

How does the Township of Esquimalt's Options Stack up to Honest Scrutiny backed up by information contained in the British Columbia Active Transportation Design Guide

In Option 1 and 1(a) the Township is proposing Bike Lanes that will not meet the diverse needs of the biking community. These options will mainly serve one segment of that biking community, the **Strong and Fearless** and to a limited extent the **Enthusiased and Confident**.

An Effective Active Transport Network must strive to be a "Universal Design" so that it is designed to serve a wide range of individual preferences and abilities. It should strive to be a "Complete Network" that is well connected to let users travel anywhere they need to go by Active Means (1)

Neighbourhood design is a key consideration (1). **Active Transportation use is positively associated with dense land use, especially residential and commercial density.** The City of Victoria has the highest percentage of the work commuter trips by bicycle in Canada at 5.3% (2021 census). This is the **Strong and Fearless** identified above. There is no data available for the other classifications of riders. The City of Victoria has a density of 4,722 people per square kilometre (2021) which correlates to study results that tie dense land use to higher propensity to bicycle.(1) Esquimalt's population density of 2,686 people per square kilometre (2023) although significant, is far behind that of the City of Victoria and arguably will see much less demand for Active Transportation from commuters (**the Strong and Fearless**). However, the community has a growing population of younger people and families and it could be argued that the population of the **Interested but Concerned population** (the largest of the segment) has pent up demand for Active Transportation. An Active Transportation Network in the community should be designed to cater to this group. The area around Town Center bounded by Fraser Street (East), Canteen (West) Lyall Street (South) and Astle and Effingham (North) will be transformed into a high density area over the next 10-15 years. Esquimalt Road will face ever larger volumes of traffic which will make vehicle volume, noise and pollution an ever greater deterrent to using this route as an Active Transportation Route. **The Township's preferred routes fail to address the needs of the large user group and the significant land use changes occurring over the next decade.**

Directness is another Network Planning consideration (1) and one that is at the forefront of the Township's preferred Option 1 and 1(a). Directness however has to be weighed against the greater desire for safety that comes from a greater degree of separation from high motor vehicle volumes and speeds and pollution that emanates from high volume routes that contain trucks and bus traffic. The majority of the population falls into the "**Interested but Concerned**" category of bicycle users. This group, the largest group looks for safety over directness. **Option 1 and 1(a) fail this group (high levels of pollution) as does Option 2 and 3 (lack of safety)**

Truck and Bus Traffic: The presence of trucks, buses and other large heavy vehicles causes unique challenges for active transportation users.(1) Where heavy vehicles and buses make up more than 5% of motor vehicle traffic it is advised, where possible, to provide an alternate route for active transportation.(1) For Esquimalt Road that is about 500 heavy vehicle trips daily. There are 140 bus trips a day plus hundreds of dump trucks and delivery trucks moving along Esquimalt Road daily. Esquimalt Road has well in excess of the recommended maximum. **Option 1 and 1(a) fail against this metric. Option 2 and 3 fail as they provide no protection from Bus and Truck traffic even if it is relatively light on Lyall Street.**

Density and Diversity is where users have a range of route options and is a major planning consideration if a ATPN is going to be successfully used.(1) The options presented by the Township are mutually exclusive and do not provide for a range of options for diverse users. Ideally, active transportation users should be provided with a

dedicated facility that is separated from motor vehicle traffic or that is located on a quiet street with low motor vehicle volumes and speeds (1). The network should be universally accessible and should contribute to a pleasant travel experience (1). **All of the Options presented by the Township fail in this category.**

Users: Wherever feasible, active transportation facilities should be universally accessible, accommodating the full spectrum of potential users with all levels of experience. Consideration should be given to the skills, needs and preferences of the types of users who are anticipated to use the facility. Facilities near parks, schools, and residential neighbourhoods are likely to attract a higher percentage of recreational users and children who prefer a greater degree of separation from high vehicle speeds, volumes and pollution (1). **The Township's options do not address these needs and connections to Parks/Recreation/Schools.**

On Street Motor Vehicle Parking can cause conflict with bicycle riders and thus bike routes adjacent to on-street parking is appealing only to the **Strong and Fearless**, the smallest of the population grouping. **The Township's proposed routes Options 2 and 3 only appeal to the Strong and Fearless at the exclusion of the other larger population groups. With on-street parking removed in Option 1 and 1(a) there is no conflict with parked vehicles. The rating for Option 1 and 1(a) is an A as the parking conflict is removed. Option 2 and 3 does not contemplate any bicycle travel through the parking area of Town Center but force use on a road with parking on both sides and no protected separation. These rate an F.**

The Township proposals suggest spending significantly on installing chicanes, speed humps, and traffic diverters with Option 2 and 3 when these funds could actually be put toward the construction of a Bi-Directional Protected Bike Lane that would actually provide a AAA experience for users.

(1) British Columbia Active Transportation Design Guide 2019