



The Corporation of the District of Saanich

Report

To: Mayor and Council
From: Harley Machielse, Director of Engineering
Date: 05/18/2023
Subject: Update on the Road Safety Action Plan

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive this report for information.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to update Council on the status of the planning process for the Road Safety Action Plan (RSAP), which was initiated in spring 2022 and is scheduled for completion in fall 2023.

BACKGROUND

In February 2022 Council adopted Vision Zero as the approach to road safety in Saanich and they directed staff to develop a Road Safety Action Plan (RSAP) in alignment with Vision Zero and a Safe Systems Approach.

Vision Zero is premised on the belief that deaths and serious injuries on roads are unacceptable consequences of crashes. It is an ambitious goal to eliminate all serious injuries and fatalities on roads while ensuring safe, healthy, and equitable mobility for all road users. This includes people who walk, use a mobility aid, ride a bike, take the bus or drive. When it comes to road safety, Vision Zero prioritizes human life and it acknowledges that deaths, and serious injuries are preventable.

The Safe Systems Approach is internationally recognized as best practice for improving road safety. It integrates a range of actions including safe speed limits, safe road design, safe road users, safe vehicles, safe land use planning and responsive post-crash care to address the complex and multi-faceted issues that contribute to safety on roads.

The purpose of the RSAP will be to articulate a vision and guiding principles for road safety in Saanich. The plan will identify targets and actions, as well as a process and timeline for prioritized implementation and monitoring. Collaboration with road safety partners will be critical, not only in development of the plan, but also as we move forward with implementation. Objectives of the RSAP, as outlined in the approved Terms of Reference are to:

- To create a plan using current data and policy.
- To provide clear guidance and direction on road safety and demonstrate alignment with the principles of Vision Zero and a Safe Systems Approach.
- To apply an equity lens to the planning process, as well as the content of the plan.
- To use a variety of methods and strategies to communicate and engage with governments, stakeholders, and the public.
- To produce a plan to guide implementation for the next 10 years.
- To establish a clear process to monitor and report on implementation on a regular basis.

SCOPE OF THE UPDATE

The RSAP is focused on the following priorities:

- Develop a vision and guiding principles that align with Vision Zero and a Safety Systems Approach.
- Collect and analyze data to understand crash trends, the risks and impacts of crashes on road users, as well as locations of concern in Saanich.
- Identify actions, based on a thorough analysis of the data and input gathered through community engagement.
- Incorporate an implementation and monitoring plan to prioritize and track progress on improved road safety and zero traffic fatalities and/or injuries.

In addition to the priorities outlined above, applying an equity lens to the RSAP is also a key priority.

Focus on Equity

Transportation equity addresses how the benefits and costs of transportation systems are distributed and whether there are disparities between different communities. Equity is a key consideration in transportation planning, as the allocation of public resources can significantly impact residents' quality of life, including the livability of their neighbourhoods and their ability to access services, education, and economic opportunities.

Equity considerations are an important component of the planning process for the RSAP and will inform 'who' should be part of the engagement, as well as 'how best' to reach individuals and groups who have been historically or systematically excluded from processes and decisions about transportation.

An equity analysis is also being used to inform planning outcomes. Details about the equity analysis being employed as part of the planning process are outlined in the "Equity Analysis" section of this report.

OVERVIEW OF THE PLANNING PROCESS

As per the Terms of Reference, the process to develop the RSAP is being completed in four phases (Figure 1).



Figure 1: Project timeline

Description of the Phases

Phase 1 of the project was initiated in April 2022. During this phase, staff worked to launch the project, confirm the membership and structure of the Steering Committee, and build awareness among stakeholders and the public.

In September the Project Team (including staff and a consultant) began collecting and analysing data on crash trends and locations of concern, as well as conducting best practices research to inform development of a baseline report: *The Current State of Road Safety in Saanich (2023)* (Appendix A).

In **Phase 2**, the Project Team engaged with stakeholders and the public. The purpose of this engagement was to identify issues and opportunities, and to seek input on the draft vision and guiding principles for the Plan.

Through the summer, as part of **Phase 3**, the Project Team will conduct additional public engagement. The purpose of this engagement will be to seek input from a range of people, including equity-deserving individuals and groups to inform the draft Plan.

The draft RSAP will be developed in Phase 3. Starting in September, the Project Team will engage with stakeholders and the public to seek feedback and assess support for the draft Plan.

In **Phase 4**, the Project Team will finalize the draft RSAP based on feedback heard through engagement and prepare a presentation of the final plan for Council in late fall 2023.

The timeline to develop the RSAP has been delayed by approximately three months. As per the Terms of Reference the final draft Plan was scheduled to be presented to Council in September 2023. However, due to delays finalizing the baseline data and analysis, as well the equity

approach, the project timeline has been pushed back. The final draft Plan is now scheduled for completion and presentation to Council in late fall 2023.

THE CURRENT STATE OF ROAD SAFETY IN SAANICH

International, national, and provincial context

The United Nations (UN) General Assembly has proclaimed 2021-2030 the Decade of Road Safety and has set an ambitious target of preventing at least 50% of road traffic deaths and serious injuries by 2030.

In 2021, in collaboration with its partners, the World Health Organization (WHO) developed a *Global Plan for the Decade of Action*, which aligns with the Stockholm Declaration and emphasizes the importance of a holistic approach to road safety. The Global Plan also reflects the Stockholm Declaration's support for safe speeds, modal shift, and multi-sectoral collaboration, and infrastructure recommendations.

Canada's Road Safety Strategy 2025 is a framework for reducing traffic injuries and fatalities in Canada. Principles outlined in the Strategy align with international best practices in road safety, including adoption of the Safe Systems Approach.

British Columbia's Road Safety Strategy 2025: A Collaborative Framework for Road Safety provides a provincial structure for achieving road safety goals. Guided by Vision Zero targets continuous downward trends in traffic fatalities and serious injuries in BC and it supports the international goal to reduce road traffic deaths and injuries by 50% by 2030.

Comparison to other communities

Currently, six municipalities in BC have a plan or policy in place regarding Vision Zero and/or the Safe Systems Approach. These include the Cities of Vancouver, Surrey, Chilliwack, North Vancouver, Vernon, and Kamloops.

There are no communities on Vancouver Island that have a dedicated road safety plan or policy. Many communities are committed to improving safety across their transportation systems through policies and actions included in transportation plans and community-wide transportation initiatives.

A comparison of crash trends over the past five years shows that when compared to other medium to large-sized municipalities in BC that share similar attributes¹, Saanich has a lower crash rate consistently year-over-year compared to these other communities. In addition, while all communities experienced a reduction in crashes in 2020 during the global pandemic, Saanich is one of the few communities to not experience a corresponding increase in 2021.

¹ Cities of Surrey, Kamloops, Abbotsford, Victoria, Kelowna, Chilliwack, and Nanaimo

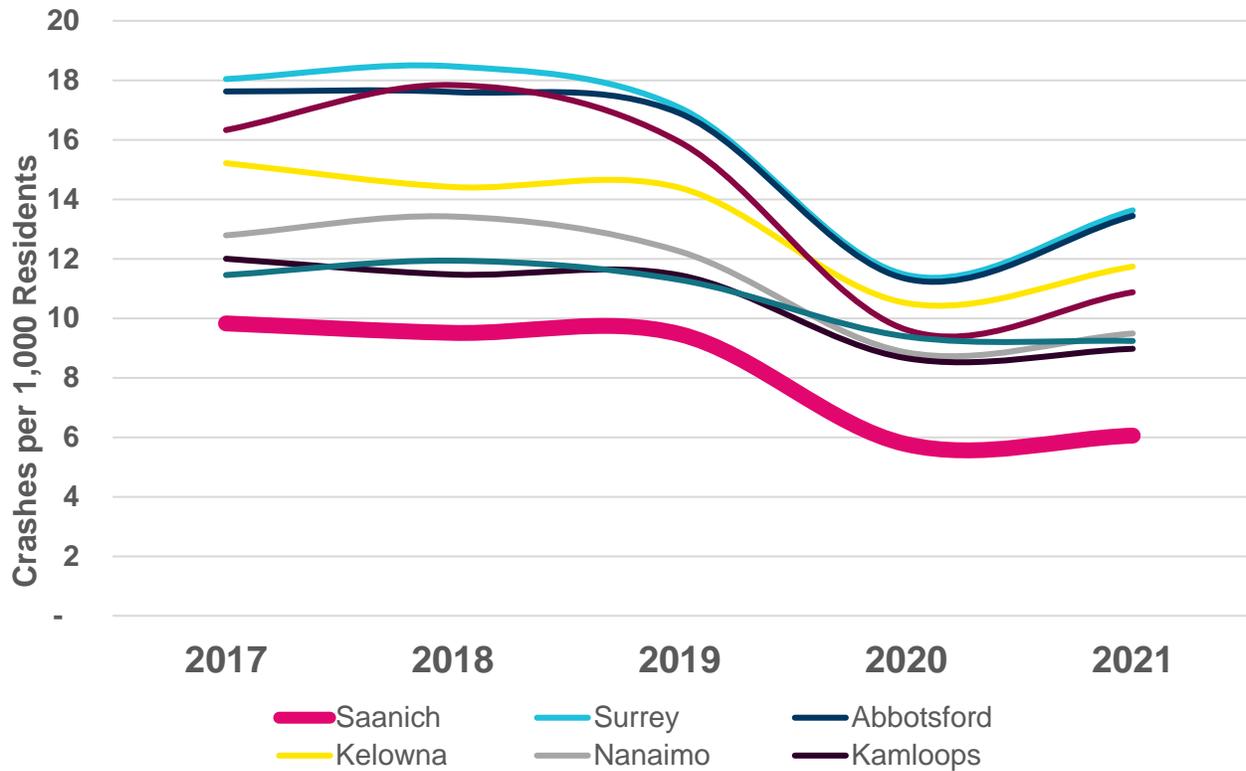


Figure 2: Comparison of crashes in Saanich and other communities

Annual crash trends

A modest increase in the occurrence of crashes took place between 2016 and 2018, before decreasing significantly in 2019 and 2020. The reduced total number of crashes in 2020 corresponds with the decrease in total trips being taken during this period due public health measures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. There is no clear reason for the reduction in crashes by almost one-third between 2018 and 2019.

Fatal crashes were highest between 2016 and 2019, with 4 fatal crashes occurring each year. Interestingly, 2018 experienced the most total crashes but there were no fatalities.

Year over year trends in crashes for Saanich for the five-year period between 2016 and 2020 are shown below.

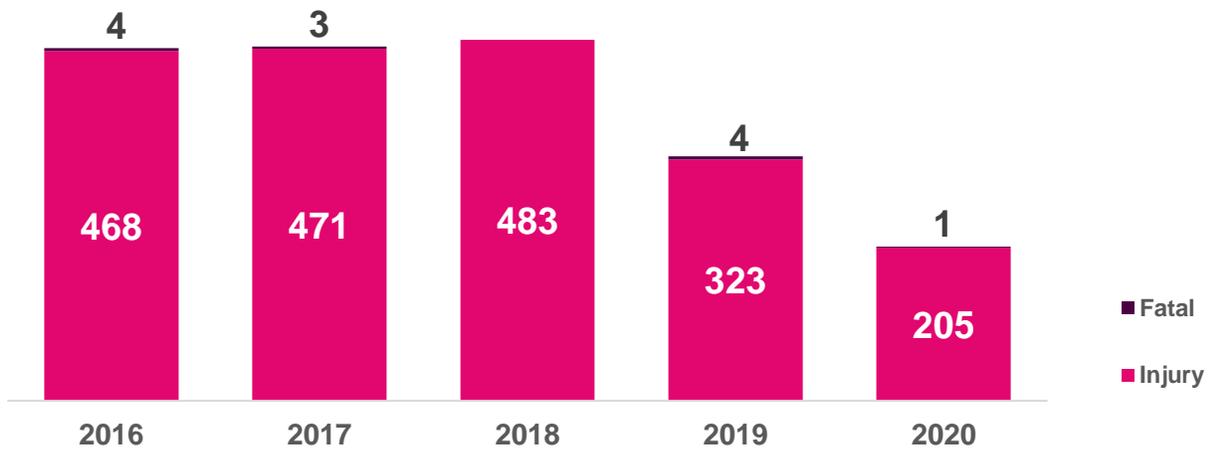


Figure 3: Annual crash trends in Saanich

Trips and crashes by mode

Twelve percent of all crashes in Saanich involve a person walking, cycling, or using a motorcycle. The impact and severity of crashes is often highest among these vulnerable road users due in part to the fact that people who walk or ride a bike do not have the protection of a vehicle around them when they travel.

Most crashes (85%) involve passenger vehicles. There are approximately 800 crashes each year and they include single vehicle crashes as well as crashes involving two or more vehicles.

When crashes by travel mode are compared to overall travel mode share the results indicate that crashes involving pedestrians (3% of total) are much lower than the overall proportion of trips made by walking (9%)². Vehicle-related crashes represent a greater proportion of all crashes (92%) as compared to the proportion of all trips by vehicle (85%). These results suggest that a vehicle trip is more likely to result in a crash than a trip made by walking.

However, as was noted above, the impact and severity of a crash involving a person walking is typically much higher than a crash involving one or more vehicles. The lower likelihood of a crash involving a pedestrian does not necessarily represent a greater level of safety.

² The comparison between travel mode and overall travel mode excludes transit trips as part of the overall mode share. As a result, trips made by passenger vehicles, walking, and bicycles are overrepresented.

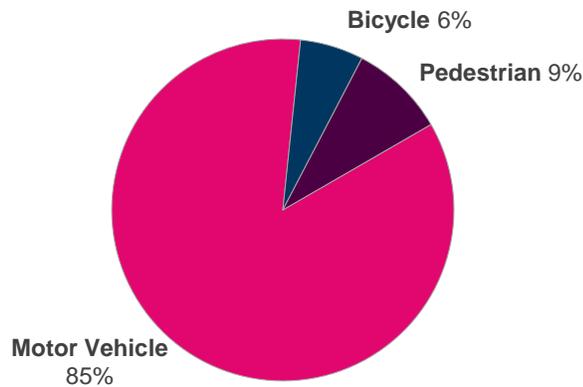


Figure 4: Overall trips by mode in Saanich

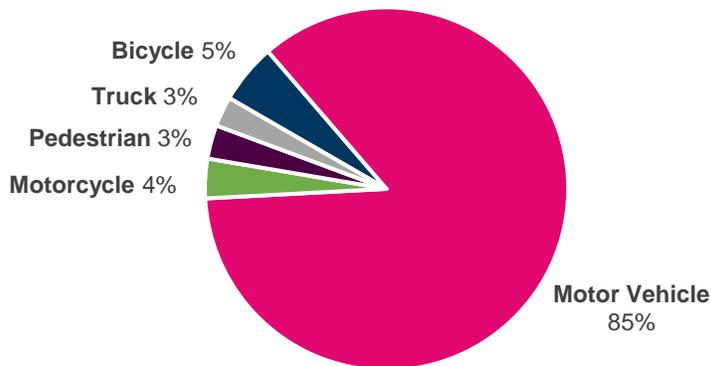


Figure 5: Overall crashes by mode in Saanich

Crash locations

Most crashes occur at intersections where complex interactions between various travel modes can lead to conflict. Approximately 19 of every 20 crashes in Saanich occur at intersections, which is much higher than the proportion of crashes occurring at intersections in most other communities.

Nearly three-quarters (71%) of all crashes occur at unsignalized locations which is likely the result of higher traffic volumes at intersections, as well as possible driver indecision and/or confusion where an explicit traffic control (e.g., signalization, stop signs) is not present.

Crashes occurring between 2017 and 2021 were mapped and are shown in the map below³. Crashes happen throughout Saanich, with some of the greatest concentrations occurring along

³ ICBC Claims data is used to map crash data in Saanich. An estimated 10% of crashes (in the ICBC dataset) do not include locational coordinates and are therefore not reflected on the map.

high-volume corridors such as Douglas Street, Blanshard Street, McKenzie Avenue, Shelbourne Street and Tillicum Road. Intersections with the highest crash frequencies are summarized on p. 39 of the *Current State of Road Safety in Saanich Report (2023)*.

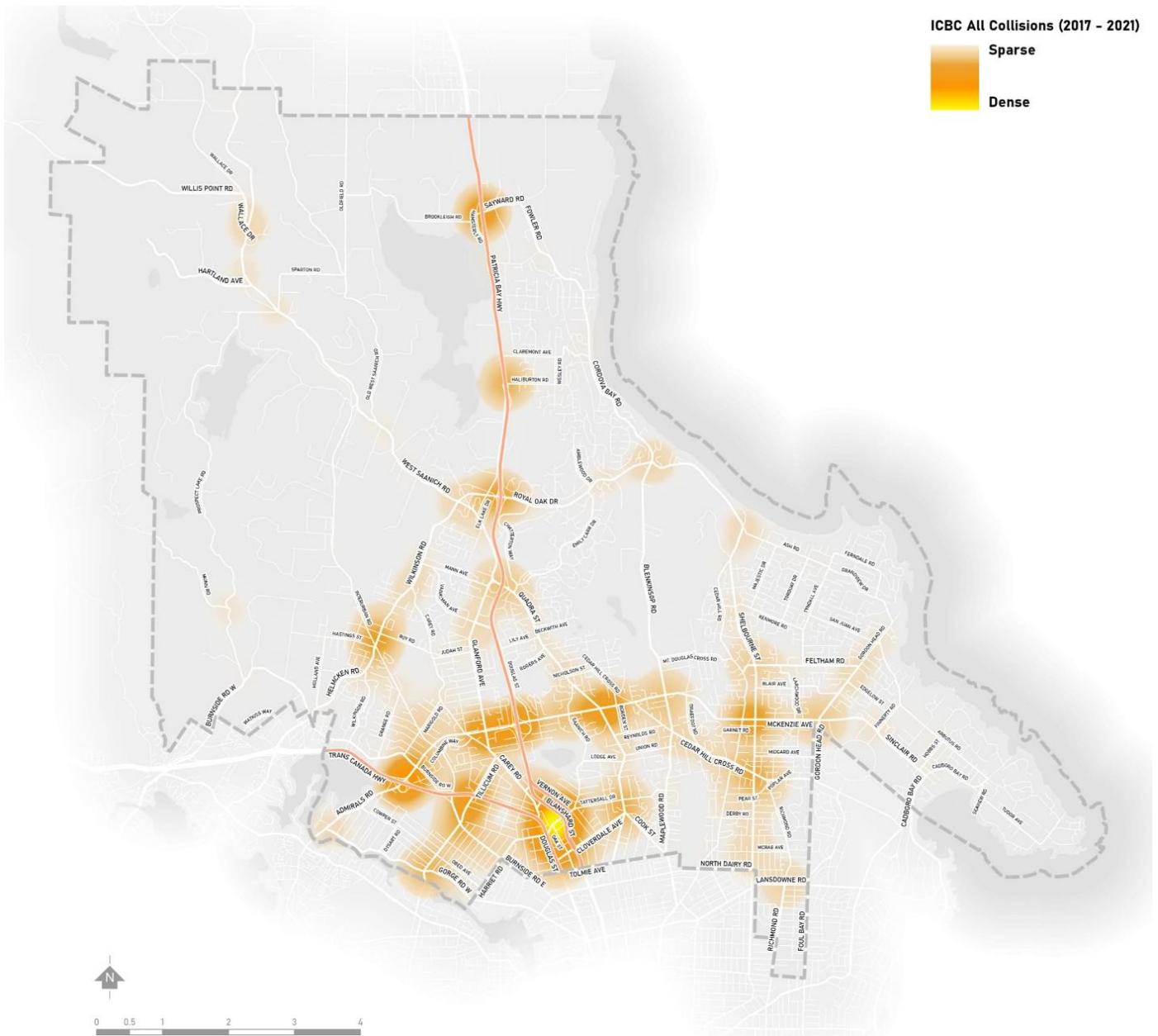


Figure 6: Map of crash locations

Network screening

A comprehensive network screening exercise is being undertaken to supplement and expand on the crash analysis presented in the *Current State of Road Safety in Saanich Report (2023)*⁴. This exercise will result in greater understanding of the following:

- Locations with the greatest crash history.
- Crash trends for different street types in consideration of classification and number of travel lanes.
- Crash trends for corridors, intersections, and crossings separate of one another.
- Contributing factors for high crash locations (e.g., geometry, sightlines, weather, driver behaviour, etc.).
- Mitigation options to improve high crash locations.

The results of the network screening will inform future investments in road safety and ensure that they are strategic and address the locations of greatest concern.

ENGAGEMENT

Stakeholder Workshop

To coincide with Phase 2, an in-person stakeholder workshop was held on March 14, 2023, at the Cedar Hill Golf Course. In total, 38 stakeholders attended the workshop representing 28 different organizations.

The workshop was an opportunity to inform stakeholders about the RSAP and to share information about the purpose of the plan, as well as the process being undertaken to develop it. Information was also shared about road safety and the role that stakeholders play in making roads safer.

Prior to the workshop, participants completed a pre-event survey. The survey results then informed a series of small group discussions that were led by facilitators and focused on exploring opportunities and concerns with road safety, as well as potential actions to address road safety through the RSAP. Workshop participants also engaged in a discussion about the draft vision and guiding principles for the plan.

A summary of the feedback received through the different discussions is attached as Appendix B.

⁴ A Network Screening is a process to identify crash-prone locations in the transportation network. Once completed, it will allow the District to identify road infrastructure deficiencies and traffic operational/control features that may have contributed to crashes and to determine appropriate mitigation measures.

Steering Committee

A Steering Committee (SC) has been created to provide advice to the Project Team and act as a liaison to governments and key organizations and agencies throughout the planning process. The SC is comprised of nine individuals who play a professional role in road safety and who have a perspective necessary for fulsome consideration of road safety issues.

To date, the SC has met three times – in August and September 2022, and March 2023. They will meet again in Phase 3 to review the draft Plan prior to it being released for public engagement. They will also meet in Phase 4 to review the final draft Plan before it is presented to Council.

Engagement with Council Committees

In spring 2022 (Phase 1) staff presented an overview of the planning process and hosted a discussion with the Active Transportation Advisory Committee (ATAC). In February 2023, Staff presented the *Current State of Road Safety in Saanich (2023)* report to the Planning, Transportation and Economic Development (PTED) Advisory Committee and the ATAC. Comments received through these presentations and discussions is captured in the meeting minutes, which are available on Saanich's website.

The Project Team will present the draft RSAP to Council Advisory Committees starting in September 2023.

EQUITY ANALYSIS

An external equity review was completed for the Communications and Engagement Strategy for this project. The purpose of this review was to provide recommendations to strengthen equity through the planning process.

The Project Team is also developing a spatial (GIS-based) tool to better understand the geographic distribution of equity-deserving groups in Saanich. Once completed, this tool will be used to inform engagement – allowing the Project Team to identify locations where engagement should be focused, as well as areas where infrastructure improvements could be prioritized.

Ultimately, the goal is to ensure that work being done to address equity through the planning process for the RSAP will lead to a more equitable plan and improved long-term safety for all Saanich residents using the transportation system.

ALIGNMENT WITH OTHER STRATEGIC TRANSPORTATION INITIATIVES

There are several transportation projects and initiatives currently underway that align with the purpose and objectives of the RSAP. These projects and initiatives are summarized below and include the Speed Limit Establishment Policy, the Active Transportation Plan Update, and development of a Traffic Calming Policy Framework.

Implementation of the Speed Limit Establishment Policy

The Speed Limit Establishment Policy was approved by Council in July 2022 to help guide changes to speed limits on Saanich roads.

Residents consistently cite vehicle speed as a concern and a barrier to using more active forms of transportation, such as walking and cycling. Implementation of the Speed Limit Establishment Policy is an important step in managing motor vehicle speeds and supporting an increasingly multi-modal transportation system.

Active Transportation Plan (ATP) Update

Saanich's first active transportation plan, *Moving Saanich Forward* was adopted by Council in 2018 as a guide for investment in active transportation improvements for 30 years. The Plan establishes a vision, goals, and targets. It also outlines strategies and actions, and an implementation plan.

Saanich is committed to monitoring and updating the ATP on an ongoing basis and in 2023, five years of implementation will have occurred. The purpose the update is to develop a current framework to support the implementation of active transportation policies and actions. The updated plan will help guide investment and decision-making in the next five years, and beyond.

Traffic Calming Policy Framework

At the February 28, 2022, meeting Council directed staff to "consider the development of a traffic calming policy in the update of the Active Transportation Plan."

In response to this direction, the Project Team is developing a traffic management framework that will be the foundation for development of a future policy and program to administer traffic calming, as well as other non-infrastructure solutions to improve safety on roads and the livability of neighbourhoods. The framework will align with Saanich policy, including Vision Zero and a Safe Systems approach.

NEXT STEPS

Between May and August 2023, the Project Team will be conducting a survey and hosting public engagement displays to seek input to inform the draft RSAP. Work will also be underway to develop the draft RSAP, which will be presented to the Steering Committee and Council Committees starting in September.

Stakeholder and public engagement on the Draft Plan will be occur between September and October 2023.

Final changes to the draft Plan will be made based on feedback received through engagement and the final draft RSAP will be presented to Council in late fall 2023.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Funding for the RSAP is through the District's 2022 Budget. In addition to staff resources, the budget for the project is \$150,000.

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLICATIONS

The RSAP will provide a framework to support implementation of road safety policies and actions. It will also guide investment and decision-making for road safety going forward, thus ensuring that key goals and prioritized initiatives outlined in the District of Saanich 2019-2023 Strategic Plan are addressed.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Federal and Provincial Plans

In 2016, the federal government released *Canada's Road Safety Strategy 2025*. It is Canada's fourth national road safety strategy, and its purpose is to guide the national effort to address road safety issues by providing a framework for governments and other road safety stakeholders to establish their own road safety plans. Vision Zero and a Safe Systems Approach are central to the national framework.

The *BC Road Safety Strategy 2025: A Collaborative Framework for Road Safety* is a framework for road safety that is grounded in Vision Zero, has goals that align with federal and international targets, and is based on a comprehensive Safe Systems Approach.

Official Community Plan (OCP)

The RSAP aligns with Saanich's OCP which envisions livable neighbourhoods where different travel modes connect neighbourhoods and allow for the efficient and safe movement of people who travel on foot, by bike or on transit.

Strategic Plan (2019-2023)

The Strategic Plan builds on the OCP policies and articulates goals to guide staff in delivering municipal services, setting priorities, and developing programs. Strengthening road safety for all transportation modes is a key goal in the Strategic Plan.

The Strategic Plan also prioritizes implementation of initiatives/actions that will ensure that planning goals are achieved. Key road safety initiatives prioritized for action include:

- Collaborate with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI) to identify and undertake safety improvements and advance active transportation initiatives.
- Strengthen transportation safety for all road users – implement initiatives from the Active Transportation Plan that improve transportation safety.

CONCLUSION

Once developed, the RSAP will articulate a vision and guiding principles for road safety in Saanich. It will also identify actions and a process and timeline for prioritized implementation and monitoring. Collaboration with road safety partners will be critical, not only in development of the plan, but also as we move forward with implementation.

The process to develop the RSAP began in April 2022. Work is well-underway, and the draft Plan is on schedule for public engagement in fall 2023. The final draft plan will be presented to Council in late fall 2023.

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Appendix:

Appendix A: Current State of Road Safety Report

Appendix B: Summary of workshop feedback

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER'S COMMENTS:

I endorse the recommendation from the Director of Engineering.

Brent Reems, Chief Administrative Officer