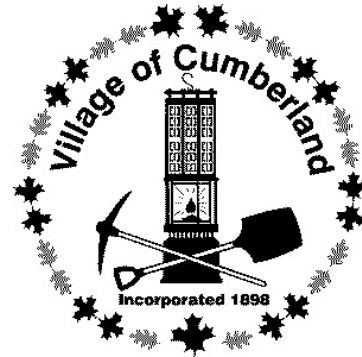


COUNCIL REPORT



REPORT DATE: February 9, 2026

MEETING DATE: February 9, 2026

File No. 0390

TO: Mayor and Councillors
FROM: Rachel Parker, Corporate Officer
SUBJECT: Resolutions to AVICC Convention – Active Transportation

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council withdraw the Village of Cumberland AVICC resolution *Provincial Funding and Development of Inter-Community Active Transportation Corridors* if the Comox Valley Regional District submits a resolution to advocate for active transportation.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide an option to support a CVRD resolution to AVICC on active transportation instead of submitting a separate resolution.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION

Date	Resolution
Jan 12 2026	THAT Council submit the resolution Provincial Funding and Development of InterCommunity Active Transportation Corridors as drafted to the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities convention.
Nov 24 2025	Committee of the Whole discussion on resolution to include active transportation provision and easements for all provincial highway projects.

BACKGROUND

On January 12, 2026, Council adopted the following resolution:

THAT Council submit the resolution Provincial Funding and Development of InterCommunity Active Transportation Corridors as drafted to the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities convention.

The resolution and background is attached to this report and has not yet been submitted to AVICC.

Mayor Brown advises that a request from Director Arbour is on the Comox Valley Regional District Board meeting agenda of February 10, 2026 to consider the following resolution:

THAT the Board endorse the following resolution for submission to the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities (AVICC) at its 2026 convention:

WHEREAS Active Transportation has not been included as a priority in the most recent Mandate Letter for the Minister of Transportation and Transit;

AND WHEREAS the Ministry is falling behind BC municipalities in creating safe pedestrian and cycling supportive policies and amenities on Ministry-owned roads in electoral areas across BC, often leaving critical gaps and connections to nearby municipalities;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AVICC and/or UBCM advocate to the Premier and Minister of Transportation and Transit to:

- Explicitly include Active Transportation as a core Ministry priority in the Ministry of Transportation and Transit mandate letter, with direction that this priority applies to rural and semi-rural contexts outside of municipalities as well as urban areas;
- Review and amend provincial Active Transportation policies, guidelines, and standards to explicitly address rural and semi-rural road conditions outside of municipalities, including constrained rights-of-way and safety considerations, and to amend the BC Supplement to Transportation Association of Canada (TAC) Geometric Design Guide where it does not adequately support active transportation infrastructure in rural and semi-rural areas outside of municipalities, in order to address the current disconnect between road operations and active transportation objectives;
- Develop and implement a formalized, cross-departmental/organizational framework for collaboration between the Ministry of Transportation and Transit and Regional Districts to align Ministry capital projects with Regional District active transportation priorities, leverage funding and delivery opportunities, and ensure accountability and consistency in advancing shared rural active transportation, safety, and community connectivity objectives.

Council members may discuss whether to support the CVRD resolution and withdraw the Village resolution.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None

OPERATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

None

ALTERNATIVES

None

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

- Diverse & Healthy Community
- Sustainable Service Delivery & Asset Management
- Community Planning

ATTACHMENTS

1. Village of Cumberland Active Transportation Resolution

CONCURRENCE

None

Respectfully submitted,

Rachel Parker
Corporate Officer

Michelle Mason
Chief Administrative Officer



Corporation of the Village of Cumberland

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File No. 0390-20
DRAFT Dec 23 2025

2026 AVICC Resolution

Provincial Funding and Development of Inter-Community Active Transportation Corridors

WHEREAS many Vancouver Island communities are within 30 kilometres of neighbouring towns—a readily cyclable distance—yet residents must use highway shoulders alongside high-speed traffic because dedicated active transportation corridors do not exist, creating safety barriers that prevent people from choosing cycling for commuting, errands, and recreation;

AND WHEREAS local governments lack the jurisdiction and resources to build safe cycling connections along provincial highways, and the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure must provide the infrastructure needed to support the growing use of bicycles and e-bikes for inter-community travel, particularly as e-bikes make longer distances accessible for people of all ages and abilities;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that AVICC call upon the Province of British Columbia to direct the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure to establish dedicated funding for separated active transportation corridors connecting communities within 30 kilometres of each other, and to integrate all-ages-and-abilities cycling pathways into all provincial highway projects;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that AVICC urge the Province to treat inter-community active transportation corridors as essential infrastructure and to work with local governments to identify and complete priority routes that will save lives, strengthen communities, and support BC's climate future.

BACKGROUNDER

Provincial Funding for Inter-Community Active Transportation Corridors

Prepared for: AVICC Conference Resolution

Submitted by: Village of Cumberland

Date: December 2025

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This backgrounder provides evidence supporting the need for provincial investment in dedicated active transportation corridors connecting nearby communities on Vancouver Island and across British Columbia. With the rapid growth of e-bike adoption, provincial climate commitments, and demonstrated health and economic benefits, safe inter-community cycling infrastructure represents a strategic investment in BC's sustainable transportation future.

PROVINCIAL CLIMATE COMMITMENTS AND TRANSPORTATION EMISSIONS

CleanBC Targets and Transportation's Role

British Columbia has committed to reducing province-wide emissions to 40 percent below 2007 levels by 2030, with a goal to reduce transportation emissions by about a third.[1] Transportation caused 42% of BC's total emissions in 2023,[2] making it the single largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in the province.

Transportation emissions in BC have increased by 18% since 2007 (as of 2022), indicating that CleanBC policies have not yet been effective in reducing emissions in this sector.[3] While BC's net emissions declined by nearly 4% in 2023 and are now 9% below 2007 levels, the 2024 Climate Change Accountability Report indicated that BC was not on track to meet its 2030 emissions targets.[4]

Active Transportation Strategy

The CleanBC Roadmap includes an accelerated shift toward active transportation and public transit, targeting 30% by 2030, 40% by 2040, and 50% by 2050.[5] In 2019, the province launched Move. Commute. Connect., BC's Active Transportation Strategy, with a goal to double the percentage of trips taken with active transportation by 2030.[6]

The BC government is aiming to have active transportation and public transit make up 30% of all trips taken in the province, and has invested \$74.8 million over three years in active transportation funding that has helped communities build over 400 projects.[7]

RAPID GROWTH IN E-BIKE ADOPTION

Market Growth in Canada

The e-bike market is experiencing explosive growth across Canada. The Canadian e-bikes market size was estimated at USD 733.4 million in 2022 and is expected to grow at a CAGR of 12.6% from 2023 to 2030.[8] In 2022, around 70,000 e-bikes were sold in Canada, with projections to increase to over 100,000 units annually by 2025.[9]

According to the Canadian Bicycle Manufacturers Association, e-bike sales grew by 92% in 2020, 47% in 2021, and maintained a 25% growth rate through 2023,[10] indicating a lasting shift in transportation preferences following the COVID-19 pandemic.

E-Bike Advantages for Inter-Community Travel

E-bikes significantly expand the practical distance for active transportation. While the average distance cyclists commute is five miles with traditional bicycles, this increases to 14 miles on average with an e-bike.[11] This makes distances between communities like Cumberland and Courtenay (approximately 7-8 km) highly feasible for e-bike commuting.

In May 2023, the Province of British Columbia announced a rebate scheme effective from June 2023 on purchasing e-bikes for British Columbian residents above the age group of 19 years based on their income bracket,[12] demonstrating provincial recognition of e-bikes as a key transportation solution.

SAFETY CONCERN ON EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE

Cyclist Fatalities and Injuries

An average of 74 Canadians die in cycling collisions each year, with 73% of those incidents involving a collision with a motor vehicle.[13] Each year in British Columbia, approximately 2,636 cyclist-related incidents occur, resulting in about 1,539 injuries and an average of 7 fatalities.[14]

In 2023, transport incidents involving pedal cyclists in BC resulted in a total cost of \$79 million, constituting 14% of the total costs from transport incidents, including \$60 million in direct healthcare expenditures and \$18 million in indirect costs related to lost productivity.[15]

Highway Shoulder Inadequacy

Most provincial highways operate at posted speeds between 90 and 110 km/h; at these high speeds, cyclists and pedestrians are very vulnerable in the case of a collision. Paved shoulders provide space for cyclists and pedestrians while allowing motor vehicles to pass; however, paved shoulders do not protect cyclists and pedestrians from errant vehicles and the natural swaying of large trucks.[16]

Currently, the shoulders of roads like the Comox Valley Parkway and Cumberland Road are regularly used by commuter cyclists, but dedicated facilities will increase the safety of this connection and further encourage non-vehicular trips between communities.[17]

The decline in cycling raises safety concerns, because areas where cycling is more prevalent tend to have lower rates of bicycle-related collisions and fatalities—a "safety in numbers" effect.[18]

HEALTH AND ECONOMIC BENEFITS

Healthcare Cost Savings

The economic case for active transportation infrastructure is compelling. A region's active transportation plans can provide significant health benefits, preventing thousands of cases of hypertension, heart disease and diabetes, providing annual benefits worth \$226 million in healthcare savings and \$111 million in productivity gains.[19]

When concerted investment is made in active travel in a city, studies show a benefit/cost ratio of 11:1, with annual benefits estimated at 34.4 disability-adjusted life years (DALYs) and two lives saved due to reductions in cardiac disease, diabetes, cancer, and respiratory disease.[20] Research from Portland shows that relatively modest investments of \$162 million in bicycling will produce health care cost savings of over \$1 billion by the year 2040, with a return on investment ratio for healthcare cost savings alone at 6.5 to 1.[21]

Disease Prevention

Increasing active transport by switching short trips to a combination of walking and cycling resulted in positive health impacts, substantial savings in healthcare costs, and may also reduce greenhouse gas emissions, with the majority of health gains from modelled interventions due to increases in physical activity.[22]

A 2022 study by the British Heart Foundation found that regular cyclists had a 45% lower risk of developing cardiovascular disease.[23]

JURISDICTIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

MOTI's Role in Provincial Highways

The BC Active Transportation Design Guide is intended to be applied during the construction of new facilities and, when feasible, the rehabilitation of existing facilities. However, widening shoulders for active transportation demands a much larger scope—it's more costly, time consuming and may require multi-year planning for utility relocation, property acquisition, drainage changes.[24]

The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI) has jurisdiction over provincial highways and is responsible for infrastructure planning and development along these corridors. The British Columbia Active Transportation Design Guide (2019 Edition) provides recommended policies, specifications, standards and guidelines to be followed in the development of active transportation infrastructure in British Columbia.[25]

Local Government Limitations

Local governments lack both the financial resources and jurisdictional authority to develop active transportation infrastructure along provincial highways. Through the Active Transportation Infrastructure Grant Program, the province provides Indigenous governments, municipalities and regional districts with financial support to build new infrastructure and make improvements to existing networks,[26] but these grants are insufficient for major inter-community corridor development.

EXISTING POLICY FRAMEWORK

Provincial Active Transportation Strategy

The BC Active Transportation Infrastructure Grant Program offers two options: the Active Transportation Network Planning Grant helps communities develop active transportation network plans, while the Active Transportation Infrastructure Grant funds development of active transportation infrastructure for all ages and abilities.[27]

The BC Active Transportation Design Guide is the first of its kind to be adopted by a provincial government in Canada. It incorporates theory, recent research, design concepts, best practices, new methodologies, and innovations to maximize the benefits of investing in active transportation infrastructure.[28]

However, only 2.5 per cent of trips in British Columbia are taken by bike,[29] indicating significant room for growth with proper infrastructure investment.

THE CUMBERLAND-COURTENAY-COMOX EXAMPLE

The Comox Valley provides a clear example of where inter-community active transportation corridors are urgently needed. Cumberland, Courtenay, and Comox are three neighboring communities located within approximately 7-10 kilometers of each other along the Comox Valley Parkway and Highway 19A corridor.

Cumberland is nestled in the Comox Valley along with the seaside towns of Courtenay and Comox only a few minutes away.[30] Currently, cyclists traveling between these communities must navigate highway shoulders at high speeds, creating significant safety risks and discouraging active transportation for commuting and recreation.

This corridor exemplifies the broader need across Vancouver Island and British Columbia for dedicated, separated active transportation pathways connecting communities within reasonable cycling distance (under 30 km), particularly with the growing capabilities of e-bikes.

CONCLUSION

The evidence overwhelmingly supports provincial investment in inter-community active transportation corridors:

1. **Climate Imperative:** Transportation is BC's largest emissions source, and current policies have not achieved necessary reductions
2. **Rapid E-Bike Growth:** The e-bike market is growing at 12-25% annually, making longer distances feasible
3. **Safety Crisis:** 73% of cyclist fatalities involve motor vehicles; highway shoulders are inadequate
4. **Economic Benefits:** Return on investment ratios of 6.5:1 to 11:1 for healthcare savings alone
5. **Jurisdictional Gap:** Local governments cannot address provincial highway corridors
6. **Policy Alignment:** Builds on existing Move.Commute.Connect. strategy and CleanBC commitments

The time for provincial action is now. MOTI must prioritize funding and building dedicated active transportation corridors between nearby communities to achieve climate targets, save lives, reduce healthcare costs, and build a sustainable transportation future.

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