



Southern Gulf Islands Transportation Integration Plan

Capital Regional District | September 2021

Project Background & FAQs

The Capital Regional District is developing a Southern Gulf Islands (SGI) Transportation Integration Plan. Building from past studies and community feedback, the purpose of the project is to create a blueprint to move from ideas to action when it comes to transportation on and between the largest Southern Gulf Islands: Galiano, Mayne, Saturna, and North and South Pender Islands, with possible links to Sidney and Salt Spring Island.

The project will propose future improvements to walking and cycling networks integrated with proposals for public transit and passenger ferry services to complement other travel. The CRD is undertaking this project to respond to resident requests for regional coordination of public transit and transportation alternatives. As a Regional District, the CRD can facilitate outcomes on behalf of the community such as administrative coordination and access to funding from other levels of government. Also, unlike non-profit societies, CRD can hold Licences of Occupation in the Provincial Road Right of Way that are needed for road side trails.

The project aims to develop recommendations, undertake community mapping, and gather feedback from residents and visitors in late summer/early fall 2021 and then revise and deliver the final project report by the end of this year.

1. What are the project's goals?

The main project deliverables for the SGI Transportation Integration Plan include:

- Developing and costing out transportation service options that are practical, feasible and right-sized to meet the needs for each community and inter-island connection.
- Undertaking community mapping and engagement to confirm existing and proposed routes envisioned by stakeholder organizations and community members, determine community needs and future priorities, and refine recommendations.
- Outlining the action steps and recommendations for how a CRD transportation service could be structured to enable the creation, phasing and integration of land-based public transportation, inter-island water passenger service, and supporting active transportation improvements on each of the Southern Gulf Islands (Galiano, North and South Pender, Mayne and Saturna).
- Understanding the CRD's role in how it can best support identified community needs and integrated transportation systems going forward, including how its capacity can best support grassroots initiatives that would continue to be led at the community level.

2. What are the timelines?

The project has been developing draft recommendations based on past community feedback and stakeholder participation. We will be undertaking community mapping and gathering feedback from residents and visitors on the draft recommendations in fall 2021, to then revise and deliver the final project report by the end of this year.



3. How do Islanders provide input and get involved?

We encourage islanders to sign up to be added to the project contact list at <https://www.crd.bc.ca/sgi-transportation> to receive project updates and alerts for how to provide feedback.

The project is guided by a steering committee led by CRD SGI Community Liaisons and other staff, as well as a Transportation Advisory Group made up of community and transportation representatives from each of the islands.

The project builds on a large amount of resident feedback and analysis already undertaken through past initiatives. The project team will be reaching out to other community stakeholders in the first phases of the project to check in on past recommendations, current needs, new opportunities and potential partnerships.

In the fall, the project will be engaging residents, part-time residents, and visitors to review and provide feedback on the draft findings and proposals before the recommendations are finalized based on input. The public engagements will include both virtual and online options, as well as hopefully some in-person opportunities at key locations.

4. We already have local solutions to transportation on the islands: why involve the CRD?

This project was initiated at the request of island residents and organizations.

We are designing the integrated transportation proposal with input from the community so it is credible, right sized, and developed by the people it will serve. Currently there are many non-profit groups who work to serve transportation needs on the islands. However, some of the challenges they often face are related to the unreliability of grant funding, the ability to access funding from other levels of government, or being granted tenure for the supporting infrastructure that is needed (like roadside pathways).

A key part of this project is to determine how best to deliver the service levels that people want, in as efficient and low cost way as possible, with a major focus on partnerships with other organizations. While status quo is always an option, one of the models this project is evaluating is the creation of a transportation service and commission similar to that already in place by the CRD on Salt Spring Island. That model is guided by local residents and still works with local non-profits and businesses to shape and deliver services in as cost-effective manner as possible. It also enables that island to access additional transportation funding and capacity where it is needed most.

Similar to the Salt Spring Island approach, we want to have the CRD facilitate solutions when it is the right organization to do so, but to step aside when it is not and when another group is better positioned to make solutions happen. We will build this kind of flexibility into the service, and ensure the service is guided by local residents who sit on the transportation commission.

5. How does this project relate to other work underway in the area, such as the AquaLink Pilot Program or the BC Ferries Southern Gulf Islands Schedule Consultation?

This SGI Transportation Integration Plan complements work already underway at BC Ferries and the AquaLink Pilot Program being run by the Southern Gulf Islands Tourism Partnership. CRD will be monitoring the outcomes of those projects closely and consulting with each agency. The goal is to not duplicate BC Ferries and other services on the islands but instead consider how we can supplement existing travel modes to make them even more connected and interconnected.

6. What are the potential benefits of this work?

One of the project goals is to integrate public transportation options with active transportation trails to encourage visitors to leave their cars at home and arrive on foot or by bicycle. This would free up space on the ferries for locals, while also offering island residents more transportation options.

Similarly, the CRD's project is evaluating what water-based passenger ferry services could be considered to complement the BC Ferries service and further strengthen inter-island connections, resilience and our economies.

7. Hasn't this already been studied? Do we really need another project and why now?

This project is focused on implementation. It is about taking all the great ideas developed over the past several years, figuring out which ones we can make work, and proposing a service to implement them.

Previous studies have proposed the concept of active transportation, public transit and passenger ferry services within the Southern Gulf Islands. However, these tended to look at the components separately. Also, since that time, new service models and technologies have emerged such as on-demand transit services and multi-modal apps, which enable planning and transportation for users across multiple types of transportation. Finally, a sustainable funding source that may be made possible through the creation of CRD transportation service could better enable local transportation organizations to continue to serve the community and deliver initiatives.

8. How will this be funded?

Funding to implement an integrated transportation service would be supported by a base level of tax revenue, income from user fees, and infrastructure grants from other levels of government. A central objective of this study is to identify partnerships and cost out a service that will be as economical as possible for the tax payer. In order to establish the service, voters need to agree. Depending on the project's outcomes and public feedback, a referendum may be proposed in tandem with the 2022 municipal election.

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