

CRD TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMISSION
MINUTES OF MEETING
Tuesday, December 10, 2024

Members: Neil Arason, Island Health
Douglas Baer, Capital Bike
Natalia Heilke, RoadSafetyBC
Sgt. Jereme Leslie, CRD Integrated Road Safety Unit
Todd Litman, Walk On, Victoria
Steve Martin, Community Member (Chair)
Dean Murdock, CRD Board (Vice-Chair)
Dr. Paweena Sukhawathanakul, Institute on Aging and Lifelong Health, UVic

Associates: Jay Douillard, CRD

Regrets: Hailey Bergstrom-Parker, Child Passenger Safety Program, BCAA Community Impact
Ron Cronk, Vancouver Island Safety Council
Dr. Frederick Grouzet, Collaborative for Youth and Society, UVic
Dr. Murray Fyfe, Island Health
Myke Labelle, Commercial Vehicle Safety and Enforcement
Owen Page, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure
Sean Powell, School District 61
Keith Vass, Media
Colleen Woodger, ICBC Road Safety and Community Involvement

Recording Secretary: Arlene Bowker

The meeting was called to order at 1:12 pm.

1. Territorial Acknowledgement

Chair Martin provided a territorial acknowledgement.

2. Approval of Agenda

MOVED by Doug Baer, **SECONDED** by Natalia Heilke, that the agenda be approved as distributed.
CARRIED

3. Approval of Minutes – November 12, 2024

MOVED by Jereme Leslie, **SECONDED** by Neil Arason, that the minutes of the meeting held on November 12, 2024 be approved.
CARRIED

4. Chair's Remarks

Chair Martin acknowledged the importance of the Commission's work. There have been ongoing tragedies on our roads and people getting seriously injured. It seems to be never ending and is a bit surprising sometimes. He is looking forward to the new year and continuing to reinforce progress on our strategic priorities.

5. Business Arising from Previous Minutes

➤ **Debrief from Annual Presentation to the Transportation Committee**

Chair Martin provided a summary on the Commission annual update he presented to the Transportation Committee in November. At the beginning of his presentation he spent a few minutes acknowledging the new transportation service and the update to the new regional plan and expressed that we would like to participate in any way that the Committee sees fit. Topics he touched on in his presentation are as follows.

- We follow the safe systems approach – education, enforcement and engineering.
- We are pleased to now have a member from MADD joining us; also the vacancy for a school district representative has been filled. A Committee member recommended that the school district representative share information on the Commission work with the other school districts.
- The Commission's strategic priorities.
- Automated speed enforcement, including advising that we would be sending the Committee a report with implementation recommendations and how we would move this forward in terms of advocacy.

Vice-Chair Murdock commented there was a very strong interest on the part of the Committee to do some advocacy for the return of automated speed enforcement and noted there are Committee members who will champion this.

Other topics covered by Chair Martin in his update were our junior hockey engagement and our support for the P.A.R.T.Y. Program, as well as the 2024 Sarah Beckett Memorial Scholarship.

Vice-Chair Murdock noted that the presentation was very well received. There is a lot of interest in the work of this Commission and that was clearly expressed; also, there is interest in continuing to be the beneficiaries of the research that takes place through the Commission. The Committee also has an awareness that the Commission has an important role to play as the work to advance a regional transportation service continues.

➤ **Update on Transportation Working Group**

The Working Group meeting was divided into two main topics. The first was looking at transportation governance options for the region, presenting to the working group and getting feedback. Reporting structures are being reviewed in terms of committees and the Commission and looking at the Commission within the transportation service.

The second topic was looking at how the Working Group functions. The group has always been chaired by a CRD staff member, however, their terms of reference did highlight that there would be the potential for a rotating chair. This was opened up for discussion and the decision was made to elect a chair. An engineer from Saanich will be the chair for the next year, and the vice-chair will be an engineer from Langford. After having been more CRD led, they are now changing tack, and this is an opportunity for that group to function truly as a working group. In January, the meeting dates will be set for the year.

➤ **Briefing note: Malahat Bus Improvement (Todd Litman)**

Todd distributed copies of his briefing note recommending that the Commission advocate for increased bus service on the Malahat as a safety strategy.

Chair Martin commented that he had asked Jay Douillard to review this issue with respect to alignment with our mandate. Jay commented that it is easy to agree that transit is a safer option and so is in alignment with the Commission mandate. However, there are a couple of other concerns, one of which is that there are other commissions, namely the Victoria Regional Transit Commission, which really focus on this particular issue and decide on service levels. The recommendation in the briefing note does diverge into discussion on levels of service, not just that transit is a safer option. The VRTC has seen this item already. The Transportation Committee also saw this item in April and did not move it forward. As we would not be bringing new information to the Committee, this may not be the most appropriate path forward for us. Additionally, we have outlined three strategic priorities that we are currently focusing on, along with our advocacy for automated speed enforcement. The Commission will need to determine if they believe this is in alignment with their priorities.

Discussion followed and is summarized below.

- There are parts of the recommendation that the Transportation Committee wouldn't be surprised to see the Commission offer support for, i.e., recognizing public transit improvements as a traffic safety strategy, and developing incentives that encourage travellers to use public transit when possible. However, the Committee would not expect the Commission to offer support to parts of the recommendation around transit schedules and fares and where transit funding should be allocated.
- The CRD regional transportation plan already highlights improving transit as a safety strategy and developing incentives that encourage travellers to use public transit when possible.
- As there are other committees and organizations that are involved in this, is there a way we could align it and still provide recommendations and offer support?
- The VRTC is not part of the CRD Board, but it may still be appropriate for the CRD Board to express an opinion about what it thinks about general transit development.
- It would be appropriate for the Commission to make a recommendation to the Committee and Board and the Board could do advocacy to the Transit Commission, however, this same request went to the Committee in April and was not moved forward.

- Although a date hasn't been set, BC Transit will be presenting to the Transportation Committee which will be an opportunity for Committee members to ask BC Transit about inter regional transit service as a priority. That would be an opportunity to continue some advocacy which still allows this Commission to not be specifically weighing in on transit priorities, but there is representation at that table who could ask those questions.
- A fan of public transit and the safety benefits are there. As an organization, we need to have a smaller number of priorities. Before we spend time on projects, we should make sure they align with our priorities.
- Our strategic plan tells us what we emphasize, not that we can't look at other issues.
- The Commission advocated to the province for point-to-point speed cameras on the Malahat to support a particular traffic safety strategy over the Malahat so it is clear that safety over the Malahat is within our scope. The Province has budgeted over \$160 million to widen the highway through Goldstream Park so there is quite a bit of work planned for increasing safety over the Malahat. There is still not a multi modal approach, i.e., currently the Ministry does not consider public transportation as part of their safety plan. Respectfully disagree that this is not within the scope of the Commission.
- Based on Jay's comments and the fact there are other avenues to move this forward, is this something that we want to use our platform with the Transportation Committee for. We don't want to use up our capital with the Committee.
- We do report to the CRD Board, and it makes less sense that we would make a recommendation that would go to the Transit Commission. We do have a mandate to recommend safety strategies.
- What are we asking the CRD Board to do and who are we asking them to ask? There is some complexity because the buses go over the Malahat, so it is not just the VRTC's jurisdiction.
- The briefing note could be revised if Commission members think it is worthwhile. There is a special message for the Commission to point out that frequent and affordable transit service is a road safety strategy.
- Agree that frequent and affordable transit service is something that the Commission could advocate for as a road safety strategy. The concern is effective use of the limited dollars to get people around safely. What's the maximum way we can make the system safer for users? Concern about the Commission putting an oar in the water recommending prioritizing transit service on the Malahat vs saying that we know transit is a safer way for people to travel.
- There is a gap in the system. In working with regional councils and the province, they are both waiting for the other to take the lead. Region has to come up with 50% of subsidy cost. Think there is an important message to go to the province and considering that the Ministry is ready to spend \$160 million on 1.5 km of safety improvement, there is a very strong argument that money could be better spent. The Commission does have a bit of a role to point that out.
- The question the VRTC would be asking is whether this is safer than investing locally.
- Would be more supportive of something that is more generic, e.g., let's recognize that the absence of public transportation is connected to safety and recommend to the province that they provide funding specifically for inter urban public transportation.

In the absence of consensus about the next steps, the following motion was made.

MOVED by Doug Baer, **SECONDED** by Paweena Sukhawathanakul, that this issue be deferred to the next meeting. **DEFEATED**

Discussion continued and Jay offered some wording for a possible motion: That the Traffic Safety Commission recommends that the Transportation Committee recommend that the CRD Board advocate to the province to (list request).

It was suggested that a straw poll be taken to determine if members were generally supportive or not of moving forward prior to spending any additional time on wording for a recommendation to the Transportation Committee. Vice-Chair Murdock commented it would be better to get the motion/recommendation properly worded and bring it back to the January meeting.

MOVED by Doug Baer, **SECONDED** by Dean Murdock, that consideration of this issue be postponed to the January meeting. **CARRIED**

Chair Martin asked that a very specific motion be brought forward to the January meeting, with discussion of no more than 10 minutes, followed by a vote.

6. Priority Business

➤ Budget Update

Our budget is in good shape, and we will level out the year close to zero. We have done a good job of spending our money.

➤ BCACP Calendar

- March – Distracted Drivers Campaign/Occupant Restraint Campaign
- May – High Risk Driving Campaign
- July – Summer Impaired Driving Campaign (Alcohol/Drug)
- September – Distracted Drivers Campaign/Occupant Restraint Campaign
- October – Drive Relative to Conditions Campaign
- December – Winter Impaired Driving Campaign

The purpose of putting the BCACP calendar initiatives on our agenda is to act as a reminder for the Commission re the focus of our partners and to try and frame our advertising to support them. We could do the advertising ourselves or support any of our partners with additional funding to expand their campaigns.

Sgt. Jereme Leslie noted that in December the winter impaired driving campaign takes place and the kickoff in the CRD was on December 6. There were approximately 50 officers out doing counterattack roadblocks. There were not as many impaired drivers as expected. December 7 was the provincial kickoff for impaired driving. The CRD Integrated Road Safety Unit met the Cowichan road safety group on the Malahat and conducted road checks. There will be extra enforcement out for the month of December through to January 1.

There has been an overall increase in impaired driving. There is a shift in the demographics from older people to the younger generation in their 20's to early 30's and is mostly alcohol related. From a communications perspective, the Commission could possibly look at meeting some of the different generations on their platform.

Paweena referred to a recent study done in conjunction with the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General looking at cannabis and co-use of both cannabis and alcohol. Often the way people determine their level of impairment with cannabis is based on alcohol and that comparison is hard for people to gauge so messaging could be about how to balance the two. The study showed that both the younger and older generation are using at high levels but regulate themselves in different ways. High regulators may be more receptive to public health messaging that appeals to their awareness. The study will be circulated to Commission members.

Jereme Leslie will reach out to the analyst in Saanich who can crunch the numbers around demographics.

7. Other Business

➤ Proposal for Public Awareness Initiative on Traffic Related Changes (Neil Arason)

Neil met with Frederick Grouzet about the proposed public awareness initiative. Frederick is very interested and could work with students on this project. He has lots of ideas on how a campaign could work and be effective, e.g., consistent use of a character and someone people could identify with. It is tied to the work Frederick already does with students but would be more about infrastructure. Some funding would be needed but it wouldn't be a large amount. They will have a proposal ready to present to the January meeting around timelines, topics, funding, media reach, etc. Chair Martin suggested bringing enforcement into it and Jereme Leslie agreed to participate.

Action: Detailed proposal to be brought to the January meeting

8. Member Updates

➤ RoadSafetyBC - Natalia Heilke

- Brianna Fougere will be the new Deputy Superintendent at RoadSafetyBC. She is currently working in the office of the Premier.

- Funding has been received through the Transport Canada Enhanced Road Safety Transfer Payment Program for doing the 2030 road safety strategy. The links to the complete list of projects that received funding, as well as the Transport Canada news release follow:
<https://tc.canada.ca/en/programs/funding-programs/enhanced-road-safety-transfer-payment-program/projects-funded-enhanced-road-safety-transfer-payment-program-2024-2026>

<https://www.canada.ca/en/transport-canada/news/2024/12/government-of-canada-invests-in-building-safer-communities.html>

➤ **ICBC – Colleen Woodger**

No update

➤ **Youth and Children – Hailey Bergstrom-Parker**

No update

➤ **Institute on Aging and Lifelong Health – Dr. Paweena Sukhawathanakul**

- Met with Todd Litman, Doug Baer and Jay Douillard to consult with them on developing bikeability and walkability indices that would be representative of the CRD. The purpose is related to a longitudinal study being conducted looking at the relationship between transportation infrastructure and changes in rider and pedestrian cognition, physical and mental health.
- Have just finished up the fall data collection for the P.A.R.T.Y. Program. Generally, have received some great feedback from the students on how we can continue this conversation on substances and road safety. Students would like an extended conversation on this and are interested in a continued conversation with enforcement and others. They are interested in information on what they can do if they find themselves in a risky situation. It is hoped to have some preliminary findings by early next year.
- An extension of the study done with the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General re cannabis and driving will look at product type. There are a lot of different modes of consumption for cannabis and will be looking at how the product type influences impaired driving.

➤ **CRD – Jay Douillard**

- A Let's Get Visible campaign was conducted this morning in Langford and approximately 160 lights and reflectors were distributed courtesy of the Commission. It was very successful and reached different groups of people than in other locations.

➤ **Integrated Road Safety Unit – Sgt. Jereme Leslie**

- This month they are working with Commercial Vehicle Safety and Enforcement looking at illegal ride share, or ride share operators that aren't complying with regulations.
- Starting to get organized for speaking to high school students about traffic safety, etc., at the Greater Victoria Police Camp in the spring.

➤ **Commercial Vehicle Safety Enforcement – Myke Labelle**

No update

➤ **Vancouver Island Safety Council – Ron Cronk**

No update

➤ **Capital Bike – Doug Baer**

They will be looking at the following from a safety perspective.

- Identifying dangerous right turn lanes.
- Phased intersection signals are often not well identified for what a cyclist should be doing, and they will be lobbying municipalities to either install separate cyclist signals or put up a sign telling cyclists to use pedestrian signals.
- They are looking to see where crosswalks are suitable for cyclists but don't have elephant ears, etc., to indicate cyclists can use them. They want to see that buttons are accessible to cyclists and add a cyclist icon.

- Cyclist rules for bus lanes. If there is an HOV lane, cyclists are permitted to use it, but they are not permitted to use a bus lane. In some areas, this is a major safety issue, e.g., on Douglas north of Tolmie.

➤ **Walk On, Victoria – Todd Litman**

- Thanks to Paweena for organizing the research project. The research project is currently defined in terms of seniors, and they are hoping that can be leveraged to address the needs of all ages.
- The City of Victoria Council passed a bylaw saying that 30 and 40 km/h speed limits will be implemented. This is an important pedestrian and cyclist safety action.

➤ **Municipal Police Forces/RCMP – S/Sgt. Doug Cripps**

No update

➤ **BC Transit – Dallas Perry**

No update

➤ **Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure - Owen Page**

No update

➤ **Island Health – Neil Arason**

No update

➤ **Working Group for UVic Collaborative for Youth and Society Joint Project – Dr. Frederick Grouzet**

No update

➤ **Adam Defrane, MADD Canada**

No update

➤ **Sean Powell, School Districts**

No update

9. **Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on January 14, 2025 at 1:00 pm. On motion, the meeting adjourned at 2:34 pm.