively prioritized. This clearer land use framework supports the integration of public spaces — such as Whaletown Commons and park areas — into a more connected, walkable, and bikeable active transportation network.

## Federal & Provincial Policy

Federal and Provincial policies related to active transportation provide direction for the recommendations made in this Active Transportation Network Plan. Senior government Active Transportation and Road Safety Strategies emphasize safety, equity, climate action, and accessibility. British Columbia's policies aim to significantly increase active transportation trips and support rural-appropriate design, while federal strategies promote safe, inclusive active transportation and Vision Zero principles. Together, these frameworks reinforce this Plan's goals and position Cortes Island and the SRD to align with senior government priorities and access external funding.

## Engagement

The development of the Active Transportation Network Plan included two phases of public engagement, and also considered previous engagement results from the preparation of the past Cortes Island Active Transportation Conditions Report. The first phases focused on gathering ideas and understanding issues. Detailed analysis of the results are included in Appendix B. The most suggested measures were:

- Building safe pathways for people walking and biking
- Adding traffic calming measures
- Improving school zone safety
- Maintaining road shoulders to enable people walking and biking to use them where possible
- Enhance parking options so vehicles don't block road shoulders

The second phase presented draft network plan options and sought to understand community support and priorities. Detailed analysis of the results are also included in Appendix B. The top five priorities from the plan recommendations were:

- Shoulder widening to enable designated space for people walking and biking at blind corners.
- Roadside pathway connecting Whaletown and Gorge Harbour.
- Roadside pathway through Mansons Landing (along Sutil Point Road and Beesley Road).
- Trail connection between Cortes Bay and Mansons Landing.
- Traffic calming to physically slow motor vehicle speeds through village centres.

In addition to this project's engagement, previous public input on active transportation conditions and gaps was collected for the past Cortes Island Active Transportation Conditions Report. Primary gaps identified were:

- Roadside pedestrian facilities in Mansons Landing
- Roadside pedestrian facilities near Hague and Gunflint Lakes
- Roadside pedestrian facilities near Gorge Harbour
- Marked pedestrian crossings along the trail system and near key destinations
- Roadside pathways and/or wider shoulders for people biking
- Additional end-of-trip facilities (e.g., bike parking, e-bike charging stations) at key destinations
- Widened waiting areas for school bus stops
- Comfortable bicycle facilities while on board ferries
- Mobility hub(s) integrating different modes of travel via amenities such as waiting areas, wayfinding, secure bike parking, and charging stations
- Driver education and public orientation to the Island's trail network



# How We Get There

The Plan's vision, goals, objectives, and actions



## Vision

**Cortes Island is a safe, connected, and welcoming place where walking, biking, and rolling are part of everyday life — supported by comfortable routes within village centres and safer connections between communities that maintain the island’s rural character.**

## Goals & Objectives

These goals and objectives support the vision for active transportation on Cortes Island by providing direction to the Plan's recommendations.

### 1 Align Policy

**Objective 1.1:** Align regional policy with this Plan and relevant senior government plans and strategies

### 2 Improve Active Transportation Comfort in High-Activity Areas

**Objective 2.1:** Connect major community destinations with pathways separated from traffic

**Objective 2.2:** Reduce vehicle speeds

**Objective 2.3:** Improve comfort for people walking in areas shared with vehicles

### 3 Improve Active Transportation Comfort between Village Centres

**Objective 3.1:** Provide near-term improvements along major routes

**Objective 3.2:** Improve trail accessibility

**Objective 3.3:** Support a long-term vision of an island-wide pathway

### 4 Improve Multi-modal Integration

**Objective 4.1:** Improve integration with BC Ferries

**Objective 4.2:** Provide end-of-trip facilities at key destinations

### 5 Monitor the Plan

**Objective 5.1:** Monitor plan progress on an ongoing basis

# Network Plan

## Summary

The proposed active transportation initiatives for Cortes Island aim to create a safer, more connected, and accessible environment for people walking, biking, and using other forms of active travel. Projects focus on improving key routes that link major community destinations, reducing vehicle speeds in high-activity areas, and enhancing the comfort and safety of all road users. At the same time, a long-term vision for an island-wide pathway network is identified.

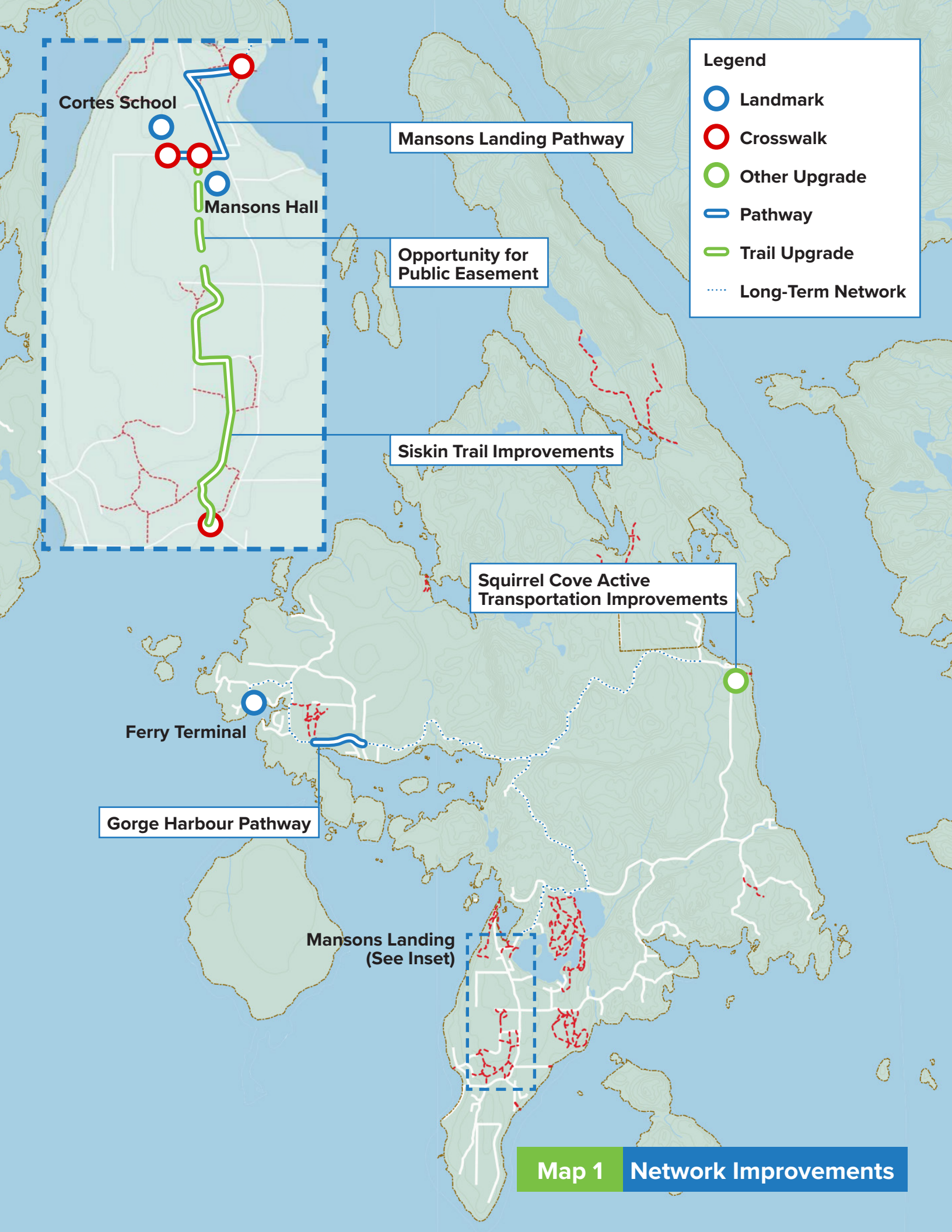
Priority projects include the development of a separated pathway network in Mansons Landing, the island's primary village centre, to provide safe connections between the school, businesses, and community facilities. Similar improvements are being considered for Squirrel Cove, where future traffic-calming measures or a pathway will be explored. Upgrades to the Siskin Trail will improve accessibility and surface quality, strengthening its role as both a recreational and transportation corridor.

Supporting infrastructure such as crosswalks and wayfinding signage will increase pedestrian visibility and help residents and visitors navigate the island's network of trails and destinations. Interim safety measures such as shoulder widening, 'Pass Slow & Wide' signage, and targeted traffic calming will provide immediate improvements while supporting long-term goals for separated pathways and slower, safer streets.

Collectively, these projects advance the plan's goals to:

- Improve active transportation comfort in high-activity areas
- Improve active transportation comfort between village centres
- Improve multi-modal integration

Through these coordinated actions, Cortes Island will strengthen its active transportation network, encourage sustainable mobility, and foster a more livable, connected community.



**Legend**

- Landmark
- Crosswalk
- Other Upgrade
- Pathway
- Trail Upgrade
- ⋯ Long-Term Network

Cortes School

Mansons Landing Pathway

Mansons Hall

Opportunity for Public Easement

Siskin Trail Improvements

Squirrel Cove Active Transportation Improvements

Ferry Terminal

Gorge Harbour Pathway

Mansons Landing (See Inset)

## Mansons Landing Pathway

Supports Objective 2.1

Being the island's main village centre, Mansons Landing experiences relatively high levels of active transportation. Most people accessing the area will use active transportation for some portion of their trip - even if that's simply walking along the road from their vehicle to a nearby commercial business. Separated pathways would offer people walking and rolling their own space separate from vehicles to access businesses, services, school, and the trail network.

It's recommended that a separated pathway be provided on Beesley Road between the Cortes Island Elementary School and Sutil Point Road. It's recommended that a separated pathway also be provided on Sutil Point Road between the crosswalks near Beesley Road and Charlotte Road.

## Gorge Harbour Pathway

Supports Objective 2.1

An active transportation connection between Gorge Harbour to beyond Whaletown Commons was identified as a primary gap in the past Active Transportation Conditions Report. It's recommended that a roadside pathway be explored to improve comfort for people walking and biking between Robertson Road and Whaletown Commons.

## Squirrel Cove Improvements

Supports Objectives 2.1 2.2

Currently, there are no active transportation facilities between Squirrel Cove and the Klahoose Tork 7 Reserve. There is also no traffic calming infrastructure in place that would slow vehicles to a speed safe for sharing the roadway with vulnerable road users.

An active transportation connection between Squirrel Cove and the Klahoose Tork 7 Reserve is recommended. The feasibility of different infrastructure options (e.g., separated pathway, traffic calming) should be explored through design and coordination with MoTT.

## Siskin Trail Improvements

Supports Objective 3.2

The Siskin Trail connects Mansons Landing south past Cemetery Road to Highfield Road and Smelt Bay Road. Given the lack of comfortable active transportation facilities on the adjacent segment of Sutil Point Road, it serves not only as a recreational facility, but also as a transportation route for the community.

It's recommended that the trail be widened to a minimum 3.0m wide standard and finished with a smoother trail surface (e.g., crushed gravel.) Additionally, given part of this trail is located on private land, it's recommended that easements be secured to formalize these segments.

## Mansons Landing Traffic Calming

Supports Objective 2.2

Speeding is a concern in the community and poses a threat to road safety on the island. It's recommended that the advisory speed limit of 40 km/hr through Mansons Landing be converted to a regulatory 30 km/hr speed limit, and that traffic calming measures be trialled to ensure the road design self-enforces this new speed limit.

## Crosswalks

Supports Objective 2.3

Crosswalks are recommended at the following locations to provide priority for pedestrians at locations with observed demand:

- Cortes Island School, connecting to the proposed Mansons Landing pathway
- Manson Hall, connecting to the existing trail to Cortes Market
- Hague Lake, connecting the trail access to informal parking across Seaford Road
- Southern extent of Siskin Trail near Highfield Road, across Sutil Point Road

## Safe Passing Law Signage

Supports Objective 3.1

Starting in 2024, vulnerable road users have new protections under B.C.'s vulnerable road user law which requires drivers to always give a minimum of 1.0 or 1.5m of space (at speeds below or above 50km/hr, respectively) when passing people walking and biking.

It's recommended that the Strathcona Regional District install MoTT I-145-1x signage complete with MoTT I-145-1x signage tabs at regular intervals along major routes where people walking and/or biking share the roadway with vehicles.

## Wayfinding Improvements

Supports Objective 3.2

Wayfinding signage supports people, particularly visitors, taking trips by active transportation along safe routes. By promoting access to key destinations via a network of signage, the trail network becomes more accessible to those unfamiliar with it.

It's recommended that signage indicating the walking and biking time to key destinations be installed at decision points along the island's pathways and trails that provide a transportation, rather than only recreational, connection.

Signage will generally be implemented as new pieces of the Island's network are constructed. For existing connections (i.e., Siskin Trail), signage can be provided at the northern (Mansons Landing) and southern (Sutil Point & Smelt Bay Roads) extents as near-term improvements.

## Assessment & Design of Targeted Shoulder Widening

Supports Objective

3.1

The island's main roads are uncomfortable for most people biking due to narrow roadways, blind corners, and high vehicle speeds. While a long-term vision of an island-wide pathway will improve comfort and safety, interim improvements can meaningfully enhance conditions.

Shoulder widening should be explored along Whaletown, Gorge Harbour, Seaford, and Squirrel Cove Roads. Wider shoulders would provide designated operating space for people walking and biking where drivers may approach from behind at higher speeds and with limited visibility.

Given the geometric constraints and varying right-of-way conditions along these corridors, a focused engineering feasibility assessment is recommended. This work would:

- Confirm priority locations based on safety risk and constructability
- Develop preliminary design concepts
- Provide Class 'C' cost estimates to support capital planning and funding applications

This approach enables targeted improvements where they are most feasible and impactful, while ensuring that scope and costs are appropriately defined prior to implementation.

## Bicycle Parking Improvements

Supports Objective

4.2

It's recommended the SRD work with private and public partners to install and/or improve covered bicycle parking at key island destinations, such as Mansons Hall, popular businesses, and public parks. A public e-bike charging station should be considered for Mansons Hall to extend device ranges and improve the convenience of bicycling to the Island's main Village Centre.

To support proactive planning for bicycle end-of-trip facilities, it's recommended that the SRD embed bicycle parking standards for commercial, industrial, institutional and multi-unit housing typologies into the regional Subdivision Servicing Standards Bylaw No. 64.



## Supporting Actions

### Summary

The policy and program initiatives proposed for the Cortes Island Active Transportation Network Plan establish the foundation for long-term coordination, investment, and implementation. While infrastructure projects deliver immediate safety and connectivity improvements, these supporting initiatives ensure that the Plan's objectives are embedded within regional policy, supported by senior government partnerships, and sustained through ongoing funding and monitoring.

Aligning regional policy with provincial and federal strategies—such as Move. Commute. Connect. and Canada's National Active Transportation Strategy — will help the SRD strengthen coordination with Indigenous and regional partners. This alignment provides a unified framework for pursuing shared goals around accessibility, climate action, and rural mobility while unlocking eligibility for external funding and investment.

Partnership and advocacy remain central to achieving the island's long-term vision. The SRD will work collaboratively with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure and Transportation (MoTT) to implement plan projects and to champion sustained provincial funding for rural active transportation networks. This advocacy will be critical to realizing the long-term vision of a continuous, separated pathway connecting Cortes Island's main community hubs.

Similarly, collaboration with BC Ferries will focus on improving conditions for people biking or rolling as part of their ferry trips. Priorities include covered bicycle parking, better access and loading facilities, and coordination of safety improvements near terminals on both Cortes and Quadra Islands.

Finally, a commitment to monitoring and reporting progress will help ensure accountability and transparency. By regularly tracking project delivery, partnerships, and mode share changes, the SRD can adapt priorities, demonstrate success, and maintain access to senior government funding programs.

Together, these policy and advocacy actions provide the institutional framework necessary to support the Plan's physical projects — helping Cortes Island build a safer, better-connected, and more sustainable active transportation network for the future.

## Align Regional Policy

Supports Objective

1.1

Embedding the Plan’s priorities within the Official Community Plan (OCP) and related regional strategies helps ensure that transportation investments, land-use planning, and climate goals are pursued in a mutually reinforcing manner. In particular, the OCP should designate areas with future trail interests to ensure that as land is developed, it supports community desires for its active transportation network.

To align transportation decisions with policy goals, it’s also recommended the SRD adopt a regional modal hierarchy that supports decision making and provides a clear framework for street design. A modal hierarchy typically prioritizes action for sustainable modes and influences which transportation modes get priority when planning, designing, funding, and operating the overall transportation system. Adopting a mode hierarchy supports senior government direction on transportation planning by, for example, aligning with the National Road Safety Strategy’s principle that “human life and health are paramount and take priority over mobility and other objectives of the road traffic system.”

## Advocate to MoTT

Supports Objective

3.3

The SRD will continue to collaborate with MoTT on implementing near-term active transportation improvements identified in this Plan, including shoulder widening, signage, and safety enhancements along key corridors.

Beyond implementation, the SRD will advocate for sustained provincial investment in active transportation for small and rural communities. Establishing dedicated funding streams will be critical to advancing a long-term vision for a continuous, island-wide separated pathway network connecting the island’s major destinations — Whaletown, Squirrel Cove, and Mansons Landing.

Advocacy efforts should emphasize the importance of predictable, multi-year funding for design, right-of-way acquisition, and construction of separated pathways, alongside maintenance support to ensure these facilities remain accessible over time. By working closely with MoTT, the SRD can help ensure that rural and remote communities like Cortes Island are recognized as integral to the Province’s broader transportation and climate action goals.

## Advocate to BC Ferries

Supports Objective 4.1

The SRD will engage BC Ferries to improve the experience and accommodation of people traveling with bicycles and other mobility devices, recognizing that most residents live several kilometres from the Whaletown terminal.

Key advocacy points include covered bicycle parking, waiting areas, and public charging stations at terminals both on Cortes Island and Quadra Island, and improved facilities for loading, securing, and disembarking bicycles on vessels. Collaboration with BC Ferries can also focus on enhancing access routes to terminals — for example, through clearer wayfinding, safety signage, and coordination with roadway improvements led by MoTT.

These measures would make ferry travel more accessible and appealing for active transportation users, supporting a multimodal connection between the island's transportation network and the regional ferry system.

## Monitor Plan Progress

Supports Objective 5.1

To ensure continued alignment with community needs and funding opportunities, the SRD should establish a structured monitoring and reporting framework for the Active Transportation Network Plan. This framework will track implementation milestones, funding outcomes, and progress toward provincial targets.

Key performance indicators may include:

- Kilometres of new or upgraded pathways and widened shoulders completed;
- Number of safety or signage improvements delivered;
- Community feedback and active mode share trends;
- Partnerships and funding secured from provincial and federal sources.
- BC Ferries bicycle trip data trends

Regular review — ideally every two years — will allow the SRD to measure progress, adjust priorities, and maintain eligibility for senior government funding programs.





# Implementation

Outlining project costs, implementation priorities, and funding options

# Funding the Plan

Implementation of the Active Transportation Network Plan will require a phased and pragmatic approach that reflects the financial realities of Cortes Island and the Strathcona Regional District. As a small community with a limited tax base and no dedicated transportation service, the capacity to fund significant active transportation infrastructure is limited across the SRD. Several communities within the region face high infrastructure needs but limited long-term funding certainty.

Implementation of this Plan will largely depend on securing provincial and federal grant funding, an approach that is unfortunately common for active transportation projects in small and remote communities and underscores the importance of being prepared to apply when funding opportunities arise. The plan supports grant readiness by identifying priority projects in a coordinated manner that aligns with provincial and federal direction.

# Cost Estimate

Table 1 summarizes Class ‘D’ cost estimates for each infrastructure project proposed within this Active Transportation Network Plan. Class ‘D’ cost estimates are based on previous tender prices, adjusted to 2026 Dollars, and include both a contingency (50%) and engineering and design costs (15%). Cost estimates are for proposed infrastructure and associated planning and design only. Real estate acquisition and has not been included.

**Table 1: Infrastructure Project Class ‘D’ Cost Estimates**

#	Project	Cost	50% Cont.	15% Eng.	Total Cost
1	Mansons Landing Pathway	\$3,060,000	\$1,530,000	\$459,000	\$5,049,000
2	Gorge Harbour Pathway	\$2,750,000	\$1,375,000	\$413,000	\$4,538,000
3	Squirrel Cove Improvements	\$1,875,000	\$938,000	\$282,000	\$3,095,000
4	Siskin Trail Improvements	\$1,105,000	\$553,000	\$166,000	\$1,824,000
5	Assessment & Design of Targeted Shoulder Widening	\$120,000	\$60,000	\$18,000	\$198,000
6	Mansons Landing Traffic Calming	\$60,000	\$30,000	\$9,000	\$99,000
7	Wayfinding Improvements	\$21,000	\$11,000	\$4,000	\$36,000
8	Safe Passing Law Signage	\$15,000	\$8,000	\$3,000	\$26,000
9	Crosswalks	\$11,000	\$6,000	\$2,000	\$19,000
10	Bicycle Parking Improvements	\$9,000	\$5,000	\$2,000	\$16,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$10,716,000</b>	<b>\$5,361,000</b>	<b>\$1,612,000</b>	<b>\$17,689,000</b>

## Prioritization

Table 2 provides a prioritized list of projects to help guide future municipal planning and budgeting. Projects may be implemented in an order different from that proposed, based on opportunities as they arise. The prioritization framework is provided below:

### Active Transportation Activity (30%)

5 = High active transportation activity

3 = Moderate active transportation activity

0 = Low active transportation activity

### Jurisdictional Complexity (20%)

5 = Low jurisdictional complexity

3 = Moderate jurisdictional complexity

0 = High jurisdictional complexity

### Constructability & Cost (30%)

5 = Simple constructability

3 = Somewhat difficult constructability

0 = Complex constructability

### Public Priority (20%)

5 = High public priority

3 = Moderate public priority

0 = Low public priority

**Table 2: Infrastructure Project Prioritization**

#	Project	Active Transportation Activity (30%)	Jurisdictional Complexity (20%)	Constructability & Cost (30%)	Public Priority (20%)	Average Weighted Score
1	Crosswalks	4	1	5	3	3.5
2	Mansons Landing Pathway	5	1	1	5	3.0
3	Mansons Landing Traffic Calming	4	1	4	3	3.2
4	Bicycle Parking Improvements	3	3	5	1	3.2
5	Wayfinding Improvements	1	4	5	1	2.8
6	Siskin Trail Improvements	3	4	2	2	2.7
7	Safe Passing Law Signage	2	1	5	2	2.7
8	Assessment & Design of Targeted Shoulder Widening	1	1	4	4	2.5
9	Gorge Harbour Pathway	2	1	1	4	1.9
10	Squirrel Cove Improvements	2	1	1	3	1.7

## Funding Opportunities

### Province of BC – Active Transportation Infrastructure Grants Program

The Province of British Columbia's Active Transportation Infrastructure Grants Program provides cost-shared funding to support active transportation infrastructure and network planning. Eligible Indigenous governments, municipalities, regional districts, and Islands Trust governments can apply for Active Transportation Network Planning Grants and Infrastructure Grants. The 2025/2026 intake of the infrastructure program is currently paused pending the outcome of a CleanBC program review. At the time of writing, no update has been provided on this program but it has historically supported projects such as multi-use paths, protected bike lanes, end-of-trip facilities, and pedestrian safety improvements with cost participation ranging up to 70–80% for small or Indigenous communities. Continued local advocacy for reinstatement of this key provincial funding, along with maintaining a portfolio of shovel-ready, plan-aligned projects, will support implementation if/when grant funding resumes.

### Federal Government – National Active Transportation Fund

Canada's Active Transportation Fund (ATF) is a competitive federal program designed to support the expansion and enhancement of active transportation networks across Canada in alignment with the National Active Transportation Strategy. It provides funding for both planning and capital projects that increase the use, connectivity, and safety of active transportation infrastructure. The ATF has committed multi-year funding (notably \$400 million over five years) but is closed for applications at the time of writing. Projects are assessed on merit, regional distribution, and alignment with federal objectives on mode shift, equity, and climate outcomes. Funding supports infrastructure such as multi-use paths, separated bike lanes, pedestrian bridges, and first-and-last-mile connections, among other eligible assets.

### Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) – Green Municipal Fund

The Green Municipal Fund (GMF) may support active transportation projects where they demonstrably contribute to greenhouse gas reductions, climate resilience, or broader sustainability objectives. While the GMF is not a dedicated active transportation program, it can be a potential funding source for integrated projects — such as complete streets, climate action initiatives, or transportation demand management strategies — where active transportation infrastructure plays a central role in achieving environmental outcomes. None of the current funding opportunities align well with the projects identified in this plan, but this fund may provide a source of funding as new opportunities arise.

## **Insurance Corporation of BC (ICBC) – Road Improvement Program**

ICBC's Road Improvement Program invests in projects that improve road safety, including for pedestrians and cyclists. While annual funding availability and criteria are not publicly detailed in advance, communities with priority active transportation safety projects may find opportunities for support through local engagement with ICBC and partner agencies. Improvements such as traffic calming and crossing upgrades can typically be funded in part through this program. Over the last 35 years the program has awarded over \$8M in grants toward road safety projects on Vancouver Island.

## **Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) – Active Transportation Planning Grants**

The Active Transportation Planning Grants program supports communities with populations up to 25,000 in undertaking network planning, engagement, and policy integration. The program can fund up to 100% of eligible planning costs (typically to a maximum of about \$30,000) for communities that lack a current active transportation plan or want to update an existing plan. At the time of writing, applications are not being accepted for this grant.

## **UBCM – Community Works Fund (CWF)**

The CWF component of the Canada Community-Building Fund provides formula funding to local governments in B.C. that can be allocated to eligible capital infrastructure projects, including active transportation projects. This flexible source can help cover a portion of the costs for recommended projects from this Plan. The program currently allocates approximately \$500,000 to the Strathcona Regional District annually, until 2029. To-date, the Regional District has allocated this funding toward projects such as trail improvements, bridge construction, and community building improvements.

## **Other Funding Opportunities**

Funding programs and priorities for active transportation continue to evolve. While some key programs are currently paused or between intake periods, new or renewed funding opportunities are expected to emerge over the life of this Plan. Maintaining awareness of upcoming funding announcements, building partnerships, and keeping a portfolio of grant-ready projects will position the Strathcona Regional District and the Cortes Island community to respond quickly and effectively as opportunities arise.



# Appendix A

Background Report





# Cortes Island

## Active Transportation Network Plan

Appendix A | Background Report

# Acknowledgments

This Background 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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# Community Direction

To develop a transportation system that meets the needs of Island residents and visitors, yet does not detract from the area's rural Northern Gulf Island character



# Existing Infrastructure

There are no adequate on-road, or roadside active transportation facilities resulting in a considerable barrier to active transportation use across the island



# Limited Comfort Today

Most people walking and cycling along island roadways are confined to narrow shoulders or must share the roadway with motor vehicle traffic



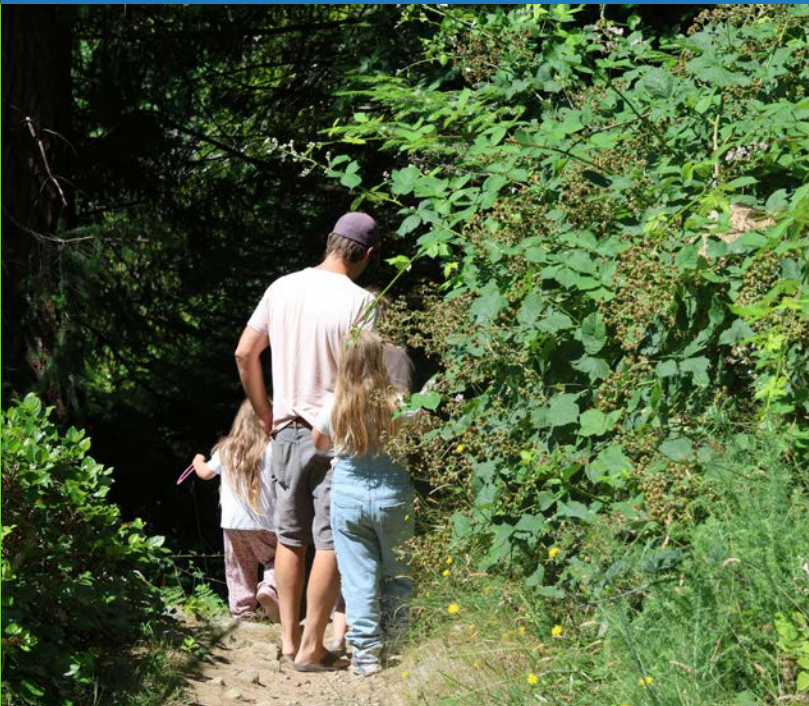
## Targets

The Province has set a target of doubling the proportion of trips taken using active transportation by 2030



## Small Connectivity Upgrades

Improvements to routes people already use today to walk and bike around the island can support more active trips



## Finding Other Ways to Improve Safety

Improvements can range in scale and even smaller projects can promote a culture of safer roads



## A1. Community Overview

### A1.1. The Island

Cortes Island is a rural island within the Strathcona Regional District (SRD). There are approximately 1,000 full-time residents spread mainly across three village centres: Whaletown, Squirrel Cove, and Mansons Landing. The community is characterized by its natural features, recreational opportunities, marine access, and is home to the Klahoose First Nation.

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

The Klahoose First Nation traditional territories span from Cortes Island to Toba Inlet. The Nation's primary village site at Squirrel Cove is home to approximately 75 full-time residents

who live and work on Cortes Island and in the surrounding areas.

Prior to roadways being constructed in the 1970s, these communities were accessed by boat; marine access to each remains in place.

Distance from the Whaletown ferry terminal to the island's largest village area, Mansons Landing, is approximately 13 kilometers. This is beyond a reasonable walking distance and also beyond a comfortable cycling distance for many given the lack of safe facilities.

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.

### A1.2. The Transportation Network

Accommodation for people walking and cycling on Cortes Island is predominantly facilitated through roads shared with vehicles, as well as the available trail networks. People walking and cycling along island roadways are generally confined to narrow shoulders or must share the roadway with motor vehicle traffic.

A lack of pedestrian infrastructure, combined with longer travel distances between key destinations, result in unfavourable conditions for travel by active modes. In the centre of Mansons Landing, however, two pedestrian crossings and a roadside gravel shoulder are provided.

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.

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 an Official Community Plan (OCP) update.



**Quadra Island**

**Klahoose First Nation**

**Whaletown**

**Squirrel Cove**

**Cortes Island**

**Mansons Landing**

**Campbell  
River**

## A2. Background Document Review

### A2.1. Cortes Island Official Community Plan (OCP) | Bylaw No. 139, July 2012

The OCP provides a strong foundation for the Active Transportation Network Plan (ATNP) with its emphasis on sustainability, inclusivity, and community well-being. The OCP envisions Cortes Island as a cooperative, self-reliant, and resilient community that values low-carbon living, environmental stewardship, and individual freedom.

Recreational infrastructure and parks are identified as being integral to active transportation on the island. The OCP supports the development of trails and greenways for both recreational and transportation to connect village areas, parks, beaches, and community amenities.

Environmental stewardship and climate action

are key themes. For example, it promotes development practices that minimize ecological disruption, while also calling for strategies that reduce greenhouse gas emissions -- objectives

“  
**To develop a transportation system that meets the needs of Island residents and visitors, yet does not detract from the area’s rural Northern Gulf Island character.**  
”

that align with active transportation goals.

This vision supports active transportation as a means of reducing reliance on fossil fuels, enhancing public health, and fostering local connectivity. While active transportation best practices have evolved since the OCP was prepared, the island’s context has not changed substantially and the OCP still presents valuable direction.

From a health and quality of life perspective, the OCP highlights the need for safe, inclusive, and accessible infrastructure that supports physical activity and social engagement. Active transportation contributes directly to these goals by creating opportunities for daily exercise and connection that happens more easily when people are not stuck behind a windshield.

The transportation objectives promote improvements to connectivity and mobility for residents of all ages and abilities. These objectives encourage collaboration with provincial agencies to maintain road infrastructure, support potential transit options, and advocate for pedestrian-friendly infrastructure like pathways and crosswalks. The plan also suggests infrastructure that supports electric vehicles and alternative transportation, to align with CleanBC goals.

Overall, the OCP supports the enhancement of active transportation options to support broader community goals. This alignment offers a clear policy direction for the SRD and its partners to pursue capital improvements, prioritize network gaps, and enhance the equity and resiliency of the transportation system in a way that is reflective of Cortes Island’s unique context.

## A2.2. Active Transportation Conditions Report, June 2022

This recent report prepared for SRD provides a lot of valuable insights to the development of a plan and it's content has been carried through many of the sections of this Background Report

Most residents walking or cycling must share narrow roads with vehicles, raising safety concerns, especially along routes such as Whaletown Road, Gorge Harbour Road, Seaford Road, and Sutil

**“ There are no adequate on-road, or roadside active transportation facilities resulting in a considerable barrier to active transportation use across the island. ”**

Point Road. People walking sometimes have gravel pathways and shoulders to walk on but few to no formal sidewalks or crossing locations.

The report provides a detailed snapshot of the current state of active transportation infrastructure, challenges, and community needs on Cortes Island based on field observations, survey data, and community input to outline existing gaps and barriers for walking, cycling, and other human-powered modes of travel.

The report identifies several priority gaps and needs. These are included in the gap analysis section of this Background Report and relate to trails, dedicated pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, road safety, integration with other modes, education, and enforcement.

The report notes that getting around by active transportation is challenging for many people. There are virtually no dedicated cycling facilities, and even basic accommodations like paved shoulders, wayfinding, and bike parking are limited.

Overall, the report paints a picture of a community with interest in active transportation but constrained by limited infrastructure and challenging topography.

**“ Most people walking and cycling along island roadways are confined to narrow shoulders or must share the roadway with motor vehicle traffic. ”**

### A2.3. Provincial and Federal Strategies

The Cortes Island ATNP will support provincial and federal objectives around active transport and road safety.

The provincial and federal active transportation and road safety strategies provide a framework that aligns with the goals of the Cortes Island ATNP. At the provincial level, British Columbia's Active Transportation Strategy—*Move. Commute. Connect.*—is a key policy document that supports the CleanBC climate plan. It aims to double the percentage of trips taken using active transportation by 2030. The strategy prioritizes creating safe, accessible, and integrated active transportation networks for all ages and abilities. It emphasizes collaboration with local and Indigenous governments, equity in access to transportation, and the integration of active transportation with public transit and land use planning. The *BC Active Transportation Design Guide (2019)* offers design guidance to meet these objectives including for rural and small communities such as Cortes Island.

**“ By 2030, the province has set a target of doubling the proportion of trips taken using active transportation. ”**

Complementing this is the *BC Road Safety Strategy 2025: A Collaborative Framework*, which adopts the Vision Zero approach—seeking to eliminate serious injuries and fatalities on the road. It outlines initiatives like speed management, safer road designs, and educational campaigns—all tailored to

reducing risks for vulnerable road users such as pedestrians and cyclists.

At the federal level, Canada's *National Active Transportation Strategy*—the first of its kind—was launched in 2021. It envisions all Canadians, regardless of age or ability, having access to safe and convenient active transportation infrastructure. It identifies six key pillars under the ACTIVE framework: awareness, coordination, targets, investments, value, and experience. The strategy is backed by a \$400 million Active Transportation Fund to support new and improved infrastructure across the country. In parallel, Canada's *Road Safety Strategy 2025* also reinforces Vision Zero principles and promotes a safe systems approach that includes safer road users, vehicles, and infrastructure. It encourages all jurisdictions to adopt context-specific safety measures, particularly those that benefit rural and remote communities.

**“ No loss of life on our roads is acceptable. ”**

These federal and provincial strategies directly inform and reinforce the objectives of the Cortes Island ATNP. This ATNP aims to improve safety, comfort, and accessibility for people walking, cycling, and rolling in a rural island context with limited roadway infrastructure. The plan will align with provincial and federal priorities and by doing so, the ATNP positions the SRD and Cortes Island to access external funding to implement best practices that support these wider goals.

### A3. Census Overview

A review of high level census metrics were undertaken for Cortes Island using the latest available 2021 Census as well as a comparison with the previous 2016 census.

#### Population

The island has a population of 1,059 residents, compared to approximately 48,150 residents in Strathcona Regional District as a whole, and thus representing about 2.2% of the Regional Districts population. This is an increase from 1,035 in 2016 indicating only a very slight increase in population of 2.3% on the island.

#### Age Profile

The population of Cortes Island skews older with a average age of 52.2 years, compared with the SRD (46.4 years) and BC (43.1 years) averages. Many residents are retirees or older working adults. This age structure has implications for accessibility and mobility, especially for active transportation. Comparing with the 2016 census, the average age then was 48.3, and being almost 5 years less than in 2021 suggests limited movement on and off the island and that people are aging in place.

#### Housing

Cortes Island has 555 occupied private dwellings, up from 535 in 2016. These are primarily single-detached homes (525), many of which are off-grid or seasonally occupied. The homeownership rate is 73%, similar to the Regional District (74%) and BC as a whole (67%) and there is an average household size of 1.9, the same as in 2016.

#### Income

Average household income on Cortes Island is approximately \$41,200, an increase from 32,395 in 2016. Average income is however lower than both the Regional District (\$48,840) and the BC average (\$54,450).

#### Mode Share

For travel to work, the census indicates that 5.5% walked, 5.5% biked, 55.6% drove, 13% were a passenger, and 13% used other means such as a boat or ATV. Based on these statistics travel to work is more active on Cortes than the Regional District (5.1% walked, 1.4% biked) and British Columbia as a whole (5.5% walked, 2% biked).

The values have changed since 2016, where 15.7% walked, 8.6% biked, 61.4% drove, 7.1% were a passenger, and 7.1% used other means.

However, it should be noted that travel to work is only captured in the long-form census questionnaire and the sample size may have been small for Cortes Island. Furthermore, Covid-19 may have influenced work from home, with 80 of 445 employees noting work from home in 2021. No data is available to compare with 2016.

Lastly, it's important to recognize that while census travel to work data provides one easily available measure of mode-share, it does not capture the many other trips made in a day, that can often be carried out by active modes such as child care, shopping, socializing, etc.

Census highlights are provided on the following page.

Note: Demographic information derived from 2021 Census Profile Table, Statistics Canada

# Census Trends

---

Cortes Island is home to **1059** residents

---

There are 804 private dwellings many off grid

**Walking** mode share for travel to work **5.5%**

---

**Cycling** mode share for travel to work **5.5%**

---

558 homes are usually occupied

228 commute within census subdivision

---

80 worked from home

The average age is **52.2**

490 people are employed, 50 unemployed, 450 not in labour force

The average income is **\$41,200**



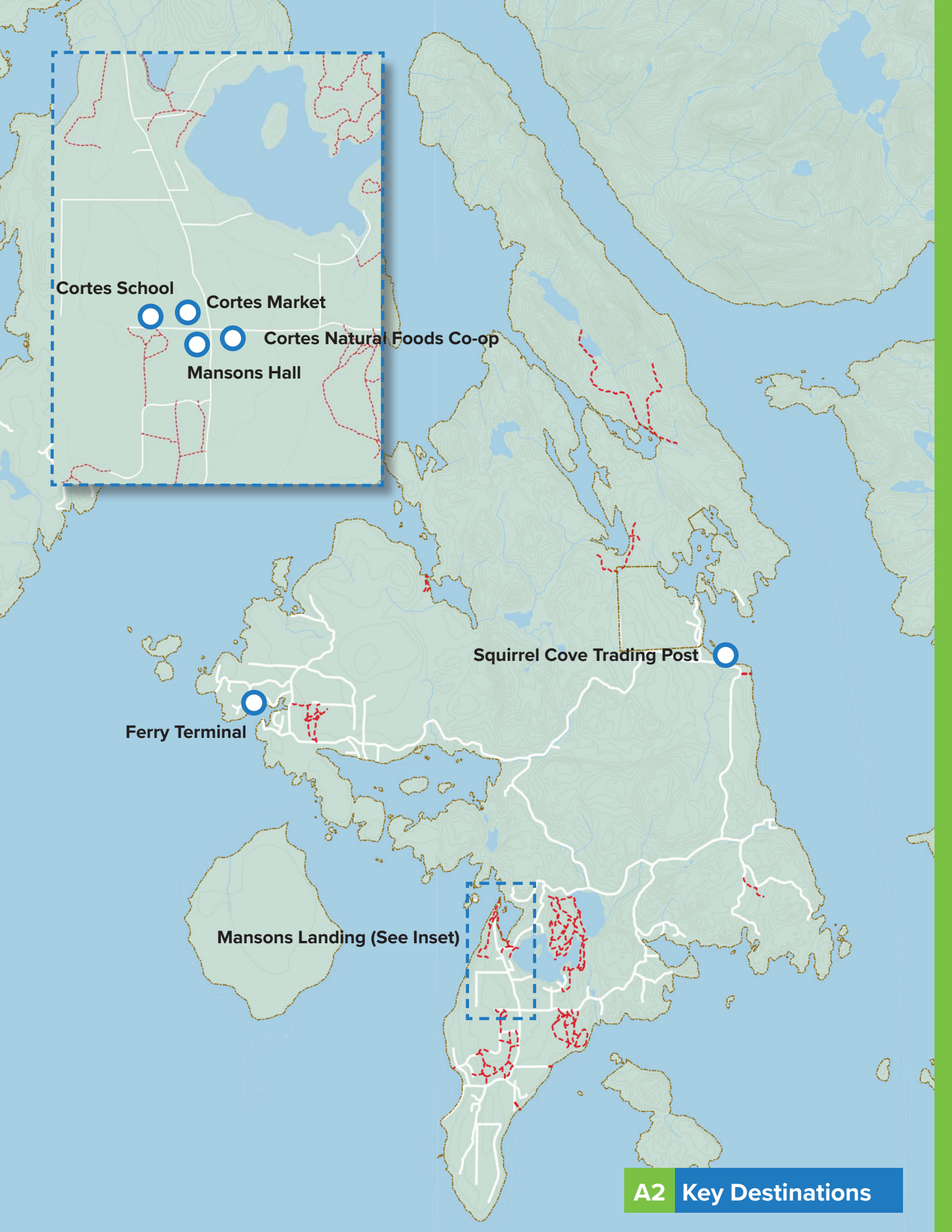
## A4. Key Destinations

The three main village centres are spaced quite far apart, making them less suitable for trips on foot. While they also include a reasonable amount of climbing if someone were to use a bicycle, these destinations could easily be reached by anybody comfortable using an electric bicycle or other electric micromobility device. Table A4.1 compares approximate travel times and levels of effort required to travel between Whaletown, Squirrel Cove, and Mansons Landing.

**Table A4.1: Key Trip Origin-Destination Information**

	Whaletown (Ferry)	Squirrel Cove (Trading Post)	Mansons Landing (Mansons Hall)
Whaletown (Ferry)		14.6 km 259m elevation gain 20 min drive 64 min cycle 38 min e-bike 3 hr 27m walk	15.9 km 229m elevation gain 22 min drive 67 min cycle 40 min e-bike 3 hr 42m walk
Squirrel Cove (Trading Post)	14.6 km 251m elevation gain 20 min drive 64 min cycle 38 min e-bike 3 hr 25m walk		11.1 km 170m elevation gain 14 min drive 48 min cycle 29 min e-bike 2 hr 36m walk
Mansons Landing (Mansons Hall)	15.9 km 196m elevation gain 22 min drive 62 min cycle 37 min e-bike 3 hr 41m walk	11.1 km 143m elevation gain 15 min drive 44 min cycle 26 min e-bike 2 hr 34m walk	

*Travel times for driving, cycling and walking, distance and elevation determined using Google Maps. E-bike travel times estimated assuming a 40% reduction in travel time.*



Cortes School

Cortes Market

Cortes Natural Foods Co-op

Mansons Hall

Squirrel Cove Trading Post

Ferry Terminal

Mansons Landing (See Inset)

## A5. Existing Infrastructure

### The Road Network

All paved routes for walking and biking are rural roadways shared with motor vehicles, often without shoulders or centre lines, and often winding with relatively steep grades. They are conditions typically considered uncomfortable for less confident people to walk or ride a bike, and challenging from a physical perspective. Given the island context and generally low vehicle volumes, some people may be tolerant mixing with traffic, assuming they have the physical ability to navigate the terrain or are supported by an electric-assist device.

Arriving from the ferry, a regulatory road sign notes that the posted speed limit on the island is 60 km/h unless otherwise posted. There are examples where the posted speed limit reduces; for example, to 30 km/h adjacent to the school during school days and times.

For many people, walking is suitable only for short trips, but this could be as part of a longer multi-modal trip by car or bicycle, to friends and neighbours close to their own homes, or if able, longer trips in the community. Getting around by bicycle is a more realistic option for many if it's safe.

The roads are naturally a direct connection for active transportation, but are limited in their effectiveness in capturing latent demand for walking and biking given how uncomfortable they can be to share with fast moving motor vehicles. In some cases, there may be gravel shoulders present that offer a somewhat more comfortable facility for people walking and biking, although their accessibility are often dependent on the presence of parked vehicles.

### The Trail Network

While the road network can be a direct travel choice for people walking and biking, the trail networks on the island offer routes that can be more comfortable and even in some cases more time competitive than sharing the roadway with vehicles.

Unpaved facilities such as trails are, however, less accessible than paved surfaces and are not generally suitable for people of all ages and abilities, particularly as adverse weather conditions deteriorate the trails over time. Other challenges that limit the accessibility of trails include irregular maintenance, overgrowth, and a lack of lighting after dark.

### Transit

Transit can combine with active transportation to make longer trips more manageable. Apart from the Klahoose Community Bus, there is no formal transit service, taxi, or ride hailing services offered on Cortes Island. The only public transit service available is the BC Ferries service to and from Quadra Island.



## A6. Gap Analysis

A traditional analysis would indicate the entire island is a gap in terms of providing comfortable active transportation infrastructure suitable for all ages and abilities. The roadways are shared with traffic moving at much higher speeds and through winding terrain. Additionally, the trail system will not be navigable by everyone in the community.

Gaps, therefore, must be considered in context and, ultimately, projects recommended in the Active Transportation Network Plan will need to consider what can be reasonably achieved. Gaps in the island's active transportation network have been identified based on the previously prepared Active Transportation Conditions Report (2022), as well as both analysis and public engagement for this Active Transportation Network Plan. Findings are summarized below.

### A6.1. Previous Conditions Report Gaps

The following gaps were previously identified by the 2022 Active Transportation Conditions Report:

- **Trails:** Key missing links include the connection from the Siskin Forest Trail to Mansons Landing and a new trail from Linnea Farm to Kw'as Park to provide safer alternatives to high-traffic roads.
- **Cycling Infrastructure:** There is a complete absence of marked or protected bike lanes. While some refer to road shoulders as bike facilities, these are often unpaved and insufficient in width or condition for safe travel.
- **Road Safety:** Speeds of 60 km/h are standard on most roads but are considered too high by many residents. Gravel shoulders, poor road conditions, and lack of lighting exacerbate risks for active users. Informal signs posted by residents reflect local safety concerns.
- **Pedestrian Infrastructure:** Pedestrian facilities such as crosswalks are nearly nonexistent outside of a small area in Mansons Landing. Areas with relatively high activity, such as Hague and Gunflint Lakes, the Gorge Harbour area, and trail-road crossings, lack basic pedestrian amenities.
- **Modal Integration:** Connections between walking/cycling routes and ferry or bus services are poorly supported. Amenities such as bike racks, shelters, or signage at terminals are rare or absent.
- **Education and Promotion:** There is a clear opportunity for education campaigns to improve awareness and encourage active travel, though these are not currently active.

## A6.2. Additional Gaps

The following additional gaps were identified based on technical analysis of existing conditions and through feedback received during both online and in-person public engagement opportunities.

- 1. Road Safety in Mansons Landing:** High speeds have been noted for the Island in general but are of particular concern in Mansons Landing where there is greater relative activity among people walking and biking, and where the advisory speed limit is lower but there is no traffic calming to promote it.
- 2. Designated Space for People Walking & Biking in Mansons Landing:** Being the island's main hub, Mansons Landing would benefit from space designated for people walking and biking. This would enable more comfortable access to nearby commercial businesses, parks and trails, and the school.
- 3. Enhanced Safety Near Squirrel Cove:** Traffic calming or separated space for people walking and biking would enhance safe access to Squirrel Cove from the Klahoose First Nation's Tork 7 IR.
- 4. Road Safety between the Island's Hubs:** While separated pathways between all the Island's hubs is desirable in the long-term, it is likely to present major financial barriers in the short- to medium-terms. Safer road conditions can be promoted through other means, however, such as lower regulatory speed limits, new signage to promote safer driving behaviour around people walking and biking, and possibly through the use of additional advisory speed limits near areas where sightlines are obstructed.
- 5. Trail Upgrades:** Existing trails that see relatively more usage from those commuting to daily needs could be upgraded (i.e., more accessible surface materials, greater width, additional maintenance) to improve the convenience of walking and biking.



# Appendix B

Public Engagement What We Heard Report





## 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	GAP 2 ROAD SAFETY	GAP 3 PLACES FOR PEOPLE TO WALK	GAP 4 PLACES FOR PEOPLE TO BIKE	GAP 5 MAKING DIFFERENT MODES MORE CONNECTED	GAP 6 EDUCATION & PROMOTION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Formalizing a Siskin Trails connection</li> <li>2. Formalizing a Siskin Farm connection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Posted speed limits are too high</li> <li>2. Traffic calming would benefit areas with higher activity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Lack of safe places to walk along roads in village centres</li> <li>2. Traffic calming would benefit areas with higher activity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Narrow roadways leave little space to ride bikes</li> <li>2. Limited bike parking, especially near parks and trailheads</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Lack of safe waiting areas at school bus pick up locations</li> <li>2. No bicycle racks and weather-protection for bikes on the ferry</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Driver &amp; bike training programs</li> </ul>



# Cortes Island

## Active Transportation Network Plan

Appendix B | Public Engagement 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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## The recommendations reflect today's reality

Recommendations acknowledge the limited population, tax base, and many kilometers of Ministry-owned roads that form the Island's primary transportation corridors. Improvements are practical and of a feasible scale.

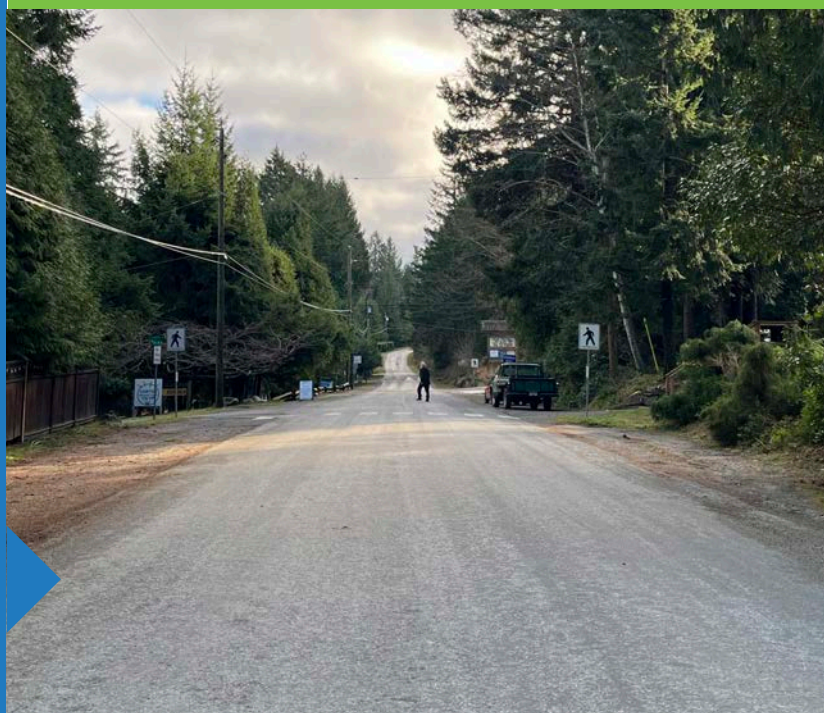


## Shoulder widening is the top priority

Widening road shoulders received broad support.

## Connections to parks are desired

There was a general preference to focus on expanding connections to existing trails, such as the Siskin Trail. Connections to Hague Lake, Mansons Landing Provincial Park, and Kw'as Regional Park were seen as important.



## Separated pathways are strongly supported

There is strong support for pathways separated from traffic.

Popular potential connections include between Whaletown and Gorge Harbour, through Mansons Landing, and between Cortes Bay and Mansons Landing.



## Traffic calming matters most in village centres

Slow vehicle speeds in high-activity areas like Mansons Landing were viewed as important tools to improve comfort and safety where people walking, biking, and driving all share space.



## Change that fits Cortes Island's character

Maintaining the Island's rural character and environment was important and reflects a preference for modest, environmentally-sensitive improvements.



## Phase 1 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  
path

Road  
signs for  
blind corners

Separate  
path connect  
Whale town  
to Mansions  
(not to road)

Slower  
speeds in  
Mansions

Speeding  
at Hague  
Love Park  
Signs say 30 MPH  
140 MPH

PLACE POST-ITS HERE

Lower  
Speed  
Limit

Blind  
Corners

## What We Heard in Phase 1

### 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:

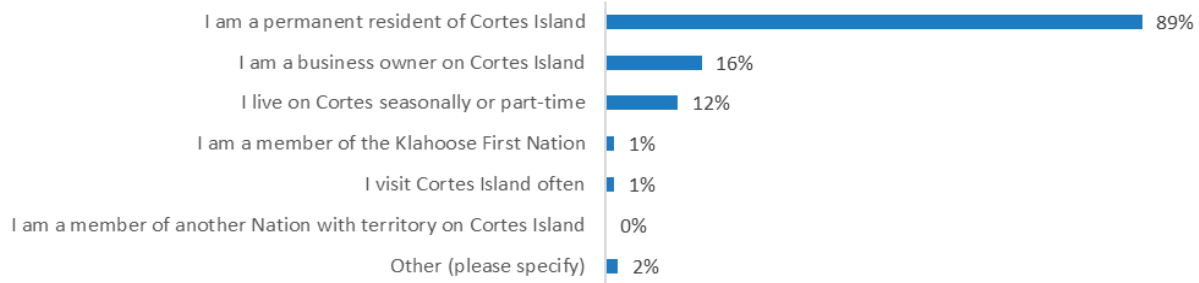
- **Blind corners and poor visibility:** Common across all areas, especially near hills, curves, and intersections. These make it hard for drivers to see pedestrians and cyclists.
- **Speeding vehicles:** Reported frequently near ferry routes, community hubs, and residential areas. Speeding increases 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 and narrow roads:** 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.

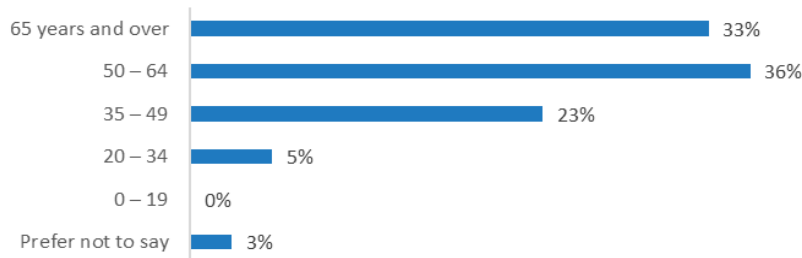
# Phase 1 Responses

## Which best describes you? (Select all that apply)



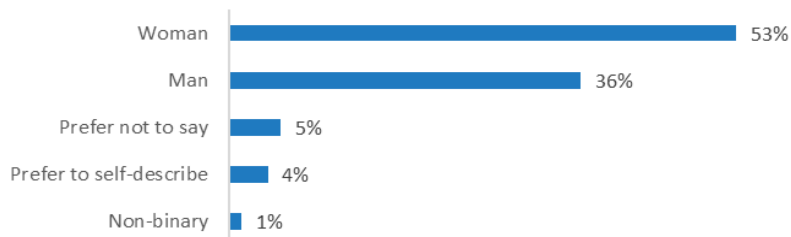
75 responses

## What is your age?



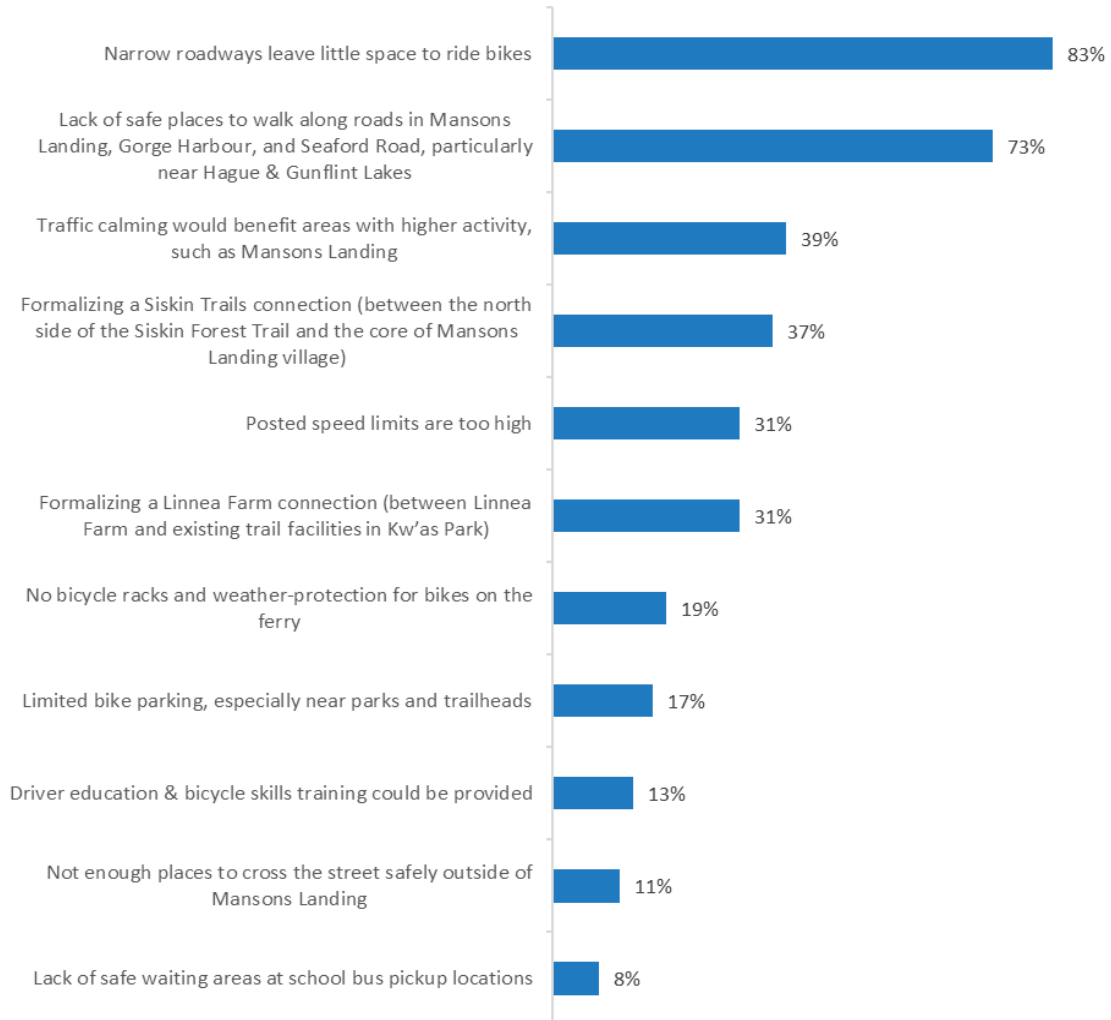
75 responses

## How do you identify?



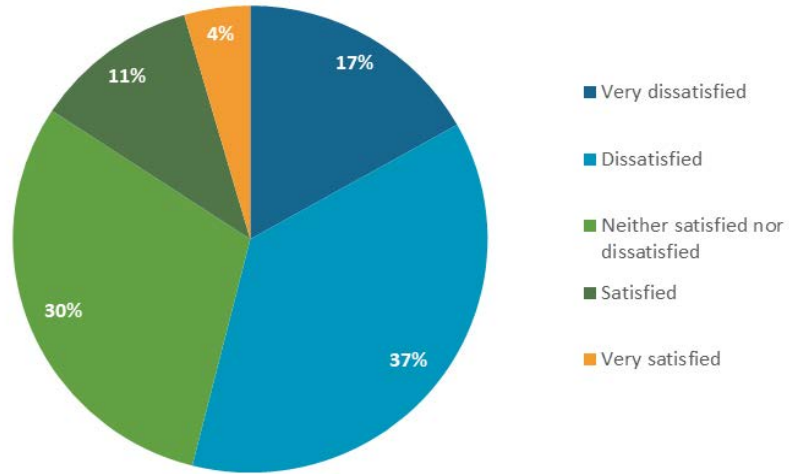
75 responses

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



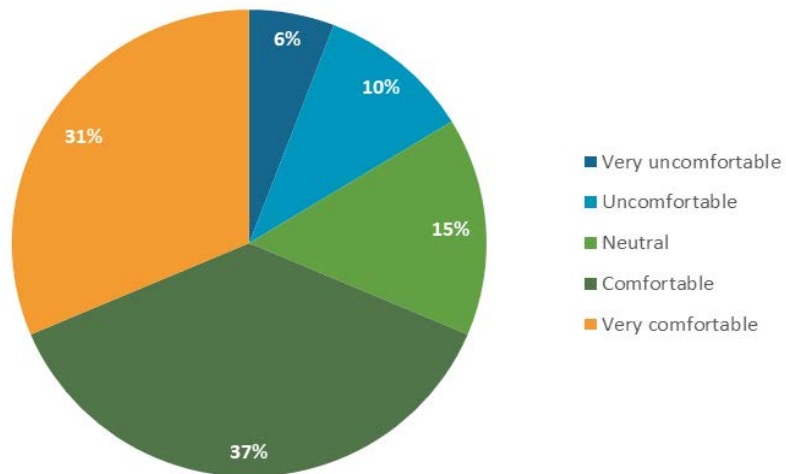
90 responses

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



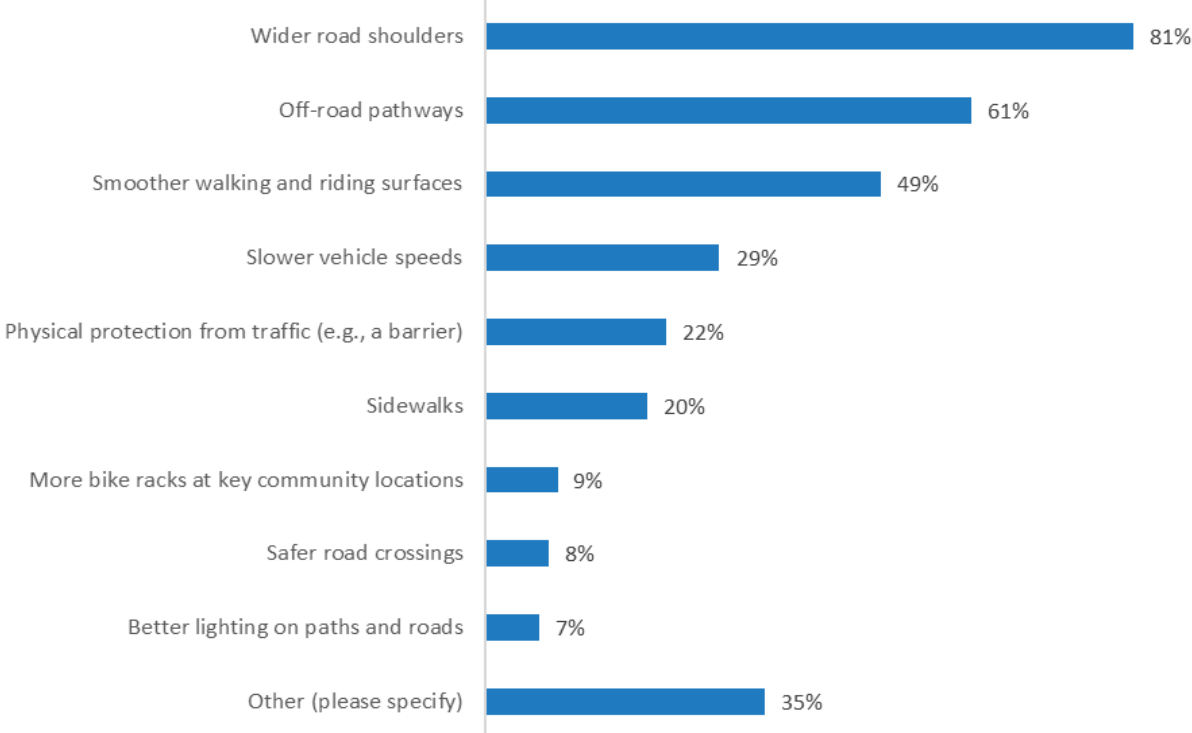
89 responses

**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 (MOT) 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 roads 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 freedom 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. Sisken 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
- sisken 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

## 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

### **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)

## **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

## 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.

## 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

## 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 work with the Strathcona Regional District (SRD) to 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.

## Phase 2 Engagement Overview

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.

### How We Gathered Feedback

To engage residents and gather input, we hosted one pop-up event on January 15 between 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. at the Mansons Hall community lunch. This event provided opportunities for community members to share their thoughts in person, ask questions, and learn more about the recommendations in the draft plan.

A community survey was open from December 15, 2025 to January 16, 2026, enabling residents to contribute their feedback online at their convenience.

### Who We Heard From at the Pop-Up Event

We talked with approximately 30 people during the in-person pop-up event. Attendees had the chance to talk with the project team and indicate their support for draft plan recommendations described on display boards.

Overall, people we spoke with were supportive of the project's direction. Many shared that they appreciate the Island as it is today, while still expressing interest in targeted improvements that enhance safety and accessibility.

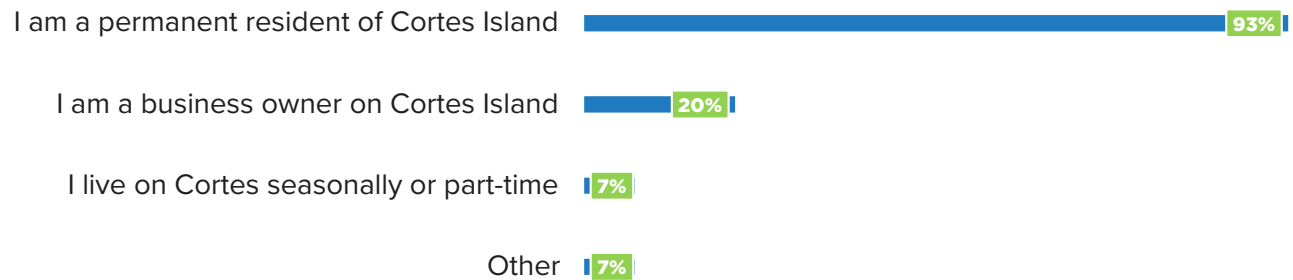
There was strong support for pathways separate from motor vehicle traffic, as well as traffic calming measures, particularly in the Mansons Landing area. Several people assumed that roadway improvements would include wider shoulders throughout the island, and this idea received broad support.

We also heard ideas and values that spoke to the community's priorities. One young visitor shared a desire for a bike path connecting Smelt Bay to Mansons Landing, indicating interest in safe, family-friendly bicycling options. Others emphasized the importance of carefully studying environmental impacts and maintaining the Island's forested character as changes are considered.

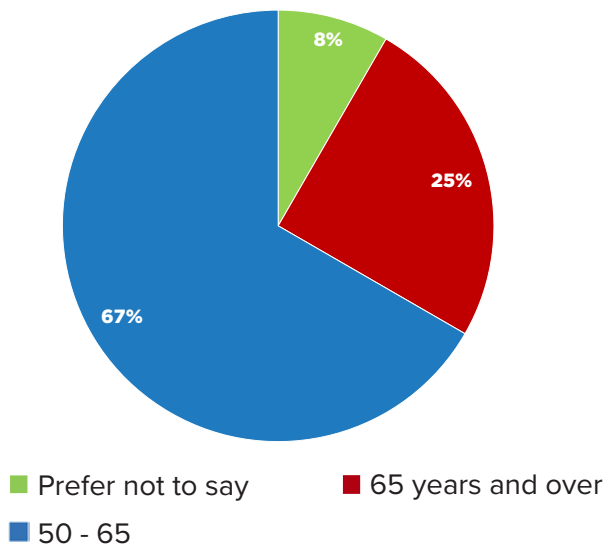
## Online Survey Participants

16 people responded to the online survey. While the population of the Island is relatively low, this low response rate reflects an unrepresentative sample of the Island’s residents. Despite this, responses should be considered informative to the Plan. Public responses are one part of the Plan’s project prioritization framework and this feedback will help inform project implementation.

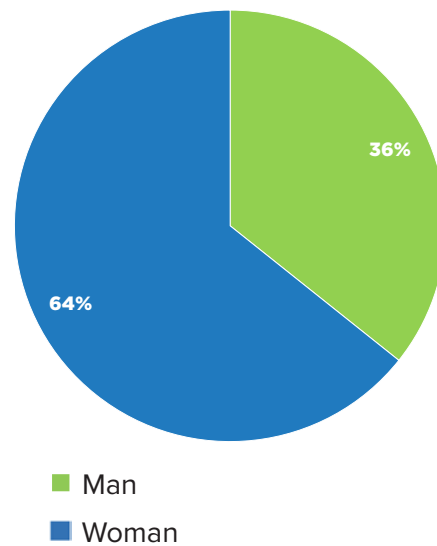
Most respondents were permanent residents of Cortes Island (93%), while 7% were seasonal residents. 20% noted they were a business owner on the Island. Similar to this project’s first round of engagement, most respondents (92%) that reported their age were over 50. Most respondents (64%) were women.



15 responses



12 responses



14 responses

## What We Heard in Phase 2

The questionnaire was structured to understand how much support each individual recommendation for the draft Plan received across respondents. As a follow-up, we asked participants to identify their priorities, which helps distinguish options that are broadly supported from those seen as most urgent or important to address first.

### Top Five Priorities

Plan recommendations that received the highest average priority scores are noted below. These results validate what we heard during the first phase of public engagement's survey, prior pop-up events, and interviews with agencies.

1. Shoulder widening to enable designated space for people walking and biking at blind corners.
2. Roadside pathway connecting Whaletown and Gorge Harbour.
3. Roadside pathway through Mansons Landing (along Sutil Point Road and Beesley Road).
4. Trail connection between Cortes Bay and Mansons Landing.
5. Traffic calming to physically slow motor vehicle speeds through village centres.

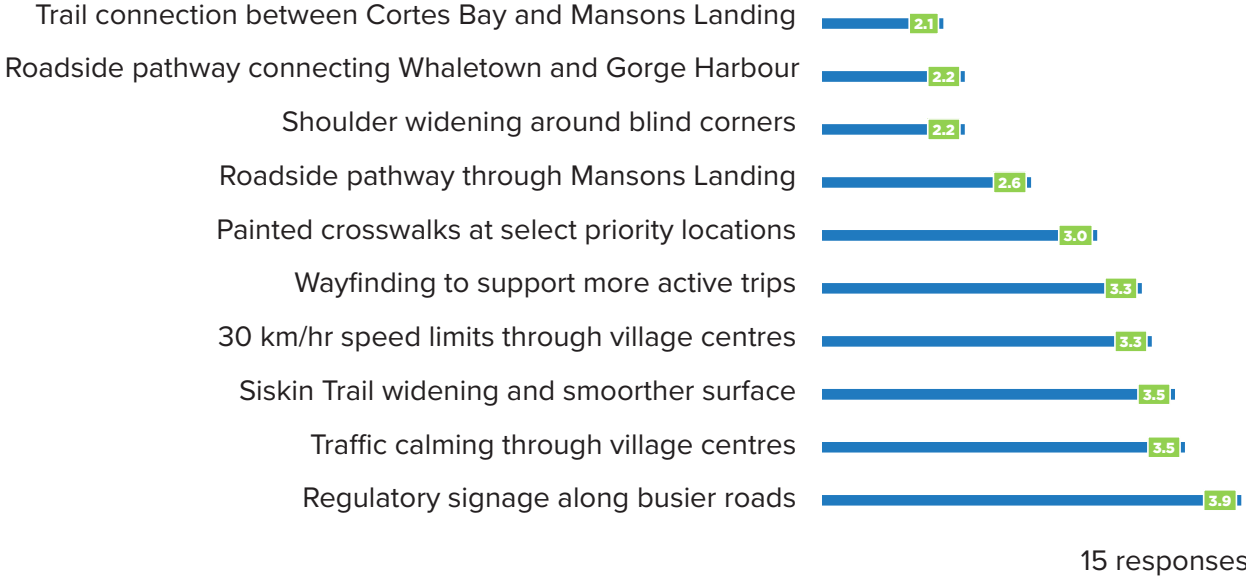
Attendees of the pop-up event at Manson Hall were also asked about their priorities. They were given up to three dots to use identifying their top priorities; albeit, most opted to talk with the project team.

The highest priorities were:

- Mansons Landing Pathway (5 votes)
- Shoulder widening (5 votes)
- Whaletown Pathway (2 votes)
- 30 km/h speed limit (2 votes)

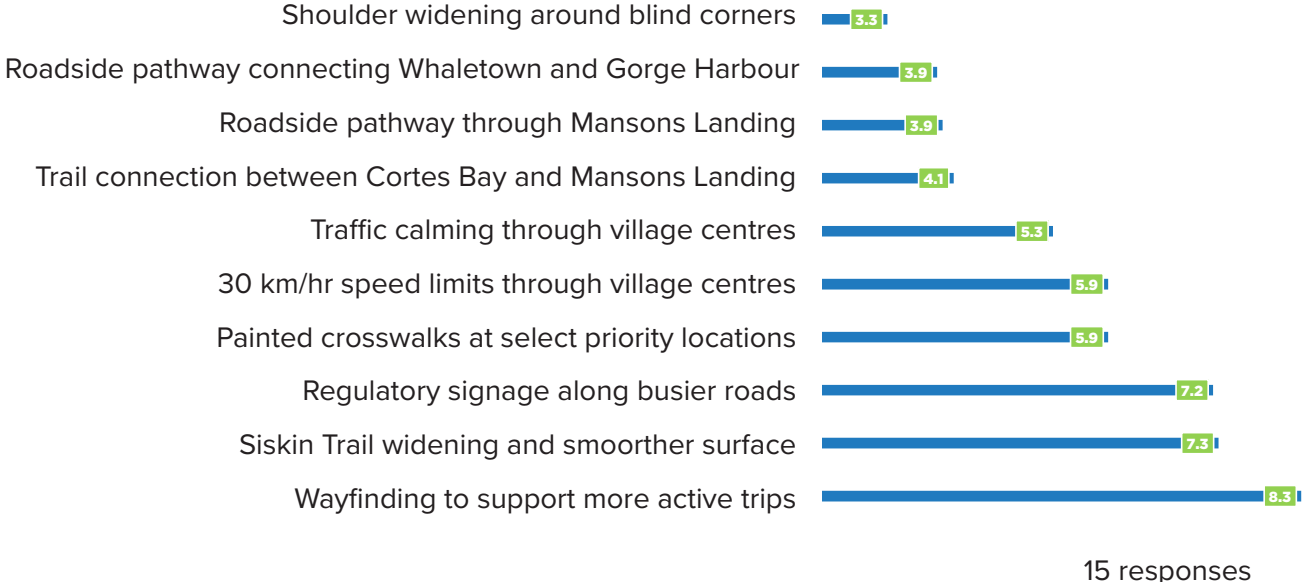
**Q1) How would you rate your level of support the following possible improvements? (1 – high level of support to 5 – low level of support)**

Participants were asked to rate their level of support for each of the proposed plan options from 1 (very high support) to 5 (low level of support). The average score for each plan option was used to understand how the level of support varied across plan options, with lower scores reflecting more support.



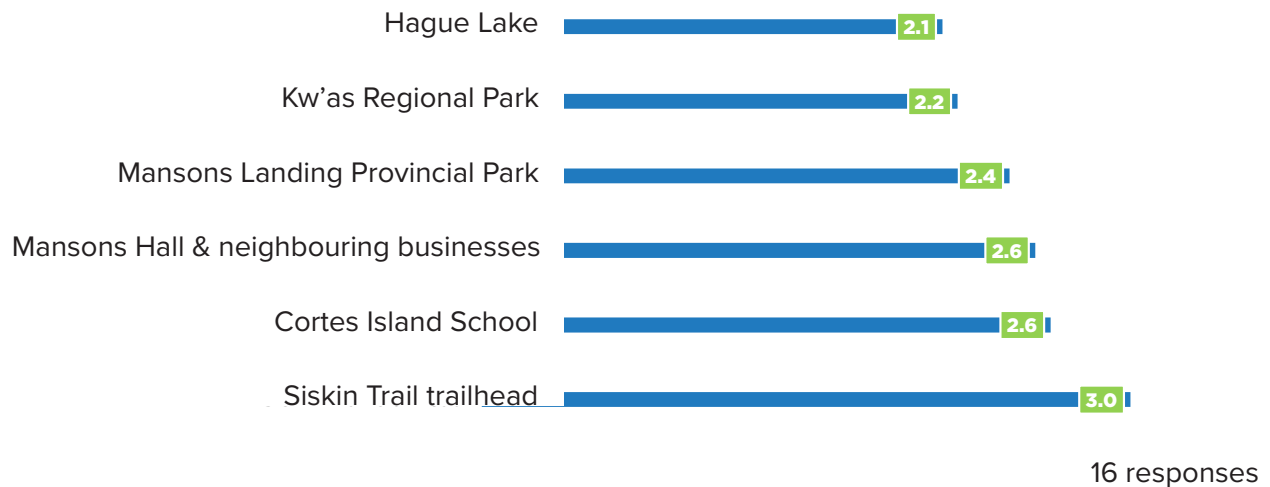
**Q2) Please rank your most important priorities from the following possible improvements. Rank from most (1) to least important (10) in your opinion.**

As options can be similarly supported, respondents were also asked to prioritize the plan recommendations from 1 (most important) to 10 (least important). The average score for each plan option was used to understand which draft Plan recommendations were most urgent to the community.



**Q3) How do you rate your level of support for connecting a Mansons Landing roadside pathway to the following destinations? Rank from 1 (high level of support) to 5 (do not support)**

Participants were asked to rate their level of support for where a pathway in Mansons Landing could connect to. The average score for each option was used to understand which destinations were of a higher priority. There was a similar level of support for all of the potential connections, with all options scoring between two and three points.



**Q4) If applicable, are there any locations on the Island where you would like to see new or additional bicycle parking? Please share your comments below.**

Only three people responded to this question and this limited feedback on bicycle parking highlighted mixed perspectives. Some residents identified the ferry docks as a suitable location for new or improved bicycle parking, while others questioned the overall need and cost of adding bike racks, noting that bicycles can already be parked in many places. There was concern that investments in bicycle parking should demonstrate clear value to the broader community. Several respondents felt bicycle parking is most beneficial for electric bicycles, particularly when charging stations are included, and suggested locations such as the ferry dock, Mansons Hall, and existing parking areas.

While bicycle parking may not be used by everyone in the community, it can remove a barrier to getting around by bicycle and that supports the larger goals of the community. Just as we provide car parking, even when not everyone can drive a car, bicycle parking helps re-balance transportation equity when provided.

**Q5) Please provide any other comments about active transportation on Cortes Island.**

The following are key themes raised from additional written survey comments.

**Speed Limits, Signage, and Traffic Calming:** Several participants raised concerns about speed limits and how clearly they are communicated. One person noted that Google Maps shows an incorrect 80 km/h speed limit on the Ferry Terminal – Gorge Harbour corridor and suggested adding clearer signage to display the correct speed. Another participant supported making existing 30 km/h zones more visible to improve safety.

Opinions varied on reducing speed limits to 30 km/h. One participant opposed this change, noting expected increases in congestion among ferry traffic, good existing road conditions, and felt the concern was being driven by a small number of newer residents.

One participant also felt that basic safety measures — such as lower speed limits, clearer signage, shared-use road signs, traffic calming, and crosswalks — should be implemented without the need for further consultation.

**Examples of Slower-Speed Communities:** One participant pointed to Bowen Island as a positive example, where 30 – 40 km/h speed limits are common across the island. They noted that slower speeds have made the community safer and more enjoyable, even as population and traffic have increased.

**Walking, Cycling, and Trail Network Planning:** Multiple participants emphasized the need for better walking and cycling infrastructure. One suggested working with landowners to gradually secure Island-wide trail easements, similar to efforts in the Southern Gulf Islands, and recommended developing a long-term master plan for walking and cycling routes to reduce reliance on cars.

Another participant felt that trails in Mansons Landing, including the Siskin Trail, are already sufficient and recommended prioritizing new off-road connections elsewhere on the Island, noting that cycling on existing roads is unsafe due to narrow widths and lack of shoulders.

**Cycling Safety on Roads:** Several participants stated that cycling on Cortes Island roads is currently unsafe. Concerns included potholes, lack of shoulders, and winding road sections with limited visibility. Participants supported the development of dedicated bike paths or off-road trails that connect key destinations, allowing people to cycle without using the main roads.

**Specific Safety Concerns and Locations:** One participant identified a dangerous road crossing between the Hague Lake parking lot and the beach trail, located at a blind corner. They suggested adding traffic calming measures such as speed bumps or rumble strips in advance of the corner to improve safety.

## Phase 2 Responses

**If applicable, are there any locations on the island where you would like to see new or additional bicycle parking? Please share your comments below.**

- This is silly you can put a bike anywhere please do not waste our money on bike racks just because [redacted] asked for them. [redacted] doesn't pay property taxes so should not be forcing [redacted] opinion on the community
- I feel like bicycle parking is only super useful for electric bikes and if it has charging stations. The ferry dock, all of the halls, and existing parking lots would be good for this.
- Na

**Please provide any other comments about active transportation on Cortes Island.**

- Google maps says the speed limit is 80km/hr. A few more signs to make it clear this isn't the case, along with the 30km/hr section from the ferry to Gorge Harbour would be very welcome. Bowen Island put in an island wide 30km/hr or 40km/hr speed limit and it was a big improvement to island safety and overall slower pace despite increased density.
- Work with land owners to get easements in place for better trail connections and experiences around the island. Like in southern gulf islands. Takes generations to fulfill so we need to start talking now. Otherwise we'll forever be in cars. Make a pedestrian/ cycling master plan for the whole island.
- Manson's town and Sisken already have trails. These trails are fine and don't need to be improved. New connections to get around the island should be the priority. Biking is very dangerous in the island with no trails and no shoulders.
- The idea of having a 30 km/h zone between the ferry and the gorge harbour marina is not a good idea. There will be 50 percent more Frey traffic later this year and this will keep the traffic density high during this time. This strip of road way is in the best condition on the island and features the most straight stretches. I felt this suggestion came up because 1 or 2 new residents who bought property in the area what to restrict it but do not realize the effect of traffic density due to speed restrictions during ferry times.
- Safety for pedestrians and cyclists that actually live here should definitely be the priority - safer shoulders and bike/walking paths that are useful for where residents need to go. Signage and wayfinding and tourist needs are a low priority in my mind compared to actual infrastructure for residents.
- Aggressive and careless driving make time on the road stressful. Weather on foot or behind the wheel.
- Bike paths would considerably improve safety for cyclists, especially in the windy patches
- The most important thing to is make biking a safer activity on Cortes. Right now without a

proper shoulder on the roads it's incredibly dangerous between dodging potholes and staying a safe distance from vehicles. Trails connecting different areas would be so great so you don't have to ride bikes only on the roads. Nice to have options.

- Why do you need a survey to put speed and road-sharing signage and traffic calming and crosswalks and to lower speed limit? Extremely obvious safety measures you'd be negligent NOT to do.
- The road crossing from Hague Lake parking to the trail head down to the beach is terribly dangerous. It is only a matter of time before we have a serious injury or worse, as families try to maneuver children across the road at a blind corner. Warning signage doesn't seem to slow drivers down. Could we have speed bumps or rumble strips in each direction (preferably before the blind corner heading south).

### **Cortes Island Map Verbatim Comments**

- blind corners in general. Cars pass bikes in many unsafe places.
- gosh this is a hard question, the whole island suffers from steep hills and sharp curves, limiting sight lines and making it unsafe to walk or bike on the island. But around the motel is among the worst areas, partly too because it is heavily used (relatively speaking)
- Walking/bike paths connecting olmstead to whaletown road for easier access to gorge harbour
- The whole island should be safer to bike if you're talking about transportation. We don't all live in these areas.
- Terrible for walking or bikes
- Pot holes which force bikers to the center of the road on blind corners
- There is a double blind corner with absolutely no shoulder. It is so dangerous that my kids can't walk to their friends house.
- Very dangerous road, blind corners between Gunflint and Mansons
- Whole island. Cyclists do not move over for cars to pass, with the winding roads, blind corners/hills there is no way to safely pass unless they pull into the shoulder or a driveway.
- Dangerous for bikes coming off the ferry
- Please refer to the 2022 Cortes Active Transportation Conditions Report for sections already identified by the community, as well as the 2017 Cortes Transportation Demand Management report which also identified dangerous sections by the community - these have already been reported and its time to do something about it instead of further surveys like this one
- Population de city and no shoulders on road

- There are no shoulders to walk or ride and the pavement edges are crumbling away into nothing , crevices where water runs down where asphalt has failed. Vehicles are travelling wayyyy tooo fast . Do people really need to accelerate excessively on every tiny straight stretch.
- When I bike along Gunflint Lake there are many sections of this curvy road where there is not enough room for bikes and cars and it is challenging for cars to pass slower bikes.
- Would be great to feel safe biking to the library
- The road is super narrow and there's no trails or ride side to go on to get to Linnea.
- Blind corner, tricky for bikes, not a lot of space on the shoulder
- Unsafe for Biking
- I pass here on a bike everyday. Many people speed going around a blind corner that's just before a place where many young children and families are crossing to the sandy beach at Hague Lake. New signs are good. What about a blinking light activated by pedestrians?
- I wanted to select dozens... these are places where vehicles have passed me on my bike where they couldn't see far enough ahead to know if cars were coming. I don't think this is necessarily a problem with the road infrastructure, if we understand that we have mixed-use roads and sometimes drivers need to travel at bicycle speeds until they get to a safe-passing location. Perhaps instead of an active transport survey+report, we need a safe place to pass survey for drivers to fill out. Can we stop putting the responsibility on non-drivers? The roads belong to walkers and cyclists as much as drivers.
- I live in Cortes bay and the roads are deadly: blind curves, no shoulders, high speeds: it's impossible for children or older people to even safely walk along them. It's home to a lot of other residents and two yacht clubs bringing a high demand for connective active transportation to the village
- Need better alternative ways to get to and from the ferry
- We need safe walking and biking trails to the library
- Lack of parking at entrance to the Children's Forest trailhead for Carrington Bay.
- Really, this is not an urban area and we should not expect urban amenities. Street lights, a bane on the natural world. steep hills.....aka local geography....no need to level them for the convenience of urbanites.
- steep hill with curves and no shoulder on the road and a drop-off.
- The Mansons Hall area - there are not safe sidewalks/off road lanes for bikes/walking/strollers to commute to and from the community hub
- Lack of shoulders for biking on very windy roads with blind corners and intersections
- Unsafe for biking , narrow roads
- Narrow shoulders and poor road surface on Seaford road.

- Area around the day parking lot is hazardous for people crossing to Hague Lake. Speed limit is too high. No marked crosswalk. Road from day parking lot to Mansons Landing should be more pedestrian friendly.
- I live on this part of the island
- Roads not safe for biking
- My area of residence. I do not venture past this area as the roads do not feel safe enough and I do limited walking and biking in this area as a result.
- Sutil Point Road between Highfield and Mansons is very poor and challenging to stay to the side of the road while riding a bike.
- The section just outside of Mansons can be difficult for cyclone due to winding roads and small shoulder.
- No shoulder, no paved shoulder, crumbling pavement, speeding vehicles, long grass, nowhere to go, especially when riding a bike. Dangerous. The pavement edges have never been worse in all my years cycling and walking in Whaletown. Speeding vehicles also contribute. I've been using the road here for nearly sixty years. Why can't we have paved shoulders and painted lines like Quadra, rather than dangerous, deep and in most cases empty ditches?
- The existing active transport is totally adequate.
- The only place on the whole island that has somewhat safe roadways is near Manson's.
- this is silly
- No safe passage to walk or cycle to Manson's town centre.
- Long stretch of many curves and no shoulder on the road. If cyclists don't pause and move over to side road or driveway then vehicles need to go extremely slowly behind them until it is safe to pass. Many drivers are impatient and dangerously pass.
- your map only lets you pick one place
- This is a steep hill so I haven't gone to the recycling centre or squirrel cove by bike.
- I don't have any "Active Transport Issues".
- Seaford Road is terrifying to cycle on, because drivers insist on passing bikes on blind curves into oncoming traffic lane or forcing bike off road into the brush. Many blind curves, esp around Hague Lake. Need shoulders and extreme traffic calming measures.
- These are park areas. Seriously, are you going to put sidewalks and lights up in a park? In addition, this is a very hilly island, something you would know if you had ever cycled/walked here.
- Going around the windy roads by the lake on bike with cars zooming past is intimidating.
- Congestion and limited vehicle parking creates hazard for pedestrians
- The roads are too narrow to allow for safe cycling

- Carrington Bay Road either side of Whaletown school- deep ditches. S curve in Whaletown- overhanging foliage, zero visibility. Cougar Hill, south of firehall driveway- water running down from driveway makes for a dry stream bed that would tip a bike over. Carrington Bay Road between Whaletown Road and ferry- chronic speeding traffic to and from ferry. Robertson Road to Post Office- extremely narrow. Walking and cycling in Whaletown should not be life threatening and it often feels like it is.
- There are several narrow sections of road with poor visibility around corners and no shoulder, making it unsafe to ride a bike. The bridge at the bottom of the Gorge Hill is dangerous because traffic goes way too fast and cyclists have no shoulders on the road heading from the bridge towards Whaletown.

### **Mansons Landing Verbatim Comments**

- Narrow margin on east side of Sutil Point road south of Mansons.
- same as above
- same as above
- The corner by the lake is one of the most dangerous spots. People fly around the blind corner and people are crossing slowly with kids and beach gear. There should be a seasonal speed bump, flashing light, etc. very dangerous and stressful.
- Not interested in Manson's landing
- This whole area is very bad for bikes/pedestrians no shoulders, terrible road surfaces
- Biking along this section of road between Hague Lake and Mansons Lagoon, the road is rough, narrow and can be busy, especially in the summer with lots of lake users.
- There's already lots of trails in Manson's Landing. I don't think we need more there.
- Better side walks and parking. The parking in the summer currently takes up all of the road shoulder
- UNSafe for Biking
- People speed and some ignore the stop sign. On a bike going straight down the hill I have almost been hit by people turning from Seaford onto Sutil Point. Perhaps a 3 way stop sign?
- Again, I wanted to select several places where drivers pass cyclists, in the oncoming traffic lane, without sufficient visibility to do so safely.
- Sidewalks in downtown Mansons and an off road or barrier protector path along Bartholomew and Cortes Bay would save lives and get a lot of people out of their cars or off their boats and downtown
- Sidewalks in mansons landing and street calming, crosswalks and bump outs would be great
- Leave us alone

- The Mansons Hall area - there are not safe sidewalks/off road lanes for bikes/walking/strollers to commute to and from the community hub
- Unsafe for biking as to narrow road, bad condition of road
- School zone is not adequately identified. Speed limit is too high coming up the hill.
- I regularly visit Manson's for food shopping and community events
- Need bike racks in parking lot
- The existing active transport is totally adequate.
- The only place on the whole island that has somewhat safe roadways is near Manson's.
- As described, including traffic parking congestion during the Friday Market and access to coop. Need parking signage on Sutil Point Road to direct to available public parking.
- Vehicles parked on both sides of the road, especially in the summer, makes it single lane and dangerous.
- your map only lets you pick one place
- Cars whip by this area. There's a deer crossing there also. I wish the 40 zone was a 30 extended up to Moon Hill.
- See Q7.
- Mostly it's fine within Mansons.
- Be great if the siskin trails connected to mansons
- Congestion and limited vehicle parking creates hazard for pedestrians, especially on market days
- A lot of traffic during Friday markets in the summer is unsafe for pedestrians and cyclists

Prepared by

