



Southern Gulf Islands Transportation Integration Plan

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WATT
Consulting Group

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Capital Regional District conducts its business within the traditional territories of over 20 First Nations, including Songhees, xʷsepsəm (Esquimalt), W̱JOŁEŁP (Tsartlip), BOḰEĆEN (Pauquachin), STÁUTW (Tsawout), WSIKEM (Tseycum), MÁLEXEŁ (Malahat), Sc'ianew (Beecher Bay), T'Sou-ke, Pacheedaht and Pune'laxutth' (Penelakut). It recognizes the First Nations governments across this region, all of whom have a long-standing relationship with the land and waters from time immemorial that continues to this day.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Southern Gulf Islands Transportation Integration Plan presents a business case for a new Capital Regional District (CRD) transportation service for the Southern Gulf Islands Electoral Area (SGI EA). An SGI transportation service would be guided by an SGI Transportation Commission made up of local representatives, similar to the model already successfully implemented to further sustainable transportation in the CRD's Salt Spring Island Electoral Area.



The primary objective of an SGI transportation service would be to provide financial and coordination support to the active transportation, community public transportation (such as community bus) and water-based mobility initiatives that have been—and would continue to be—led by local non-profit and private organizations on the islands. The CRD service would be targeted to fill the gaps in the existing local transportation framework by holding tenure and/or acting as the sponsoring local government when required for transportation infrastructure investment and funding applications to higher levels of government.

The role of the CRD transportation service would also be to encourage investment in active transportation road improvements and cycling infrastructure, provide integration of water and land public transportation systems, and facilitate partnerships between other agencies and community groups advancing transportation solutions in the region. Without establishing a transportation service for the SGI EA, the CRD does not have the authority or resources to support a locally controlled network of trails and cycling routes, public transit options, or support more effective inter-island travel. Legislative and legal restrictions prevent regional districts from cross-funding across services, so the CRD is currently unable to shift funding from other internal funding streams to support local transportation solutions on the islands.



Transportation Service Concept Exploration and Development

The request to explore an SGI transportation service originated in May 2018 when the Southern Gulf Islands Community Economic Sustainability Commission (CESC) requested that the CRD establish a new transportation service for the SGI Electoral

Area. The CESC motion specified the service should be guided by a commission with representatives from Galiano Island, Mayne Island, Pender Islands, and Saturna Island with a mandate to oversee and coordinate the transportation initiatives relating to on-island and inter-island transportation, trails and bikeways and liaising with the SGI Harbours. The CRD Board endorsed the request and the CRD subsequently advanced a process to consider an integrated transportation service for the region.

As a result of this, in 2021, Watt Consulting was engaged to undertake a comprehensive SGI Transportation Integration Plan that included developing a business case for service model options and quantified costs, as well as a standalone Active Transportation Plan for SGI. The process was grounded in an in-depth community engagement and stakeholder consultation program that included spring and summer 2021 virtual workshops with Transportation Advisory Groups (TAGs) comprised of community transportation groups from each of the modes, outreach to area First Nations, interviews with agency stakeholders, and information provided to the community via the CRD website, posters, and a media release.

In late summer and early fall 2021, the project gathered further feedback from the public on transportation gaps and opportunities at community mapping events and a round of public online engagement that included interactive mapping, quick polls, a survey, and an ideas forum. A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) was sent to every SGI mailbox to encourage people to fill out the survey.



During the Round 1 engagement, 2.5k people visited the Get Involved (Bang the Table) virtual engagement site, and 695 surveys were submitted.

Service Level Options

In response to the feedback received from stakeholders and the community, Watt prepared a range of service level options that would be possible for the SGI. The service levels were guided by recognition that the SGI functions with strong volunteer economies and that there were many community-based transportation solutions that could become more viable with just a little more sustainable and predictable support.

The service options were put forward with the understanding that the SGI tax base alone would not be enough to afford the level of infrastructure required to achieve the ultimate desired transportation vision heard from the islanders. Therefore, the recommended approach builds off existing grassroots organizations and volunteer networks as much as possible. The suggested role for the CRD is not to become a

transportation service provider, but rather to leverage more significant infrastructure funds and to be an enabler, supporting coordination and contributing funding for integrated services to be provided by 3rd parties and community organizations.

Based on this approach, the project developed a sample range of service level options that would be possible for the SGI at four tax requisition levels:

- **Option A – Status Quo** – No increase in requisition. No change in service level;
- **Option B – Basic Level** – Would provide small grants to community bus and trail groups, with an annual budget of up to \$270,000;
- **Option C – Semi-Integrated Transportation System** – Would support active transportation and community buses, with only minor support for water-based modes, with an annual budget of up to \$450,000; and
- **Option D – Fully Integrated Transportation Service** – Would support all three modes with an annual budget of up to \$675,000.

Sample tax requisition amounts based on 2021 property assessments were also included with the service level options and ranged from \$7.49 per \$100,000 of assessed property value for Option B, to \$18.51 per \$100,000 for Option D. Updated figures based on 2022 property assessments have since **lowered** these projected amounts to instead range from \$5.50 per \$100,000 assessed value for Option B (or \$0.055 per \$1,000) to \$14.10 per \$100,000 for Option D (or \$0.141 per \$1,000).

Round 2 engagement took place in winter 2022 and sought feedback on the level of support for the various funding options (based on the original 2021 property assessment amounts shown) and the range of proposed transportation solutions. It involved an online survey and four virtual Q&A sessions (conducted over Zoom). An FAQ was sent to every SGI mailbox.

This mail-out explained the proposals and encouraged people to fill out the survey and attend the virtual meetings.

During the Round 2 engagement, 1.5k people visited the Get Involved (Bang the Table) site, and 365 surveys were submitted.

The Round 2 Engagement found that the majority of respondents (67%) supported a tax requisition to increase transportation solutions in the islands. Eighty-five percent of respondents to the survey indicated a desire for change from the current level of transportation service on the islands. “Option D - Fully Integrated Transportation Service” was the first preference for the highest number of participants (45%), and

Southern Gulf Islands Transportation Integration Plan

Let's talk about improving transportation options on the Southern Gulf Islands.

[Get Involved](#)



“Option C - Semi-Integrated Transportation Service” was the second preference for most participants (50% of participants had it as their second choice).

In February 2022, the SGI Community Economic Sustainability Commission received the consultation results and passed a resolution recommending the CRD Board implement “Option D,” of the SGI Transportation Options.

Recommendations and Next Steps

An integrated transportation system encompassing walking, cycling, public transportation, and water-based transportation would change the economic geography of the region and enable shared services and increased connections throughout the islands. Investment in active transportation and public transportation would improve safety, equity, and access among residents of all ages while also reducing greenhouse gas impacts from residents and visitors.

The prerequisite for the CRD to have a formal role in funding and supporting locally-led transportation initiatives in the Southern Gulf Islands is the creation of an SGI transportation service, which in turn can only be enabled through a Service Establishment Bylaw and voter assent process.

Should the CRD wish to pursue an SGI transportation service, recommended next steps would include:

- CRD Board consideration of a Service Establishment Bylaw and voter assent process.
- Preparing for a referendum in the 2022 General Election.
- Presentation of information on the service proposal in lead up to the referendum.



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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Public Engagement Summary

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Capital Regional District (CRD) developed the Southern Gulf Islands (SGI) Transportation Integration Plan to understand the demand for, and propose future improvements to, mobility networks in the SGI Electoral Area, including walking, cycling, public transportation and passenger ferry services. Developed with the CRD and the community by Watt Consulting Group in partnership with Dreadnought Marine Consultants, this Plan presents a range of service models and estimated budget requirements to implement the vision of an integrated transportation service.

Building on past studies and community feedback, the purpose of the project was to assess how to most effectively 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.

This document summarizes the outcomes of the SGI Transportation Integration Plan project, with a focus on describing the potential role, attributes and scope of a CRD Southern Gulf Islands transportation service function should the CRD Board and the SGI electorate wish to move forward with establishing one through a Service Establishment



A major barrier to funding ongoing transportation improvements in the SGI is the Electoral Area's lack of a formal transportation service function through its governing Regional District, the CRD.

Unlike municipalities which have more flexibility in shifting their budget and service priorities, regional districts must formally define services. Without such a service, the area cannot access CRD funding towards local transportation projects or apply for larger provincial and federal transportation grants.

Bylaw and referendum. This plan also provides a high-level summary of the outcomes of engagement and analysis undertaken for the project and how they shaped the recommendations.

More detailed information on the engagement and outreach activities and their results are provided in Appendix A, as well as in the Southern Gulf Islands Active Transportation Plan that also resulted from this work.

SGI Transportation Integration Plan – Project Objectives & Deliverables:

- **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 capture existing and proposed trails envisioned by stakeholder organizations and community members, determining community needs and future priorities, and refining 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.
- **Understanding the CRD's role** in supporting identified community needs and integrated transportation going forward.

1.1 Project Evolution & Engagement Approach

The request to explore an SGI transportation service originated in May 2018 when the Southern Gulf Islands Community Economic Sustainability Commission (CESC) requested that the CRD establish a new transportation service for the SGI Electoral Area. The CESC motion specified the service should be guided by a commission with representatives from Galiano Island, Mayne Island, North and South Pender Islands, and Saturna Island, with a mandate to oversee and coordinate the transportation initiatives relating to on-island and inter-island transportation, trails and bikeways and liaising with the SGI Harbours.

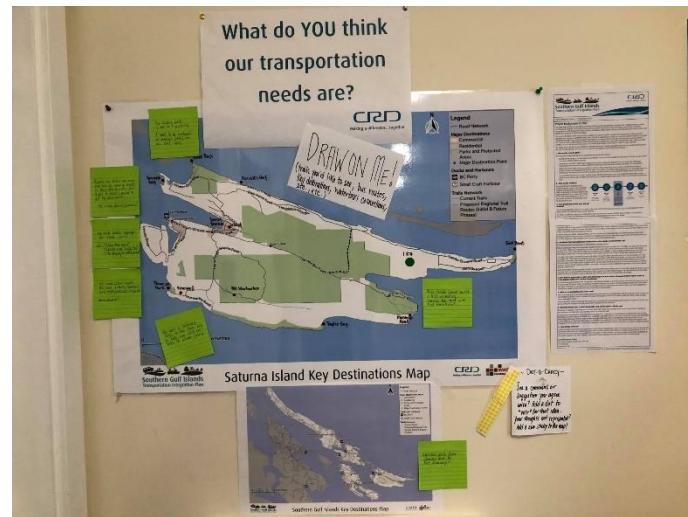
The CRD Board endorsed the request and the CRD subsequently advanced a process to consider an integrated transportation service for the region. Subsequently in 2021, Watt Consulting was engaged to undertake the SGI Transportation Integration Plan.

Project Timeline



The project's process was grounded in an in-depth community engagement and stakeholder consultation program:

- **Targeted Outreach** took place in spring 2021 and involved virtual workshops with Transportation Advisory Groups (TAGs) that included community organization representatives for each of the three modes: active transportation (trail societies, walking, cycling), public transportation / community bus, and water-based transportation. This phase also included outreach to area First Nations, interviews with stakeholder organizations, and information provided to the community via the CRD website, posters, and a media release.
- **Community mapping events** were held at tables at farmers markets and other community events during late August and early September to gather public feedback on transportation gaps and opportunities.
- **Round 1 engagement** took place in fall 2021 and invited the public to provide feedback on transportation gaps and opportunities using the CRD's digital engagement platform which included interactive mapping, quick polls, a survey, and an ideas forum. A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) was sent to every SGI mailbox to encourage people to fill out the survey.
- **Round 2 engagement** took place in winter 2022. It presented potential transportation solutions developed based on Round 1 engagement results and sought feedback on the level of support for the various options and funding levels. It involved an online survey and four virtual Q&A sessions (conducted over Zoom), as well as anFAQ sent to every SGI mailbox. The mail out explained the proposals and encouraged people to fill out the survey and attend the virtual meetings.



Community Involvement by the Numbers:

- **ROUND 1** – 2,500 project page visits, 695 surveys
- **ROUND 2** – 1,500 project page visits, 365 surveys, 43 Q&A participants

In tandem with the above engagement, the project process also included:

- **Review of past community and transportation plans** to ensure that the project built from previous community direction and analysis.
- **Analysis and development of mode-specific options** guided by the specific conditions of the Southern Gulf Islands and the input of local transportation providers, as well as the best practices and similar past projects in other Canadian island and rural communities.

Project Involvement

First Nations: WSÁNEĆ Leadership Council, Penelakut Tribe

Transportation Advisory Group Participating Organizations:

General (Across all Modes)

- Community Economic Sustainability Commission
- Southern Gulf Islands Tourism Partnership
- Experience the Gulf Islands
- Southern Gulf Islands Community Resource Centre
- CRD Liaisons + Senior Transportation Planner
- Cycling advocates
- Other community organizations

Active Transportation

- Galiano Trails Society
- Mayne Island Pathways
- Moving Around Pender
- SGI Parks and Recreation Commissions
- Gulf Islands Trails Society

Public Transportation

- Mayne Island Bus Society
- Saturna Shuttle
- Moving Around Pender
- Galiano Bus Society
- Gertie/ BC Community Bus Coalition

Water Transportation

- Penelakut Tribes
- Coast Salish Peoples of Galiano Society
- Southern Gulf Islands Harbour Commission
- Ferry Advisory Committee
- Water taxi providers
- SGITP Water taxi pilot
- Salish Sea Inter-Island Transportation Society

Other Organizations Interviewed:

- Internal CRD departments (Regional Planning, Regional Parks and Trails, SGI Harbours, Real Estate, Salt Spring Island Transportation Service, etc.)
- Islands Trust

- School District 64 Administration
- SD 64 School Trustees + PAC
- BC Ferries
- BC Transit

- Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure
- Emcon
- Parks Canada

Southern Gulf Islands

Project Context and Demographics



This project focused on the five largest islands within the SGI Electoral Area: **Galiano, Mayne, North and South Pender, and Saturna.**

Engagement and outreach also encompassed other nearby islands like Penelakut and Salt Spring, as well as part-time residents and visitors who may also reside on Vancouver Island, the lower mainland, and other locations.

- Communities in the Southern Gulf Islands were generally experiencing a decline in population from 2016 to 2011 (-2.8%). This trend has now reversed with an almost 30% increase in population in the SGI EA based on initial information from the 2021 census.
- The Southern Gulf Islands' population is older than average. In 2021, the median age was 62 years for the Electoral Area, compared to 43 years in all of BC.
- The summer population is also impacted by part-time residents returning to their summer homes as well as visitors travelling to resorts, hotels, and campgrounds and marine traffic arriving by personal boat.
- While summer population figures are not available, it is estimated that during that period the population of Galiano and Saturna both increase about 2-3 times, and the population of Mayne, North Pender and South Pender increase about 2 times.
- The population is mostly concentrated on: North and South Pender Islands, in the areas of Magic Lake and Trincomali; Galiano Island, in the areas of Sturdies Bay, the South End, and Montague Harbour; Mayne Island, in the areas of Dinner Bay/Spinnaker, Miners Bay, Georgina Point and Bennett Bay; and Saturna Island around Lyall Harbour.

2.0 SGI TRANSPORTATION ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Based on the engagement and research outlined in Section 1.1, clear themes emerged in terms of transportation issues and opportunities in the Southern Gulf Islands. The following summarizes the key findings based on what was found through the analysis and jurisdictional research, heard from the public, and then what was heard from First Nations, existing local transportation organizations and stakeholder organizations. Please also see **Appendix A – What We Heard** Reports for the detailed outcomes from the two rounds of public engagement.



Desire for Improved Transportation

Safety, Connection, Equity

Overall, the theme heard repeatedly from the public and stakeholders was that there was a need to improve alternate transportation options on the Southern Gulf Islands, particularly due to the perception of a lack of safety for users of the hilly, winding and narrow road network. The need for improved transportation alternatives stemmed from the desire by respondents to:

- Be better connected to major origins and destinations on the islands.
- Have alternatives to motor vehicles.
- Provide seniors and low-income populations better travel options.
- Be more cohesive and comprehensive in the availability of transportation choices.
- Better enable kids the ability to travel safely and independently.
- Be more sustainable and better stewards for the environment.

SGI Issues and Opportunities – Summary of Key Themes:

JURISDICTIONAL	FROM THE PUBLIC	FROM STAKEHOLDERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of an existing transportation service function for the SGI means that the CRD cannot allocate funding to local transportation projects, leverage and receive transportation funding grants from other levels of government, or hold land tenure or licenses of occupation required for larger infrastructure initiatives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low satisfaction levels with the different transportation modes. • Overall desire to improve transportation options and many ideas on how to do so. • Range of perspectives on level of appropriate financial support to improve this but majority willing to pay more. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing local transportation groups know their communities and can make things work effectively. • Biggest challenges for these groups are lack of dependable ongoing funding and lack of access to major grants (due to no sponsoring municipality.) • Openness to further exploring partnerships.

2.1 Jurisdictional Issues and Opportunities

In addition to being an unincorporated Electoral Area within the Capital Regional District, jurisdiction within the SGI is relatively complex, with the Islands Trust providing local land use planning services and broader oversight to foster the preservation and protection of the Trust Area, the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MoTI) responsible for road maintenance and improvements, BC Ferries providing ferry service, and School District 64 overseeing schools, including running a water taxi service to connect grade 8-12 SGI students to schools on North Pender Island and Salt Spring Island.

The SGI EA does not currently have a transportation service function within the CRD, unlike other regional district electoral areas with a formal transportation service function such as the CRD's Salt Spring Island's Electoral Area and the Regional District of Nanaimo's Gabriola Island (Electoral Area B). This lack of a formal transportation service has meant that the CRD has not been able to provide operational funding or support on the islands for initiatives like cycling improvements and public transportation.

On the one hand, this lack of CRD transportation jurisdiction has resulted in an extremely diverse collection of local volunteer-supported non-profit groups (trail societies, community bus organizations, etc.) and private water-taxi operators who are all contributing towards mobility in different ways. (**See Section 2.3 Stakeholder Feedback**). However, the downsides to this multiplicity and lack of formal governmental jurisdiction are that:

- **The local transportation organizations do not have reliable and predictable funding sources** to support their work in an ongoing way, which means that projects and their resulting services may be sporadic. In the past the CRD has channeled one-time grants-in-aid towards local groups like the community bus societies, but this funding cannot be used for operational expenses, is project based and amounts are limited.
- **Transportation improvements are slower to achieve than in other similar B.C. rural communities** since the SGI are not able to access large provincial and federal funding streams for active transportation and public transportation, due to the lack of a formally-designated sponsoring local government.
- **Initiatives may not necessarily be coordinated** or serve broader community transportation goals since projects are guided by individual island groups that may have less capacity to coordinate on an ongoing basis between the islands and/or between the different modes of transportation.

Without an SGI Transportation Service Function, the CRD Cannot:

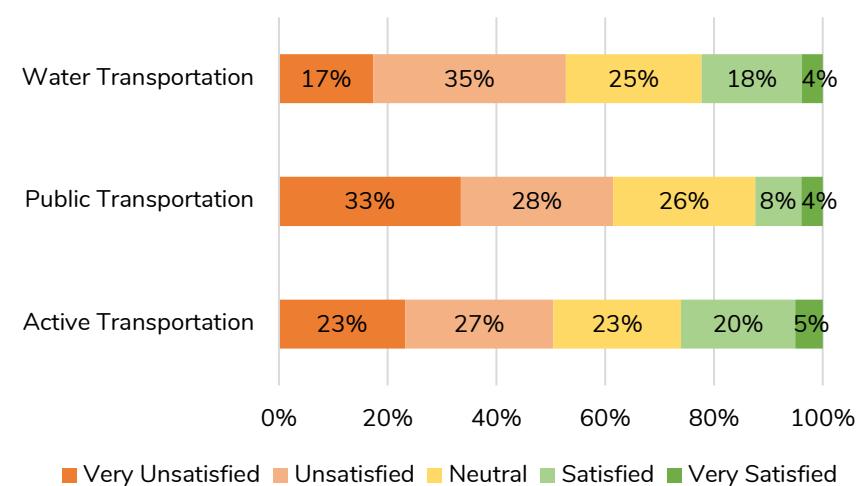
- Fund or support local transportation projects (CRD Regional Parks & Trails projects may still move forward but on regional rather than local timelines; local Parks & Recreation trails may not serve interconnected transportation goals)
- Secure grants from other sources
- Hold Licenses of Occupation on Ministry of Transportation & Infrastructure roads for roadside paths

2.2 Public Feedback

The initial rounds of public engagement were focused on understanding the “**what, why and how**” of the transportation issues and opportunities on all four islands and included Community Mapping events and Round 1 online engagement tools (survey, interactive mapping tool and quick polls). These initial rounds of engagement informed the identification of transportation issues and opportunities, with key findings as follows:

- There are low satisfaction levels for transportation modes on the islands, with 50-61% of respondents either very unsatisfied or unsatisfied.
- **Improving public transportation** ranked as highest overall mobility priority, especially for seniors and people who are unable to walk or cycle. There is a desire for year-round community bus service complemented by car stops, ridesharing, and taxi service.
- **Walking and cycling** were close as second priorities. Improving available infrastructure and connections for these are the active transportation priorities, with safety being a main concern.
- **Water transportation services** should connect with other modes and need to be affordable. They should also align with school extra-curricular schedules and allow for day trips.

Round 1 Public Survey Results – Level of Satisfaction by Transportation Mode



Top Priorities for Transportation Improvement

1. Improve public transportation options available on each island, such as community bus, shuttles, taxis or Car Stop programs to complement transit. Highest Priority
2. Improve pedestrian trails and walking routes connecting community destinations. Next Highest Priority
3. Improve water transportation between islands, such as small passenger ferry services to complement BC Ferries. (All with Similar Rankings)
4. Improve cycling routes between community destinations. (All with Similar Rankings)
5. Better coordinate transportation services and schedules between islands. (All with Similar Rankings)
6. Improve signage and information to communicate transportation options. Lowest Priority

Round 1 Public Survey Results – Top Three Improvement Priorities by Mode

Based on Responses Across All Islands



1. Community Bus service that operates year-round at commuter times plus other times of day.
2. Taxi or ride-hailing options.
3. Shuttle services to transport residents and visitors to special events.



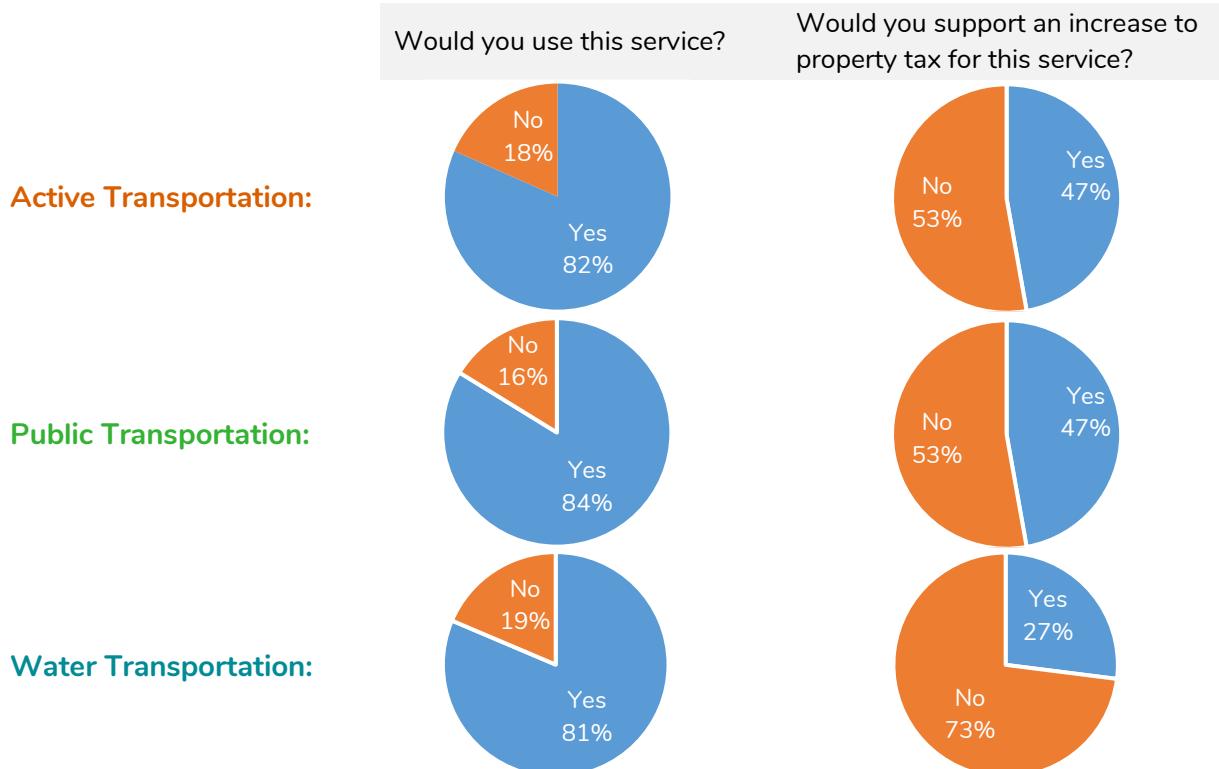
1. Create more space for safe walking and cycling on existing roadways.
2. Develop new off-road trails for walking and cycling that connect key destinations.
3. Improve the accessibility of existing trails for bikes, people using wheelchairs, strollers, etc.



1. Connect docks with public transit.
2. Passenger fare that costs \$25 or less each way.
3. A schedule that fills gaps in current service schedules (BC Ferries and school water taxis).

Round 1 Public Quick Poll Results – Likely Use of Transportation Improvements and Support to Fund It

There was strong agreement among online Quick Poll respondents on the need for transportation improvements and likelihood that they would use it, but less agreement on willingness to pay more property tax to fund the improvements. However, it should be noted that the Quick Poll questions around taxation did not state the funding amount, meaning that for active transportation and public transportation, **nearly half of respondents (47%) said that they were willing to pay more property tax to fund those improvements without even knowing at that time how much it would be.**



2.3 First Nations, Transportation Group, and Stakeholder Feedback

In addition to echoing many of the themes heard in the jurisdictional analysis and public feedback, the conversations with local transportation groups, First Nations and Stakeholders also informed the SGI issues and opportunities, which are summarized here by mode. See also the technical summaries in **Appendices B-D** for further information.

Summary of Local Transportation Group, First Nations and Stakeholder Feedback

Transportation Mode	Feedback Highlights
Active Transportation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are many groups already involved with trail network development and there is a strong belief that this work is most effectively done at grassroots level. However, key gaps identified include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of ongoing and predictable funding sources. Many trails have more of a recreational focus and may not necessarily connect key destinations as transportation corridors or be accessible to bicycles, people using wheelchairs, strollers, etc. Gulf Islands Trail Society is a multi-island organization that can potentially be an integrating forum across multiple trail societies. BC Parks and Parks Canada also have multiple other decision-making factors when it comes to trail development, particularly the priorities of Indigenous cultural preservation and ecological preservation. The existing road network does connect major destinations but there is often little space on road shoulders for pedestrians and cyclists. Development of roadside trails in the SGI is complex due to placement of the roadway in existing rights-of-way, topography, water management and jurisdictional control by the Ministry of Transportation & Infrastructure (MoTI). Developing roadside pedestrian and cycling trails requires coordination with other agencies like MoTI, acquiring License of Occupations in the Road Right of Way, and undertaking technical engineered plans to ensure drainage, maintenance standards and safety requirements are met. There is strong sensitivity on the islands to “over-building” pedestrian and cycling trails: there is a desire for active transportation infrastructure to reflect the rural character.
Public Transportation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each of the islands has previously had community bus or community transportation systems, with Saturna Island’s still operating and Mayne Island’s recently re-initiated. While a volunteer-based, on-demand model seems to work on Saturna, the challenges noted by community bus societies in the region included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of ongoing and predictable funding sources has affected the sustainability of services from year to year. Reliance primarily on volunteers for operation also impacts when and how often services can operate. Community bus operators have missed out on the ability to access federal capital funding towards vehicle purchase due to lack of a sponsoring local government.

- New “digital on-demand” transit service models—serving customers when and where they need a trip--provides a way to improve the efficient operation of public transportation services on many of the islands, rather than by operating on a fixed route and schedule. However, implementing the customer app and dispatch system that can best meet that need would be cost-prohibitive to do on an island-by-island basis.
- Community bus society representatives expressed interest in potentially working together to share costs and expertise that could be common to all, such as vehicle procurement, administration, integrated marketing, etc.
- Connecting public transportation infrastructure is still lacking at many key destinations, particularly at BC Ferries and CRD docks and sheltered waiting areas in village centres.
- Car stops could still be a feasible way to augment the reach of public transportation services but its level of return in a “post-COVID” world is unknown.

Water-Based Transportation



- Regularly scheduled service for passengers is provided by BC Ferries to each of the Southern Gulf Islands but schedules and service levels do not easily enable travel between the SGI or between SGI and Salt Spring Island, particularly for same-day-return trips.
- Passenger only water taxi service to the Gulf Islands is currently provided by several smaller seasonal operators and two year-round private vessel operators.
 - Gulf Island Water Taxi is one of these operators and is based out of Salt Spring Island. In addition to charter services, they currently hold the School District 64 contract to transport students between islands to attend school.
- In 2021, the Southern Gulf Islands Tourism Partnership’s AquaLink pilot project operated every Saturday and Sunday in September through to October 10, with one scheduled run in the morning and one scheduled run in the afternoon/evening.
 - Operated by Gulf Islands Water Taxi, the service was funded through grants obtained by the Southern Gulf Islands Tourism Partnership, and it featured a new online booking, scheduling and payment system which integrated these business functions.
 - Currently the AquaLink project continues to operate trips Monday – Thursday using any spare capacity on the school bus runs.
- The annual, volunteer-run, Tour des Isles event provides a demonstration of what an interconnected water taxi and public transportation system could look like.
- Interest in potential partnerships around water transportation were expressed by several entities in this project, including members of Penelakut Tribe and private operators.
- Water-based connections have different feasibility requirements depending on distance and season. For instance, the relatively short and protected connection between Galiano and Mayne Islands is more feasible to operate with smaller boats than the longer connection between the Southern Gulf Islands and Salt Spring Island and Sidney, where bigger enclosed boats are required for distance and year-round operation.
- Some desired water-based connections also cross regional district boundaries, such as between Galiano Island, Penelakut Island, and landings within the Cowichan Valley Regional District at Chemainus or Crofton.

3.0 FEASIBLE TRANSPORTATION APPROACHES & CRD ROLE

Based on—and in tandem with—the feedback summarized in **Section 2.0**, the project analyzed potential transportation improvements and feasible supporting service and governance approaches by mode. The results of this analysis were discussed and refined with the respective Transportation Advisory Group for each mode. Opportunities for synergies and increased integration between modes were also considered.

In turn, the analysis of these service approaches informed the recommended role of a CRD transportation service function outlined in the following **Section 3.1** and presented in the example service options in **Section 4.0**. Section 3.1 also provides a high-level summary of the analysis findings and technical background work that were undertaken by mode to summarize and explore the following:

- **Active Transportation** - Existing plans and groups involved with Active Transportation in the SGI, key issues and opportunities related to Active Transportation, best practices, and suggested priorities. Key findings from this work were also summarized in the [Southern Gulf Islands Active Transportation Plan](#).
- **Public Transportation** - Existing and past groups involved in community bus operations within the SGI, types of community transportation services that would be feasible in the islands (such as fixed route shuttles, on demand services, etc.), and operating and governance models. This analysis also explored the potential feasibility for operating public transportation in the SGI as a BC Transit cost-shared service.
- **Water Transportation** - Existing and potential water-taxi operators in the islands, regulatory frameworks, and potential partnerships (such as with area First Nations and School District 64). The analysis also explored service levels and cost and capacity tradeoffs between operating passenger ferry transportation on a seasonal basis (when it is more feasible to use smaller boats), versus year-round operation when larger boats are required due to weather.



3.1 SGI Transportation Service Findings & Recommended CRD Role

The following outlines the key findings and conclusions from the analysis, including a recommended role for the CRD in supporting transportation in the SGI, as well as governance and operating models and service design considerations. These conclusions informed the CRD integrated transportation service options presented in **Section 4.0**.



3.1.1 Key Conclusions – Overall Transportation Integration & CRD Role

- **Recommended Transportation Service Function and CRD Role:** There are potential activities that the CRD would be best-positioned to undertake to support improved transportation options in the SGI. These would require the establishment of a transportation service. These activities primarily relate to supporting funding and coordination across modes and jurisdictions, including:
 - **Provision of funding grants** to local SGI transportation organizations delivering services.
 - **Leveraging infrastructure funding** from other levels of government, and development of partnerships with the School District, BC Ferries and MoTI for coordinated improvements to existing and proposed services.
 - **The ability to hold Licenses of Occupation** (which cannot be held by non-profits) in the provincial road Right of Way that are needed for roadside trails, as well as the ability to provide support for the technical engineering and coordination required by MoTI.
 - **The ability to hold others forms of tenure (land ownership)** as required to support the development of trails or infrastructure.
 - **Support for foundational improvements** that cut across modes of travel and which may be less financially feasible for individual organizations to undertake on their own, including:
 - **Support for marketing and customer communications** across travel modes and islands, such as a website portal.
 - **Trip scheduling, dispatch and customer booking technology** that could be used by community bus organizations on each of the islands plus private water taxi operators, to show available trips or coordinate on-demand service.
 - **Intermodal infrastructure investment** that facilitates connection to and between modes, including bus shelters, bike racks, and wayfinding signage, as well as land-side improvements for connection to active transportation and public transportation at CRD docks, and support for similar coordination with BC Ferries at their terminals.
- **Governance:** It is important that any CRD transportation service function created for the SGI be guided by a **Transportation Commission** made up of local representatives each island and each transportation mode, to ensure that local priorities and opportunities are reflected in its decisions. A similar model exists for Salt Spring Island. The Commission may also itself seek formalized guidance from groups representing each island's interests more broadly, or input from transportation providers for each mode in the way of advisory committees or stakeholder groups.
 - The SGI Transportation Service will also benefit from formalized partnerships with other agencies to achieve economies of scale through shared service models. For example, there was discussion of the opportunities that may exist through collaboration with Penelakut Tribe which has commuter traffic between the islands, or the School District 64 with its contract for daily water taxi service.

- The islands may benefit other **coordinating umbrella entities** for each mode that would span the islands (for example, as exists with the Gulf Islands Trail Society). The Commission could support non-profit organizations to facilitate common functions – for example, the public transportation operators may find an economy of scale if they collaborated on vehicle procurement, administrative and record keeping functions, customer information, etc.).
- **Timing and Phasing** - It would be possible to develop active transportation, public transportation, and water-based transportation networks individually and gradually as funds are available and the coordination between the modes can be designed after they are operational. However, a more holistic approach would be to plan all modes simultaneously and implement them all in a phased and cohesive manner, to ensure that coordination between modes is present from the start of service.



3.1.2 Key Conclusions: Active Transportation

- **Operating Model:** As outlined in the Overall Transportation Integration section above, the active transportation focus for the CRD should be on supporting local SGI organizations and other third parties who would deliver walking and cycling connections where they meet transportation objectives. Depending on funding levels, the range of suggested activities within this role includes:
 - **Annual active transportation grant program** available to local SGI organizations to support the development and maintenance of walking and cycling connections, such as supporting coordination costs and purchase of materials. Criteria for such a grant program would be typically determined by the proposed Transportation Commission but project criteria would ideally prioritize [a] trails or paths that have a transportation objective in connecting key community destinations, and [b] connections that are accessible to both pedestrians and bicycles / other wheeled devices.
 - **Supporting more complex and multi-jurisdictional projects** by leveraging grant funding from other levels of government, holding tenure and Licenses of Occupation as required, coordinating with MoTI and their road maintenance provider to facilitate projects and planning, providing support for technical elements (engineering review of designs, archaeological assessments), and providing project management support.
 - **Providing funding and support towards active transportation infrastructure and information**, such as funding and tenure for the placement of bike racks and maintaining current trail information on the CRD's publicly accessible regional mapping GIS tool.
 - **Organizing an annual trail network coordination event** (potentially in partnership with the Gulf Islands Trails Society) to bring together the multiple organizations working on issues related to the development of trails and pathways within the SGI. Ideally held in the fall when groups are preparing for the busy spring season of construction and maintenance, such an event could involve not only local trail societies, CRD SGI Electoral Area and Regional Trails staff, representatives from the Parks and Recreation Commissions, and the new Transportation Commission, but also Parks Canada and BC Parks staff and potentially also representatives from the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure or their maintenance provider staff.



3.1.3 Key Conclusions: Public Transportation

- **Operating Models:** A range of operating models were explored, including [1] a BC Transit model, [2] operation by community bus societies with a greater proportion of paid staff and coordination between them, and [3] status quo delivery by individual community bus societies continuing to operate on a primarily a volunteer-basis. Option 2 or 3 are recommended depending on funding availability, with Option 2 offering the most functional sustainability and local economic benefits.
 - A BC Transit model is **not** recommended for the SGI for the following reasons:
 - It would be more significantly more expensive, even with opportunity for provincial cost-sharing. This is due to vehicle type, requirements for a ratio of spare vehicles, maintenance requirements, staff compensation considerations, and decreased revenue opportunities.
 - BC Transit does not currently allow charter services to be delivered with its vehicles.
 - Under BC Transit, operation of services would likely be grouped together, meaning a single entity would likely be procured to operate all SGI services, which would mean potentially less ability to retain local control and economic development benefits from the operation.
- **Service Type and Levels** – Given the range of population sizes, geographic shapes and road network types on the islands, there is also a corresponding range of potential service levels and types of services to be offered. For instance, fully on-demand passenger transportation has been working well on Saturna Island (which has a lower density population distributed across the island) while the long narrow form of Galiano makes fixed route transit more viable.
 - Future SGI public transportation service models should consider a range of service types, depending on the island and season. In particular, if technology were provided to support it, digital on-demand transit, operating during trip windows oriented to key ferry times, would likely offer the most efficient operation and highest ridership.
 - Depending on funding levels, the recommended priority order for service is:
 - Seasonal services with a focus on the period between the last week of June and Labour Day.
 - Services during the spring/fall shoulder seasons and winter focused on meeting morning and afternoon peak ferry times and school boat runs.
 - Additional midday services, particularly on Fridays and weekends.
 - Complementing public transportation, car stop programs should be maintained/restarted after the pandemic, and other ride hailing, ride sharing and taxi services can also be considered.
- **Vehicle Type** – Smaller vehicles are preferred. While in some cases cars may be viable, minivans and smaller buses with a capacity of 7-15 passengers would likely offer the most flexibility and cost-efficiency.
 - There are significant federal funding programs now available to support procurement of electric vehicles for transit systems, as well as the associated charging infrastructure. However, these programs are only available in partnership with a supporting local government; for the CRD to be a sponsoring partner it needs a dedicated SGI service to be established.



3.1.4 Key Conclusions: Water-Based Transportation

- **Operating Models and CRD Role:** Some of the considerations around water transportation include its cost, regulatory requirements, and operating conditions. In general, water transportation is the most expensive service to operate. For instance:
 - Smaller boats that are viable for fair weather and for year-round operation in more protected routes (such as between Galiano and Mayne) have an operating cost per hour of service that is 3-4 times that of typical community bus services.
 - Larger vessels required for year-round operation on more open routes such as connection to Salt Spring Island, and that remain reliable during more severe weather, have an operating cost per hour of service that is 7-10 times that of typical community bus services.

Because of the higher cost and regulatory complexity, it is not recommended that the CRD operate or solely contract inter-island water taxi services at this time. Instead, it is recommended that the focus of any CRD involvement in water-based transportation be focused on facilitating partnership development, as well as supporting the implementation of supporting infrastructure and technologies that can make provision of water-taxi services by private operators more viable and connected, for example:

- Support for marketing and customer communications, such as an SGI integrated transportation website that includes water taxi information.
- Trip scheduling, dispatch and customer booking technology that could be used by private water taxi operators to show available trips or coordinate on-demand service, such as that developed for the AquaLink project.
- Land-side infrastructure improvements at docks to enable coordination between modes, such as wayfinding signage, bike racks and benches/shelters for connecting public transportation.
- **Service Levels:** For the purposes of this study, sample service levels and routes were explored to identify potential operational costs for service providers to better serve the SGI and understand the economy of scale and the funding gap between user fares and operation costs to meet desired interisland connections. Based on previous surveys, workshops and more recent stakeholder and public engagement, service preferences cited by both residents and businesses relate largely to the gaps in the existing BC Ferries service.
 - Similar, to the priorities outlined for public transportation, there is a mix of different travel needs and priorities for year-round resident and businesses. Key service priorities relate to building onto the Monday to Thursday commuter connections already taking place between SGI and Salt Spring Islands, and enhancing SGI inter-island connections seasonally and then year-round.

4.0 CREATING AN SGI TRANSPORTATION SERVICE

Based on the community feedback described in **Section 2.0**, and building from the analysis and recommendations for a CRD role outlined in **Section 3.0**, this Transportation Integration Plan supports the creation of a new CRD transportation service function for the Southern Gulf Islands Electoral Area.

Similar to the model already successfully implemented to further sustainable transportation in the

CRD's Salt Spring Island Electoral Area, an SGI transportation service would be guided by an SGI Transportation Commission made up of local representatives.

The primary objective of an SGI transportation service would be to provide financial and coordination support to the active transportation, public transportation, and water-based mobility initiatives that have been—and would continue to be—led by local non-profit and private organizations on the islands. The CRD service would be targeted to fill the gaps in the existing local transportation framework by holding tenure and/or acting as the sponsoring local government when required for transportation infrastructure investment and funding applications to higher levels of government.

The role of the CRD transportation service would also be to encourage investment in active transportation road improvements and cycling infrastructure, provide integration of water and land public transportation systems, and facilitate partnerships between other agencies and community groups advancing transportation solutions in the region.



With a formal Southern Gulf Islands transportation service, the CRD can:

- Establish a Transportation Commission with representation from each island, which could:
 - Set budgets to fund locally-based priorities.
 - Provide funding to local groups (eg. trail societies and community bus societies) to deliver transportation services / improvements.
 - Provide funding towards partnerships for inter-island connections.
- Support the development of integrated transportation services.
- Provide staff support to seek larger federal and provincial grants.
- Hold Licenses of Occupation and coordinate with other entities to develop roadside paths.
- Support the implementation of technology and infrastructure that can be shared across local service providers, islands and modes.

4.1 Transportation Service Example Funding Levels and Options

While a portion of funding for a Southern Gulf Islands transportation service function may come from user fares, partnerships, and other funding sources it can leverage, if it is approved by Southern Gulf Islands voters in a referendum the service's ongoing funding would also come from property taxes up to a maximum limit.

The level of property tax limit approved determines the level of service and the potential scope of what an SGI transportation service could offer.

This section presents four examples of service options (Options A-D) and funding levels to meet the range of transportation needs identified by the community.

- **The example options are based on information provided by SGI community organizations** including trail and bus societies, costing analysis and best practices from other communities, as well as the results of round 1 engagement. See also **Section 4.1.1 Overview of Cost Assumptions** for further information.
- **The options presented here have been refined based on feedback from the community** in the second round of engagement held in January–February 2022. These current options present the same upper limit maximum tax requisition with those presented for engagement, but the allocations between modes have been adjusted to reflect feedback (see also **Section 4.3**).

Ultimately if an SGI transportation service was established, the funding priorities would be determined by the Commission of local representatives, within its annual budget. Therefore, the options are only **examples of the level of service that could be supported with various amounts of funding**. The Commission would have the ability (and responsibility) to allocate funding based on local priorities and the merit of grant applications by service providers. This also means that they would be able to “mix and match” elements of service options, including adjusting allocations between islands and between modes, to best meet the needs of each specific island and the integrated transportation network as a whole.

Taxation and Funding Implications

In addition to calculating the cost of each example option based on the level of service provided, the following tables also show the property tax implication for each, based on the 2022 assessed values of properties in the SGI.

The amount per property would vary depending on the property's value. For this reason, a cost per \$100,000 and per \$1,000 of assessed value is also shown.

Service Establishment Bylaw Process

Establishing a formal Regional District transportation service function for the Southern Gulf Islands Electoral Area would require a service establishment bylaw be approved by the CRD Board, and the electorate in a referendum, which could coincide with the October 2022 general elections.

4.1.1 Overview of Cost Assumptions

The sample options draw from a wide range of cost inputs, including information from existing service providers, cost details from similar communities, and current CRD financial information and practices. Developing cost estimates was a high-level process for many of the elements due to the following:

- **Ultimately it would be an SGI Transportation Commission that would determine the recommended mix of modes, services and funding levels** (within a total potential requisition amount) if an SGI transportation service is established. The allocation amounts shown reflect feedback and priorities heard through this process. The sample amounts also strive to keep the service levels and cost totals reasonable, within an amount that would be feasible within the population levels, community context, and tax base.
- **Each of the five largest SGI islands has different population levels, needs and capacities between them.** This means that the Commission may adjust funding levels per mode on an island-by-island basis. It also means that cost projections by island and mode are impacted by unknowns, such as the level of volunteer effort that would likely continue to support operation of some of the modes, as well as the degree to which some of the various transportation-related organizations may partner together to share costs, where practical.

A fundamental proposed role for the CRD in an SGI transportation service is to use grants to fund local transportation service providers. These non-profit operators will have varying budgets that reflect their operational and capital needs, depending on the proportion of continued volunteer support (particularly in the case of public transportation), as well as sharing of some of the common cost elements between islands / modes, grant funding, other local fundraising, and revenue sources such as fares, charters, donations in kind, etc.) Grant funding will be application based and the Commission will have criteria to ensure equitable funding is allocated to ensure service needs are met, as demonstrated by the applicant's proposal and as appropriate for the demand and population of each island.

The approximate amount shown per island are rough estimates, but also grounded in real numbers based on the operational budgets of existing service providers; **the distribution by mode and island would ultimately be made by a Transportation Commission**, which would have the discretion to award according to the need advanced by the community groups in order to meet the objective of an integrated, effective transportation network.

The sample options in the following section provide details on service levels by mode. However, general assumptions by mode across the options are as follows:

- **General:** Operating and capital costs were based on 2021/22 actuals or budgets where they were available, with estimates from previous years adjusted for inflation.
- **Local Governance:** Staff costs related to supporting an SGI Transportation Commission (administration, grant support, record keeping, correspondence) are included in the CRD Staffing and Coordination lines for options.
- **Active Transportation:**
 - Amounts shown are a notional level for potential grant amounts to help offset the cost of materials, volunteer appreciation, and administrative / insurance costs for trail society projects, based on the feedback from the primarily volunteer-run societies on some of their key needs.
 - Grant amounts shown do not include the significant amounts that are available for active transportation infrastructure through federal and provincial funding programs. (See **Section 7.2 – Funding** in the [SGI Active Transportation Plan](#) for a list). These larger senior government amounts would be **in addition to what is shown** and the SGI would have the ability to access these if it had a transportation service through the CRD and therefore a sponsoring local government and the staff to apply for and help manage those projects.

Overview of Cost Assumptions, Continued

- **Public Transportation:**
 - Operating costs reflect a range of operating models and service types, that span from an average of \$45 per hour of service (for services operated primarily by volunteers) to \$70 per hour of service (for those primarily operated by paid staff). The hours of service per year varies by option and the service levels per island would depend on the operating model. Operating costs include wages and benefits or honourariums for driving, dispatch and administrative staff (as applicable), insurance, maintenance, fuel, tires, cleaning and administrative supplies, and an amount towards office space / vehicle storage.
 - Capital costs assume two vehicles per island (one in service, plus one spare) using vans (in the low estimates) or a mix of vans and minibuses in the high estimates. For purposes of comparing across options, an amortized lease amount per vehicle was used with the assumption that half of the vehicles would be new and half would be used. (Therefore, capital costs may be less in cases where existing purchased community bus vehicles are used or private volunteer vehicles operate the service).
 - A 5% contingency amount, 6% CRD administration amount and notional amounts for marketing and coordination were also included in public transportation estimates.
 - Costs shown are net of revenues and assume amounts for passenger fares and charters to offset costs. The average passenger fare assumes option of discounted travel for regular users (such as tickets), plus also that some services may continue to be on a by-donation basis. Revenue was adjusted by option and operating model to reflect likely ridership based on past performance and peer B.C. communities. It is assumed that some level of fundraising and/or sharing of space and administrative functions would still take place in order to operate service as cost-effectively as possible.
 - Evaluation of a BC Transit model also took into account the vehicle requirements and lease fees, average operating costs, BC Transit administrative costs and potential cost sharing for that type of service. It is not shown in the options here as it cost more and was less feasible. (See **Section 3.1.3**)
- **Water Transportation:** Evaluation of water transportation services, models and costs (outlined in Appendix D) took into account different regulatory requirements, boat size and operating costs depending on route and time of year. Given that costs per hour of service are high (ranging from approximately \$200 - \$500 per hour depending on size of boat), the options focus on contributions towards partnerships and providing contributions towards foundational improvements that would help all private water taxi operators (trip booking software, dockside improvements, etc.)
- **Supporting Infrastructure and Maintenance:** Includes a notional amount. At lower ends, budget reflects information from CRD on typical insurance and maintenance amounts for what is shown, while higher amounts reflect a small annual budget towards minor infrastructure improvements such as bike racks, dockside amenities, etc.
- **Coordinating and Marketing Tools:** Includes amounts for CRD contribution to these items, such as to an on-island organization(s) that may develop and provide these services or internally.
- **CRD Staffing and Coordination:** Includes wages and benefits amounts for additional CRD staff to support the transportation service function (who could be based on the islands). FTE and job classification details are outlined in each option, with classifications reflecting current pay scales and estimates depending on years of service / experience. A 6% administration fee is also included in the amount shown (as required by CRD) to reflect organizational overhead costs beyond staff hired to support the service (needed for allocations to Finance, IT, Human Resources, etc.)
- **Annual Funding Levels / Costs:** Reflects 2022 SGI property assessments and approximate annual property tax impacts per \$100,000 (or per \$1,000) assessed value. See also note on bottom of page 23.

Option A – Status Quo

(no additional costs)

This option reflects the current state today. Local SGI transportation organizations operate on their own and seek donations, grants, and other revenues as they can as there is no ability for the CRD to provide service or funding to them. The CRD does not have staff or budgets to access larger provincial and federal funding grant programs on behalf of the SGI transportation societies and there is no specific transportation decision-making structure for the electoral area.

There is no funding available from the CRD for supporting infrastructure, maintenance, or marketing and coordinating tools. There is no coordination for integrated transportation options and no staff support.

Mode	Funding Allocation	Example Service Levels
 Local Governance	n/a	No specific transportation decision-making structure.
 Active Transportation	\$0	Ad hoc grants only; depends on each island's trail organization(s) to raise funds, seek grants, and build/maintain/operate trails, get insurance, hold tenure where possible.
 Public Transportation	\$0	Ad hoc grants only; depends on each island's community bus society to raise funds, seek grants, own/maintain vehicles, meet regulatory requirements, and operate service.
 Water Transportation	\$0	No change. Water connection would still depend on BC Ferries or unsubsidized, uncoordinated private water taxi operators.
 Supporting Infrastructure & Maintenance	\$0	No additional funding from CRD
 Coordination and Marketing Tools	\$0	None other than what individual organizations create.
 CRD Staffing & Coordination	\$0	No change. CRD does not fund or support transportation in the SGI. No coordination for integrated transportation options. No ability for CRD to apply for transportation grant funding from other levels of government. No staff support, or engineering or planning expertise.
 Annual Funding Level & Cost	\$0	No change to transportation-related property taxes (stays zero)

Option B – Basic Grants

(at a maximum requisition¹ up to ~\$270,000 annually)

This option creates a very basic transportation service for the SGI and establishes a Transportation Commission made up of local representatives. The Commission would set priorities and therefore the annual budget funding levels between the three modes and would fine-tune allocation between islands based on their specific needs.

The most limited and lowest cost of the three funded options, this example focuses on providing small grants to existing transportation groups. As part of these grants, some limited funding would be available to local trail societies and community bus societies. The amount for community bus societies would allow public transportation service to operate a few days a week, primarily in summer high season, with most staff volunteers.

Water travel opportunities would primarily be provided by BC Ferries, unless a private operator saw the potential for additional water taxi services. There would be limited funding available for supporting measures like infrastructure, marketing, and communications. This option includes provision for a part-time (0.5 to 0.8 FTE) CRD coordinator role to support the Commission, assist with the grant program functions, and would be able to apply for some external grants on behalf of the SGI EA.

Option B – Basic Grants – Example Attributes by Mode

Mode	Example Funding Allocation	Example Service Levels
 Local Governance	Costs are included in CRD staffing & coordination item.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishes SGI Transportation Commission with SGI volunteer commissioners to advise on local priorities, guide planning and decision making, and make recommendations for an annual budget. Part-time staff support for the Commission and to administer internal and external grant programs.
 Active Transportation	+/- \$32,000* * Suggested allocations to travel modes are subject to Commission priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Could support small annual CRD grants to local trail societies to help offset costs of materials and coordination for active transportation trails. Roadside trails would be funded through third party grants; see next bullet. Funds staff to support application for 3rd party grants to fund construction of roadside trails, plus manage any tenure held by CRD. If requested, CRD could hold tenure (such as Licenses of Occupation in the public road Right of Way) but would not operate or maintain trails. Trails societies would continue this function as now.

* Suggested allocations between travel modes are subject to Commission priorities

¹ **Important Note on Maximum Requisition:** The CRD would not collect the maximum requisition for many years – initially the service would be funded by a fraction of the maximum allowed by the bylaw and as stated here. The budget/requisition amount would increase according to inflation, and ultimately, the service priorities and budget allocated will be proposed by the Commission for approval by the CRD Board and may change from year to year.

Option B – Basic Grants – Example Attributes by Mode

Mode	Example Funding Allocation	Example Service Levels
 Public Transportation	+/- \$141,000*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could support annual CRD grants to local community bus societies towards operations costs such as maintenance and insurance. (Total amount would depend on Commission priorities, would likely vary by island and amount shown is net of any revenues). • Funding level likely means: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Operated by combination of volunteers and some paid staff. ◦ Likely more limited and seasonal operation. • The community bus societies would own and maintain their own vehicles. CRD wouldn't operate services but could apply for grants to purchase vehicles, then lease them to providers). • Provision for modest car stop program support (signage, promotion) in tandem with community bus grant program.
 Water Transportation	\$0*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change, except for coordinating tools (see below). Water connection would still depend on BC Ferries or unsubsidized, uncoordinated private water taxi operators.
 Supporting Infrastructure & Maintenance	+/- \$6,000*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small annual (capital reserve) fund to support targeted infrastructure improvements and maintenance, such as bike racks, benches, and bus stop signage. • CRD able to fund and own assets (such as buses, benches, etc.) and secure use of road right-of-way where needed.
 Coordination and Marketing Tools	+/- \$10,000*	<p>Funding for coordinating tools, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidated SGI transportation website hub with links to 3rd party schedules. • Contribution towards land/water transportation trip-booking system supporting bus and water taxi operators.
 CRD Staffing & Coordination	+/- \$81,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modest CRD administration and coordination role (0.5 – 0.8 FTE), including administering capital/operating grants to non-profits and Commission support. • Owning assets and holding tenure when required by other levels of government. • Securing infrastructure funding from senior governments • Limited partnership development and integrated planning. <p>Staffing estimates include provision for 0.8 FTE (15 position) Administrator to help develop and administer local grant program, support Commission, and support funding applications to other levels of government, licenses of occupation, etc.</p>
 Annual Funding Level & Cost	Maximum of \$270,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At maximum requisition, property tax impacts of up to approx. \$39 per year for the average homeowner, or up to \$5.50 per \$100,000 assessed property value (\$0.06 per \$1,000).

* Suggested allocations between travel modes are subject to Commission priorities.

Option C – Semi-Integrated Transportation System

(at a maximum requisition¹ of up to ~\$450,000 annually)

In comparison to Option B, this option provides more enhanced funding to local transportation organizations and coordination support from CRD staff. Like Option B, it establishes a Transportation Commission made up of local representatives to set annual priorities and budget funding levels between modes and islands.

However, it also increases funding to augment service levels, particularly for community buses which would then be able to operate across more days and months of the year and with a higher proportion of paid staff (which in turn supports local employment in the islands). This option also provides additional support for leveraging larger funding grant programs from other levels of government, as well as increased marketing and communications tools and strategic planning to support the development of an integrated transportation network.

Water travel would still be primarily provided by BC Ferries and private water taxi operators, but this option would have a small amount of capacity to support developing water transportation partnerships. This option includes provision for one full-time (1.0 FTE) CRD coordinator / planner role to support the Commission and provide more fulsome support towards funding programs to local transportation groups, external grant applications, partnership development, service promotion and strategic planning.

Option C – Semi-Integrated Transportation System – Example Attributes by Mode

Mode	Funding Allocation	Example Service Levels
 Local Governance	Costs are included in CRD staffing & coordination item.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishes SGI Transportation Commission with SGI volunteer commissioners to advise on local priorities, guide planning and decision making, and make recommendations for an annual budget. • Full-time staff support for the Commission and for strategic integrated transportation planning and to administer internal and external grant programs.

¹ **Important Note on Maximum Requisition:** The CRD would not collect the maximum requisition for many years – initially the service would be funded by a fraction of the maximum allowed by the bylaw and as stated here. The budget/requisition amount would increase according to inflation, and ultimately, the service priorities and budget allocated will be proposed by the Commission for approval by the CRD Board and may change from year to year.

Option C – Semi-Integrated Transportation System – Example Attributes by Mode

Mode	Funding Allocation	Example Service Levels
 Active Transportation	+\$60,000*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could create more robust CRD grants to local trail societies to help offset costs of materials and coordination for active transportation trails. Roadside trails would be funded through third party grants. • Funds staff to support application for 3rd party grants to fund construction of roadside trails, plus manage any tenure held by CRD and assist in coordinating between groups. • If requested, CRD could hold tenure (such as Licenses of Occupation in the public road Right of Way) but would not operate or maintain trails. Trails societies would continue this function as now.
 Public Transportation	+\$243,000*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could support annual CRD funding to community bus societies for more regular service. (Total amount would depend on Commission priorities and amount would likely vary by island depending on travel need, operating model and service levels; amount shown is net of revenue from fares, charters, fundraising). • Funding level likely means: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Greater proportion of paid coordinator and driving staff ◦ More days and months of service than Option B • The community bus societies would own and maintain their own vehicles. CRD could apply for grants to purchase and own vehicles, then lease them to service providers. • Provision for funding support and regional coordination for car stop programs + car share, etc.
 Water Transportation	+\$10,000*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding available to convene partnerships aimed at supporting regular scheduled water taxi services, but likely cannot fund service without other budget trade-offs. • Coordinating tools (see below).
 Supporting Infrastructure & Maintenance	+\$6,000*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small annual (capital reserve) fund to support targeted infrastructure improvements and maintenance to better connect modes, such as bike racks, benches, and bus stop signage. • CRD able to fund and own assets (such as buses, benches, etc.) and secure use of road right-of-way where needed.
 Coordination and Marketing Tools	+\$15,000*	<p>Funding for coordinating tools, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for consolidated SGI transportation communications and marketing, online information, promoting car shares, etc. • Contribution towards land/water transportation trip-booking system that can be used by bus and water taxi operators.

* Suggested allocations between travel modes are subject to Commission priorities.

Option C – Semi-Integrated Transportation System – Example Attributes by Mode

Mode	Funding Allocation	Example Service Levels
 CRD Staffing & Coordination	 +/- \$116,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More substantive CRD administrative and support role (1.0 FTE total), including grant and contract management, administration, work planning and Commission support. Owning assets and holding tenure when required by other levels of government, including technical requirements (geological studies, archeological studies, etc.). Securing infrastructure funding from senior governments. Partnership development, such as water taxi Strategic planning and coordination to implement an integrated transportation system, with enhanced ability for it to function and be communicated as a regional network. <p>Staffing estimates include provision for 1.0 FTE (J17 position) Analyst to give professional level service such as managing licenses of occupation, roadside trail project management, and strategic planning, funding applications to other levels of government, and local grant programs. Would also support Commission and manage records and correspondence.</p>
 Annual Funding Level & Cost	 Maximum of \$450,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At maximum requisition levels, property tax impacts of up to approx. \$65 per year for the average homeowner, or \$9.17 per \$100,000 assessed property value (\$0.09 per \$1,000)

* Suggested allocations between travel modes are subject to Commission priorities.

Why Are Staff Needed for the Transportation Service?

- Providing CRD service requires staff to **manage, coordinate, and administer** the various functions expected of the service. Staff would provide a range of expertise, including writing tenders, procurement, contract management, grant writing and administration, engineering review, negotiating Licenses of Occupation, integrated scheduling, etc. that are specialized skills that the volunteer commissions may not have, or if they do, could be taken off their plates.
- Staffing in the right places and times in turn can better enable precious volunteer capacity to be used where it is the most valuable**, such as by providing staff support to volunteer Transportation Commission members or specialized grant and procurement support to help get transportation societies the resources they need.
- Having a staff role can provide the continuity of knowledge and relationships** to support long term priorities and project success, especially more complex ones that may involve multiple organizations. This helps projects move forward in a more timely way, and assists local groups with more effectively connecting into and benefiting from other resources and capacity available through the CRD.

Option D – Fully-Integrated Transportation System

(at a maximum requisition¹ of up to ~\$675,000 annually)

This option provides the highest level of funding towards SGI transportation services. However, to be clear, the example service levels are still modest as they try to maintain funding at a level that reflects the nature of the islands as smaller, more rural communities and also the fact that many residents are on fixed incomes and may have less capacity to pay more. This option's example service levels provide a fulsome starting point for an integrated transportation network that leverages funding from other levels of government, while also still building off of the islands' volunteer capacity and community connectedness to deliver services as cost-efficiently as possible.

Like Options B and C, it establishes a Transportation Commission made up of local representatives to set annual priorities and budget funding levels between modes and islands. However, at this level community bus operations would likely be able to operate year-round and primarily with paid staff. This option also provides for the ability to not only convene water transportation partnership discussions but also potentially to contribute to water transportation service partnerships.

This option includes provision for up to 1.5 FTE positions, including a full-time administrator / planner role, a part-time coordinator, and engineering/ professional contract expertise to support development of roadside trails with MoTI. The coordinator and administrator roles would support the Commission and provide more fulsome support towards funding programs to local transportation groups, external grant program applications, partnership development and strategic planning, including support for year-round operation of community bus services.

Option D – Fully-Integrated Transportation System – Example Attributes by Mode

Mode	Funding Allocation	Example Service Levels
 Local Governance	Costs are included in CRD staffing & coordination item.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishes SGI Transportation Commission with SGI volunteer commissioners to advise on local priorities, guide planning and decision making, and make recommendations for an annual budget. Full time staff support for the Commission and for strategic integrated transportation planning and to administer internal and external grant programs.

¹ **Important Note on Maximum Requisition:** The CRD would not collect the maximum requisition for many years – initially the service would be funded by a fraction of the maximum allowed by the bylaw and as stated here. The budget/requisition amount would increase according to inflation, and ultimately, the service priorities and budget allocated will be proposed by the Commission for approval by the CRD Board and may change from year to year.

Option D – Fully-Integrated Transportation System – Example Attributes by Mode

Mode	Funding Allocation	Example Service Levels
 Active Transportation	+- \$124,000*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could create CRD grants to local trail societies to help offset costs of materials and coordination for active transportation trails. Roadside trails would be funded through third party grants; see next bullet. • Funds increased staff to support application for 3rd party grants to fund construction of roadside trails, plus provide engineering expertise to facilitate their planning and construction, manage any tenure held by CRD and assist in coordinating between groups. • CRD could hold tenure (such as Licenses of Occupation in the public road Right of Way) and work with trails societies to support continued operation and maintenance of trails.
 Public Transportation	+- \$294,000*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could support annual CRD funding to local community bus societies towards year-round service. (Total amount would depend on Commission priorities and be allocated as part of an application process. Grant requests by the different bus societies would be based on operating models and service levels; estimates shown are net of any revenues from fares, charters, fundraising). • Funding level likely means: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Greater proportion of paid coordinator and driving staff ○ Year-round operation with more days and months of service than Option C. For instance, service seven days a week in the summer and 3-6 days per week rest of the year depending on service levels per day. • The community bus societies would own and maintain their own vehicles. CRD could apply for grants to purchase and own vehicles, then lease them to service providers (but CRD would not operate the bus services). • Funding support and regional coordination for car stop programs + car share, etc.
 Water Transportation	+- \$57,000*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convenes and supports a financial contribution towards partnerships for seasonal and potentially year-round water taxi services. • Coordinating tools (see below).
 Supporting Infrastructure & Maintenance	+- \$16,000*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More robust annual (capital reserve) fund to support targeted infrastructure improvements and maintenance to better connect modes, such as bike racks, benches, and bus stop signage plus dockside improvements. • CRD able to fund and own assets (such as buses, benches, etc.) and secure use of road right-of-way where needed.

* Suggested allocations between travel modes are subject to Commission priorities.

Option D – Fully-Integrated Transportation System – Example Attributes by Mode

Mode	Funding Allocation	Example Service Levels
 Coordination and Marketing Tools	+- \$15,000*	<p>Funding for coordinating tools, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for consolidated SGI transportation communications and marketing, online information, promoting car shares, eBike, etc. • Contribution towards land/water transportation trip-booking system that can be used by multiple bus and water taxi operators.
 CRD Staffing & Coordination	+- \$169,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As outlined in Option C with additional assistance required to manage/coordinate community bus and integrated network in year-round operation, enhanced water taxi operation, PLUS access to enhanced technical support for the transportation service, such as engineering for development of roadside improvements. <p>Staffing estimates include provision for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 1.0 FTE (J17 position) Analyst to give professional level service such as managing licenses of occupation, roadside trail project management, and support strategic planning, funding applications, marketing, and local grant programs. ○ 0.5 FTE (J12 position) Administrative support to manage records, correspondence, Commission support.
 Cost	Maximum of \$675,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At maximum requisition levels, property tax impacts of up to approximately \$98 per year for the average homeowner, or \$14.10 per \$100,000 assessed property value (\$0.14 per \$1,000)

* Suggested allocations between travel modes are subject to Commission priorities.

Why an Integrated Approach to Transportation Matters

Resilience and Choice: Seamless multimodal connectivity gives people diversity of options and the ability to choose a mode that suits their needs, financial capacity and physical abilities.

Using Resources More Effectively: An integrated network can fine tune its offerings based on distance and demand, and use its budget to support the transportation needs of a wider section of the community.

Equity and inclusivity: An integrated transportation system develops a number of different modes in a community at the same time, thereby balancing out the needs of the various users.



4.2 Option Evaluation

A high-level evaluation of these options was carried out based on how much each option contributed to the priorities identified in the first round of engagement. When collated across all modes, these priorities are to:

- Better connect to major origins and destinations on the islands.
- Improve safety of roadside conditions for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Reduce the need to drive for everyone as well as provide better travel options for youth, seniors and lower-income populations.
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and environmental impact.
- Increase the cohesiveness of transportation options to better facilitate connection and economic development on and between islands.

The development of options and their evaluation also took into account community members who expressed a reluctance to see an increase in taxes to support improved services, as well as strong community feedback on ensuring local control, continued support of grassroots organizations and that solutions are right-sized and specific to the unique character and opportunities of the islands.

While Option A – Status Quo does not have any tax impacts on the community, it also does nothing to improve transportation options on the islands.

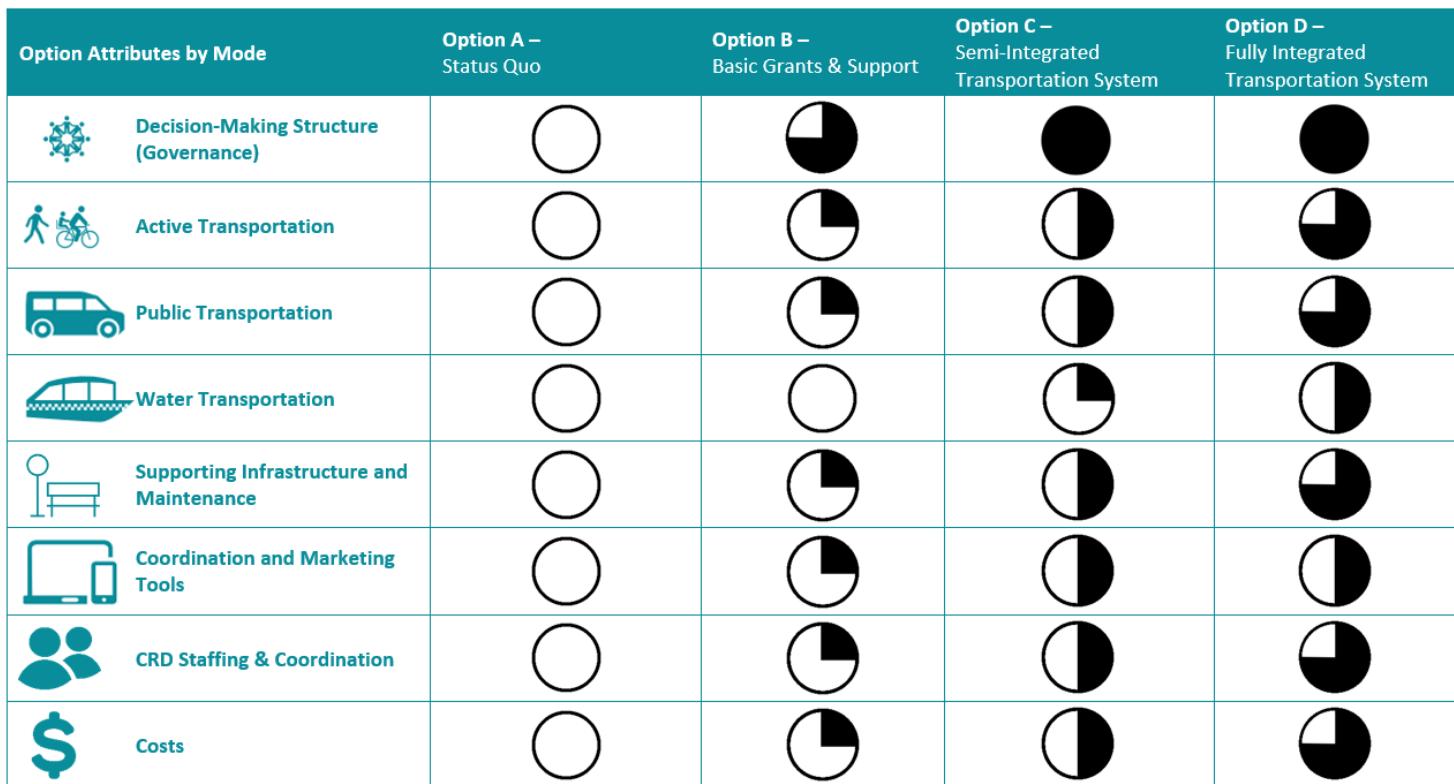
The other options respond to the improvements requested by the community in varying degrees. They:

- **Fund grants to local trail societies** to help them more easily plan for and build walking and cycling routes connecting key community destinations.
- **Provide stable funding to island community bus societies** to help them continue operations, provide service across more times of the year, and be able to financially support a larger share of their drivers.
- **Create coordinating tools that support multiple types of travel**, including a website for integrated SGI transportation showing travel options and trip booking software.
- **CRD sponsorship and staff support to access even more funding for projects in the SGI through provincial and federal programs**, such as funding for roadside trails and to offset the cost of public transportation vans.
- **Other CRD support as needed** to help local organizations make transportation happen, such as developing partnerships, holding the Licenses of Occupation required to develop roadside trails, maintaining insurance, and leasing or owning land and vehicles if required and a local organization is not able to do so.

The graphic below summarizes the example service options and how they compare against each other. Based on the evaluation above, Option C and D meet all the priorities identified by the community.

Of those two options, Option D has the higher cost, but it is also better able to meet the key community priorities of supporting improvements to roadside trail safety, enabling year-round access to community bus services, and beginning to support inter-island water transportation in a limited way through partnerships. At the same time, Option D also strives to balance providing a sustainable and appropriate starting point for an integrated transportation network with the need to be as cost-effective as possible.

Summary of Transportation Service Example Options



Ranges from  = No Change to  = Substantial Change / Improvement

4.3 Round 2 Engagement Results

Round 2 engagement took place in winter 2022 and sought feedback on the level of support for the four service options (Options A to D) described in **Section 4.0**.

Engagement involved an online survey and four virtual Q&A sessions (conducted over Zoom). An FAQ was sent to every SGI mailbox. This mail-out explained the proposals and encouraged people to fill out the survey and attend the virtual meetings.

During the Round 2 engagement, 1.5k people visited the Get Involved (Bang the Table) site, and 365 surveys were submitted.

The Round 2 Engagement found that the majority of people (67%) supported a tax requisition to increase transportation solutions in the islands.

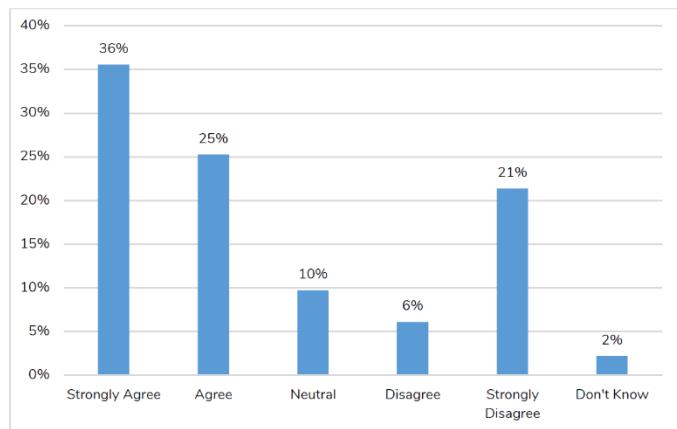
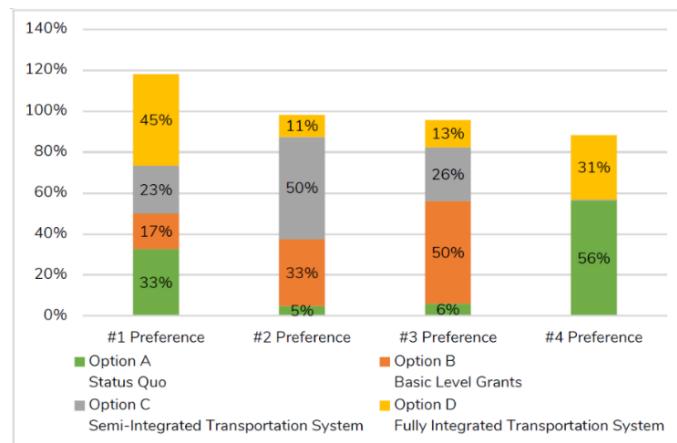
Eighty-five percent of respondents to the survey indicated a desire for change from the current level of transportation service on the islands.

The “Option D - Fully Integrated Transportation Service” was the first preference for the highest number of participants (45%), and “Option C - Semi-Integrated Transportation Service” was the second preference for most participants (50% of participants had it as their second choice).

Respondents were also asked whether they agree or disagree with bringing a proposed Service Establishment Bylaw forward to a referendum. Respondents either strongly agree (36%) or agree (25%). About a quarter of respondents strongly disagree (21%) or disagree (6%).

Service Options A through D presented in this report are nearly identical to those presented for Round 2 engagement and had identical upper limit totals for each. However, the final versions of the Options presented in this document have had minor adjustments to the allocations between modes within each option to reflect feedback heard during engagement.

Likewise, the estimated cost per \$100,000 assessed value presented during engagement was actually higher than in the final version in this report because the engagement figures were based on the previous 2021 assessed values for the SGI.



In additional comments respondents indicated reasons for why they were for or against moving the establishment of a SGI Transportation Service Establishment Bylaw to a referendum, and these are captured in the box below:

Round 2 Public Survey Results – Reasons Given For and Against Moving to Referendum**Why to support a Referendum**

- Better safety for pedestrians and cyclists
- The need for alternatives to private vehicles, especially when considering environmental impacts and an aging population that is unable to drive
- Better connections between communities
- Independence for youth and seniors
- Value in having a single coordinating body

Why not to support a Referendum

- Affordability and tax impacts
- Concerns about the transportation service function being process and staff heavy
- Concerns about CRD ability to implement the plan efficiently and effectively
- No need for change

From the results, the desire for change from the status quo seemed to be top of mind of most respondents, with a combined 78% choosing either “Option D - Fully Integrated Transportation Service” or “Option C - Semi-Integrated Transportation Service” as their **first preference**.

An integrated transportation system encompassing walking, cycling, public transportation, and water-based transportation would change the economic geography of the Southern Gulf Islands region and enable shared services and increased connections throughout the islands. Investment in active transportation and public transportation provides a means to improve safety, equity, and access among residents of all ages while also reducing greenhouse gas impacts from residents and visitors.

The benefits of an integrated transportation system start to be realized more holistically with Option D. In February 2022, the SGI Community Economic Sustainability Commission received the consultation results and passed a resolution recommending the CRD Board implement “Option D,” of the SGI Transportation Options. The Southern Gulf Islands Harbours Commission passed a resolution supporting the establishment of an SGI transportation service in March 2022.

5.0 RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS

An integrated transportation system encompassing walking, cycling, public transportation, and water-based transportation would change the economic geography of the Southern Gulf Islands region and enable more shared services and increased connections throughout the islands.

Investment in active transportation and public transportation provides a means to improve safety, equity, and access among residents of all ages while also reducing greenhouse gas impacts from residents and visitors.

The prerequisite for the CRD to have a formal role in funding and supporting locally-led transportation initiatives in the Southern Gulf Islands is the creation of an SGI transportation service, which in turn can only be enabled through a Service Establishment Bylaw and voter assent process.

Should the CRD wish to pursue an SGI transportation service, recommended next steps would include:

- CRD Board consideration of a Service Establishment Bylaw and voter assent process.
- Preparing for a referendum in the 2022 General Election.
- Presentation of information on the service proposal in lead up to the referendum.

Community Benefits of an Integrated Transportation Service:

- Allowing the CRD to support local transportation groups to leverage grant funding for infrastructure and other assets such as electric buses.
- Enabling safe walking and cycling opportunities.
- Supporting community goals of livability and access to services.
- Rebuilding inter-island and community connections.
- Facilitating the movement of workers and goods.
- Taking climate action in SGI by supporting alternative transportation choices that reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Reducing congestion on SGI roads and BC Ferries.
- Supporting the local businesses and regional economy



5.1 Suggested Path to Implementation – Year 1

If the CRD Board moves a Southern Gulf Islands Transportation Service Establishment Bylaw to referendum in the October 2022 General Election, and if that referendum is successful, the initial ramp up to implementing the new SGI transportation service would likely take place in 2023 after the start of the new CRD Board term in January.

Since 2023 would be a transitional Year 1, the full suite of Transportation Service elements would not be in place for the whole calendar year (which is also the CRD's fiscal year). Therefore, for budgetary purposes, if Option D is the preferred requisition amount and approved through voter assent, the amount required for Year 1 will be a fraction of the full projection of \$675,000.

This lower suggested Year 1 budget projection reflects the best practice of starting small and sustainable within the available requisition amount, and prudently growing from there. Further, given that a key aspect of the SGI Transportation Service is to have its annual budget priorities decided by a locally-represented Transportation Commission, the suggested amount reflects the fact that the Commission won't be in place until half way through the year.

The Year 1 suggested budget is based on this suggested timeline and assumptions:

- Potential provision for a partial year of staff support,
- Potential for limited grants to community bus societies to support service starting in summer of 2023 until the full grant program is established by the Commission for the following year,
- Contingency for emergency grant funding for trail societies until the full grant program is in place.

Potential Year 1 Timeline

Nov – Dec 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newly elected CRD Board is sworn in and formally adopts the Service Establishment Bylaw. • CRD Board considers and adopts bylaw to establish the SGI Transportation Commission.
Jan – May 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertise for SGI Transportation Commissioners representing the Islands and modes, and appoint Commission. • Consider Year 1 funding requests by community transportation providers. • Develop job description(s) for supporting staff; post job ads and hire new staff.
May – Oct 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop strategic plan and prioritized work plan with Commission. • Start to implement short term priorities of work plan. • Develop Grant Program for 2024 based on transportation criteria; design application process. • Undertake Service and budget planning for 2024.
Oct - Dec 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress with work plan. • Confirm 2024 annual budget and work plan priorities for Transportation Service.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

Resourceful and deeply connected to their communities, the residents and organizations of the Southern Gulf Islands have already taken many positive steps towards providing sustainable transportation options. From the countless recreational trails that have been built, the community bus projects that were initiated, or the massive annual multimodal volunteer effort that happens for Tour des Iles, these efforts have shown that improving connection matters to the community and that there is a capacity and a desire to make it happen.

At the same time, this project has heard a strong desire from residents and stakeholders to do more.

Parents want improved roadside conditions so their kids are safe cycling to school. Older residents want reliable and continued public transportation options so they can age in place when driving might no longer be the best option. Multiple residents and stakeholders have spoken to the importance of encouraging visitors to arrive without vehicles, and the desire to further water-based interisland connection and economies. And throughout the course of this study, the effects of climate change (heat domes, windstorms, unseasonable temperatures) have underscored the need to take action on transportation and energy use rapidly and decisively.

If islanders truly want to do more to achieve these transportation goals and level up on the pace of transportation improvements, it will require more effectively harnessing available senior government funding, increasing collaboration with agencies like MoTI, and reducing duplication of effort by different community groups across the islands and transportation modes. Formally creating a Southern Gulf Islands Electoral Area transportation service is not only a feasible way to reach those objectives, it is the required prerequisite.

