

Notes from the November 29, 2005 meeting of the Cycling Subcommittee of the District of North Saanich Parks Commission

Present: Farrell Boyce (chair), Joyce Nordlund, Floyd Mailhot, Tim Tanton (District Engineer)  
Absent : Councillor Anny Scoones

Meeting called to order at 4:30 pm in the District Council Chambers.

Responses to the questionnaire circulated at the October 16 “Bike and Hike” event make it clear that the most urgent concern of District cyclists was road safety and consequently the most frequently expressed recommendation for improvements was the establishment of designated bicycle lanes on key arterial routes.

The purpose of the meeting was to identify the segments of North Saanich roads that most require separation of bicycle and automobile traffic either by establishing cycle paths separate from roadways (preferred option) or by the widening of roads (paved shoulders) to accommodate bicycle lanes. We are not recommending that trails separated from the road be paved. A well-compacted gravel surface would be adequate for commuter cycling and would be safer for combined pedestrian and cyclist use since high-performance / high speed cyclists (skinny, high pressure tires) would generally opt for the paved roadway.

The discussion focussed on routes that connected the more densely settled sub-communities of the District with the commercial areas of Sidney and Saanichton and with each other. These are the routes most frequently used by those who use bicycles for commuting or shopping and where the payoff for increased route safety in terms of reduced automobile traffic will be greatest. Recreational riders will use these routes as well in order to access the quieter, more scenic routes throughout the District.

Ten (10) road and trail segments are identified and they are listed in (approximate) order of priority.

1. Bicycle lanes (paved shoulders) on West Saanich road between Wain Road and Towner Park Road. This segment was the top priority requested by the cyclists of North Saanich that responded to our “Bike and Hike” questionnaire. Also we understand that cost estimates are available to submit a request for a fund sharing grant. for the 2006 fiscal year.
2. Trail along sewer trunk line from near West Saanich Road and Towner Park Road following John Road allowance along the north boundary of the Tseycum Reserve and connecting with John Road. This is an important link for both recreational cyclists and commuter cyclists travelling to Sidney from the Deep Cove area.
3. Mills Cross Road from West Saanich Road to MacDonald Park Road. The wide verge on the south (airport) side of Mills Cross Road would lend itself well to the construction of a separate (stand-alone) bicycle path. We would like to have estimates done to determine the cost difference between widening the shoulders on Mills road and building a separate

path between the road and the airport fence. If the cost is comparable we recommend that the District approach the Victoria Airport Authority to determine whether the Authority would be willing to grant permission to build a bicycle path / footpath along Mills Cross Road between the south side ditch and the airport fence.

4. McTavish Road between East Saanich Road and Lochside Drive. This short segment of McTavish is possibly the most congested of any in the District, particularly between the intersection with Canora and Lochside Drive. Cyclists would be advised with signs, to travel from Willingdon to McTavish via East Saanich Road instead of proceeding along Willingdon.
5. Bicycle lanes (paved shoulders) on East Saanich Road from Willingdon Road to Gulf View Park (south boundary of the District). This segment is an essential connector serving the new school (opposite the Panorama Rec. Centre), the Panorama Recreation Centre and the Dean Park Subdivision. An extended section of East Saanich Road running from Willingdon Road to Mount Newton Cross Road in Central Saanich might be considered as a joint venture with the Districts of North and Central Saanich, providing safe bicycle connection between the village of Saanichton and the Town of Sidney.
6. Trail connecting Towner Road to Towner Park Road. Prior to the Deep Cove sewer construction, the footpath from the east end of Towner Road to the west end of Towner Park Road (and beyond to Warrior Point) was too narrow and too close to trees to accommodate both cyclists and pedestrians. Many local cyclists chose instead to risk the disapproval of Towner Park community by riding on the private (paved) road. Trail or private road, this route (Madrona, Towner Road, Towner Park Road) avoids both the strenuous climb over the ridge using Cromar, Downie or Norris Roads and a significant section of the heavily travelled West Saanich Road. A reconstructed trail should be made wide enough to allow both bicycle and pedestrian travel.
7. Bicycle lanes (paved shoulders) on Wain Road from West Saanich Road to Tatlow Road. This is the most direct route from the Deep Cove “business district” to the centre of Sidney via the Lochside Trail. Since Wain Road is straight, visibility along the road is generally good except where the slope changes abruptly on the eastern flank of the ridge. Cycle lanes extending both east and west of the slope break would make Wain Road much safer for cyclists and should be considered as a high priority improvement in advance of completing cycle lanes over the whole West Saanich/Tatlow stretch.
8. Separate path across airport land linking Willingdon Road with Mills Cross Road. This path would allow cyclists to avoid a heavily travelled section of West Saanich Road. From Mills Cross Road, a short length of trail across the soon-to-be-built subdivision on the northeast corner of Mills Cross Road and West Saanich Road could link with other trails and roadways on a route approximately parallel to West Saanich Road that would link with the (new) trail along the sewer right of way on the John Road allowance (north boundary of the Tseycum Reserve), a route that avoids the particularly dangerous section of West Saanich Road adjacent to Patricia Bay.

9. Bicycle lanes (paved shoulders) on West Saanich Road between Willingdon Road and Ardmore Drive (and eventually beyond to McTavish Road).
10. Bicycle lanes (paved shoulders) on McTavish Road from West Saanich Road to East Saanich Road. Segments 8 and 9 both connect the Ardmore sub-community with the Town of Sidney.

Action List:

- Receive comments on above list of road and trail segments from the District Parks Commission.
- Identify recreational cycle routes with scenic or heritage interests (liaison with Heritage Commission).
- Publish both commuter and recreational routes on the District Website, thereby soliciting additional input from the public.

Next meeting of the Cycling Subcommittee: Tuesday, January 10 at 4:30 pm at the District Hall