Climate Action Plan Education Webinar, hosted by Transition Salt Spring

Let's Get There Green

Transportation Solutions for the Gulf Islands

Thursday, March 31, 2022
6-8pm on Zoom

LINKS, Resources & Q&A in the CHAT
RESPONSES FROM OUR PANELISTS FOLLOWING RESOURCE LINKS BELOW

Event Video Recording HERE on our YouTube Channel.

Panelists included;

Rob Fleming, **B.C.'s Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure**, who will be in conversation with TSS chair Bryan Young about transforming transportation at the provincial and local levels;

Adam Olsen, **MLA for Saanich North and the Islands**, who is working to close the loop on the Salish Sea Trail with its missing link on Salt Spring;

Gayle Baker, chair of the CRD's **Salt Spring Island Transportation Commission**, on developing a greener transportation future for Salt Spring Island.

Bob MacKie from **Island Pathways**

Justine Starke, Manager, **Southern Gulf Islands Service Delivery at the CRD**

Paul Brent S**outhern Gulf Islands CRD Alternate Director, Chair SGI Economic Sustainability Commission**

Tristan Ford, **Transit Planner for BC Transit**

Resource Links:

TSS Climate Action Plan - Transportation
https://transitionsaltspring.com/one-cool-island/transportation/

Right of Way Land Donations (For developing bike paths)
https://www.crd.bc.ca/parks-recreation-culture/parks-trails/piprc/land-donations

Cycling Advocacy for Salt Spring
www.islandpathways.ca

Video: Cycling on Salt Spring Island is all about "road smarts'
Courtesy of Brenda Guiled (Previous Island Pathways Board Member)
"https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=roDX6pKdDds

How to pave a bikeway through SSI
https://www.islandpathways.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/How-to-Build-a-Bikeway-Thru-SSI.pdf

Subscribe to the TSS newsletter
https://subscribe-can.keela.co/newsletter-subscription4

Battery Recycling

https://electricautonomy.ca/2022/01/28/lithion-commercial-recycling-quebec/

https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2021/nov/26/battery-power-five-innovations-for-cleaner-greener-electric-vehicles

https://thenarwhal.ca/electric-vehicles-canada-battery-recycling/?fbclid=IwAR3x8VKY-x4FSRnyFl8pkxVawJpC6AL2k-VAJMkow3FQbjand56sz__Etkc

https://fortune.com/2021/09/14/tesla-cofounder-jb-straubel-redwood-materials-battery-materials/

https://www.pembina.org/media-release/bc-can-lead-ev-battery-recycling-report
www.islandpathways.ca

CHAT QUESTIONS/ANSWERS

(Thank you to our panelists and CRD director for taking the time to respond).

From Brian Smallshaw to Everyone:
Re: safe bike lanes: biked up Ganges hill earlier this afternoon and narrowly missed getting smoked by a large dump truck - came WAY too close. Of all places on the island, would really like to see an uphill bike lane out of Ganges going south.

Response from Gary Holman:
[MOTI committed to repaving Ganges hill up to Cranberry with 1.2 m shoulder lanes]

From Gwenyth H. Dobie to Everyone:

Does someone need to “get smoked” on their bike… before we stop talking about all this and get some ACTION.

From Gary Holman CRD Director to Everyone:

The focus tonight might be on pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, which is important, but lowering speed limits, more frequent line painting, more cross-walks (incl. Pedestrian-operated) and medians/pedestrian refuges will complement infrastructure improvements, especially in and around our main villages.

From Brenda's iPad to Everyone:

My question of Minister Fleming: Will Minister Fleming honour Minister Trevena's promise to widen and repave from the top of Ganges hill to the top of Fulford hill, soon after the Ganges hill upgrade is done?

MINISTER FLEMING’s response:

Fulford-Ganges Road

As I committed in the meeting, the ministry is currently engaging a road survey along Fulford-Ganges Road between the Vesuvius Bay and Fulford Bay ferry terminals to help inform how cycling could be better supported on the corridor. We expect to have a completed report by the end of this summer, which staff will share with the CRD once completed.

I understand that residents would like the ministry to commit to widening and repaving the Fulford-Ganges Road from the top of Ganges Hill to the top of Fulford Hill once the Ganges Hill upgrade is completed. Although other projects to improve road safety in the region have been prioritized for the short term, the ministry has been clear that Fulford-Ganges Road is a priority for resurfacing. The ministry prioritizes resurfacing projects for rural roads based on many factors, including a route’s condition and use, the available resources, the existence of other competing priorities and whether the project can be coordinated with other local projects.

The scope of the next phase of resurfacing on Fulford-Ganges Road will be determined based on need and other priorities. Some areas, such as from the Fulford Ferry terminal to Beaver Point Road, require further discussion with the CRD, as the CRD has highlighted the need to

replace the existing utilities under the road first. BC Ferries also needs to be consulted, as it has future plans for terminal upgrades that will affect the road as well.

As part of the Ganges Hill upgrades, a 1.6 km section between Seaview Avenue and Cranberry Road will receive a 1.2 metre-wide paved shoulder on either side of the road. This decision is consistent with the 1992 MOU, and the CRD was consulted on various options that were considered throughout the design.

From Peter R to Everyone:

One easy simple action “we” could take to make our one bike lane usable would be to sweep the debris off of the Lower Ganges bike lane. Right now I and other cyclists often must ride in the car lane to avoid the dirt and gravel :(

From William Mackwood to Everyone:

How are we going to convince people to cycle/walk if we cannot offer relatively safe conditions? I am an avid cyclist, have cycled in many Canadian communities, and few are more backward than SSI. It is shameful. We need to stop ‘studying’ and move to action. When, exactly, will the work start on a Ganges Hill cycle lane?

From Gary Holman CRD Director to Everyone:

William, we've gone far beyond "just studying." In partnership with Island Pathways, have built miles of pathways and sidewalks at a cost of about $4 million, of which about 1/3 was covered by local taxpayers. Re Ganges Hill, MOTI has committed to repaving Ganges Hill up to Cranberrry with wider shoulder lanes by 2023. In 2022, RoW acquisitions, ditches and power poles must be moved.

From Guy Dauncey to Everyone:

On the Ganges Vesuvius Road, is there not a big public right-of-way on either side of the road?

From Gary Holman CRD Director to Everyone:

Guy, there are a number of pinch points on RoWs for our main roads.

From Gary Holman CRD Director to Everyone:

The SSI Transportation Commission, which is unique in BC electoral areas, has initially focused on pedestrian/cycling infrastructure in Ganges because of limited resources and to get the biggest bang for the buck. At the urging of SSI Solutions and Island Pathways, more detailed planning of the Salish Sea Trail has now begun. Regarding the Fulford-Ganges section, MOTI is the key partner.

From Elizabeth White to Everyone:

Shoulder on Lower Ganges Rd south of Baker Rd is always unuseable due to debris piled up against new concrete barrier. That section of road was always bad but is now potentially deadly for cyclists.

From William Mackwood to Everyone:

I encourage Minister Fleming to ride his bike to the Market !

From Bryan Young - Chair TSS to Everyone:

A site survey is not a public survey — yes I am tired of them too, but they are important. This survey would look at the entire length of the route from Vesuvius to Fulford to quantify pubic vs private lands and what it would require to make a bikeway happen.

From Brian Smallshaw to Everyone:

While a survey might be useful, we know the single worst section - GANGES HILL - so rather than tackling the whole thing, why not fix that first?

From Brian Smallshaw to Everyone:

Gary, will those wider shoulder lanes on Ganges Hill be both up and down? From my point of view as a cyclist, I'd rather see the lane up be very wide with some kind of a concrete barrier between the car and bike lane, and nothing much changed on the downhill lane where bikes can take the car lane and not slow down car traffic.

Response from Gary Holman

[MOTI presented to the Salish Trail group and to the Transportation Commission and stated that their design included a total of 2.4 m of shoulder lanes which could be distributed between uphill and downhill in a number of ways. Given the constraint on total shoulder lane width (dictated by RoW constraints which required purchase of parts of 24 properties), and advice from cyclists, both groups ultimately recommended 1.2 m for each shoulder. The Transportation Commission will consider the possibility of a separate pedestrian pathway on the uphill side, depending on how the shoulder lanes look in reality, which would require culverting of the drainage ditch.

From Gary Holman CRD Director to Everyone:

MOTI is surveying, designing and repaving Gangs Hill first, with widened shoulder lanes, to be completed 2023.

From Brian Smallshaw to Everyone:

Gary, I'd like to see the plans for the shoulder lanes. As mentioned earlier, the lane in the uphill direction needs to be much wider than the downhill - and from the top of the hill to Ganges, the downhill could be eliminated altogether.

Response from Gary Holman
[See response above. The cyclists who participated in MOTI presentations to the Salish Trail group and to the Transportation Commission recommended 1.2 m each shoulder. It's a judgment call about whether to continue to push for wider shoulder lanes, which would require more RoW acquisition and runs the risk of MOTI delaying and ultimately re-allocating their scarce dollars to other jurisdictions.]

From Simon Rompre to Everyone:
One of the biggest obstacles is the fact that all the important decisions regarding bike safety are taken by government employees who don"t live here, most likely don't ride bicycles and are in no need to get elected, how do we overcome this?

Above question as per MINISTER FLEMING's previous response on bike paths and response from Gary Holman:
[We could become a municipality (voted down decisively twice), in which case we would take over roads and the huge liability associated with them – a liability that will only grow larger with climate-related storm and road washout events. Failing that, we need to work with our MLA and the Province to advocate for wider shoulder lanes as we repave roads.]

From William Mackwood to Everyone:
Who is responsible for sweeping the shoulders? And why can it not be done more often? Having recently rode from Ganges to Fulford in the rain (muck), I can say that this would be a simple, effective and immediate improvement.

From Peter R to Everyone:
Yes it would be good to know who specifically we could politely harangue about getting the shoulders and bike lanes swept clean. ...?_____?...

MINISTER FLEMING's response to this question:

Road Sweeping

The ministry's maintenance contractor for the Island, Emcon Services Inc., is responsible for sweeping and maintaining Island roads. If residents have concerns about a safety issue on any local road, the fastest way to have it addressed is to report it to Emcon on their 24-hour reporting line at 1 866 353-3136.

From Brenda's iPad to Everyone:

In 2013 Dec, MoTI published a review of SSI roads using a Ride Comfort Index survey, from the comfort of an SUV. We need them to do an RCI using cyclists and pedestrians

Electric Vehicles

From Tom Mitchell to Everyone:

Thank you for being here tonight Minister, can you comment on Electric school buses for Salt Spring.

Gary Holman response: [In a recent inter-agency meeting, SD 64 announced they had were purchasing one electric bus and had committed to acquire two more. Not sure of timing.]

MINISTER FLEMING's response to this question:

Electric School Buses

I know some participants had questions about procuring electric school buses for Salt Spring Island. I have shared your comments with my colleague the Honourable Jennifer Whiteside, Minister of Education, for her information.

From Patti Baral/Bryan Young- Director TSS to Everyone:

Another question to the Minister: As you well know, Salt Spring likes to tout its status as having the highest number of EVs per capita of anywhere in BC – and for that we give a lot of credit to Transition Salt Spring's very active EV working group. One question that often comes up with respect to EVs concerns the life cycle of batteries and minerals being used in their manufacture. While some feel that BC could be more aggressive than 2040 for the sunset of sales of ICE vehicles, we are a Canadian leader. However, one area where we get a lot of questions is around the environmental costs of the spent batteries and rare earth minerals used to make EVs and in fact all manner of goods. What are BC's plans with respect to battery recycling, the mandating of recycled content, and how can BC position itself to form a part of the emerging EV battery supply chain in Canada?

MINISTER FLEMING response to above question:
Our government's CleanBC plan outlines our commitment to continue to improve recycling in B.C., including for electric vehicle batteries. You can also read more about some of the work being done to repurpose retired electric vehicle batteries in this news release.

Ganges roads and speed limits

From Brian Smallshaw to Everyone:
Why can't we start with speed bumps on the main road through Ganges?

MINISTER FLEMING response to above question:
Jurisdiction and Road Improvements

As some residents are aware, a 1992 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the ministry and the Islands Trust gives the ministry jurisdiction over most roads on the Island. I recognize that some residents would like to see changes to local roads in some locations to enhance safety for cyclists and pedestrians, such as narrowing lanes, widening shoulders or reducing speed limits, and the MOU does not preclude these types of changes. While the Motor Vehicle Act sets out statutory default maximum speed limits of 50 km/h within municipalities and 80 km/h outside of municipalities, the ministry is pleased to work with local governments in unincorporated areas to determine safe and appropriate speed limits as communities grow and change over time.

The appropriate place for community members to provide feedback about upgrades or changes to local roads that they would like prioritized is through the Capitol Regional District (CRD) Salt Spring Island Transportation Commission. If the commission endorses the proposed changes, it could then raise them with the ministry for consideration. The ministry would expect the CRD to be responsible for any local initiatives or projects within road rights-of-way that are not initiated by the ministry.

With respect to the suggestion to install speed bumps on roads, the ministry does not install speed bumps on roads as they can be hazardous to emergency vehicles and highway maintenance equipment. The RCMP is responsible for enforcing speed limits and any concerns about speeding should be raised with the local detachment so they can target their enforcement efforts appropriately.

Regarding weight limits, all commercial vehicles must comply with the size and weight specifications of the Commercial Transport Act. While most roads are built to accommodate

larger commercial vehicles, the ministry may implement load restrictions on roads to protect the road if the road base is weakened from precipitation or otherwise compromised.

Gary Holman response: [Despite numerous requests, MOTI does not support speed bumps, but they do seem supportive of lowering the speed limit. The CRD Transportation Commission has been focusing its work, often in partnership with Island Pathways, on pathways and sidewalks in the Ganges area. We've built miles of these pathways since the Commission was established in 2008, with plans to do more. The Commission has received a grant to hire a consultant to develop an active transportation plan for downtown Ganges that will ultimately link the North Ganges sidewalks to the bottom of Ganges Hill.]

From Guy Dauncey to Everyone:

How much of Salt Spring's lack of safe cycling facilities is down to a lack of local control, since the roads are governed by the Ministry of Transportation, who spend just 1% of their budget on Active Transportation?

Gary Holman response:

[For Ganges and other SSI Villages, the CRD Transportation Commission (unique in unincorporated areas) has been quite successful in securing funding (including from MOTI's Active Transportation program) to build miles of (mostly) pedestrian and some cycling infrastructure. For the 20 km Salish Trail, MOTI definitely prioritizes repaving rather than active transportation per se, but their Ganges Hill repaving project will include wider shoulder lanes and it is this approach we are fairly confident they will continue with every project on the Fulford-Ganges section, which they have identified as a priority – no firm timeline commitments though😊. If SSI incorporated, we would take over responsibility for roads and the authority to spend more on active transportation, but we also take on the huge and growing liability (with climate change) of the entire road system.]

From Brian Smallshaw to Everyone:

How soon can we get speed bumps in Ganges? [See responses above.]
See Minister Fleming's above response.

Ministry Funding

From Steve Earle, Gabriola to Everyone:

Question for Rob Fleming: The 1992 MOU between the Ministry of Transportation and the Islands Trust ensures that control over island roads are firmly under the control of the Ministry and that all main roads are treated as highways. We need to change that to allow

islanders some more control over their roads so that they can reduce speed limits, make traffic lanes narrower (which will also slow cars down) and make more room for pedestrians and cyclists. This is something that the minister could do, and it won't cost millions.

MINISTER FLEMING responded as above.
Further comments;

Climate Change

The ministry is committed to ensuring our infrastructure can withstand the effects of climate change. Since 2015, the ministry has had a policy that states all designs of provincial highway infrastructure—including new, rehabilitated and rebuilt infrastructure—must take into account future climate events. We are also working with climate specialists at the Pacific Climate Impacts Consortium, based at the University of Victoria, to provide ministry staff with future climate data so they can account for these events in their designs.

We understand the concerns about sea level rise affecting local roads like Walkers Hook Road, where erosion from the ocean is causing recurring issues. As these issues arise, the ministry has been reconstructing the road to be more resilient and adaptive by increasing culvert sizes and strengthening the road base.

Speed Limits

From Malcolm Harris to Everyone:
North Saanich and Crofton: 60km/hr max speed with full bike lanes all the way to Duncan/Maple Bay or Brentwood /Victoria. What did Salt Spring do to get 80km/hr and no bike lanes?

MINISTER FLEMING as per answers above

From Anne Parkinson to Everyone:
Do we know the weight limit on island roads? It seems to me the size and weight of massive trucks (for building new houses?) is both dangerous and ruins roads - is there any weight limits and measurement that can be posted or installed?

From Bob MacKie - Cycling Salt Spring to Everyone:
We have to redesign the roads (narrow, traffic calming, etc.) as well as lowering speed limits and signage. This has been found elsewhere and is pretty well researched.

Transit

From Gary Holman CRD Director to Everyone:

The Minister is dealing with an entire province with much bigger populations than SSI that he has to consider in getting the highest return on transit investments.

From Kisae Petersen - IWAV to Everyone:

My question for BC Transit - Can we please get Bus Route #1 to be brought down Corbett to Croftonbrook to service the 100+ residents? BC Transit has said no in the past but it's a big barriers for many tenants and we could reduce car ownership. IWAV would pay for the bus shelter and this would increase riders on this route.

(Answered and encourage Kisae to be in touch with Tristan Ford - TFord@bctransit.com)

From Jason Griffin to Everyone:

Transit to Vesuvius is essentially a dead end without transit from Crofton to Duncan or Nanaimo

From Erinanne Harper- TSS to Everyone:

Yes better transit connections from Crofton would be super! Also up hwy 17 to Comox and Campbell River

From Brian Smallshaw to Everyone:

Transit question: Any plans to expand bus service on Beaver Point Road beyond some runs in the summer?

Tristan Ford Response: Year-round service to Beaver Point and Ruckle Park is in our Transit Future Service Plan and remains a priority in our planning processes.

From David Hargreaves to Everyone:

Tristan. Can the saltspring transportation model work on other islands?

Tristan Ford Response: Transit operates primarily through partnerships with local governments and operating companies. This allows us to deliver transit in smaller communities.

From David Elderton to Everyone:

Any plans for EV busses???

Response from Gary Holman

[BC Transit has committed to full electrification of its fleet, including on SSI, by 2040. The Transportation Commission is advocating for acceleration of this timeline on SSI. BC Transit's current view is that smaller electric buses currently available aren't proven performers in rural areas, although they acknowledge that technology is advancing rapidly. We need to find a suitable location for storing and charging electric buses on SSI, as well as acquire DC fast chargers to help facilitate bus electrification here.]

From myna lee Johnstone to Everyone:

we could have a fleet of electric vans rather than sending the buses on less used routes...would be cost efficient..and very green active transportation

Response from Tristan Ford: Unfortunately, no. The electronic fare collection system will be rolled out to 30 systems across the province which have near end of life onboard fare collection systems, of which Salt Spring is not one.

Bike Safety

From Colleen MacDonald - Let's Go Biking to Everyone:

People want to come to Saltspring and feel safe cycling, and I am so glad your team is working on this, I will be including Saltspring in a cycling guidebook coming out in June 2022. Keen to support your initiative. Colleen at Let's Go Biking.net

From Darlene Gage - Transition Salt Spring to Everyone:

That was done through Hornby's version of Island Pathways, along with donations of private land and incredible amounts of volunteer effort there.

Collected closing thoughts

So that is a BIG YES on the transportation referendum

Vision for transport in the future? More data, less vehicles and more public transit

Fewer cars on the road partially by using autonomous vehicles (self-driving cars)

Lots more cycling and people walking.

Using the existing roads, but also cycling routes that are designed around the lay of the land.

People walking on 'private' property - more of a rural approach to moving around

Sharing the roads much more.

Appreciate what we have now - no traffic lights for example

We need to be strategic and focussed in our requests. We are a small tax base.

Reduce speed limits
change our culture to be more cooperative and sharing of resources
Culture of community mindedness
Develop a different road treatment that is not so polluting
Think differently. Work collaboratively

From the TSS Salt Spring Electric Vehicle Group

The history of EV's things on Salt Spring Island, and our positive results:

- We were a very early community to install a free public charger (ArtSpring) to support both locals and tourists. With Internet connectivity, we were able to determine in the early days that it was rated in the top 10 used chargers in the province.
- As time went on, TSS volunteers observed the need for additional chargers. They worked with donors and generous business partners to provide an island-wide network of free public chargers. A different program was initiated to support chargers located at B&B's and MURBS.
- We still support one of the highest density charging networks anywhere (and additional chargers are on the way)
- For the past decade, TSS volunteers provided on-going education events and promotions.

RESULTS

- I believe (Jim Standen) there is no coincidence that the above infrastructure and education programs provided the incentive to establish SSI as the highest EV ownership (by population) of any region in BC.
- The estimated + 350 EV owners have displaced ICE units. The TSS statistics volunteers are able to use ICBC statistics to calculate the following estimates:
    - reduced use of fuel no longer need to be transferred to the island - 310,000 litres per year
    - reduction in GHG emissions - 900 tCO2e per year
    - GHG emission reduction to date - 2,300 tCO2e
    - elimination of +600 annual messy oil charges
- Finally, measuring progress is crucial to attaining a goal. We have tried to find another region that has made the effort to calculate the annual increase in EV adoption required to attain their GHG reduction goals of their local community. We believe we are unique in our efforts. Based on the CAP 2.0, we need to reduce our passenger vehicle emissions by 50%

by 2030. To achieve this, we have calculated we need an additional 80 vehicles in 2021. ICBC statistics, expected to be released shortly, will verify if we are on track.

EV Battery Recycling - Jim Standen;

The issue with EV battery recycling is not enough materials - yet - most of the batteries are still stuck in cars - that are lasting longer than expected, which is a good thing.

After a decade of EV's on the road, the situation is changing and the time has come - it is the market driving the recycling industry. The batteries are about 95% recyclable, and the cost of recycling is far less than mining, so enter the market (greed ?). The recovered materials are totally usable in making more EV batteries.