

Albina Gorge Tillicum Engagement Summary

The Saanich Engineering Department held a public information event at the Esquimalt Gorge Park Pavilion on October 21, 2024. 150 people were in attendance. The district received 141 survey responses (95 online and 48 handwritten). Below is a summary of what we heard:

How did you hear about the project?

- Social Media – 32%
- Community association - 19%
- Website -16%
- Street signs- 10%
- Mail out -6%
- No answer -2%
- Other -16% (Email, neighbour, Capital Bike, work)

How do you currently use Gorge Road between Tillicum and Harriet?

- Drive – 24%
- Resident – 18%
- Cycle – 18%
- Commuter – 17%
- Walk – 16%
- No answer - 5%
- Other – 2% (Bus, taxi)

What do you like about the concept provided today?

Many respondents have expressed strong support for the proposed upgrades particularly targeted at improving cyclist roadway safety and pedestrian infrastructure. The focus on active transportation, including cycling and walking have been positively received, highlighting features like protected bike lanes and traffic separated paths.

Respondents are generally positive about the proposed upgrades to the Albina Gorge Tillicum area, with a strong emphasis on improved safety and infrastructure for cyclists. Many appreciate the inclusion of protected bike lanes and the separation of bike lanes from traffic. The concept's focus on active transportation and making it easier and safer for biking and walking is highlighted as a key benefit. Several respondents are excited about the potential for these changes to encourage them to choose cycling over driving and note that the design could lead to a reduction in speeding along Gorge Rd. The beautification aspect of the project, including green spaces and trees, is also mentioned positively. Improvements to pedestrian infrastructure and safety are noted,

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with some respondents specifically mentioning crosswalk lights and accessible crosswalks. The project's potential to create better connections with other parts of the cycling network is also seen as a positive development. Some respondents did express dissatisfaction with the presented information with concerns about unnecessary and potentially costly projects in the area, however the project concept does align with the goals of the District's Official Community Plan and Active Transportation Plan. Other concerns raised included the impact on vehicle traffic and potential for increased congestion, suggesting that a reduction of vehicle lanes would increase traffic on side streets. And potentially cause delays for public transit. These concerns have been considered by the District within the existing design and mitigation measures that have been implemented.

Overall, most of the feedback is supportive of the upgrades aimed at enhancing cyclist and pedestrian experiences, with a focus on safety, connectivity, and aesthetic improvements.

Thinking about all roadway users, what do you dislike about the concept provided and the impacts this will have on the street?

Respondents have expressed a variety of concerns and opinions regarding the 'Albina Gorge Tillicum Upgrades'. A significant number of respondents are worried about increased traffic congestion due to reduced driving lanes, and vehicle short cutting on side streets.

While there is support for making the area safer and more accessible for non-car users, there is also significant concern about increased congestion and the impact on car traffic. Some respondents suggest that the needs of cyclists and pedestrians could be better met with alternative solutions that do not reduce vehicle capacity.

Please share any specific comments regarding the protected intersection at Tillicum Road and Gorge Road.

Respondents have expressed a variety of opinions regarding the protected intersection at Tillicum Road and Gorge Road. A common theme is the appreciation for improved safety measures, particularly for cyclists and pedestrians, with several respondents excited about the proposed changes. However, there are concerns about the complexity of the intersection and the potential for confusion among drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians. Several respondents specifically mention the need to ban right turns on red to enhance safety. The issue of slip lanes is also frequently brought up, with many advocating for their removal due to safety concerns. There are also calls for better education and clear signage to help all road users navigate the new infrastructure. Some respondents are worried about potential delays and increased congestion because of the changes

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with a few suggesting that the intersection is fine as it is and does not require modification. Some respondents are outright critical of the project, labeling it as a waste of money or ineffective while others are supportive and believe it will be an improvement in the current situation.

Overall, while there is enthusiasm for safety improvements, there is also a significant amount of concern regarding the execution and potential unintended consequences of the intersection upgrade.

Please share any specific feedback relating to the public information session you attended today. Is there anything we can do to improve?

Respondents provided varied feedback on the Albina Gorge Tillicum Upgrades project, with several noting they were unable to attend the public information session due to scheduling conflicts, work commitments, or lack of notice. The online materials and the opportunity to comment digitally were appreciated and a useful resource for those who were unable to attend in person. Positive feedback was given about the organization of the session and the availability of knowledgeable staff. However, some respondents were critical of the project's approach, suggesting that for future projects The District engage the community earlier in the project during the planning stage. There were also concerns about infrastructure downsizing with a growing population and the potential increase in pollution from idling cars.

In summary, while there was appreciation for the opportunity to engage online and some positive interactions with staff, there were significant concerns about bike lanes, traffic congestion, and the need for better communication and engagement strategies.

Please feel free to add any additional comments, concerns, or ideas related to this project.

Respondents are generally supportive of the Albina Gorge Tillicum Upgrades, expressing gratitude for the improvements in bike lane safety and pedestrian infrastructure. There is a strong emphasis on the need for safer cycling routes and better connectivity, with some families stating that the current infrastructure does not feel safe enough for them to choose cycling over driving. Several respondents have specific suggestions, such as improved street lighting, the addition of bus shelters and safety features and concerns about the impact of reduced traffic lanes on emergency response times and potential congestion. Some respondents are worried about the integration of two-way bike lanes with existing one-way lanes and the potential for increased traffic congestion due to lane reductions. There are also requests for more public engagement and consideration of residents' feedback, with some suggesting that surveys should be sent to all households in the

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area. A few respondents mention the need for traffic studies to address concerns about traffic flow. There is a sentiment that the project should prioritize transit and reduce car dependency, with some advocating for a focus on transit bus lanes to reduce emissions. Additionally, there are calls for more indigenous plantings and restoration of natural habitats.

While there is enthusiasm for the project and its focus on non-car travel, there is also a clear desire for careful planning to ensure traffic flow is not negatively impacted and that the needs of all residents are considered.

Next Steps

We appreciate everyone for sharing their detailed thoughts on this important project. The feedback generated will contribute to refining of the detail design of the roadway. We recognize that a main theme of the feedback was concerns with increased traffic congestion through the reduction of travel lanes. This projects meets the goals brought forth in the [District's official community plan](#) by balancing mode shares on Saanich roads to encourage users to choose active travel.