



# Saanich E-bike Incentive Pilot Program Focus Group Results

The District of Saanich worked with the Greater Victoria Community Social Planning Council (CSPC) to gather qualitative feedback from participants in the Saanich Community E-bike Incentive Pilot Program. This was done through a series of focus groups to better understand participants' experiences with the pilot to inform future programs.

The focus groups were conducted by CSPC staff as part of the Transportation ACES (Access, Climate, and Economic Security) initiative. This brought together individuals and organizations with expertise in climate, transportation, and equity to develop ideas on how to ensure that climate action in transportation addresses both equity and a just transition. The TACES initiative was funded by the Vancouver Foundation.

## FOCUS GROUP DESIGN

Three focus group sessions were conducted with participants in the income qualified tiers of the Saanich e-bike pilot. Invitations to the focus groups were distributed to 120 income-qualified participants (those participants that had applied to the program within the previous 12 months). Focus groups were held on evenings and weekends. A \$25 honorarium for participating in the focus group was offered. Honoraria were administered by the CSPC and sent by e-transfer. Eight participants attended the focus groups, as outlined below:

- **May 13, 2023 (Focus group A):** 3 participants
- **May 15, 2023 (Focus group B):** 2 participants
- **May 17, 2023 (Focus group C):** 3 participants

This represented a 7% response rate, which exceeded our 5% goal. The focus groups included people of different ages, genders, and ethnicities but skewed younger and female overall. A broad range of prompt questions were developed that covered topics regarding their experience with the application process and other climate incentive programs, their experience with their e-bikes, transportation affordability and accessibility generally, and other comments about barriers to cycling in the region. The focus groups were facilitated by a representative from the CSPC with Saanich staff also in attendance to hear the answers and to ask follow up questions to better understand the participants' experiences.



## SUMMARY OF FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS

### Incentive process:

- Focus group participants' experience with the program were quite positive in terms of the benefit it brought to their lives.
- The application process received very positive feedback, although some noted that it was stressful to not know if there would be enough incentives for them.
- Most focus group participants had not accessed other climate incentive programs before.

### Transportation affordability:

- All said that their e-bike delivered financial savings when they rode it rather than paying for a vehicle trip or foregoing a monthly bus pass.
- Participants reported using their e-bike to substitute car trips and also bus trips and cycling trips.
- No one felt financially burdened as a result of purchasing an e-bike through the program.

### Cycling and parking experiences:

- Focus group participants' experiences with their e-bikes were quite positive.
- Many reported using their e-bikes for many types of trips, such as commuting to work or school, buying groceries, or recreation.
- There was some difference in opinion about protected bike lane design.
- One participant had a bike stolen but it was recovered and they are riding it again.
- Those who lived in single family homes had an easier time storing their e-bikes at home than those who lived in multi-family homes.
- Many liked the idea of staffed bike valets like in downtown Victoria and Hillside Mall.
- No participants had used the available discounted e-bike safety skills courses, some noting that they had experienced a fall from their e-bike (note that they continued to ride their e-bike after).
- Some participants expressed interest in facilitated group rides.



### Overall feedback:

- Generally, participants believed it was a good offer from Saanich and would likely ride even more with better separated cycling infrastructure and safer bike parking at destinations throughout the community.

### FOCUS GROUP QUOTES

*"The great thing about your program is there's a tiers system, right? And the amount are significant. If you can offer like a hundred dollars, \$200, you can call that a program, but hey, people wouldn't really budge, right? [...] The amount is reasonable and it can really make a difference influence people's decision."*

*"The bike is perfect for me. I don't need a car."*

*"I've got a regular bike, but you know, I just couldn't do the hills [...] until I bought the e-bike and that I've been riding probably 3 times 4 times a week."*

*"I think it's a great program. Really glad I did it."*

*"It's definitely cheaper than the gas in the car. That's for sure."*

*"Yeah, it was really helpful. Because since I migrated in my mid-thirties, so it's like from scratch to start my career and everything. [...] So I was really stressed about my expenses every month [...] So this was really helpful, because I clearly could calculate that it could save me the bus pass for a month, and it would give me much more mobility in the city."*

*"Having this bike, I've completed lots of like tasks that usually you consider, "Oh, it's a car task!" I do groceries, [...] I can still go uphill and all that. So, it's very reachable."*