

Notes taken at the Town Hall community meeting on Roads and Trails, January 29, 2019

NB: detailed notes are listed below the Summary

Summary:

Roads

Lake Cowichan Road was consistently and almost unanimously identified as a top priority for road improvement. Major concerns included speeding (especially near Currie Park) and poor visibility of lane markers, curved roads, and intersections at night and during inclement weather. Solutions for poor visibility focused on reflective markers (e.g., highly reflective curved arrow signs near turns, “cats eyes” in centre lane) rather than street lighting. Speeding needs to be addressed with volunteers and speed watch programs.

Much of the discussion at road tables focussed on pedestrian and cyclist safety, especially Lake Cowichan Road, but in the course of the discussion, participants decided that rather than widen roads, a network of well-connected roadside and/or off-road pathways would be much preferred. Thus, the most common concern around roads is more appropriately discussed in the section below on Trails.

Trails

Participants at trail tables placed emphasis on the Greenway Trail, especially connecting Highway 18 to Glenora (across the river). Overall, participants want to see a high degree of connectivity between major trail networks such that residents throughout Sahtlam have easy access (i.e., avoiding roadways) to local trails as well as connectors to other regions (e.g., Glenora, downtown Duncan). There was an emphasis on having multi-use trails and the need for signage to educate visitors on safety (i.e., approaching horses, right of way for people vs cycles vs horses, etc). Motorized off-road vehicles also need trails and access to remote trail areas (e.g., north of Highway 18), but most agreed these should be kept separate from pedestrians, cyclists, and horses.

There was significant enthusiasm among participants for volunteer work in trail-building, and a number of people signed up for the task. Flagging and identification of pin markers was seen as a first step that could readily be accomplished by coordinated volunteers. We will need to work with CVRD on options for involving the community safely in trail building on CVRD land. Chris Istace of the Cowichan Trails Society has offered information and resources for learning how to undertake such efforts at the grassroots level, address liability/safety concerns and bring in outside funding where shortfalls exist in CVRD budgets. A committee is being formed, based on those volunteers who signed up, to look into this further.

Roads Table 1: facilitator Mariah Wallener, note-taker Shannon Hollinshead

- connector(s) to Cowichan Valley Trail from/along Lake Cowichan Road with signage and reflective markings
- More room on the shoulder of Lake Cowichan Road for cyclists and pedestrians
- poor/no lighting on Lake Cowichan Road
- Need reflective paint or markers and lines, willing to pay higher taxes for it
- Reflective strips a priority on blind corners and curves (cars cut corners; sides of the road are in bad condition, no shoulders)
- Roadside pathway for cyclists and pedestrians, with 2 “lanes” to accommodate both directions of travel in one path: this would be better than widening the road itself
- The improvements made by North Cowichan on their section of Lake Cowichan Road were viewed as a positive improvement
- Rumble strips down the centre of Lake Cowichan Road
- Hanks Road S turn is narrow, lots of accidents

Roads Table 2: facilitator Jack Macneill, note-taker Kathy Mercer

- the speed and park signs approaching Currie Park is confusing; the speed sign says 40 km/h and the sign indicates there is a park, but this is conflicting because the speed limit in a park area is 30 km/h
- traffic calming near Currie Park; would like a reader board to collect statistics
- vehicles are traveling the Lake Cowichan Rd at much higher speeds than posted; would like a reader board to collect statistics
- potholes are hazards for everyone (motor vehicles, bicycles, pedestrians)
- lack of space to walk on the shoulder of the road; near Currie Park the shoulder is approximately 1 foot wide, not enough for a person pushing a stroller
- would like to see an amber flashing (pedestrian crossing) light installed @ Creighton & Cowichan Lake Rd
- Barnjum Rd between Riverbottom & Sunrise, road surface is crumbling
- shoulders of the road are not compressed after Main Road work (creates a ridge), making it dangerous to ride bicycles on

- signage that there is a crosswalk at Tansor & Cowichan Lake Road [note: this is on North Cowichan land]
- roadside pathways needed, no place to walk (make pedestrian pathways on Cowichan Lake Rd rather than expanding car lanes)

Additional Roads Comments (sent in by people who were unable to attend the meeting)

- lack of lane marker visibility (especially in poor weather) on Riverbottom Rd and Barnjum Rd
- poor sight lines at the following intersections: Barnjum and Riverbottom, Riverbottom and Cowichan Lake Road, Barnjum/Menzies/Gibbins
- Sunrise Road needs maintenance (road erosion)
- increased traffic and speed on Barnjum Road
- intersection at Barnjum/Menzies/Gibbins confusing signage (only 2 stop signs)

Trails Table 1: facilitator Julia Rylands, note-taker Maureen Hayes

- Hanks Park, Sahtlam Tree Farm, Chinese Cemetery on Payne Road, and Tipperary Corridor need I.P. pins located and recognized before trail building; need to find out who the property owners are to help with location.
- metal fence has been installed across the Greenway path on the back of Hanks Park by the property owner, restricting trail access for everyone. Check to see if his I.P. pin is in the proper location.
- elk and deer trails: where are they comfortable travelling with both fence issues and public usage of the land (horses, bikes, dogs and people)
- some sections of future Greenway trails go through Treaty and Crown land (from Hwy 18 through Inwood Creek Park)
- create safer walking along Cowichan Lake Road from the Sahtlam Firehall to Jordan's Lane; include bus stop areas
- move drainage ditches away from roadway and build a culvert covering with gravel to become a walking trail; don't put gravel pathway right beside the road as people tend to walk on road instead (study by Loren Duncan)

- reduce traffic speed
- greenway should be developed before asking for funding to build a footbridge from Sahtlam to Glenora
- focus on the Greenway Trail from Inwood Creek to Glenora; build from Inwood Park along housing route to Currie Park using already-created infrastructure, less expensive and away from Treaty land
- pull-outs are needed for horse trailers; e.g. trailheads at Inwood Park and Chinese Cemetery on Payne Road
- Trash bins should be placed at each trailhead
- use a variety of pathway materials: natural and gravel as needed
- variety of pathways be used, natural and gravel as needed.
- awareness and respect for the ecosystem and native animal habitat when trail building

Trails Table 2: facilitator Francine O'Brian, note-taker Laura Warren

- top priority is to get the Sahtlam Greenway Trail built
- connections between trails and horseback riding access
- the bridge at Glenora Riverside Park; this is a beautiful section full of trails and is close to Sahtlam; needs to be accessible to equestrians (multiuse)
- want a Cowichan River crossing at Sandy Pool Park via bridge and trail all the way to Highway 18
- trail etiquette rules posted along trails – cyclists, horseback, pedestrian rules of the trails; e.g. signs to instruct cyclists how to approach horses from behind to prevent spooking (make a noise, say hello, ring a bell)
- generally want more signage and trail maps
- connection wanted between Sunrise and Barnjum roads
- connection through Hanks Road Park, currently there are gates blocking connectivity, need a trail around adjacent private property
- trail from Tipperary to Hanks Rd has been fenced off by property owner; fence was apparently approved by MOTI; trail is not accessible now

- easier access to Sahtlam trail network and Cowichan Valley Trail with multiple access points
- find out if powerline areas can be utilized for trails and if so, can they be made more usable/walkable; e.g. trail under transmission lines from Cowichan Lake Road to Cowichan Valley Trail
- currently no trails for motorized vehicles so they are using the public highway and roads to access certain trails
- allowing motorized vehicles creates noise and adds to wear and tear of trails; motorized vehicles should be kept on dirt tracks and don't belong on trails shared with cyclists, pedestrians, and horses