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Submitted by: Anonymous

Submitted values are:

Subject

Equestrian feedback about Wallace near Centennial Park: Ongoing community discussion about the new bike lane

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Message

Sarah Ridell kindly reached out after my last email to Council, to ask for feedback on equestrian access and needs in and around Wallace and Centennial Park, given the continuing discussion of a bike lane in that zone.

This is the summary qualitative feedback from Central Saanich Equestrian and Horse Community, with key needs identified:

1. Safe paths for horses and riders / Bridle Paths: There is a strong consensus among the community members regarding the need for safe pathways (away from road traffic) - also known as Bridle Paths - for horses and riders in and around Centennial Park, Wallace Drive and Willow Way to ensure the safety of both riders and animals in accessing multi-use pathways around the Saanich Fairgrounds, within Centennial Park and to connect to equestrian facilities in the neighbourhood.

2. Access from Willow Way to Centennial Park and Fair Grounds: Strong emphasis on the the necessity for safe access from Willow Way to Centennial Park and the Fair Grounds, suggesting a path beside the school or through one of the neighbouring properties as an easement, as the simplest option. WE NEED A LIGHTED EQ-height BEG BUTTON CROSSING from Willow Way trail, across Wallace, to a connected bridle path through either of the properties neighbouring the high school, since EQ access is completely blocked there.

3. Reducing hazards on existing routes: Concerns about hazards on existing routes, such as deep ditches along Willow Way, highlight the need for measures like fences, trimming brush, and creating alternative routes (bridle paths and multi-use trails away from motor vehicles) to ensure safety for riders, pedestrians, and cyclists. Much-needed trail maintenance and sight-line improvements and ditch safety for animal riders along Willow Way trail.

4. Improving road safety: There is a call for improving road safety measures, including signage, speed reduction, driver education, and empathy for vulnerable road users like horses and pedestrians, along with promoting proper etiquette among all road users, especially around Stellys X Road, Wallace, Centennial Park where there is growing motor vehicle volume and speeds, making equestrian road use extremely dangerous to horse and rider.

5. Infrastructure improvements: Suggestions for infrastructure improvements include building a bridle trail along Wallace behind sidewalks, providing safe crossing areas including beg-button crossings set at heights accessible for people on horses as well as those walking, biking and rolling, signage about how to pass (slow and wide) around horses and riders and to yield to them, and considering the possibility of purchasing land for creating safe pathways/multi-use bridle paths for all vulnerable road users. The shoulder along Wallace to Stellys X is just not wide enough to safely accommodate horses and their riders AND enable 1 metre passing distance now required in the Motor Vehicle Act on roadways marked at 50km/hr.

6. Community engagement and support: The feedback underscores the importance of Central Saanich Equestrian and Horse community engagement and support in addressing these issues, with individuals expressing a desire for a collaborative approach to finding solutions and addressing concerns.

These key needs can serve as focal points for addressing the community's concerns and improving the safety and accessibility of equestrian routes and roadways in the neighborhood around Stellys Cross Road, Centennial Park and Willow Way Trail / Polo Grounds.

For additional information re: road safety design for Equestrians as vulnerable road users, see below:

Bridle paths, also known as bridleways or equestrian trails, are routes primarily used by people riding horses, though they may also be utilized by hikers and cyclists. These paths are typically inaccessible to motorized vehicles or have restrictions against them. While in industrialized countries they are mainly for recreation, in other regions they serve as vital transportation routes. Laws regarding usage vary by country.

In England and Wales, a bridle path permits horse riding in addition to walking and cycling since 1968. The term "ride" is often used interchangeably with bridleway. In the US, "bridle path" colloquially refers to

trails used for day treks on horses, primarily on the East Coast, while the term "trail" is more common in the West. Long-distance multi-use trails, such as Australia's Bicentennial National Trail, cater to various users, including equestrians. Rail trails may also accommodate horse riding.

Road crossings pose challenges for equestrians, especially on busy roads. Light-controlled crossings are recommended for safety, with considerations for rider-operated controls and waiting times. Proper design and signage are crucial for safe crossing points, including adequate sightlines and barriers to prevent accidents. Trunk roads and dual carriageways present additional challenges, with underpasses or overbridges preferred for safer crossings where possible.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide you with this information.

Lin Philips (and all of us in the community with horses we love and cherish).

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