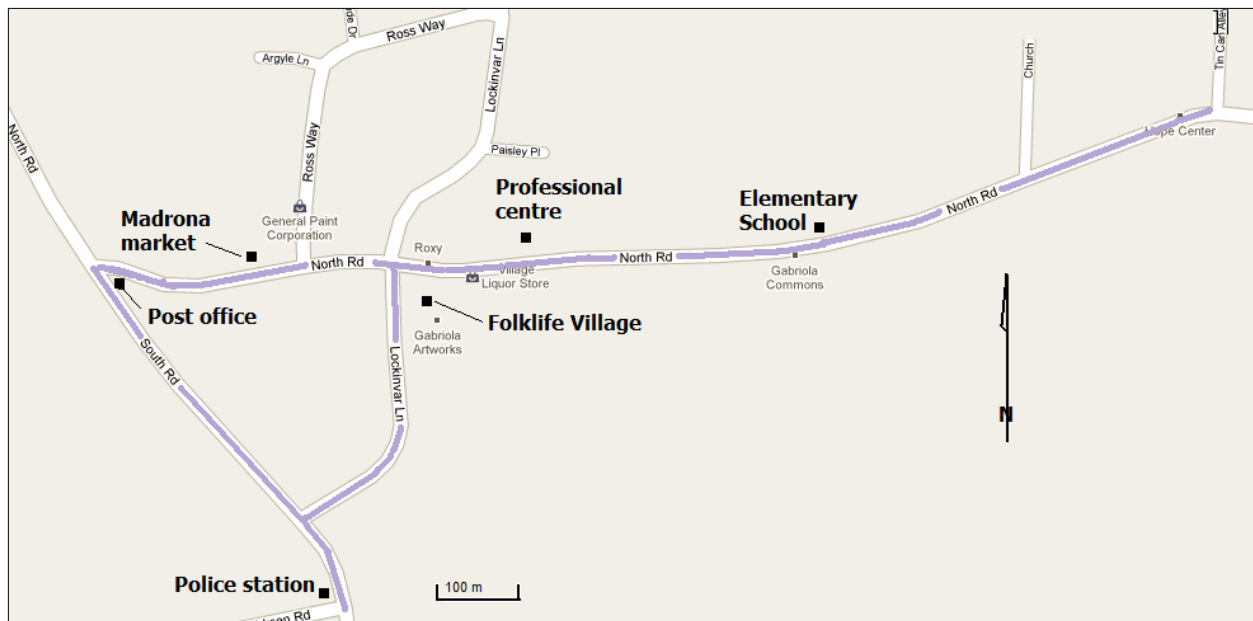


Issues related to provision of bike lanes in the Village area of Gabriola Island

Introduction

The busiest roads in the Village area of Gabriola Island include:

- South Road from the intersection with North Rd. to Dirksen Rd.,
- North Road from South Rd. to Tin Can Alley, and
- Lockinvar Lane from South Road to North Road.



All of these roads warrant inclusion in the Gabriola Cycle Route Plan, and in fact all merit special consideration as they are amongst the busiest sections of road on the entire island.

This brief report includes a summary of issues—including property ownership, safety and feasibility—related to construction of road-shoulder commuter bike lanes along these sections of road. The concept of constructing an off-road cycling and pedestrian path beside North Road from South Rd. to Tin Can Alley is also put forward.

Road shoulder bike lanes

Property ownership

As far as can be determined from the RDN web-based map there should be no issues related to property ownership along any of the routes in question. In all areas the 1.2 m road-shoulder will fall well within the existing road allowance.

Safety

Although the routes in question are amongst the busiest on Gabriola Island, the vehicular traffic and bicycle volumes are low compared with those in most urban parts of British Columbia. The busiest intersections in this area are along North Rd. especially at Ross Rd, Lockinvar Lane and Tin Can Alley, and at the entrances to the Co-op gas station and Govt. Liquor Store, the Folklife Village mall, the Professional Centre mall and the Elementary School. It is felt that the provision of road-shoulder cycle lanes can only make the use of these roads safer for both cyclists and drivers, as there will then be more room for both.

Feasibility

There are no significant physical limitations to the construction of road-shoulder cycling lanes along the routes in question, although there are some minor issues as follows:

North Road

On the north side of North Rd., between the South Rd. intersection and Lockinvar Ln., there are several areas where there is a relatively steep embankment (down) adjacent to the road and there is currently insufficient room on the shoulder to accommodate a 1.2 m wide cycling lane. The embankment is not high, however, and it would be relatively simple and inexpensive to extend the shoulder. (See locations A and B on Appendix 1a)

On the north side of North Rd. there are a few places where there are drainage curbs within 1.2 m of the traffic lane, including the area opposite the Post Office, part of the area in front of the Madrona Mall construction site, and the area in front of the Co-op gas pumps. (See locations C, D and E on Appendix 1a.)

South Road:

Along the west side of South Rd. for approximately 100 m from the intersection with North Rd. the existing unpaved shoulder is too narrow to allow for a 1.2 m cycling lane, and some fill will be required. (See location F on Appendix A1.)

Along the east side, in front of the Women's Institute, the existing unpaved shoulder is too narrow to allow for a 1.2 m cycling lane and some fill be required. There is also an existing drainage curb within the 1.2 m allowance that will have to be relocated. (See location G on Appendix A1.)

1.2 m paved shoulders already exist on both sides of the road, from the Women's Institute to the Dirksen Rd.

Lockinvar Lane

1.2 m wide road-shoulder cycling lanes already exist on both sides of Lockinvar Lane, from South Rd. to North Rd.

Off-road cycling and pedestrian trail

While road-shoulder bike lanes are preferred by most serious cyclists, many other cyclists and most pedestrians prefer to have trails that are further removed from traffic. The 1.4 km long section of North Road from South Rd. to Tin Can Alley is easily the busiest transportation corridor on Gabriola Island for vehicle, bicycles and pedestrians (including elementary school students), and it is proposed that—in addition to the road-shoulder cycling lanes—consideration should be given to construction of an off-road hard-surface trail along this route. The arguments in favour of this are as follows:

- It would encourage more village-area island residents to cycle and walk.
- It would remove most pedestrians and recreational cyclists from the road shoulder.
- It would allow more students to get to school on foot or by bicycle, perhaps giving them a start on a life of self-propelled transportation.
- It would encourage both residents and summer visitors who visit the Farmers Market the shops and/or the Commons to walk through the village rather than drive.

A potential route for a hard-surface off-road trail from South Rd. to Tin Can Alley is shown on the following map. The trail would be 2 to 3 m wide and would be situated either within the road allowance or on private property. It would extend along the north side of North Rd. from South Rd. along the front of the Madrona Mall property, across Ross Rd. and then along the front of the Raven Feeds, Liquor Store and Co-op gas station property. It would then cross to the south side of North Rd., across the front of the Folklife Village property, through Huxley Park and part of the Commons. It would then cross back to the north side of North Rd., through the elementary school and RDN properties, and continue as far as Tin Can Alley.



Planning and construction of such a trail would be spearheaded by the Gabriola Cycle Route committee and GALT, but it could only be realized with the cooperation of numerous property owners and the enthusiastic support of the Gabriola community, and with financial assistance from the RDN and provincial government.

If this concept is embraced by the community, care must be taken to ensure that plans for its construction do not conflict with the plans for road-shoulder cycling lanes along this route.

Prepared by: Steven Earle, February, 2010