

November 26, 2024

Dear Saanich Council and staff,

I am writing in support of the Quadra-McKenzie draft plan, particularly in support of the proposed installation of separated bus lanes and improved transit infrastructure along the McKenzie corridor. As anyone who has driven McKenzie during the morning or afternoon rush hours can attest, it is often a parking lot with cars at a total standstill (though bicycles and other road users move quite efficiently in the protected cycle lanes between UVic and the Lochside Trail). Adding bus lanes will serve tens of thousands of residents from across Saanich and the CRD who regularly travel the McKenzie corridor, including thousands of students and staff commuting daily to UVic. Indeed, without Saanich's adoption of the Quadra-McKenzie plan, UVic will be unable to reduce the number of vehicles driving to its campus daily, thus undermining the ability of the second largest employer and public institution in the region (after the BC government) to meet its sustainability goals, improve pedestrian and cyclist safety, and enhance environmental quality on campus and in surrounding areas.

Reallocating urban space to bus lanes, bike and roll lanes, and wider sidewalks with ample shade trees is also needed for Saanich to be a climate leader. The evidence clearly shows that bus lanes result in 'traffic evaporation' and make life better for everyone, including those who continue to drive cars and trucks. As an award-winning researcher and academic leader on climate change issues in Canada and beyond, I wish to stress that such local initiatives are vital for our collective effort to reduce air pollution and GHG emissions, given that transportation accounts for roughly half of all emissions in the CRD. Particularly given the false and misleading information that has circulated widely about the Quadra-McKenzie draft plan, I hope and expect Saanich Council to remain committed to evidence-based decision-making and the goals laid out in its 2020 Climate Plan.

As a resident and homeowner in Saanich and an employee of the University of Victoria, my young family and I spend much of our time travelling east-west along the McKenzie corridor to school, work, and activities. In the absence of fast and frequent public transportation options, we often choose to drive far out of our way to avoid traffic congestion along McKenzie, in the process contributing to increased vehicle traffic in residential neighbourhoods such as Gordon Head. Building proper transit infrastructure along McKenzie will enhance the quality of life in surrounding neighbourhoods, allowing our whole region to benefit from these improvements.

It is time for Saanich to address these issues along McKenzie with vision and determination. I encourage Saanich council and staff to move quickly to approve the Quadra-McKenzie plan, including the planned transit improvements and separated bus lanes.

Sincerely,



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We acknowledge and respect the łək'wəḡən peoples on whose traditional territory the university stands and the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

