

# SCHOOL TRAVEL PLAN

Doncaster Elementary



Transportation and  
Development Division  
January 2018



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The 2016/2017 Active & Safe Routes to School Program is part of People Power, the Active Transportation and Healthy Communities Program, which aims to motivate, support and encourage residents to walk, roll and cycle more often. People Power has been made possible through the generosity of our funding partners.



The Capital Regional District (CRD) is the regional government for 13 municipalities and three electoral areas on southern Vancouver Island and the nearby Gulf Islands, serving more than 377,000 citizens.



The District of Saanich, with a population of 114,000 people, is a sustainable community where providing opportunities for balanced, active and diverse healthy lifestyles is recognized as paramount for ensuring social well-being and economic vibrancy, for current and future generations.



The Real Estate Foundation is a philanthropic organization based in British Columbia. Their mission is to transform land use attitudes and practices through innovation, stewardship and learning.



The Traffic Safety Commission's purpose is to review traffic safety problems in the capital region and make recommendations for reducing or eliminating the problems.



The Victoria Foundation is a community foundation that connects visionary donors with causes that truly matter, to invest in people, projects and non-profit organizations that make communities stronger – now and for the long-term.

**Capital Regional District**

[www.crd.bc.ca/project/regional-transportation/active-safe-routes-to-school](http://www.crd.bc.ca/project/regional-transportation/active-safe-routes-to-school)

**District of Saanich**

[www.saanich.ca/EN/main/community/getting-around/walking/safe-routes-to-school.html](http://www.saanich.ca/EN/main/community/getting-around/walking/safe-routes-to-school.html)

**HASTeBC**

[www.hastebc.org](http://www.hastebc.org)

**National Active and Safe Routes to School**

[www.saferoutestoschool.ca/school-travel/planning](http://www.saferoutestoschool.ca/school-travel/planning)

## Summary

The purpose of this School travel Plan is to provide a summary of the 18 month school travel planning (hereinafter: STP) process at Doncaster Elementary (hereinafter: Doncaster). The School Travel Plan is a living document belonging to the school that should be revisited regularly in order to update the status of the Action Plan items and to incorporate future evaluation findings. The School Travel Plan identifies and prioritizes engineering, encouragement and enforcement actions aimed at creating a safe and more comfortable environment for students and their families to walk, bike and roll to school.

This document consists of information compiled since the Capital Regional District's (CRD) Active and Safe Routes to School program began at Doncaster in the fall of 2016. Results of the school travel planning process indicate an increase in active school travel mode share with recommendations that support creating different options for families to travel to and from school.

## Background

In 2016, the CRD initiated the School Travel Planning process as part of the CRD's Active and Safe Routes to School program. School districts and municipalities were solicited to identify schools that would benefit from school travel planning. Through this process, a total of twenty schools, across 10 municipalities and one electoral area were recruited to participate in the program. This report focuses on Doncaster located in the District of Saanich (hereinafter: Saanich).

## School Travel Planning

School Travel Planning is a community-based planning process that has been used with success to date in communities across Canada to increase the number of families choosing active transportation modes to get to and from school. School Travel Planning uses a collaborative approach, working to involve all relevant stakeholders

and enable communities to tackle the root causes of their schools' transportation challenges.

Key benefits of School Travel Planning are:

- Improved health and fitness of students
- Reduction in traffic congestion
- Improved traffic safety
- Reduction in pollution
- Improved air quality

STP involves a network of representatives of key school-transportation stakeholder groups who make up an External Partners Network and inform and support the STP process. Organizations and individuals that contributed to Doncaster's STP process included administrators, teachers, staff, parents, and students from the school as well as staff from Saanich, the Greater Victoria School District, Saanich Police, Island Health, and other community partners.

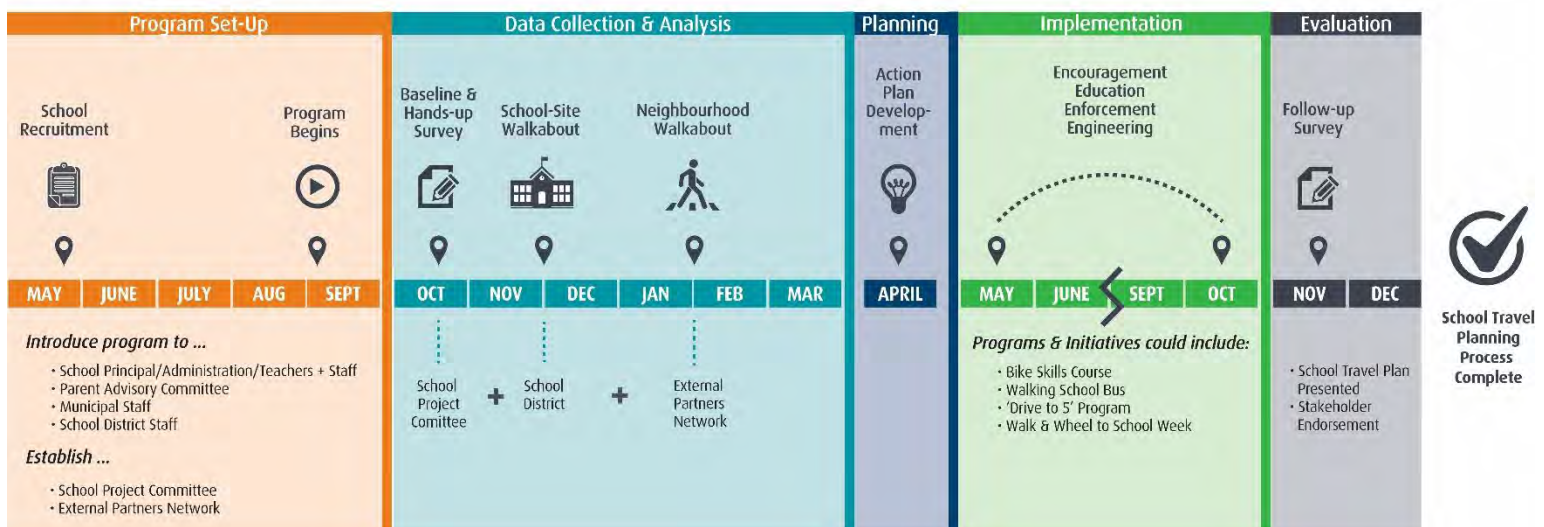
At individual schools, the STP process is led by an STP Facilitator, who convenes a School Committee, comprised of staff, parents, and administration, to outline specific active school travel barriers and solutions, developing the foundation and specifics for each school's Travel Plan

## School Travel Planning Process

There are five phases in the 18-months school travel planning process.

### Active & Safe Routes to School

#### SCHOOL TRAVEL PLANNING PROCESS



*“École Doncaster Elementary is a place for learning. We are all here to learn and to help others learn.”*

Doncaster is part of the Victoria School District (SD 61) and is located at 1525 Rowan St. in Saanich. For the 2016-2017 school year, 430 students were enrolled at Doncaster from full-day kindergarten to grade 5. Doncaster is a dual track French Immersion/English school.

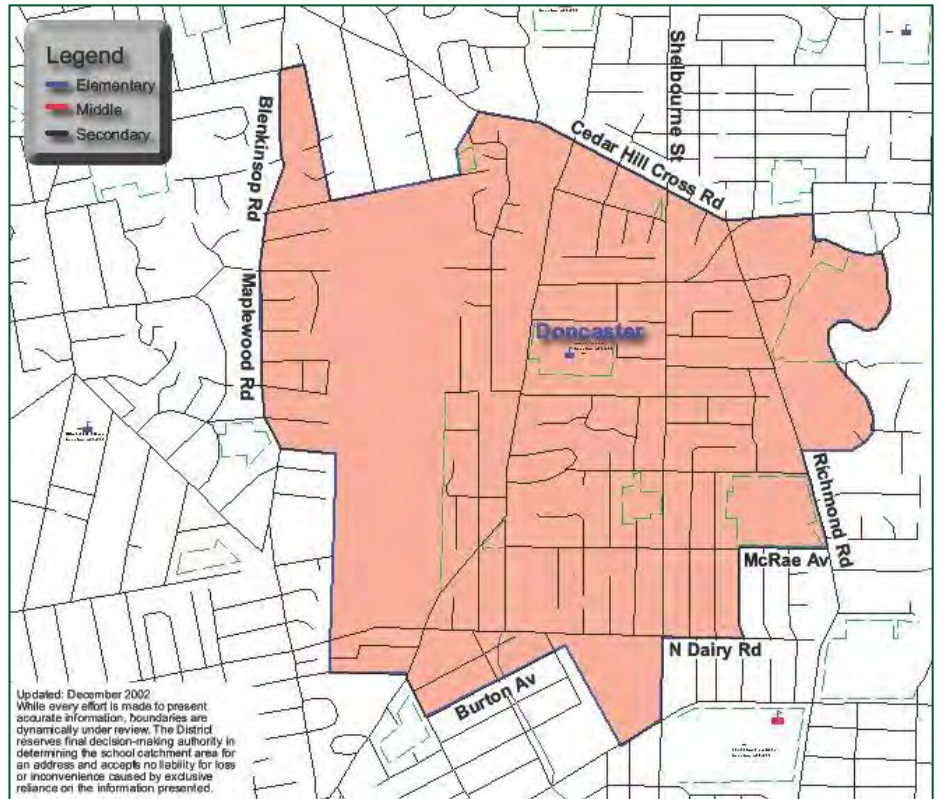


Figure 1- Doncaster's catchment area. Source: School District 61

## Neighbourhood Overview

Doncaster is located in the Cedar Hill neighbourhood of Saanich. The neighbourhood is bounded to the north by McKenzie Ave., to the west by Quadra St. and Cook St., to the south by North Dairy Rd., and to the east by Shelbourne St.

Cedar Hill is home to a variety of older and newer residential subdivisions with a commercial area located along Shelbourne St. to the east of the school. To the west of the school is the Cedar Hill Golf Course that has a municipally owned multi-use path that provides a link from Maplewood Rd. to Cedar Hill Rd. close to the school.

## Transportation Overview

Doncaster is located on Rowan St. just east of Cedar Hill Rd. There are sidewalks along the south side of the section of Rowan St. near the school, and on both the east and west side of Cedar Hill Rd.

There is a bike lane that provides a north-south route on Cedar Hill Rd. with bollards for the section adjacent to the school to provide a barrier from vehicle traffic. Pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure is growing in Saanich with the implementation of Saanich's Active Transportation Plan. Many of the neighbourhood streets surrounding Doncaster do not currently have dedicated pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, but there are plans to either upgrade existing facilities or install new facilities.

Doncaster's main entrance is on the north side of the school, facing Rowan St. Students enter the building through doors on the east, west and north sides of the school. Supervision of students commences at 8:25 am and concludes at 3:05 pm.

Bike racks are located on the north side of the school facing Rowan St. with another rack located on the north-west side of the building. There is a pedestrian path surrounding the school for students to walk their bikes to the second bike rack location. There is a staff and visitor parking lot to north of the school off Rowan St.



## Methodology and Results

Baseline school travel data was collected through a variety of methods, including student hands-up surveys, family take-home surveys, a school site visit and walkabout, and meetings with the school community.

Baseline hands-up surveys and family take-home surveys were completed in October 2016.

The school site walkabout at Doncaster took place in November 2016 and the neighbourhood walkabout occurred in February 2017. The walkabouts were attended by parents, students, the principal and various other members of the External Partners Network, who observed the school's travel patterns and toured the area to investigate and examine concerns. The walkabout informed the Travel Challenges section of this report, as well as the Best Routes to School Map and the School Travel Action Plan, both of which are attached as appendices to this document.

## Surveys

Take-home surveys were distributed in October 2016 and a teacher facilitated hands-up survey was conducted from October 24 to October 28, 2016. Classroom teachers recorded daily mode share students used to get to and from school over a one-week period. Five classrooms participated in the hands-up survey. A copy of the hands-up survey can be found in Appendix A.

The take-home survey is part of the data collection process and helps inform the school walkabouts and action plan.

Parents were asked to complete one survey for their family and send it back with their eldest child. Students filled out the surveys with their parents and reported on how they travel to/from school, how far they live from their school, and reasons for using their chosen travel mode. Families who indicated that they usually drive to and/or from school were asked what would need to change in order for them to consider

using active transportation for the journey. Families were also given a map to identify the route they currently take if they usually walk or bike to school, or the route they would take if they were to begin using active transportation.

A 30% response rate was met to ensure accurate representation. A total of 142 families completed the survey. The take-home survey is attached to this document as Appendix B.

## School-site Walkabout

Many schools throughout North America, particularly older schools in urban areas, were designed and constructed when most students walked or biked to school. More recently, schools have been designed or renovated to accommodate high rates of driving students to school, often at the expense of students who walk or cycle.

A frequent issue related to existing school sites is how to balance facilities for pedestrians and people on bicycles, including sidewalks, safe crossing areas and bicycle parking, with automobile and bus facilities, including driveways, travel lanes, parking lots, drop-off/pick-up areas and loading zones.

The Doncaster school-site walkabout took place on November 22, 2016. The walkabout included a 30 minute review of on-site facilities and a 30 minute debrief to discuss potential solutions to on-site transportation challenges. The group focused on four areas: school entrances, pedestrian pathways, potential conflicts, and bicycle parking. It was an opportunity for parents, principals and school district staff to come together to explore school-site challenges and brainstorm actions that might address identified challenges. See Appendix C for a summary of the school-site walkabout.

## Neighbourhood Walkabout

Infrastructure surrounding a school can influence how families travel to and from school. Neighbourhood walkabouts provide an

opportunity for stakeholders to come together and assess the transportation landscape and consider what could be improved to provide a safer and more attractive environment for students and families to use active transportation.

On February 27, 2017, stakeholders were invited to participate in a neighbourhood walkabout to explore transportation challenges in the Doncaster neighbourhood and brainstorm actions that might address those challenges. Specifically, participants were asked to identify what education, enforcement and engineering interventions could help create a safer space to walk and bike to school.

Each participant was provided with a walkabout map identifying the areas of highest concern that came through the baseline surveys (Figure 2). The walkabout route was informed by feedback collected through the take-home surveys as well as other comments from parents and students about areas of concern. After the walkabout, attendees participated in a debrief discussion about solutions and opportunities to the identified challenges. See Appendix D for a summary of the neighbourhood walkabout.

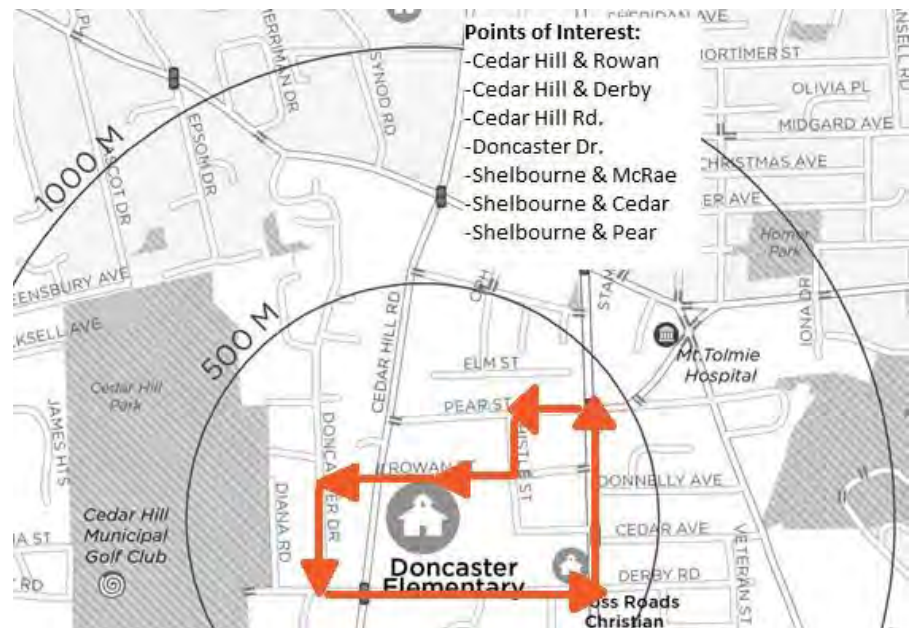


Figure 2- Cut-out from Doncaster's walkabout observation sheet

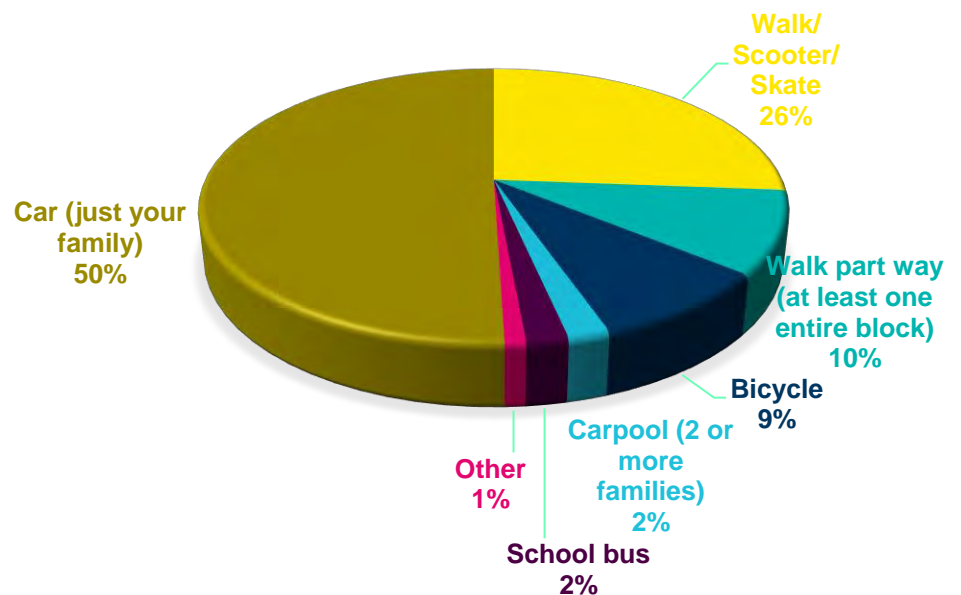
Both walkabouts were followed by meetings at which participants debriefed and discussed their experiences, and began brainstorming solutions to the challenges they had observed. The walkabouts and subsequent discussions informed the School Travel Action Plan developed for Doncaster, which is attached to this document as Appendix E.

## Baseline Findings

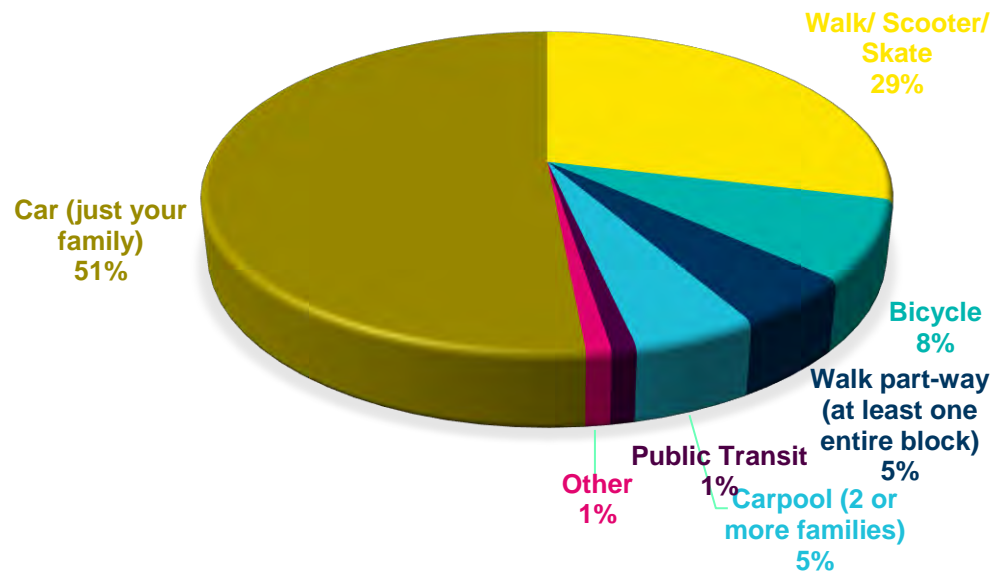
### Hands up Survey Results

Five divisions of students from Kindergarten-grade 5 participated in baseline hands-up surveys in October 2016. Teachers asked students to raise their hands when identifying their method of travel to school, and recorded responses daily over the course of one week. Results from this survey are presented below.

### MAIN MODE OF TRAVEL TO SCHOOL



## MAIN MODE OF TRAVEL FROM SCHOOL



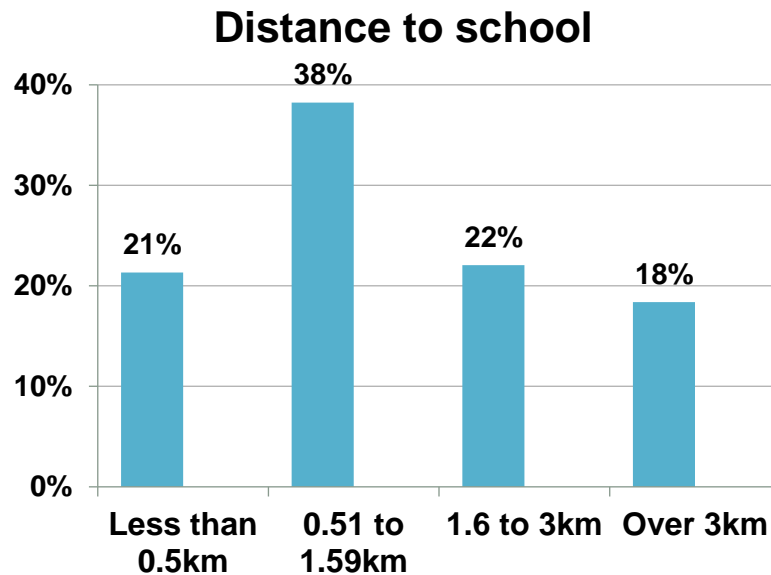
### Take Home Survey Results

The take home survey was completed by 142 families, out of 430 students that attended Doncaster for the 2016-2017 school year. Families who had more than one child at Doncaster were asked to only complete one survey.

According to the take-home survey, families at Doncaster arrive at school by car more than any other mode of travel, which places single-family car travel mode share at 50%. Another 3% of students carpool to school. Over one quarter of families (28%) walk, skate or scooter to school, and another 2% walk part way. There are 13% of families biking to school. Only 1% of students take the school bus to Doncaster and 3% take public transit.

The travel patterns at the end of the day, travelling from school, do not significantly differ from the morning travel patterns at Doncaster.

There is a slight increase in car travel in the afternoon as 51% of families travel home using single-family car travel, whereas there is a slight decrease in students walking (27%) and biking (12%). There is a slight increase in the number of students taking public transit (4%) and carpooling (4%) with other families. Through the qualitative comments provided in the survey, it was identified that the 1% of those who travel by ‘other’ modes are being picked up for daycare.

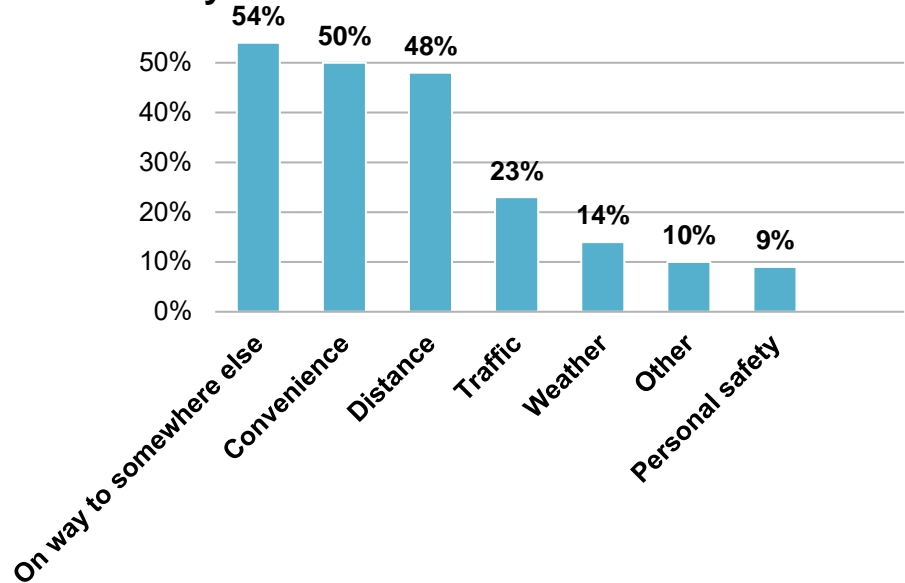


Only 18% of Doncaster families who completed the survey live over 3 km away from the school, which means that 82% of the school is within walking or biking distance to the school. Of families who responded to the take-home survey, 21% live within 500m of the school and another 38% live between 0.51-1.59 km. Of the students who live less than 500m from the school, 17% are driven.

For the next section of questions, families were allowed to choose up to three answers.

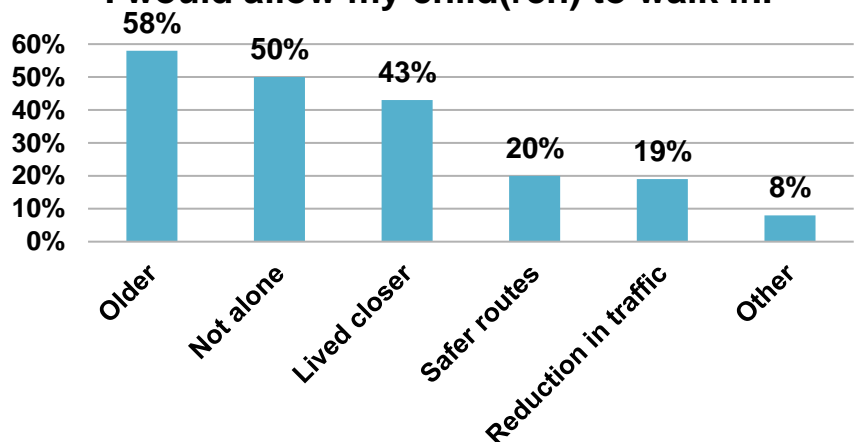
According to the take-home survey, over half of survey respondents identified that they drive to school because they are on their way to somewhere else (54%) and 50% identified that it is convenient. Another 48% of families identified that distance is a factor in why they choose to drive to/from school.

### Why do families at Doncaster drive?

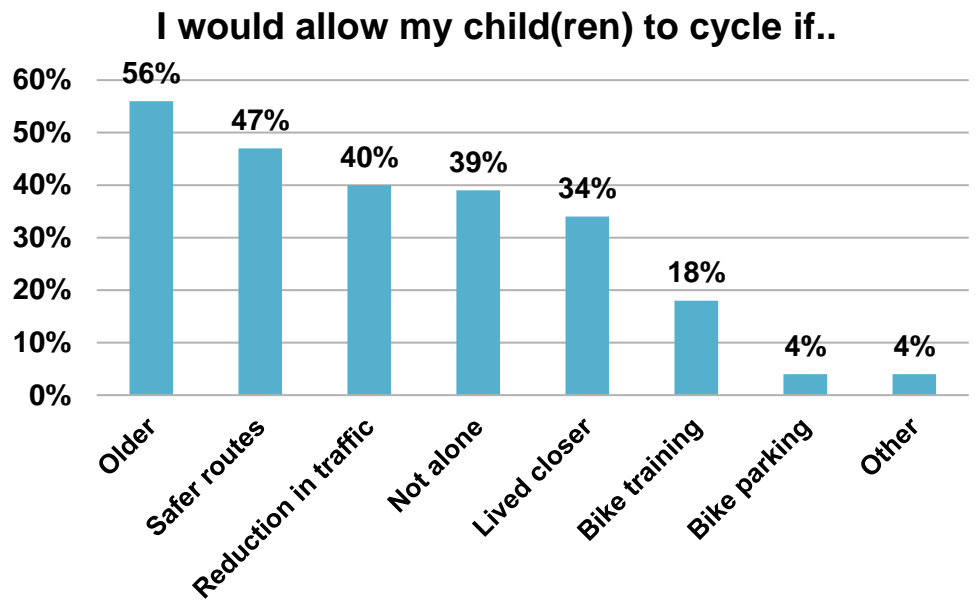


Over half of the respondents to the take-home survey indicated that they would allow their child(ren) to walk to school if they were older (58%) and half indicated they would if they were not alone (50%). Another 43% indicated they would allow their child(ren) to walk if they lived closer to the school.

### I would allow my child(ren) to walk if..



Again, over half of parents (56%) would let their children cycle to school if they were over. Almost half of parents indicated if there were safer routes to bike to school they would let their child(ren) (47%). Another 40% of respondents identified that if there were a reduction in traffic they would let their child ride to school.





School travel challenges are the barriers to active travel faced by families and students at Doncaster. These challenges were identified through a variety of forums: take-home family surveys, where families were presented with a map to identify particular areas of concern in the neighbourhood, through Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) meetings, through school-site and neighbourhood walkabouts and through conversation with the Principal and other members of the school community.

Many of the travel challenges were further explored in the neighbourhood walkabout, where municipal stakeholders and the school community came together to explore these areas of concern and to brainstorm potential solutions.

This section, along with the Action Plan, identifies some of the challenges and potential ways to address and overcome these challenges in order to encourage more active school travel at Doncaster.

## 1. Rowan Street & Cedar Hill Road



*Figure 2- Rowan St. facing east. There are often cars parked on both sides of the street.*

The Rowan St. and Cedar Hill Rd. intersection is located north-west of the school. In the baseline survey, parents identified that this is a busy intersection with vehicles travelling over the 30km/h school zone speed.

There is no cycling infrastructure on Rowan St., and only a northbound bike lane on Cedar Hill Rd.

There are also a number of cars parking on both sides of Rowan St., reducing the road to one-lane, making this area a concern for accessing school property.

## 2. Pathway connecting Doncaster Drive to Cedar Hill Road

There is an existing path connecting Doncaster Dr. to Cedar Hill Rd. The path is narrow and cannot accommodate people walking two abreast. There is also a sharp bend in the path, making it difficult for cyclists travelling east-west to see oncoming users. It was discussed at the neighbourhood walkabout that parents are often parking in front of the trail head on Doncaster Dr., which prevents users from accessing the path.



Figure 3- Path from Doncaster Dr. to Cedar Hill Rd.

## 3. Derby Road & Cedar Hill Road Intersection

The Derby Rd. and Cedar Hill Rd. intersection was one that was identified as being of significant concern in both the baseline survey and neighbourhood walkabout. The sidewalks leading up to the intersection drop off into the road area at all sides of the intersection. There is no dedicated or protected space for pedestrians to wait to cross the road. The sidewalk on the south west side of the intersection is very narrow and leads to the closest bus stop and community centre.



Figure 4- Cedar Hill and Derby intersection facing south



Concerns about the school zone sign on Cedar Hill Rd. were raised on the neighbourhood walkabout. It is placed prior the Derby Rd. and Cedar Hill Rd. intersection when travelling northbound, and this raised concerns of drivers not knowing they are in a school zone. Participants were supportive of having the school zone sign moved further north in Cedar Hill Rd.

In addition to this, it was noted at the neighbourhood walkabout that there are no audible signals at the intersection. Participants noted they would like this installed at the intersection to let people know that the button has been pressed to change the light and to let people know when to walk.

## 4. Shelbourne Street & Cedar Avenue

The intersection of Shelbourne St. and Cedar Ave. was identified as an area of concern through the baseline survey. The intersection has a pedestrian controlled traffic signal, but the road is wide and takes a long time to cross. In addition to this, vehicles are turning onto Shelbourne St. from Cedar Ave. when students are crossing the crosswalk.

## 5. Pear Street

Pear Street was identified as an area of concern in both the baseline survey and neighbourhood walkabout. The street does not have any sidewalks or cycling facilities. Speed is of concern on this street, as well as high traffic volumes



*Figure 6- Pear St. is very narrow, there is no pedestrian or cycling infrastructure.*



*Figure 7- Thistle Street is very narrow and does not have dedicated pedestrian or cycling space.*

## 6. Thistle Street

Thistle Street, similar to Pear Street, does not have any cycling or pedestrian infrastructure. Concerns about cars parked on the corner of Rowan and Thistle creates visibility issues. There are a number of vehicles that drive down Thistle Street to get to Doncaster.

## 7. Shelborne Street & McRae Avenue

The Shelborne Street and McRae Avenue intersection was highlighted as an area of concern in the baseline survey. Pedestrians are often faced with vehicles turning onto Shelbourne St. from McRae as they are crossing the street.



*Figure 8- Bike racks located at the front of the school*

## 8. Bike Racks at Doncaster Elementary

There are three bike racks located at the front entrance of the school in a visible and well-lit location. When entering school grounds, previous school policy asked students to dismount and walk bike to bike rack area. In an effort to increase ease and accessibility, this policy was reconsidered in 2016 and now students are to use their discretion and be considerate of other users.

Currently, there is bike parking to accommodate a large number and sizes of bikes. There are 2 racks at the front of the school that can accommodate up to 20 bikes, and an additional rack at the back of the school that can accommodate 8-10 bikes. With a high number of students biking to school in good weather, the racks cannot accommodate the number of bikes at the school. As a result, the school is in need of additional bike racks.

## School Travel Planning Goals

The main goal of the School Travel Planning process is to increase the number of children and their families that use active transportation. This brings a number of individual and collective benefits, which reduces the volume of vehicles in the school zones and makes those areas safer.

To achieve this goal, the school and its partners must support and encourage active transportation. Having events and activities for students is important, along with improving vital infrastructure to make sure that active transportation is a safe and viable option. The next section outlines interventions undertaken to date to achieve this.

## Implementation

The school-site and neighbourhood walkabout provided an opportunity for stakeholders to discuss solutions to the school's identified transportation challenges. The solutions can be divided into three different categories: engineering, enforcement and education/engagement.

Below is an overview of the solutions enacted. Interventions identified that have yet to be undertaken can be found in Doncaster's School Travel Action Plan, attached to this document as Appendix E.

## Action Plan

Recommendations and actions that emerged from the School Travel Planning process were documented in a School Travel Action Plan. The Action Plan features engineering, enforcement, education, engagement and encouragement actions for which the school community and members of the External Partner Network are responsible. A variety of actions can be taken, in the holistic process

of school travel planning, to support more active travel to and from school. Doncaster's School Travel Action Plan is attached as Appendix E to this document.

Each action can be identified to support one or more of the following goals:

- 1) Improve walking routes to school
- 2) Improve cycling routes to school
- 3) Improve traffic safety in the school zone
- 4) Encourage uptake of active travel to and from school
- 5) Promote alternative student drop-off location
- 6) Monitor effectiveness of School Travel Planning efforts

## Engineering

### District of Saanich

Saanich has moved the school zone sign on Cedar Hill Rd. The sign is now further north on Cedar Hill Rd, so that drivers turning north onto Cedar Hill from Derby are aware that they are entering a school zone. Saanich has also installed collapsible bollards on Cedar Hill Rd. to restrict parents from parking in the bike lane.

## Education and Engagement

### Best Routes to School Map

The Best Routes to School Map features the best walking and cycling routes that connect all areas of the catchment to the school (Appendix F). Routes are selected based on information provided in the take-home survey results and during the neighbourhood walkabout, consultation with the PAC, and a review of existing infrastructure. Where applicable, the routes selected feature pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure such as sidewalks, bike lanes, and marked crosswalks.

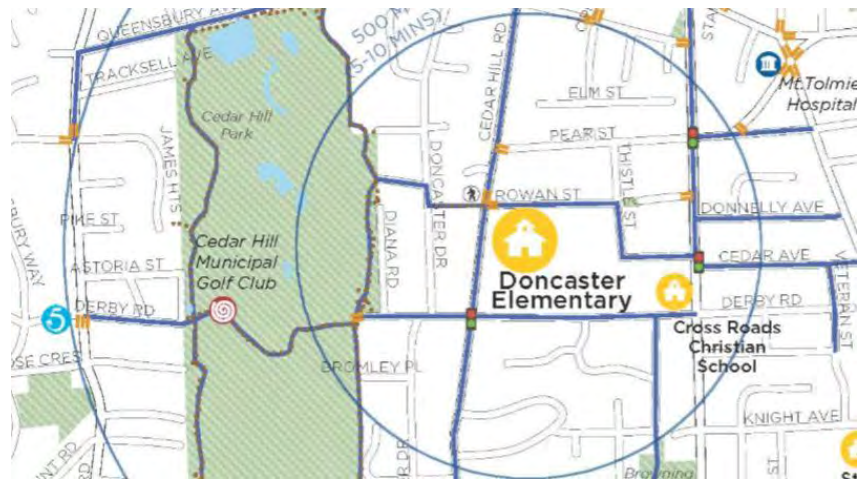


Figure 9- Cut-out of Doncaster's Best Routes to School Map

### Bike Maintenance Clinic & After School Safety Checks

The CRD funded a bike maintenance clinic and afterschool safety checks during Bike to Work Week in May 2017 given by Mountain Equipment Co-op. The clinics taught students the basic mechanical knowledge of their bikes, such as what the components of the bike are, diagnosing problems and fixing a flat a tire. The afterschool safety checks allowed for some minor tune-ups and safety checks for students who had ridden their bikes to school that day.

### Bike to Work and School Week

Doncaster participated in Bike to Work and School Week May 29 to June 2, 2017. During this week, Doncaster had nearly two-thirds of the school walking and biking, and had 444 trips to school by bike. Brenna O'Connor, the principal at Doncaster, led a principal's walk from Kings Pond on March 31. Having students walk to school from King's Pond significantly reduced the amount of traffic in the front of the school on this day.

Doncaster won a bike rack from the Greater Victoria Bike to Work Society during this week for their participation.

### Drive to 5 Program

A Drive to 5 Program can be an effective way of encouraging those parents who have to bring their cars to school to park away from the school and walk the remainder of the journey. The program can help make the area around the school a safer and more pleasant environment for everyone, as well as enabling families to become more active and healthy.

Drive to 5 was implemented at the Cedar Hill Golf Course during Walk and Wheel to School Week. Newsletter information was provided in the spring and in the fall prior to Walk and Wheel to School Week. There was not a significant turnout of families participating in the program during this week. Doncaster would like to continue to promote the program to encourage future participation. More newsletter information has been provided to remind parents to not park in the bike lane on Cedar Hill Road when dropping their child(ren) off, and encourages the use of the Cedar Hill Golf Course as a Drive to 5 Location. Drive to 5 newsletter information can be found in Appendix G.

### Walk & Wheel to School Week

The Capital Regional District held a Walk and Wheel to School Week campaign from October 2-6, 2017. As part of this campaign, the school tracked the number of students walking and wheeling to school that week.

Newsletter information was provided to parents prior to Walk and Wheel to School Week. This provided parents new to Doncaster information about the Active and Safe Routes to School Program. Information was provided about Walk and Wheel to School Week and the Drive to 5 Program. See Appendix H for a copy of this newsletter.

During Walk and Wheel to School Week, Doncaster launched their Drive to 5 Program to encourage students to participate in walking to school.



A celebration station was held on October 3 after school. The blender bike was provided so students were able to ride the bike and make smoothies. Pamphlets containing Doncaster's best routes to school map was handed out to parents interested in having their child(ren) walking and wheeling to school (see Appendix I). Reflective tape was also given out to students with education material on visibility.

A neighbourhood walk was led by parent volunteers on October 6. Parents walked with students to school, with other families joining along the way to school.

### Scooter Rack

As part of the Active and Safe Routes to School program, the CRD purchased a skateboard and scooter rack for the school. The rack was installed at the end of the program to celebrate Doncaster's participation. The rack was installed at the front of the school next to the bike racks, in a highly visible and secure area.

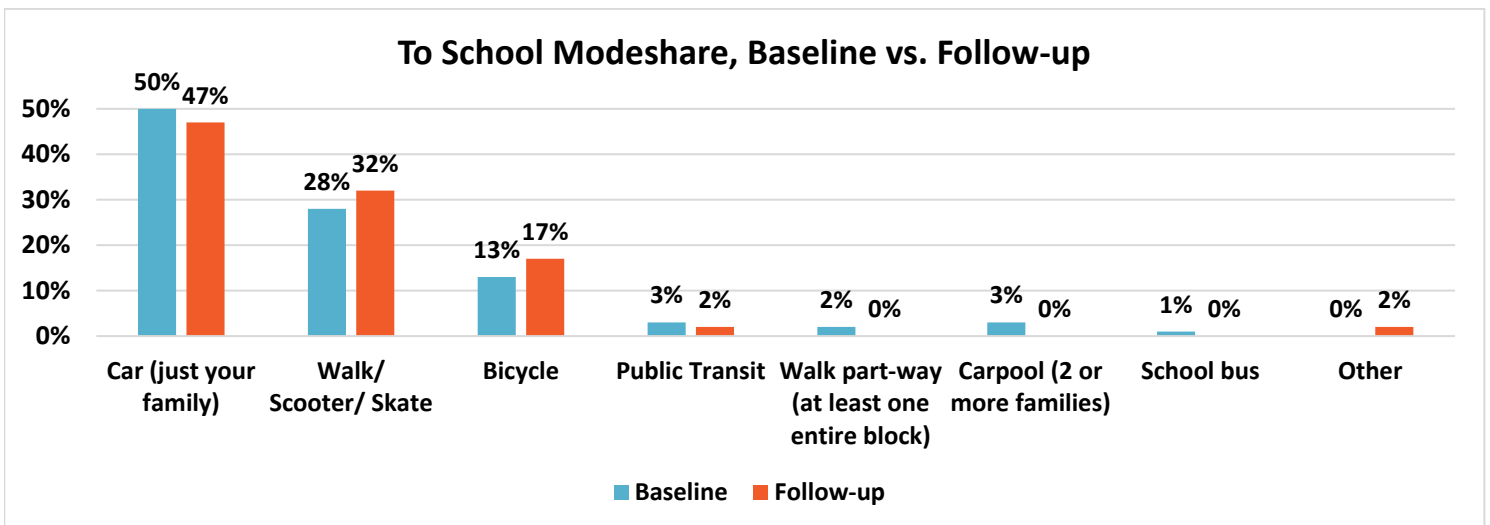
## Methodology and Results

Online surveys were completed during October and November 2017, a year after baseline data was collected. A total of 49 families completed the follow-up survey.

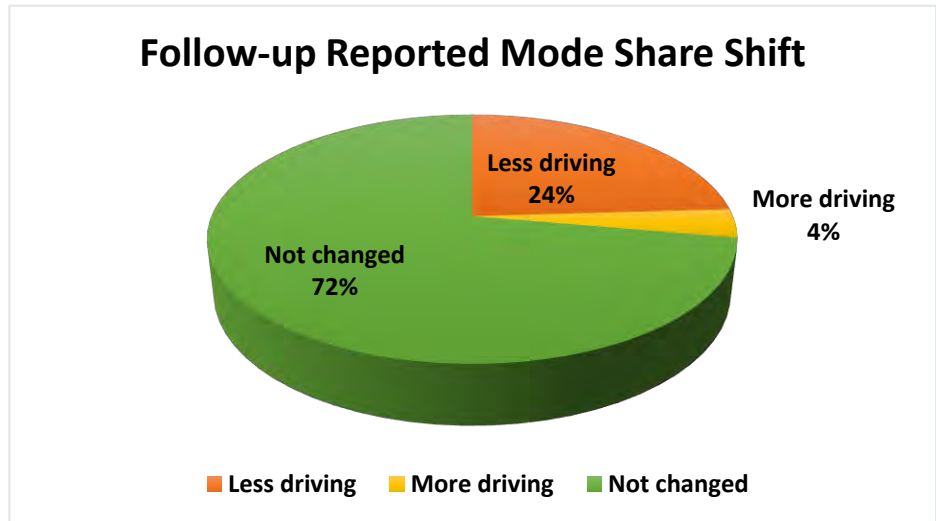
To confirm the data, generally speaking the travel mode trends were similar between the take home and hands up surveys across the participating schools. Still, it is important to note there are some limitations to the follow-up survey data. There was a lower response rate to the follow-up survey than the baseline survey. With this, there is a potential for response bias from active transportation interested parents. As well, within schools there is a student turnover of 16-33% between the baseline and follow-up survey.

### Results

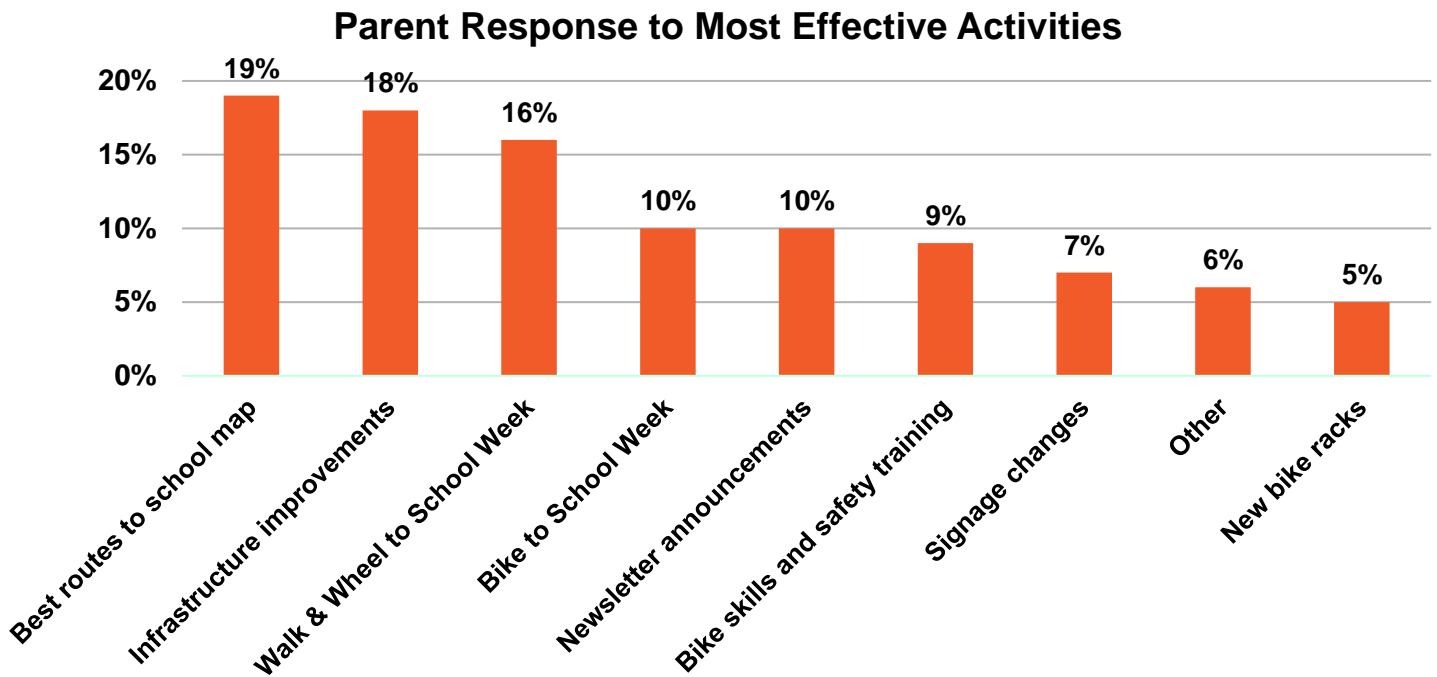
In the baseline survey conducted in October 2016, 50% of families drove to school, 28% walked and 13% bicycled. In the follow up survey, 47% of families reported driving to school, 32% reported walking and 17% reported bicycling.



of families driving changed from 50% to 47%, walking increasing from 28% to 32% and cycling increasing from 13% to 17%.



Parents who completed the survey felt that infrastructure improvements, the Best Routes to School Map and Walk and Wheel to School Week were the most effective activities. Anecdotally, parents expressed concerns about infrastructure that still need improvements, but express their interest in active travel once these improvements are made. As well, parents discussed the Best Routes to School map as being very helpful for new families attending Doncaster.



The results of the follow-up surveys are encouraging with more students using active transportation for their trips to and from school. Still, the follow-up survey was administered after a limited implementation period. Education and engagement programs continue at participating schools, while infrastructure improvements can take considerable time to implement with budget process and council approvals. If schools are reassessed in 3-5 years, a stronger reflection of travel behaviour change is expected.

## Conclusion

School travel planning is a process by which a school undergoes an assessment to review what education, engagement, enforcement and engineering initiatives could be undertaken to encourage and motivate students to use active transportation. The process aims to bring together a number of different stakeholders that all play a role in providing a safer and more comfortable

environment for students and families to choose active travel for the journey to and from school.

The School Travel Plan and accompanying Action Plan should be revisited annually to review what actions still need to be taken and what programs could be enhanced to continue to encourage students and families to use active travel. In addition, as new students and families start at the school, they should be made aware of the school travel plan, the best routes map and program options available to them.

## School Travel Planning Members

### School Committee

Principal: Brenna O'Connor  
PAC President: Katia Dilkina  
Member at Large: Erin Prescott

### External Partner Network

District of Saanich, Engineering: Troy McKay & Sandra Liddell  
SD61, Healthy, Safe & Caring Schools Coordinator: Marnice Jones  
SD61, Director of Facilities: David Loveridge  
SD61, Trustee: Rob Paynter  
ICBC: Colleen Woodger  
Saanich Police: Shannon Olgilvie  
Island Health: Janelle Hatch  
Greater Victoria Cycling Coalition: Edward Pullman