

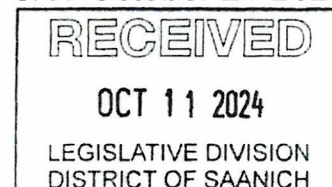


The Corporation of the District of Saanich

Report

C/W-October-21-2024

To: Mayor and Council
From: Harley Machielse, Director of Engineering
Date: 10/21/2024
Subject: Final Road Safety Action Plan



RECOMMENDATIONS

That Council adopt the Road Safety Action Plan and direct staff to:

1. Bring forward a resource request to increase annual operating funding by \$250,000 in the draft 2025 Financial Plan to support implementation of non-infrastructure items in the Road Safety Action Plan;
2. Bring forward a one-time resource request of \$2,000,000 in the draft 2025 Financial Plan to support implementation of infrastructure changes in the short-term (0-2 years);
3. Develop a long-term funding strategy that considers a strategic mix of taxation and borrowing;
4. Explore business cases for possible new revenue generation to be included in the 2026 financial plan; and
5. Pursue provincial and federal grants dedicated to infrastructure and road safety improvements.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's support for the final *Road Safety Action Plan* (RSAP) which is a 10-year document to achieve Vision Zero. Using systems thinking – called the Safe System Approach – the plan outlines an integrated process and series of actions to address safe speeds, safe road users, safe vehicles, safe road design, post-crash care, and safe land use planning.

The RSAP is evidence-based and grounded in data. It is informed by technical analysis, best practices research and the opinions and ideas of stakeholders and the public. It builds on the investments that Saanich is currently making to improve active transportation with infrastructure improvements, speed limit reductions, and traffic calming. If adopted, this plan will guide our work and ensure that we are taking the necessary steps to provide safe, healthy, and equitable mobility for Saanich residents.

Implementation of the RSAP will require an estimated \$21 million over 10 years. Five million of this can be accommodated using existing municipal resources and through coordination with other planned work. It is recommended that the remaining \$16 million, including the \$2.5 million for non-infrastructure items and \$13.5 million for new capital work will be provided using a combination of strategies including taxation, borrowing, grant funding, and new revenue streams.

DISCUSSION

Background

In February 2022 Council adopted Vision Zero as the approach to road safety in Saanich and they directed staff to develop a RSAP.

The objectives of the RSAP, as outlined in the approved Terms of Reference were to:

- To create a plan using data and in alignment with current policy.
- To provide direction on road safety and reflect the principles of Vision Zero and the Safe System 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 process to monitor and report on implementation on a regular basis.

In response to Council's direction, the RSAP that has been developed over the past two and a half years aligns with Vision Zero and the Safe System Approach. The plan articulates a vision and mission, and eight guiding principles. It also provides an overview of the community and equity issues related to transportation. It details the current state of road safety in Saanich and identifies 30 primary and supporting actions that will guide future investment in policy, engineering (infrastructure design and construction), education and awareness, enforcement, and equity.

Collaboration with partners from across the road safety sector was key in the development of the RSAP and it will play a critical role in the timely and effective implementation of the plan.

Planning Process

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

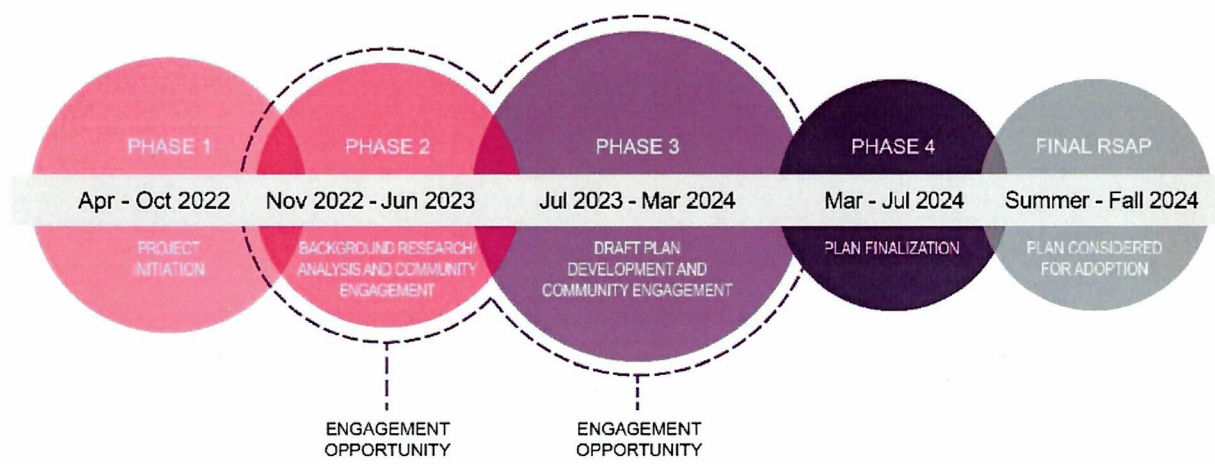


Figure 1: Project timeline

A summary of the activities undertaken in the development of this plan is outlined in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Summary of process activities by phase

PHASE	ACTIVITIES
1 (Apr-Oct 2022)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project launch Finalize membership and structure of the Steering Committee Launch a project webpage and build public awareness
2 (Nov 2022-Jun 2023)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collect and analyse crash data; conduct best practices research Prepare the baseline report: <i>Current State of Road Safety in Saanich</i> Stakeholder and public engagement
3 (Jul 2023-Mar 2024)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional consultation with a diverse range of people Complete the Network Screening Develop the draft plan Stakeholder and public engagement
4 (Apr-Jul 2024)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalize the RSAP based on feedback from engagement Prepare for presentation to Council

Stakeholder and Public Engagement

Stakeholder and public engagement occurred throughout development of the RSAP. In Phase 2 the purpose of engagement was to understand the community's ideas and concerns about road safety in Saanich and to determine the level of support for the draft vision and guiding principles. We hosted a stakeholder workshop in March 2023 that was followed by a series of pop-up

engagements, open houses, and an online survey. Engagement during this phase was organized in coordination with the ATP update.

Engagement activities in Phase 3 were intended to gather input and gauge support for the draft RSAP. They involved meetings with individuals and groups, pop-up events, open houses, and an online survey.

Detailed summaries of the engagement processes are documented in the engagement summary documents dated, September 2023 and June 2024. Both documents are available online at: www.saanich.ca/roadsafetyaction.

Over the course of the project, approximately 80 individuals, organizations, agencies, and groups with a professional role or personal interest in road safety were contacted. In addition, local First Nations were notified of the project and invited to participate in the planning process.

Participation in engagement activities in Phases 2 and 3 is summarized in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Summary of Participation in Engagement Activities

Phase	Summary of Participation
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 stakeholder workshop with 38 participants representing 28 organizations 7 pop-up engagement events at locations that were informed by the equity analysis. In total, approximately 327 connections were made with people in Saanich. 2 open houses were hosted at different times and in different locations. In total, 86 people attended these events. 547 completed surveys.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over 20 meetings with road safety partners and equity-deserving groups 4 pop-up engagement events at locations that were informed by the equity analysis. In total, approximately 203 connections were made with people in Saanich. Approximately 260 people viewed two promotional videos about the RSAP 552 completed surveys

Supportive of the methods of engagement outlined above, a variety of communication tools were used to reach stakeholders and residents. These included email messages and notifications, social media, print media, utility bill inserts mailed to individual households, and website updates.

Steering Committee

A Steering Committee (SC) was created to provide advice to the Project Team and to act as a liaison to governments and key organizations and agencies throughout the planning process. The SC included nine individuals who represented the Saanich Police Department, ICBC, Vancouver Island Health Authority, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, and the Capital Regional District.

The SC met four times over the course of the project in August and September 2022, and March and November 2023. In September 2024, the final draft RSAP was shared with the SC.

Advisory Committees

The Project Team met with Council Advisory Committees throughout the planning process. A summary of the meetings in Phase 1, 2, and 3 is provided below:

Phase 1 and 2

- Active Transportation Advisory Committee (ATAC) (3 meetings)
- Planning, Transportation, and Economic Development (PTED) Advisory Committee

Phase 3

- Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)
- Accessibility, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) Advisory Committee

Recommendation Rationale

Engagement results

Findings from the various community engagement events and initiatives that occurred throughout the planning process are summarized in this section. The following results are from Survey #1 (Phase 2):

- 84% of survey respondents believe that it is important for Saanich to aim for Vision Zero and the majority (67%) feel that enhanced road design would have the biggest impact on achieving Vision Zero.
- 43% of respondents disagree or strongly disagree with the statement that Saanich streets are safe.
- Survey respondents indicated that they feel safest driving a car in Saanich. Transit users also reported feeling safe. Respondents who cycle and walk feel the least safe.
- According to respondents a lack of safe cycling and walking facilities is the top contributor to serious injuries and deaths. They also indicated that more bike lanes and sidewalks would increase their feelings of safety when travelling in Saanich.
- Top locations of concern were the Tillicum area including at the intersections of Highway 1 and several Saanich streets. The second highest number of concerns were recorded in the Quadra area.

The results from Survey #2 (Phase 3) indicate overall support for the RSAP with survey respondents giving it an average rating of 3.58 out of 5 stars, or 71.6% support. Key themes that emerged from the qualitative responses in the survey are summarized below:

- Respondents are supportive of the RSAP, but would like to the targets, timelines, and reporting process to be strengthened. They would like more immediate implementation.
- Many safety concerns relate to drivers travelling at high speeds close to other road users. Respondents would like to see speed reductions accompanied by education and enforcement. A smaller number of respondents did not support speed limit reductions.

- Enforcement plays an important role in reducing vehicle crashes and unsafe driving.
- A culture of safe road use is needed, and Saanich should be doing more to communicate with residents about safety topics

The engagement results indicate that support for the RSAP is closely tied to continued implementation of the ATP and speed limit reductions. It is also dependant on efforts to address safety through road design, including the construction of new infrastructure with demonstrated safety performance and implementing traffic calming measures. Education and enforcement will continue to play a key role in ensuring that residents know the rules of the road, and that there are consequences when they break them.

The feedback received through engagement was considered in the development and finalization of the RSAP.

Plan Content

Per Council's direction and in accordance with the approved Terms of Reference, the RSAP has been developed to achieve Vision Zero. It is data-driven and evidence-based and it aligns with the Safe System Approach. The plan also reflects key policy directions to increase active transportation and enhance community well-being and health.

Actions

There are 30 *primary* and *supporting* actions outlined in Section 7 of the RSAP that align with the goal of zero traffic fatalities and serious injuries. The actions are centred around the Safe System Approach to ensure that road safety is addressed in an integrated and comprehensive manner.

Saanich will play a key role in implementing the nine primary actions. These actions have the greatest potential to achieve Vision Zero. Through public engagement we heard support for the list of primary actions and the top three actions that people believe should be prioritized for implementation include:

- **Action #1** – Install safe infrastructure in priority locations identified in by a Network Screening
- **Action #2** – Build multi-modal streets that include transit priority and infrastructure for walking, rolling, and cycling.
- **Action #3** – Pursue infrastructure solutions with demonstrated positive safety performance.

The 21 supporting actions in the RSAP are also important in the pursuit of Vision Zero, but responsibility for implementation of these actions may be outside Saanich's immediate control. In addition, implementation may take longer, and these actions may be more difficult to monitor and evaluate.

We heard from some stakeholders and members of the public that the following actions should be higher priorities and that they should be identified as primary, not secondary actions:

- **Action #9** – Improve safety at high crash locations on highways
- **Action #17** – Encourage increased transit ridership to reduce private vehicle use and VKT

- **Action #24** – Develop and implement awareness and education campaigns on road safety
- **Action #25** – Develop and implement an education program focusing on transportation options for non-drivers

Based on this feedback, the action to improve safety at high crash locations on highways (#9) was elevated to a primary action.

While important to the overall goal of zero traffic deaths and serious injuries, actions #17, #24, and #25 are still identified as supporting actions in the final plan. Actions #24 and #25 are not the direct responsibility of Saanich and implementation will require that staff work closely with road safety partners including SPD, CRD, ICBC, RoadSafety BC and BC Transit.

Implementation of Action #17 will require that we work closely with BC Transit who provides the transit service in Saanich and is ultimately responsible for ridership.

Priority locations

Through a Network Screening process, which involved a review of crash data, 20 crash-prone locations in Saanich were identified including 13 intersections and 7 corridors. If the RSAP is adopted, further analysis will be undertaken in these locations to understand the nature of crashes and determine appropriate measures to mitigate and/or eliminate risks for road users. The 20 locations will then be prioritized for improvements based on several factors including priorities identified in the ATP and through the speed limit program and as part of a future traffic calming program. Factors including equity, project scope and budget, and potential coordination with utility projects will also be considered in the prioritization of these road safety projects.

Advocacy

A series of advocacy actions are included in the RSAP that pertain to enforcement and vehicle safety. While important to the overall goal of zero traffic deaths and serious injuries, these actions have provincial and national implications, and they are not in Saanich's direct control. Saanich will work collaboratively with partners to address these issues, recognizing that any advances made will take time and could impact all Canadians.

Data

The RSAP is based, in part, on evidence derived from available crash data sets. Through the analysis of data to inform this plan, it became clear that there are gaps and inconsistencies in the available data, which if addressed would enable a more complete understanding of crashes on Saanich roads involving different road users. Like our work on advocacy, efforts to improve data are outside Saanich's direct control and any progress we make to address data issues will take time and could have benefits for local authorities and road safety professionals across the province.

Implementation and monitoring

Effective and timely implementation of the RSAP will require focused effort, and collaboration with road safety partners. It will also require ongoing support from Saanich Council and input from the residents of Saanich. Sustainable funding will also be key to implementation of the plan.

Annual reporting on implementation will include tracking progress towards zero traffic fatalities and serious injuries and tracking capital investments in road safety. It will also include an assessment of different road users' perceptions of safety through the community survey.

A five-year review of the RSAP will be used to identify completed actions, prioritize remaining actions, and assess the overall success and impact of progress to date.

IMPACTS

Financial Implications

The RSAP outlines a comprehensive plan to improve road safety through a series of capital construction projects, and policy and program-related actions. The Plan includes the design and construction of new infrastructure, replacement of aging assets, and the establishment of policy and programs to guide and sustain long-term safety improvements.

Implementation of the RSAP will require significant investment in capital infrastructure work, as well as investment in new professional staff resources. If the plan is adopted by Council, a new position for a Road Safety Engineer would be required to oversee the following:

- Detailed safety audits and risk assessments;
- Design and implementation of safety projects;
- Strategic relationships and coordination with other municipal departments and external stakeholders;
- Monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of different safety measures; and
- Communications on road safety initiatives and updates to Council and the public.

Estimated Total Implementation Cost

The total cost to implement the RSAP over its 10-year lifespan is estimated at \$21 million (calculated in 2024 dollars). Of this amount, \$5 million can be accommodated using existing municipal resources and integrating road safety improvements into existing planned asset replacement and active transportation projects. The remaining \$16 million, including the \$2.5 million for policy development and staffing and \$13.5 million for new capital work will need to be secured through different funding strategies.

Funding Strategies

To fund the remaining \$16 million required for implementation of the RSAP, four different funding strategies are proposed for Council's consideration:

Strategy 1: Taxation

- Incremental increases in municipal property taxes could be implemented to generate revenue. For instance, a modest annual increase of 0.15% over 10 years could contribute a significant portion of the required funds.

Strategy 2: Borrowing

- The municipality could borrow to cover the upfront costs of projects. Borrowing \$16 million with a structured repayment plan over 15 years would spread the financial burden and allow immediate progress on critical projects. If Saanich were to borrow for the infrastructure portion there would need to be a budget increase to service that debt, which would require a modest annual tax increase.

Strategy 3: Grants

- The municipality could pursue provincial and federal grants dedicated to infrastructure and road safety improvements. Actively seeking out grant opportunities would help reduce the reliance on borrowed funds. Success in securing grants would also lessen the long-term taxation and debt obligations.

Strategy 4: New Revenue

- Development of a parking management program is a potential new revenue stream that staff could explore. The increasing demand for on-street parking in Saanich, as well as curb-side spaces for loading and deliveries, is creating challenges for residents, businesses, and visitors. Looking into parking programs, such as a residential paid parking permit program could address these issues and potentially generate significant revenue for the municipality.

Recommended Approach

Staff is recommending that Council consider a blended approach to fund implementation of the RSAP that accounts for the current financial realities and constraints of the municipality. The RSAP represents a significant and essential investment in the safety and well-being of Saanich residents on our roads. By exploring the use of different strategies including taxation, borrowing, grant funding, and new revenue, the District can ensure the successful and timely implementation of the plan and a greater likelihood of achieving our goal of zero traffic fatalities and serious injuries.

Strategic Plan Implications

The RSAP is consistent with the Council Strategic Plan 2023-2027. By focusing on safety, this plan ensures that the objectives and initiatives of the Strategic Plan are achievable.

Interdepartmental Implications

Enhancing road safety is a key priority for the SPD as noted in their 2023-2026 Strategic Plan. Through strategic initiatives, education and enforcement, and collaboration with stakeholders, the SPD is working to reduce the frequency and severity of crashes on Saanich roads. This includes pro-active enforcement to combat impaired, distracted, and dangerous driving, as well as working to protect the safety of vulnerable road users (VRUs) through enforcement, and targeted road safety initiatives and public safety campaigns.

The SPD has played a key role in development of the RSAP and they will be instrumental in its implementation. As Saanich's population grows and demands on the transportation system continues to increase, SPD will likely require additional traffic safety officers to meet public expectations for enforcement and education, and to ensure fulsome implementation of the RSAP.

The Engineering Department continues to work with the Planning Department to implement provincially mandated housing targets. The importance of a connected, convenient, and safe multi-modal transportation network to support projected land use changes and population growth is of primary importance.

The Engineering and Planning Departments, and the Sustainability Division are all working towards a common vision to ensure that people can live affordably and travel safely and easily in the community using sustainable transportation modes.

The Parks Division is working to achieve an equitable distribution of tree canopy throughout the District and to ensure that green infrastructure is considered as part of new transportation infrastructure projects. Engineering supports this work and continues to explore options to plant new trees and retain existing trees during the planning and design phases of road projects. If trees cannot be retained and protected, staff explore options to replace trees at a ratio of 3:1 in the same local area, whenever possible.

Policy Implications

The policy framework that provided direction to the RSAP includes international plans and declarations, as well as national, provincial, and local plans and strategies. The key documents referenced in the development of the RSAP are outlined below.

International Plans and Declarations

In 2021, the World Health Organization and the United Nations released a *Global Plan for the Decade of Action* that includes a target to reduce deaths and injuries on roads by at least 50% by 2030. It also identifies the Safe System Approach as the process to achieve this target.

National and Provincial Plans

Canada's *Road Safety Strategy 2025* is a national framework for reducing traffic injuries and fatalities. It is based on Vision Zero and promotes implementation of infrastructure and programs to achieve downward trends in the number of fatalities and serious injuries. The strategy incorporates international best practices in road safety such as the Safe System Approach.

British Columbia's *Road Safety Strategy 2025: a Collaborative Framework for Road Safety* builds on global and national direction and provides a structure to achieve provincial road safety goals. It is guided by Vision Zero and supports the global target of at least a 50% reduction in fatalities and serious injuries by 2030.

Saanich Plans, Strategies, and Policies

The *Official Community Plan* (OCP) is the principal legislative tool to guide growth and change in Saanich. It is an expression of community values and includes policy direction on the integration of land use and transportation, promotion of sustainable transportation options including transit, walking, rolling, and cycling, GHG reductions, affordable housing, and community well-being and livability.

The *Active Transportation Plan* (ATP) is Saanich's long-term plan to increase active transportation by improving connections and making it convenient and safe for people who walk, roll, ride a bike, or take the bus. The plan includes a target to increase the proportion of all trips in Saanich made by active modes to at least 50% by 2050 and it identifies short-, medium-, and long-term priorities for infrastructure to support this target. The ATP continues to guide the build-out of multi-modal streets.

Transportation is the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in Saanich. The *2020 Climate Plan* identifies targets for increased active transportation, and it supports active travel and transit-supportive policies to reduce GHG emissions and combat climate change. Consistent with this, the *Electric Mobility Strategy*, also prioritizes sustainable active transportation with actions to support the rapid transition to e-bikes.

The *Speed Limit Establishment Policy* is currently guiding changes to speed limits on Saanich roads. Speed management is a primary action in the RSAP, and implementation of the Speed Limit Establishment Policy is helping to reduce vehicle speeds and supporting a safe multi-modal transportation system for everyone.

A traffic calming policy and program is currently being developed for Saanich to support reduced speeds and safety for all road users through road design. The policy will be presented to Council in late fall 2024.

CONCLUSION

With this report staff are recommending that Council adopt the final Road Safety Action Plan (RSAP) which is a 10-year document to achieve Vision Zero. Centered on the Safe Systems Approach, the plan will be the District's guide to apply a systematic and integrated process to improve road safety by focusing on 30 primary and supporting actions.

Implementation of the RSAP will require an estimated \$21 million over 10 years. Five million of this can be accommodated using existing municipal resources. Staff is recommending an increase of \$250,000 to annual operating funding to support implementation of non-infrastructure items over the life of the plan. They are also recommending a one-time resource request of \$2 million in the draft 2025 Financial Plan to support implementation of infrastructure changes in first two years. In addition, Staff are recommending development of a long-term funding strategy, exploration of business cases for possible new revenue generation, and the pursuit of grant funding for infrastructure and road safety improvements.

The *Road Safety Action Plan (RSAP)* is based on evidence and grounded in data. It is informed by technical analysis, best practices research and input from stakeholders and the public. It builds on the significant investments that Saanich is currently making in active transportation, speed limit reductions, and traffic calming. If adopted, the RSAP will provide the direction needed deliver safe, healthy, and equitable mobility for all Saanich residents.

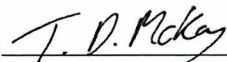
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Attachments:

Attachment A: Final Road Safety Action Plan

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER'S COMMENTS:

I endorse the recommendation from the Director of Engineering.



Brent Reems, Chief Administrative Officer