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REPORT SALT SPRING ISLAND LOCAL COMMUNITY COMMISSION MEETING OF THURSDAY, MAY 14, 2026

SUBJECT **Permit for Bicycle Icon Painting**

ISSUE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to review costs and implications associated with obtaining a permit to regularly paint bicycle icons northbound on Fulford-Ganges Road from Cranberry Road to Seaview.

BACKGROUND

At the March 19, 2026, meeting of the Salt Spring Island Local Community Commission (LCC), the following motion was passed.

“That the Salt Spring Island Local Community Commission request staff report back on the implications of applying to the Ministry of Transportation and Transit for a permit to regularly paint bicycle icons at appropriate locations including northbound on Fulford-Ganges Road approaching Ganges”.

Painted bicycle icons within bike lanes and road rights-of-way are used to clearly indicate that a portion of the roadway is intended for use by cyclists, and that motorists should expect their presence. These markings help clarify the function of the space, particularly where bike lanes may otherwise resemble shoulders or parking areas and reinforce the legal status of cyclists as legitimate road users. By visually designating cycling space, the symbols support consistent and predictable behaviour by all road users.

Bike icons also contribute to improved safety and comfort by guiding cyclists to ride in a visible and appropriate position on the roadway, including through intersections, merges, and other complex locations. They encourage better awareness and passing behaviour by motorists, reducing conflicts and uncertainty. While painted markings do not provide physical separation, they are a cost-effective and flexible tool particularly on rural or constrained roads to support active transportation, improve perceived safety, and encourage greater cycling activity as part of the transportation network.

Capital Regional District (CRD) staff provide line painting on CRD owned playing fields. Line painting on CRD parking lots or roadside pathways, maintained by the CRD under a permit, are contracted out. Special equipment, insurance and having a qualified contractor are required to complete this work.

While volunteers provide valuable support to local government, there are legal and operational considerations that the BC Ministry of Transportation and Transit (MoTT) would need to carefully assess before issuing a permit for the CRD to oversee this work. These risks can be mitigated through a clearly defined and authorized program that includes standardized specifications, training, supervision, and clear maintenance responsibility however this would require greater CRD staff involvement than that required when contacting this work to a professional.

IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

The CRD has received a quote to develop a traffic management plan, contract traffic control and paint approximately 40 bike symbols over approximately 1,500 metre roadside is estimated at \$7,500. This estimate is for MoTT approved paint, while the cost for using the more durable MoTT approved thermoplastic product is \$22,000. Prior to completing any work, the CRD would need to obtain a permit from the MoTT. To obtain a permit for painting bicycle lane icons on the roadway shoulder, the CRD would be required to:

1. Apply for a Highway Use Permit
2. Prepare and submit required documentation, such as:
 - A traffic control plan compliant with the Traffic Management Manual for Work on Roadways.
 - A traffic management plan (if the activity is complex or long-duration).
 - Certificate of insurance per MOTT requirements
3. Ensure all symbols and paint conform with the Ministry's Manual of Standard Traffic Signs and Pavement Markings including approved paint types, sizes, and placement locations.
4. Coordinate with MOTT staff to review and approve the spacing, location, and execution plan, ensuring road safety and legal compliance.
5. Hire qualified contractors or trained personnel to perform the work using approved materials and construction methods.
6. Maintain the markings over time, monitoring for wear, fading, or defects and refreshing or repairing as needed to meet provincial spec levels.
7. Promote compliance and enforcement by installing proper signs, reinforcing restrictions (e.g., no parking in bike lanes), and integrating markings into routine maintenance and inspection schedules.

Recent discussions with the MoTT indicated that the use of painted bike icons in areas designated as multi-use may create confusion, as paved shoulders are considered multi-use facilities for both pedestrians and cyclists. MoTT advised that clearly marking the paved shoulder as a shared pedestrian and cycling lane through signage would be preferred, while still meeting the objectives of the proposed bike icons. Signage is also more cost-effective, longer-lasting, lower maintenance and can be installed under a Highway Use Permit. The estimated cost for signage and installation is \$5,000.

Should the LCC wish to add this annual work to the budget, a motion would need to be passed directing staff to add a one-time supplementary item under the 1.238B Community Transportation Service 2027 -2031 provisional budget.

Environmental Implications

Bike lanes support active transportation by making cycling a more practical and attractive option, which can reduce vehicle congestion, parking demand, and greenhouse gas emissions. Shifting short, local trips from vehicles to bicycles lowers fuel consumption and reduces carbon dioxide and other harmful air pollutants, improving overall air quality. Fewer vehicle trips also decrease congestion-related emissions from idling and stop-and-go traffic and can reduce the need for expanded roads and parking areas, helping limit land disturbance, impervious surfaces, and long-term environmental impacts.

Economic Implications

Designated bike lanes also provide economic benefits by offering a cost-effective transportation investment that can reduce congestion, vehicle wear on roads, and long-term infrastructure and maintenance costs. Compared to road widening or parking expansion, cycling infrastructure is relatively inexpensive to build and maintain. Bike lanes can also support local businesses by increasing foot and bike traffic, as cyclists tend to make frequent, local stops. In addition, increased cycling contributes to better public health outcomes, which can lower long-term healthcare costs and improve overall economic productivity within the community.

CONCLUSION

Painted bicycle icons can support cyclist visibility and roadway clarity, their implementation on provincial highways involves permitting, operational complexity and ongoing maintenance costs. Based on discussions with the Ministry of Transportation and Transit, signage identifying paved shoulders, as shared pedestrian and cycling facilities, is the preferred approach and achieves similar safety and awareness objectives. This option is also more cost-effective, longer-lasting, and simpler to implement under a Highway Use Permit. The Salt Spring Island Local Community Commission may consider this information when determining whether to pursue signage installation or to direct staff to include ongoing pavement marking costs in future budgets.

RECOMMENDATION

There is no recommendation, this report is for information only.

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ATTACHMENT

Appendix A: Location Map – Fulford-Ganges Rd, Northbound from Cranberry to Seaview