

## Salish Sea Trail Update

The Salish Sea Trail Network (SSTN) Working Group has been meeting for over two years now to try to advance safer cycling along Salt Spring's main route from Fulford to Vesuvius, as part of a larger regional trail network. This group is chaired by MLA Adam Olsen and includes CRD Director Gary Holman, CRD Local Commissioner Gayle Baker, Islands Trustee Laura Patrick, the Office of MP Elizabeth May, plus staff, and representatives from Island Pathways and Transition Salt Spring and the local Ferry Commission.

In 2023, the group, via Island Pathways, secured both Federal and Provincial funding to advance this work through public events, advocacy, planning and design.

To launch this initiative, Island Pathways Outreach Director, Robin Jenkinson worked with partners to organize the June 2 Ride, Rally & Forum featuring BC Minister of Transportation, Rob Fleming, as part of Spring GoByBikeBC Week.

The day included a morning group bike ride from Fulford to town led by MLA Adam Olsen, followed by a private meeting with MoTI staff and the Hon. Rob Fleming to discuss strategy for getting paved bike lanes along Fulford-Ganges, Lower Ganges, and Vesuvius Roads. Volunteers Steve New, Luke Campbell, Bryan Young, Bob MacKie, and Colin Stein played big roles in getting this organized.

Simultaneously, Michi Main, Carolyn Hopp, Natasha Kong, Naomi Tweddle and other volunteers were hosting a Family Bike Park Rally at Mouats Park, including a toddler scoot bike course, a bicycle-blender smoothie station, free helmets for youth, plus info and reflective swag.

Mid-day, everyone came together at the Mouats Park Meadow, next to the Lions Bike Park there, for an ASK Salt Spring, organized by Gayle Baker, that involved about 60 attendees who presented the Minister of Transportation, MoTI Regional Director Mike Pearson, MoTI South Island Manager Shawn Haley, and MLA Adam Olsen with questions for nearly two hours! We learned a lot. For instance, that Ganges Hill would be constructed soon.

Following-up on recommendations from the Minister, the SSTN connected with Executive Director of Clean Transportation, Trish Rorison and Director of Active Transportation, Kate Berniaz, as well as MoTI Roads Area Manager Owen Page and Minister Fleming's office on a group zoom on August 18, where we discussed how to access some of MoTI's special 100-million dollars of active transportation funding over the next three years, which is above and beyond their regular Active Transportation Grant program.

This funding requires that the Local Community Commission of the CRD identify bike lanes from Fulford to Vesuvius as a priority. Cross your fingers we don't miss this opportunity!

Stay tuned for another public petition for bike lanes, safety infrastructure advocacy, and a big community effort to try to get this done!



*Helmets for Life at the Family Bike Park Rally.  
Photo by Hannah Spray Photography.*

# One of the best things you can do

by Simon Rompré

For many years as I worked as a health care attendant, I watched many, mostly older folks, come into the hospital or long term care facility in very poor health. This is the sad reality of life. It eventually happens to everyone. We will all get old—that is if we're lucky to even get there. The probabilities are high that most of us will sooner or later get a diagnosis and be in and out of doctors' offices. We'll eventually probably end up in a hospital, maybe at first for some surgery. At some point, if we can't look after ourselves or have a family to do so, we'll be at the whim of a heavily burdened health care system with chronic shortage of staff. Not exactly a happy prospect. If you're older, you've probably watched this with friends and family and know that it's a one way street; any solution is only temporary. But the good news is that we can slow the aging process down.

As a matter of fact, this is the main reason why I ride a bike. Seeing so many people go from healthy to sick and eventually die made an impression on me. I also know that many of the people I looked after had very sedentary lifestyles; that is, they spent most of their life sitting, and whenever they went somewhere they drove. Walking was reduced to a minimum.

In the many years I worked in health care, I never met anyone who made moving into a facility their retirement plan. This is something we all dread, but if you're concerned about this challenging prospect, let me tell you that we have a choice; we can slow down aging or do nothing and speed it up. What if this simple choice that slows down aging could also make kids healthier, prevent climate catastrophes, save some money because you're not buying so much gas or paying for a car you can't afford, while making you happy (remember endorphins?) and even improving your property value because everyone is having so much fun riding their bikes all over the island. Would you do it?

And if these arguments are not strong enough, let me tell you that studies have shown that not only does riding a bike build muscle mass and improve bone density, it also helps with maintaining our cognitive skills, which are essential to help prevent dementia.

Many Salt Springers moved here to get away from the city, and while the peace and quiet is well appreciated by most, many Salt Springers end up giving up their

bicycles because it's very hilly and our main roads are too scary to cycle on. Not only do many residents give up riding, but many local children never get to enjoy bicycling for the same reasons. Now with ebikes the hills are no longer challenging and this is good news for those of us wanting to get back on our bikes, but our busiest roads really need bike lanes for kids to be able to ride on.

During Covid, many of us started doing more outdoor activities like cycling and hiking. There are more cyclists on our roads every day, and in spite of the lack of safety, I still encourage everyone to ride a bike. There are many secondary roads on our island that are perfectly safe to ride on but as long as our main roads remain narrow without proper shoulders for bike lanes, Salt Spring will be lacking something important for a healthy community to thrive.

Please help get the word out and advocate for better bike safety. Our politicians need to hear it. Participate in bike events whenever possible, and when you vote remember to make sure the candidate you're voting for knows that Salt Springers care about safe roads for cycling. Remember, whether young or old or in between, riding a bike is one of the best thing you can do.



*Narrow shoulders on the Fulford-Ganges. Photo by Hannah Spray Photography.*



# All Kids Bike: An opportunity for all kids to learn to ride a bike in school

By Nomi deRoos

I'm a 12 year old who has lived on Salt Spring Island nearly all my life and have been obsessed with bikes since before I could walk. Salt Spring is an amazing place to grow up but it can also be difficult to do some of the things kids in bigger places grow up doing, things like biking every day. Some kids here don't get the chance to learn how to ride a bike because it's not easy to find safe places to ride and most of us can't do things like ride to school.

A couple of years ago, I learned about the All Kids Bike Program in one of my mountain biking magazines. It's a super cool program started by Strider Bikes that provides schools with all the equipment and lesson plans to teach kindergarteners how to ride during their PE classes. I showed it to my mom and soon after she and her friend, Robin, started working with Island Pathways, the Lions Club, the Co-op, the SSI Fireman's association and ICBC to raise the money so we could start All Kids Bike on Salt Spring!

Over the past two years, Island Pathways has supported my mom and I to run the program together at SSE (with some great volunteers) and it has been awesome to say the least. We've had some kids who are already little shredders, some who just need a bit of confidence and some who don't know how to pedal or have never even sat on a bike. By the end of eight 30 minute sessions, they have all gained skills, progressed and have had tonnes of fun. I have learned a lot about working with kids and have loved mentoring them to be confident riders, whether they progress to pedals or just end up ripping around with huge smiles atop their strider bikes. It feels really good to see them learn the fundamentals of riding and bike safety in a positive way that'll set them on a path to a two-wheeled life!



By Michi Main

Our intention is that this great program runs for many years and reaches as many SSI kids as possible. This year, the Salt Spring Foundation is supporting Island Pathways to expand and bring the All Kids Bike Program to Fernwood and Fulford as well as SSE. This is an extremely fun and rewarding program to be involved with and we can always use more community support. This year we'll be looking for some motivated and enthusiastic grade 6/7 mentors at each school and can use bigger person help with anything from transporting bikes around Salt Spring to simple mechanicking and help running the program in schools.

If you're interested in supporting the program or helping out, please contact Michi at [michi@cetacea.ca](mailto:michi@cetacea.ca).



Above: The All Kids Bike Program at Salt Spring Elementary and at left: thank-you artwork.



# Upcoming Events

**EBIKE 55+ SAFETY COURSE** - Saturday, September 16, from 10-3pm, Portlock Park Portable Building. This course is geared towards older adults who may be returning to cycling after many years or looking to further develop their on-bike skills. The morning includes presentations and discussion. Then, after a lunch break, there will be a group bikeride. Register at [bit.ly/BIKEFREEDOM](https://bit.ly/BIKEFREEDOM) or by emailing [robin@islandpathways.ca](mailto:robin@islandpathways.ca).

**FREE! “The ENGINE INSIDE” Outdoor Movie Night** - Friday, September 22, 2023 - 7pm Rally, movie starts at 7:30. “The Engine Inside reveals the unique power of the bicycle to change lives and build a better world.” Centennial Park. Watch the trailer at <https://www.engineinsidofilm.com/>

**OCTOBER 16-29 GOBYBIKEBC WEEKS** - Celebration stations, group rides and rallies, events coming soon. <https://gobybikebc.ca/salt-spring-island/>

**NOVEMBER 26 - a great ISLAND PATHWAYS AGM!**



*Bicycle blender blackberry smoothies!*



*More photos from June 2. Above, left: Minister of Transport with Bill 23 visibility flag. Above, right: ASK Salt Spring with Minister of Transport Rob Fleming Both photos by Natasha Kong.*

## Memberships, Donations and Volunteers

Help us reach 1000 Island Pathways members. Together our voices are stronger!  
\$10 individual lifetime membership [islandpathways.ca/membership](https://islandpathways.ca/membership)

Island Pathways is always eager for more volunteers to help us carry out our work.  
Get involved today [islandpathways.ca/volunteers](https://islandpathways.ca/volunteers)

Make a tax deductible donation [islandpathways.ca/donate](https://islandpathways.ca/donate)

PO Box 684 Ganges, Salt Spring Island, BC V8K 2W3