

**CRD TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMISSION
MINUTES OF MEETING
Tuesday, October 14, 2025**

Members: Neil Arason, Island Health
Rob Bernhardt, Capital Bike
Ron Cronk, Vancouver Island Safety Council
Dr. Frederick Grouzet, Collaborative for Youth and Society, UVic
Steve Martin, Community Member (Chair)
Sean Powell, School District 61
Dr. Paweena Sukhawathanakul, Institute on Aging and Lifelong Health, UVic
Dr. Melissa Wan, Island Health

Associates: Sgt. Doug Cripps, Saanich Police
Adam Defrane, MADD
Jay Douillard, CRD
Cst. Matt McNichol, Oak Bay Police

Regrets: Hailey Bergstrom-Parker, Child Passenger Safety Program, BCAA Community Impact
Natalia Heilke, RoadSafetyBC
Myke Labelle, Commercial Vehicle Safety and Enforcement
Sgt. Jereme Leslie, CRD Integrated Road Safety Unit
Todd Litman, Walk On, Victoria
Dean Murdock, CRD Board (Vice-Chair)
Owen Page, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure
Keith Vass, Media
Colleen Woodger, ICBC

Guests: Otis Geddes, Graduate Student, Dept. of Psychology, UVic
Amelia Smit, Injury & Violence Prevention Consultant, Island Health

Recording Secretary: Arlene Bowker

The meeting was called to order at 1:04 pm.

1. Territorial Acknowledgement

Chair Martin provided a territorial acknowledgement.

2. Approval of Agenda

MOVED by Neil Arason, **SECONDED** by Ron Cronk, that the agenda be approved with the following addition:
- Research on distracted driving – Item 5(b) **CARRIED**

3. Approval of Minutes – September 9, 2025

MOVED by Neil Arason, **SECONDED** by Frederick Grouzet, that the minutes of the meeting held on September 9, 2025 be approved. **CARRIED**

4. Chair's Remarks

Chair Martin commented on the discussion which took place at the September meeting and the report from the Transportation Committee on the new governance structure which will in effect dissolve the Commission. That recommendation will go to the CRD Board on November 12.

It is somewhat sad to see the Commission as an independent body be disbanded. A big part of our agenda today will be our recommendations to the Transportation Committee on priority projects that we want to see continued.

Road safety is probably the biggest public safety risk to citizens that we have in the CRD. Chair Martin noted that he has watched the Commission for many years and feels strongly that the work and the research we do and the discussions we have are very important. Thanks to everyone here for being willing to give up their time and contribute every month.

5. Presentation on Findings from the P.A.R.T.Y. Project – Otis Geddes, Amelia Smit

As part of the Commission's priorities, funding had been provided for an assessment of the P.A.R.T.Y. Program (Prevent Alcohol and Risk-Related Trauma in Youth). Otis Geddes, UVic graduate student, provided an overview of the research and a summary follows. The entire presentation can be viewed here: [Party Program.pdf](#)

The PARTY Program is a one-day injury and prevention initiative for youth aged 15 and older. It is currently delivered virtually in classrooms through the CRD and was adapted from the in-person delivery which was used

prior to Covid where students visited hospital trauma wards. Previous evaluations of the in-person program showed improvements in students' attitudes towards risks. Prior to this study, the effectiveness of the online version had not been assessed.

Participants in the study were 353 Grade 10 and 11 students from three secondary schools in the CRD. The research team went into classrooms and surveys were completed in class one day before and after the PARTY Program which is delivered as part of students' Career Life Education curriculum. Students' attitudes towards risk taking were measured, which is basically their risk perception.

According to information provided by the students, in the past year 25% had used cannabis and 49% had used alcohol. Most students were at low risk for substance use addiction according to the World Health Organization guidelines, although there were some daily users of cannabis. 4% of students had driven under the influence of cannabis or alcohol, and 24% of students had been a passenger with someone under the influence of cannabis, and 47% had been a passenger with someone under the influence of alcohol.

Changes in participants' intentions to engage in a variety of risky behaviours as well as their attitudes, sense of social norms, and self-efficacy to make safe decisions were measured. After the program, there was a significant reduction in intentions to take risks, students' attitudes of risk perception became stronger, their social norms changed in the sense that they felt like those behaviours were less approved of by their peers. Their self-efficacy did not change which is important.

Feedback from students found that most students agreed that the program was important and should continue to be delivered, but they also had the following suggestions for improving it: increase engagement opportunities; tailor content to students' experiences; and focus on learning.

Overall, these findings suggest that the PARTY program coincided with short-term changes in cognitive and motivational drivers of risk-taking behaviour but did not see an increase in students' self-efficacy to make safer decisions.

After the presentation, discussion ensued as follows:

- Amelia Smit noted that they have begun implementing several of the suggestions in response to the feedback received. As it would be a struggle to get back to presenting the program in hospitals due to space no longer being available, and staffing shortages, they are looking at running the PARTY Program in schools as an in-person workshop within a larger safety day event. In-person classroom sessions would be a partnership with ICBC, police, fire and ambulance personnel, with representatives from each organization coming to the school. Stations that students rotate through would be set up, and all stations would have an interactive piece, paired with sharing of information.
- It was noted that while most students don't meet the risk criteria for substance use disorder, there is still a group of youth that are using cannabis regularly. Therefore, it is important to remind schools to address not only the issue of driving, but also the concerns related to dependency that need to be discussed. There is value in being able to go into classrooms and talk about the broader public health issues around dependency, not just a one-day program about injury but about making safe choices as well.

5(b) Research on Distracted Driving

Otis Geddes presented some research highlights from literature on distracted driving.

Consequences of distracted driving:

- Factor in 20% of fatal road collisions in Canada in 2022
- Cyclists and pedestrians are also at risk and are 1.6 times more likely to be hit by a distracted driver
- ICBC survey shows that 42% of drivers still use their phone for at least one out of every ten trips they take
- The majority of drivers believe it is risky to text while driving, but many still do

Top five contributing factors to police-reported vehicle crashes and vehicle injuries by year - 2017-2021

- The most commonly mentioned contributing factor is distracted driving, over and above road conditions, weather and speeding

Who is engaging in distracted driving?

- Younger drivers are more likely to engage in distracted driving than older drivers
- Male drivers are more likely to be involved in an accident related to distracted driving

Why does distracted driving happen?

- People tend to understand the consequences of collisions and distracted driving, however, knowledge doesn't inform their behaviour
- People tend to believe that distracted driving is dangerous for others, but that they are capable of doing it
- People experience the frequent and short-term rewards associated with checking their phone while driving
- People perceive it is common to use their phones while driving

What can be done about distracted driving?

- Fines, demerit points, and license suspensions can reduce distracted driving in the short term, particularly when paired with public awareness and targeted campaigns
- Long term prevention is best supported by education
- Effective interventions challenge drivers' positive beliefs about distracted driving
- Parental communication and partnerships with high schools can be effective for younger drivers

After the presentation, discussion ensued as follows:

- From a police perspective, younger drivers with L's and N's are typically very careful. It would be interesting to see research once young drivers get rid of their N. Most of the tickets given out are for middle-aged drivers.
- Research shows that cell phone use can be due to pressure and wanting to feel connected. It isn't seen as a distraction. Also, people think they can multitask. Studies show that cognitive performance is significantly lower in challenging situations if you are a frequent media multi-tasker.
- How effective are initiatives of various police departments, such as pay a fine or do an education program on the weekend instead? Would like to know more about larger studies around this.
- From national reports on various initiatives around the country, they are effective during the campaign, however, after the campaigns are done, people tend to go back to original behaviour.
- Example given from a detachment in the Yukon where police issue tickets and hold onto them for a month. The ticket is pulled if people come in and do an education program. The success rate was very high.

6. Business Arising from Previous Minutes

- **Update on Transportation Working Group**
No update

7. Priority Business

- **Budget Update**
Everything is on track. Third party payments where grants come from are essentially drained, with money for the MADD presentations being held aside. Adam Defrane noted that six schools have been booked for the MADD presentations, but he will only need \$3,000 as three of the presentations will be funded by MADD.
- **Discussion regarding Commission wind-up recommendations to Transportation Committee regarding projects and priorities that should continue under the new governance structure**

The Commission discussed which initiatives it would like to recommend to the Transportation Committee for continuation under the new governance structure.

Chair Martin commented that the strategic priorities and planning around evidence-based risks should continue and that should inform what the traffic safety priorities should be. Until it is proven that they are no longer a problem, distraction, speeding and impaired driving need to be at the forefront of everything that the CRD does in the future.

Members brought forward the following issues and recommendations:

- Question about what could be done to support local governments to advance their active transportation
There are a lot of tools that could be made available.
- It was noted that active transportation is front and centre in new governance structure.
- It was confirmed that the Cst. Sarah Beckett Memorial Scholarship will continue. The money for the scholarship program will still be funded by the CRD. The responsibility goes to the CRD Board to decide and the recommendation in the staff report will be for a third party to do the callout for applications and make a recommendation to the Board for the scholarship winner. The Roy Watson scholarship is already managed through UVic, so could look at also managing the Sarah Beckett scholarship.
- The details around the Commission grant program are currently somewhat unknown. There will be funding available, and it will be up to the new Regional Transportation Advisory Committee to make recommendations. Some of the things that we have funded through grants historically may be done under a contract, rather than a grant.
- **Recommend** that the CRD continue to support and fund motorcycle safety training.
- **Recommend** that the CRD continue to support traffic safety education and awareness. The videos and cartoon strips that have been created in conjunction with CHEK TV are based on evidence and research groups, as well as focus groups.
- **Recommend** there should be an advisory group focused on public education equivalent to the Regional Transportation Advisory Committee. We don't want to lose all our work. An advisory group is more appropriate to leverage input from the broader community, institutions and key stakeholders, rather than subcommittees or working groups.

- Appreciate the emphasis on evidence-based approaches. In addition to our focus on education awareness, we should remain open to engaging in other areas such as policy development and additional initiatives in the future.
- **Recommend** that there shouldn't be too many priorities and let the priorities be governed by evidence. The power of priorities is that it narrows the focus and forces people to look at what the evidence says and then act on the evidence.
- **Recommend** continued support for the following:
 - junior hockey education and awareness around impaired driving and speed
 - MADD Canada video presentations throughout the CRD
 - the PARTY Program and continued support for the evolution to encompass distracted driving
 - continued focus on distracted driving and how we reach other people not in youth age group. Liked the idea of a choice of a fine or attending an education program.
 - automated speed enforcement. That would be a huge miss if that wasn't picked up. Suggestion to have it as a regional program and lobby the province to pass enabling legislation that would enable regional governments to fund and implement automated speed enforcement.
 - impaired driving
 - continue to engage the type of people we have here. Two groups that are at the front lines of everything around road safety are police and school districts. Police are first and have great suggestions about road safety. School districts have all the youth, and we know the risky behaviours youth engage in. We should continue to involve the school districts.
- Besides the public education group, suggest there be an evidence and policy advisory group. That is part of that thinking of what's the most appropriate way to get input from people that are very knowledgeable about it.
- Important to be able to collect indicators of success and have a system in place to monitor success.

➤ **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.

8. **Other Business**

➤ **November and December Meetings in light of new governance**

After discussion, members agreed that the November 18 meeting should go ahead.

MOVED by Steve Martin, **SECONDED** by Frederick Grouzet, that the November 18 meeting will go ahead and will be the Commission's final wrap-up meeting. **CARRIED**

Members were also invited to express interest in joining any of the new working groups or sub-committees once they are established. Contact Jay at jdouillard@crd.bc.ca if you interested.

9. **Member Updates**

➤ **RoadSafetyBC - Natalia Heilke**

No update

➤ **ICBC – Colleen Woodger**

No update

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

No update

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

- Will be handing work over to Jay

➤ **CRD – Jay Douillard**

- Noted in the news that consideration is being given to changes in driver licensing by removing the second road test for new drivers

- **Integrated Road Safety Unit – Sgt. Jereme Leslie**
No update
- **Commercial Vehicle Safety Enforcement – Myke Labelle**
No update
- **Vancouver Island Safety Council – Ron Cronk**
 - Wrapping up another successful motorcycle training season. 80% of the people who attended training passed their road test on their first try. The VISC refresher skills course is becoming known, and they are starting to see similar courses popping up in other motorcycle training schools in the province. The TSC is well represented in the training through slides and overheads, and he hopes there will be a pathway to continue that funding.
- **Capital Bike – Rob Bernhardt**
No update
- **Walk On, Victoria – Todd Litman**
No update
- **Municipal Police Forces/RCMP**
Sgt. Doug Cripps, Saanich Police
 - Monthly campaigns are ongoing to support the BCACP calendar. October is “Drive relative to conditions.”
 - Will be doing another junior hockey presentation in the next couple of weeks and the goal is to finish them by the end of the year.
- Cst. Matt McNichol, Oak Bay Police**
 - The department sends out media releases on their projects as much as possible. Beyond the schools, they are working on different stop sign projects, as well as distracted driving and impaired.
- **BC Transit – Dallas Perry**
No update
- **Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure - Owen Page**
No update
- **Island Health**
Neil Arason
 - Invited to participate in the CRD’s Ready Step Roll Program which has identified three schools this year. Attended Braefoot and Northridge Elementary Schools in the past week with ICBC, local government, school district, and parents who work together to identify areas around the school that need some kind of improvement
 - The Vision Zero grant program is open to the end of November for community groups, including schools
- Dr. Melissa Wan**
 - Will be interesting to see if changes to the driver licensing program get passed. It’s not just the removal of the second test, but also a different pathway for older adults. Would like to see results of changes.
- **Working Group for UVic Collaborative for Youth and Society Joint Project – Dr. Frederick Grouzet**
 - The new video on distracted driving is going out and they are working on another one which will be filming next month in collaboration with CHEK News. Also, working on creating one new comic strip per month based on Bear and Marmot characters. The latest one is on roundabouts.
- **Adam Defrane, MADD Canada**
No update
- **Sean Powell, School Districts**
 - September brings a shift in behaviour around schools and streets. Thanks to police partners for being visible at the school and working with staff. It was a positive September for schools and traffic.

10. Next Meeting

The final meeting of the Commission will be held on November 18, 2025. On motion, the meeting adjourned at 2:37 pm.