

District of Oak Bay Active Transportation Strategy

Phase 1 Community Engagement Executive Summary
October 2025

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This document is an executive summary of the community engagement results for the District of Oak Bay's Active Transportation Strategy Update, Phase 1.

About the Project

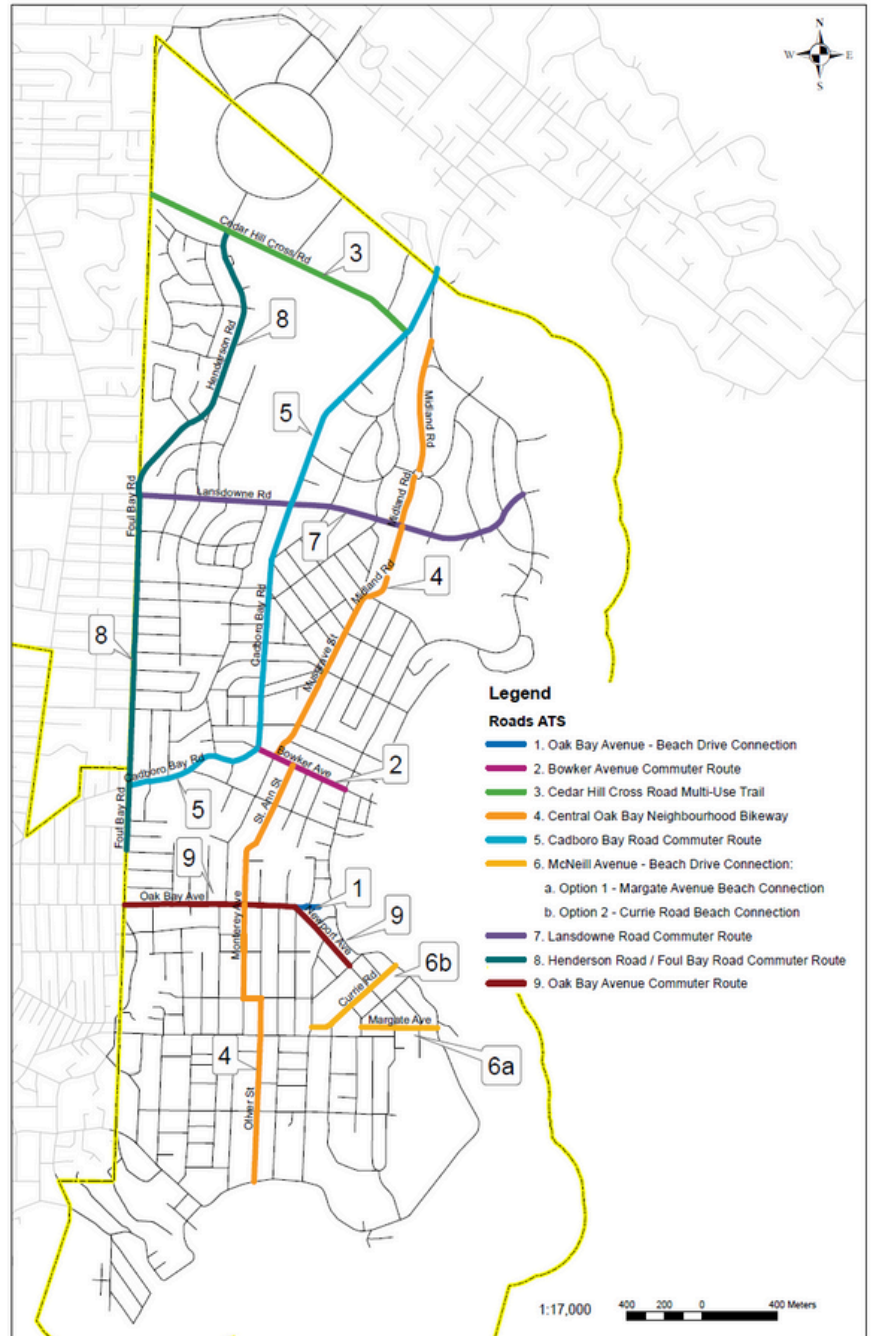
The District of Oak Bay is updating its Active Transportation Strategy (ATS), a long-term plan to make it safer, healthier, and more sustainable for people to move through the community by walking, cycling, rolling, or taking transit. Active transportation connects residents to their daily needs while supporting community health, affordability, and climate action goals.

The updated strategy builds on the original 2011 ATS and subsequent technical reviews in 2022 and 2024, which aligned local plans with the BC Active Transportation Design Guide. This update focuses on implementing nine proposed cycling routes that form the backbone of Oak Bay's future active transportation network, connecting schools, parks, shopping areas, and neighbouring municipalities.

Recognizing that these projects directly shape how people move around Oak Bay, Council directed a broad, community-wide engagement process to ensure local voices help shape the updated strategy and its Cycling Implementation Plan, to be presented to Council in early 2026.

Phase 1 of the engagement ran from September 3 to 26, 2026 and the goal was to gather community input on active transportation habits, priorities for walking and cycling, and the nine proposed routes.

Findings from this phase will guide how the routes are refined and prioritized and inform the development of Oak Bay's first Cycling Implementation Plan, a key step toward building a safe, connected, and inclusive network for all ages and abilities.



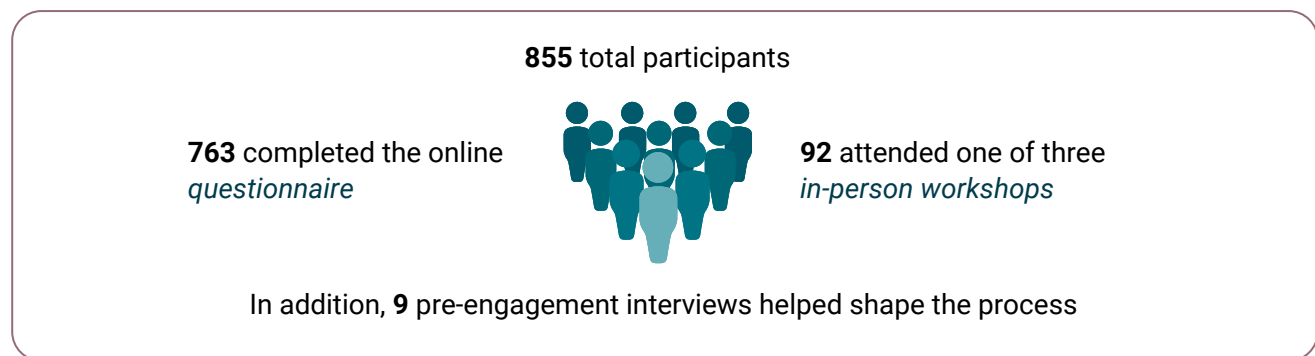
Engagement Highlights

How We Engaged

Oak Bay residents, visitors, and community organizations were invited to participate through multiple opportunities:

- **Pre-engagement interviews** with community representatives to help shape the approach and materials.
- **Online questionnaire** open to the public from September 3-26
- Three **in-person workshops** held September 12, 13 and 16 to explore walking and cycling priorities and route-specific feedback.
- **Ongoing communications and outreach** through the District website, social media, local news, signage, email updates, and printed materials at community facilities.

Reach and Participation



What We Learned

Overall Insights

Residents of Oak Bay care deeply about safety, accessibility, and preserving the character of their neighbourhoods. There is broad recognition that walking and cycling are essential to a healthy, connected community but opinions differ on how best to achieve that balance.

Key themes included:

- A strong desire for traffic calming and slower speeds across Oak Bay.
- The need for connected walking and cycling networks that link key destinations.
- Calls for transparency and education so residents understand what is being proposed, why it matters, and how decisions will be made.
- Emphasis on maintenance, amenities, and accessibility for seniors, families, and people using mobility devices.

Walking in Oak Bay

Walking is the most common daily activity with 64% of survey respondents walking daily. People walk for physical health (78%), enjoyment (69%), and fresh air (67%). Most feel safe doing so, but improvements are needed to make it more comfortable and inclusive.



Top priorities for improving walking:

- *Sidewalk upgrades and maintenance:* Fix cracks, slopes, and uneven pavement; widen narrow sidewalks; ensure curb cuts are accessible for wheelchairs and strollers.
- *Safer crossings:* More and better-marked crosswalks, especially near schools and parks, with flashing lights and improved lighting.
- *Traffic calming:* Lower speed limits (30 km/h), speed humps, and four-way stops in high-traffic areas.
- *Lighting and signage:* Better illumination and clear wayfinding.
- Amenities and comfort: More benches, public washrooms, and shade trees.



Cycling in Oak Bay

Cycling was the primary mode of transportation for a quarter (26%) of survey respondents, motivated by physical health (55%), commuting (52%), and enjoyment (45%). While most cyclists feel somewhat safe, many described Oak Bay's current infrastructure as incomplete and inconsistent.



Top priorities for improving cycling:

- *Better cycling infrastructure and connectivity:* A clear, continuous network linking Oak Bay with Victoria and Saanich.
- *Traffic calming and slower speeds:* To make cycling safer on shared streets.
- *Secure bike parking and repair stations:* Particularly near schools, shops, and parks.
- *Improved crossings and visibility:* Coloured pavement markings and better lighting.
- *Education and culture change:* Awareness for drivers and cyclists about sharing the road.

Community opinion was divided on protected bike lanes. Many residents view them as essential for safety, particularly for families and less confident riders, while others worry about impacts on parking, street width, and emergency access.

Route-Specific Feedback

Community members provided detailed feedback on each of the nine proposed cycling routes. All routes received more support than opposition, with varying levels of enthusiasm and concern. The highest level of support was for route 8 (Henderson Road/Foul Bay Road Commuter Route) and highest level of opposition was for route 9 (Oak Bay Avenue Commuter Route).

Route 1 – Oak Bay to Beach Drive Neighbourhood Connection Support: 50% Oppose: 26% Reasons for Support: Participants said this route would fill a missing link, connecting Beach Drive with Oak Bay Avenue and Victoria's cycling network. They valued safer access to the waterfront and smoother travel from downtown Victoria to the coast. Reasons for Concern: Others questioned need and demand, noting nearby streets already offer safe cycling alternatives. Concerns included steep slopes, limited visibility, and constrained road space. Changes Suggested: Extend the connection toward Victoria's network or link through Windsor Road or Brighton Avenue. Improve crossings and signage at Beach Drive and Newport Avenue.	Route 2 – Bowker Avenue Commuter Route Support: 53% Oppose: 23% Reasons for Support: Participants viewed Bowker Avenue as a logical east-west corridor connecting schools, recreation, and shopping areas. It was described as a safe, practical, and comfortable route that needs only minor upgrades. Reasons for Concern: Some felt Bowker Avenue already functions safely without major changes and worried about parking loss on a narrow residential street. A few questioned its broader connectivity and usefulness for commuters. Changes Suggested: Improve crossings at Cadboro Bay Road, add traffic calming, or consider rerouting via Dalhousie Street or Pacific Avenue to better connect to Willows Beach and school areas.
Route 3 – Cedar Hill Cross Road Multi-Use Trail Support: 62% Oppose: 16% Reasons for Support: Strongly supported for safety and connectivity, this corridor links Oak Bay to UVic, Camosun, and Victoria's Fort Street protected lane. It was described as well used and essential for improving comfort and reducing vehicle conflict. Reasons for Concern: A small number questioned timing and need, saying current demand may not justify a multi-use trail. Some wanted investment focused on higher-use routes. Changes Suggested: Add controlled crossings at Cadboro Bay Road and Upper Terrace and extend the trail connection through to Beach Drive.	Route 4 – Central Oak Bay Neighbourhood Bikeway Support: 62% Oppose: 25% Reasons for Support: Participants valued this north-south route for providing safe access for children traveling to local schools and parks. It was seen as a quiet, comfortable corridor that links neighbourhoods to Oak Bay Village and regional routes. Reasons for Concern: Key concerns included parking loss, emergency-vehicle access, and potential congestion on narrow residential streets. Some felt the area already works well for shared travel. Changes Suggested: Shift portions of the route to wider or calmer streets such as Hampshire or Oliver, add four-way stops and crossings, and link with the Cedar Hill Cross Road.

Route 5 – Cadboro Bay Road Commuter Route

Support: 64%

Oppose: 20%

Reasons for Support: Cadboro Bay Road was described as a main north–south commuter and school corridor linking Oak Bay with UVic and downtown. Participants who support the route emphasized its regional role and the need to reduce safety risks from fast traffic and buses.

Reasons for Concern: Some said the road is too busy for safe cycling and already wide enough without additional lanes. Others cited parking loss, congestion, and overlap with other commuter routes.

Changes Suggested: Shift the corridor to Eastdowne Road or Uplands Road, connect with the Haultain bikeway, or focus on painted lanes and safer crossings near schools and markets.

Route 6a – Margate Avenue Beach Connection

Support: 37%

Oppose: 30%

Reasons for Support: A small number of participants supported it as a potential link between McNeill Avenue and Beach Drive. They saw it as part of completing the network to the waterfront.

Reasons for Concern: Most said Margate Avenue is too steep, narrow, and low-use for safe cycling. It was viewed as unnecessary compared with Currie Road.

Changes Suggested: Shift the connection to McNeill Avenue or extend the route west to link directly with the Richardson Street bikeway in Victoria.

Route 6b – Currie Road Beach Connection

Support: 42%

Oppose: 26%

Reasons for Support: Currie Road was described as flatter, wider, and safer than Margate, offering good access to Windsor Park and Beach Drive. Respondents noted the existing four-way stop and convenient link to the Richardson bikeway.

Reasons for Concern: Some felt the street is already calm and would not benefit from formal infrastructure. Concerns also focused on parking and congestion during park events.

Changes Suggested: Add crosswalks into Windsor Park, consider Orchard Avenue as an alternate route, and extend the bikeway connection to Richardson Street.

Route 7 – Lansdowne Road Commuter Route

Support: 59%

Oppose: 21%

Reasons for Support: Lansdowne Road was supported for improving east-west regional connectivity and safety for students and commuters. Respondents said it would link Oak Bay to UVic, Camosun, and nearby schools.

Reasons for Concern: Some viewed it as under-used, with limited cycling demand, and cited narrow lanes and high vehicle volumes. Others worried about parking removal and unclear design details.

Changes Suggested: Prioritize the section between Cadboro Bay and Foul Bay Road, shift to quieter nearby roads such as Neil Street, and preserve existing trees along the corridor.

Route 8 – Henderson Road/Foul Bay Road Commuter Route

Support: 65%

Oppose: 20%

Reasons for Support: This was the highest-supported route, recognized for regional connectivity to UVic, Camosun, and Victoria. Respondents emphasized safety improvements and the need for protected lanes on a busy commuter corridor.

Reasons for Concern: Those who opposed this proposed route cited high traffic, narrow width, and potential parking loss, saying Foul Bay Road may not safely accommodate all users. Some questioned whether commuter infrastructure fits Oak Bay's local context.

Changes Suggested: Extend the route south to Oak Bay Avenue, coordinate with Saanich, add crossings at Haultain, or reroute sections via Henderson or Dean Road for quieter travel.

Route 9 – Oak Bay Avenue Commuter Route

Support: 55%

Oppose: 32%

Reasons for Support: Some respondents saw this as a vital corridor linking Oak Bay Village with Victoria's Fort Street protected lane and regional destinations. They said improved cycling infrastructure would enhance safety and support local businesses by improving access.

Reasons for Concern: Others felt Oak Bay Avenue is too narrow and congested, making bike lanes difficult without removing parking. Some warned that changes could harm businesses and preferred parallel residential routes.

Changes Suggested: Explore alternate alignments using Brighton, Granite, or Elgin Roads, improve pedestrian crossings, or integrate cycling improvements into a broader village streetscape plan.

Overall Support for All Routes (73 comments)

Some respondents expressed support for all nine routes, emphasizing that Oak Bay needs a complete and connected cycling network. They highlighted safety, connectivity, accessibility, and climate benefits and said a full network would make cycling a viable everyday mode for all ages and abilities.

Overall Opposition to All Routes (121 comments)

Most of the people who commented on why they opposed a specific route, opposed all or most routes, citing limited need, parking loss, congestion, and cost. They viewed Oak Bay's existing streets as already safe, opposed physical barriers as visually intrusive, and feared new infrastructure would alter the community's traditional character.

Next Steps

The Cycling Implementation Plan is the next step in turning the updated Active Transportation Strategy into action. A community open house on November 13, 2025 will give residents the chance to see how Phase 1 feedback has helped to inform proposed refinements to the nine proposed routes. The routes and updated ATS are expected to go to Council in early 2026 for a decision. From 2026 to 2029, more detailed, route-specific engagement will invite community input on design options, trade-offs, and implementation priorities.

