

Promoting the Salish Sea Trail



By Simon Rompre, photos by Bob MacKie

On July 20th, a group of about 30 dedicated island cyclists met Adam Olsen, our local MLA, in Fulford for a bike ride to Ganges to promote the Salish Sea bike trail on Salt Spring Island. As we all know, Salt Spring does not have safe bicycle paths along the majority of our roads and is not really considered a very safe cycling destination. However, Salt Spring Island, being a major tourist attraction, could easily become a wonderful place to visit by bike or ebike if only our roads were safer.

Adam Olsen has been working on this vision along with various community groups as well as CRD and Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MoTI) representatives and he gave a brief speech and took questions and answers once the rally arrived at Centennial Park. One of the main concerns expressed by many in attendance is how little has been done by previous administrations on this issue in spite of having been on the political agenda for decades and Adam announced that there are some promising developments.

A study is currently underway by MoTI to assess the state of our roads. This study is supposed to be finished by the end of September and will be used in developing bike safe roads in the coming years. Another thing Adam supported and helped Island Pathways/Cycling Salt Spring secure is a \$50,000 Active Transportation grant aimed at promoting the development of a safe cycling infrastructure on the island. With this help there are many reasons to believe that improved island cycling is just around the corner but some rally participants, while happy about this, reminded everyone that we have been here before and it is long overdue.

This event was a very good opportunity for members of various local organizations to meet. Salt Spring Solutions has been very vocal and gathered an 1800 signature petition to finish the Salish Sea Trail a couple of years ago. It also helped, along with Adam Olsen, start the Salish Sea Trail Network Working Group that meets regularly to update and discuss some of the pressing issues with CRD and MoTI.

Transition Salt Spring, with many active supporters, has been helping to organize and promote cycling on island. In the spring they hosted a meeting with Minister of Highways Rob Flemming for everyone to attend and during this meeting Minister Flemming announced the current study to improve cycling on our roads.

Cycling Salt Spring is a committee of Island Pathways and is involved with many cycling programs on the island, such as Helmets for Life and scoot bikes for kids in the schools, Gobybike weeks twice a year, advocacy for bike safety, speed reduction as well as promoting the need for a safe cycling infrastructure for a healthy community.

With all these wonderful people working together, these long awaited road improvements for cyclists are coming closer to becoming a reality and making sure that they stay on the agenda is essential for anyone caring about Salt Spring's quality of life. Stay informed!



Salt Spring's First Community Park

Island Pathways is excited to be supporting a community coalition that has reached its final stretch of fundraising to acquire land on the northeastern slope of Hwmet'utsum (Mt. Maxwell.) This 75 acre parcel adjacent to the watershed and park is slated to become Salt Spring's first community park with a multi-use recreational trail network that will include equestrian trails, hiking trails and managed mountain biking trails.

This land acquisition and park development will be a huge benefit for our community, protecting this land from logging and development, directing recreational activities to managed trails and away from more sensitive areas and giving islanders the opportunity to spend time on this land in healthy outdoor pursuits that may not have been previously accessible.

After 2 years of effort, most of the money has already been raised! The CRD/PARC, a private donor and the landowners themselves have pledged \$1.4 million toward the purchase price. Several local organizations and individuals are working hard to raise the remaining \$350,000 by this project's deadline at the end of 2022.

At this critical stage, every donation, big or small, will make a difference. Let's all contribute to safeguard this land for our future generations. For more information, and to make a donation, please visit <https://communitypark.ca>.

Brenda's Compendium on Safer Cycling for Salt Spring

For more on cycling see Brenda Guiled's (as always comprehensive and excellent) piece on the Salt Spring Exchange, "We need safer cycling infrastructure now and for the future"

<https://saltspringexchange.com/2022/06/01/w-e-need-safer-cycling-infrastructure-now-and-f-or-the-future/>

Why I joined Island Pathways

I joined Island Pathways last month. I'd been meaning to join for years. A cycle ride in June gave me the final push to sign up.

I live part-time on Salt Spring and I've been aware of the terrific effort that Island Pathways has put in to make active transportation more pleasant and safer on the Island.

In June I hosted 5 cycling friends from Montreal. We cycled on the Island and in the Victoria area of the CRD and in the CVRD. We had fun and I gained a new perspective while hosting my friends from the "cycling capital of Canada". Cycle trails and wide road shoulders have improved by leaps and bounds in our neighbouring regions. Even small town and rural Duncan and North Cowichan make it safer and more pleasant for cyclists. But Salt Spring has stalled. This is not for lack of effort by Island Pathways and others who have advocated strongly for improvements. Highway design & maintenance, traffic safety, planning and tourism authorities/associations seem only to pay lip service to cycling safety and comfort on Salt Spring.

I've joined Island Pathways and the Cycling Salt Spring committee to help. There's reason for hope with the support of our elected officials, recent funding for a road technical study and funding for advocacy to promote the Salish Sea Trail. The increase in e-bikes on the Island is also a game changer that will position cycling as 'transportation', worthy of improvements. I hope we can pivot from studies to action.

Steve New, Whims Road

Editor's note: It was great to receive Steve's unsolicited piece (above) about why he joined Island Pathways.

We'd love to hear more from our members. Why do you support Island Pathways? What are the walking or cycling routes that you most enjoy? What are the some of the challenges?

We're often tight on space but we'll try to include what we can. Send any comments or articles to info@islandpathways.ca

GobyBike June 2022 Rotary Presentation by Simon Rompré

You can read (and enjoy the many great photos) of Island Pathways board member and active Cycling Salt Spring committee member Simon Rompré's presentation to the Rotary Club at <https://thesalishseawheel.blogspot.com/>

Island Pathways Cycle Salt Spring Committee “Walk and Wheel” Event

By Wendy Webb, Island Pathways Board

It was a slow start by noon on that Sunday in Rotary Park but slowly and surely the attending groups arrived, set up tents and barbeque for hot dog fans. Then came the kids with parents or alone. With the focus on Safety this event organized by Robin Jenkinson and Bob Mackie was a first step toward perhaps becoming an annual event.

There was a table for “Helmets for Life” where several children received shiny and new helmet for \$10 and were awarded with a free membership in Island Pathways. Margaretha Nordine, an old hand at helmet fitting helped out and Wendy Webb assisted.

Strider training bikes were unloaded and placed in the centre of the grassy area of Rotary Park, the course marked with colourful plastic discs. These bikes are small with only pegs foot rest not pedals. The idea is that they are a training tool for the very young. It is a good way to “get their feet wet”. Many were on a bicycle for the first time.

There was a tent offering popcorn and the “cycle blender” machine smoothies. Costumed servers as good as any professional walked around and made patrons feel as if they were at a cocktail party. The circus group arrive costumed and on stilts towering above all of us making us feel miniature.

“Walk and Wheel” was a success as I see it with everyone offering something and learning lessons to blend expertise and novice alike.



Strider training bikes ready for riders to try out. Photo by Wendy Webb.

All Kids Bike Program at Salt Spring Elementary

By Michi Main

I wanted to send out a heartfelt thank you from myself and on behalf of all the kindergarten and grade 1 kids who participated in our first trial run of the All Kids Bike program at Salt Spring Elementary.

We ran the program with two classes over the course of 7 mornings. I feel we all learned a lot, had a fantastic time together and definitely gave a few kids the chance to figure out how to balance on a bike and overcome their fear of pedals in a very positive way. (We did have some short-lived tears when the kids first came in on the morning we had converted the bikes to pedal mode but these quickly disappeared!)

I was really impressed with how the program worked well for all levels... and it was amazing to see such huge progress by the last session. I wish you could've seen all the smiles throughout the program and the delight on our last day when we set up a super fun obstacle course complete with bubble wrap to ride over.

Now that we've seen how it flows we are going to be brainstorming about how to ensure this program can be sustainable for many many years to come. We are planning to bring it to SSE, Fernwood and Fulford kindy classes in the coming school year.



All Kids Bike participants. Photo by Kari Holmes.

Merchant Mews Pathway

Island Pathways', *Partners Creating Pathway* Committee volunteers, have cleared the land near Merchant Mews for a new section of community pathways that will connect to the pathway on Upper Ganges Rd. This will get pedestrians off the road at Merchant Mews and all the way into Ganges on a safe off road pathway. All the required reports (i.e., dangerous tree, riparian area, archaeological, etc.) have been completed and our engineer is working on the design plans. This project should be "shovel ready" for the CRD to tender out for construction and then built, hopefully in the fall of this year.



PCP committee volunteers take a break during a work party at Merchant Mews. Photo by Jean Gelwicks.

Island Pathway's Hiking Map is Now Indestructible

Island Pathways (IP) quickly sold out of our first printing of the ***Salt Spring Island On Foot*** hiking map and it is now updated, reprinted and is now in stores.

The really exciting news is this time we printed it on *tear and rain resistant paper!* We wanted to print it on a water and rip resistant material from the beginning but this product is more expensive. We decided to see how it did first. It sold very well and now IP is just so proud of the final product and that it will be as indestructible as we can make it.

It can be found in a number of stores around town including Apple Photo, Salt Spring Books, Waterfront Gallery, Old Salty, Blacksheep Books, Salt Spring Mercantile and at the Visitor Information Centre.

Island Pathways is also responsible for a cycling map, ***Salt Spring Island on Wheels***. This map is also the only indexed road map of Salt Spring. We hope in the near future to also have this printed on the same indestructible material.



Memberships, Donations and Volunteers

Island Pathways is always eager for more volunteers to help us carry out our work. To learn how to get involved please email info@islandpathways.ca

Donations are always welcome and receive a charitable tax receipt.

Become a member to show your support. Membership is \$10 for one year.

Online: www.islandpathways.ca (using PayPal or credit card). Post: Send your name, address, telephone and email along with cheque to Island Pathways to: PO Box 684 Ganges, Salt Spring Island, BC V8K 2W3