

**Making the Gabriola  
Village transportation  
corridor safe for all - *a  
study in governance &  
citizen action***

# What this is really about . . .

- ▶ How a community approached an intractable problem through ‘creative’ governance
- ▶ First, we’ll describe the problem and the process we enacted to address it
- ▶ Then we’ll share the lessons we learned about governance

# Can We Collaborate Better?

To collaborate better need to recognize what is at play:

- ▶ **We are dealing with 'wicked' problems:** “. . . where no accepted definition of the problem exists; where one problem is interrelated with others; and where the solutions proffered to address them are precarious, controversial, and difficult to implement. What is more, these types of problems pit those involved in trying to solve them against each other in jurisdictional conflict” (Durant, Fiorino & O’Leary)
- ▶ **We need to be clear on who ‘we’ includes**

# The Gabriola Problem

*Lack of proactive planning for the Village Core has resulted in:*

- ▶ a 'strip mall' environment, and
- ▶ A highway through the centre of Gabriola's village core

*Multiple governance interests operating at different scales:*

- ▶ MoTI (provincial)
- ▶ Regional District of Nanaimo (regional)
- ▶ Local Trust Committee - (local)
- ▶ An outdated MOU between MoTI and IT (1992)

**Everyone is in charge of a piece, no one is in charge of the whole.**

# Enter Village Vision

- ▶ Village core planning on the LTC list for years - never moved into a priority
- ▶ Early attempts to engage with the LTC (2012) were rebuffed on the grounds that:
  - ▶ VV had no mandate
  - ▶ It was the role of planners
- ▶ Undeterred a group formed to create opportunities for citizen input into all aspects of village design regardless of jurisdiction, mandate or authority



village  
VISION  
gabriola island b.c.

## Village Vision is a Community-led planning project

- ▶ Community meetings
- ▶ Expert opinions
- ▶ Surveys
- ▶ Design workshop with VIU Masters of Community Planning students
- ▶ Consultation with LTC, RDN and MoTI



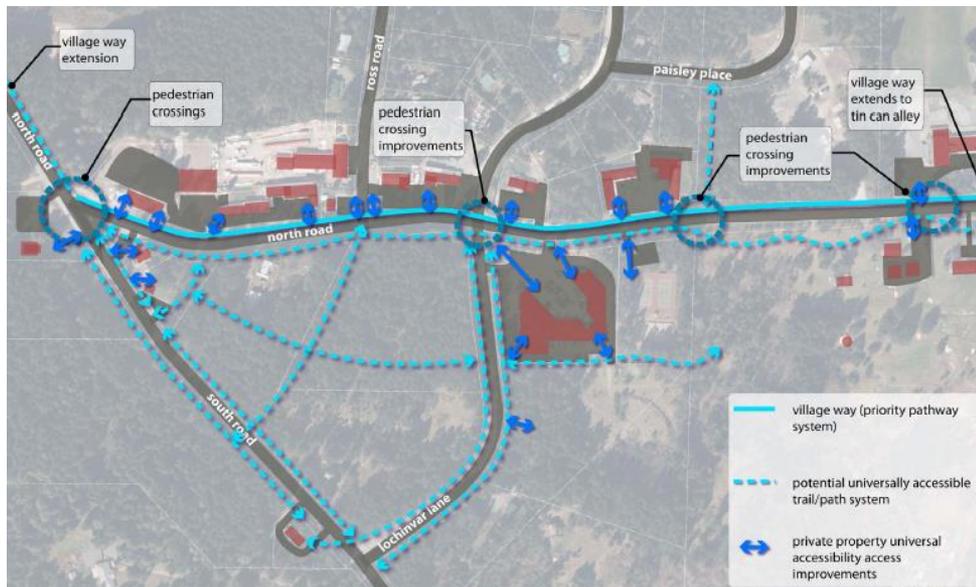
# Focusing on 2 Big Ideas

## Big Idea 1 - North Road and South Road Intersection Improvements

- **Concept** - Redesign the North and South Road intersection to improve pedestrian, cyclist, and vehicular safety, and to create a “gateway” to the village.

## Big Idea 2 - Creating a Village Feel on North Road

- **Concept** - Make the village area portion of North Road more of a pedestrian-friendly street, with a village character.

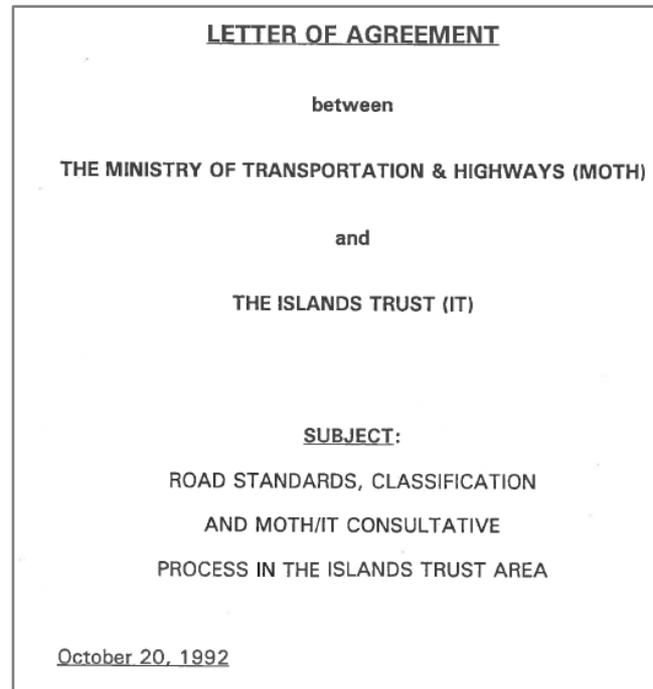


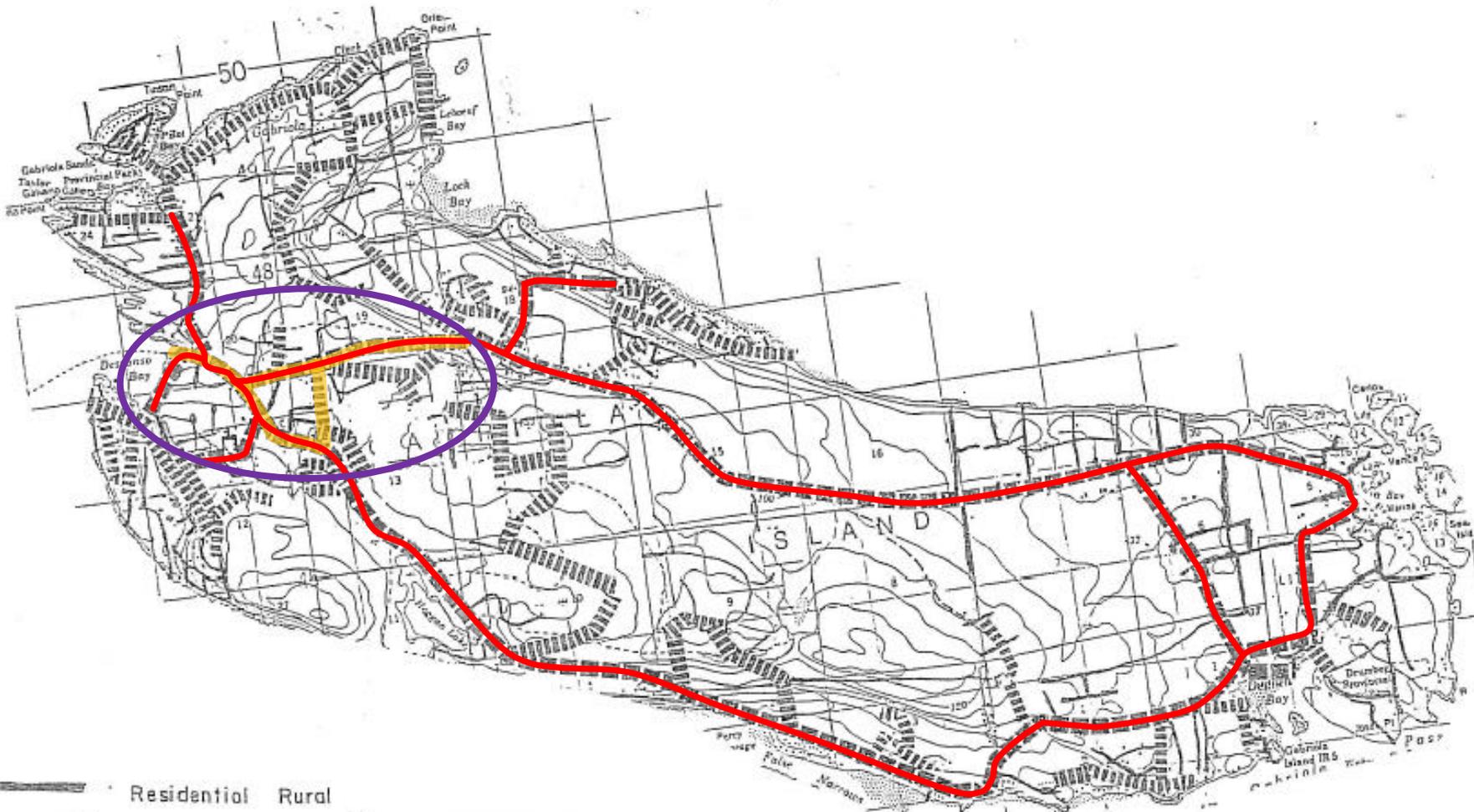
**Bottom Line . . .**

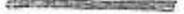
**Gabriolans want safe,  
walkable, and bikeable  
streets in the Village area.**

# The Planning Challenges

- ▶ An outdated agreement between MoTH and the IT.
- ▶ Willingness and budget commitment of RDN caught in a jurisdictional disagreement between MOTI and the RDN





-  Residential Rural
-  Minor Rural
-  Major Rural

MINISTRY OF TRANSPORTATION  
& HIGHWAYS - PLANNING

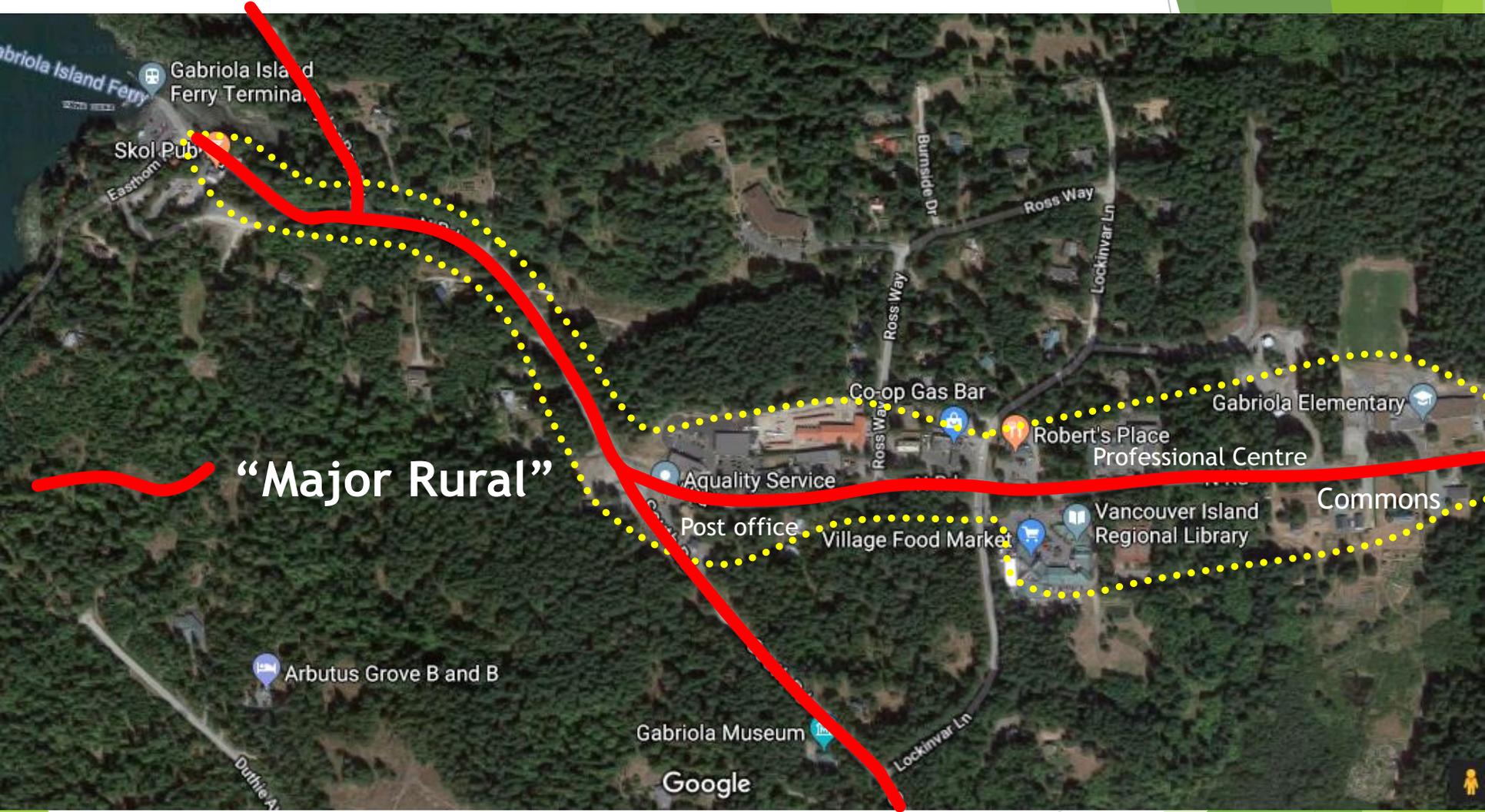
*Aug 13/92*

## ISLAND ROAD STANDARDS

Islands Trust Nomenclature	R/W Width	Design Speed	Cleared Width	Driving Lanes	Constructed (Top) Width	Surfaced Shoulder Standard	Gravel Shoulder	Cycle Lanes
Residential Rural/Local	20m(66')	50km/hr	13.9m(45.6')	5.5m(18.0')	6.7m(22')	not required	0.6m	No lanes
Minor Rural	20m(66')	50km/hr	14.5m(47.6')	6.1m(20')	7.3m(24')	not required	0.6m	2 lanes *
Main Rural	20m(66')	60 km/hr	15.6m(51.1')	6.7m(22') 7.3m(24') crest/curve	9.1m(29.8') or 9.7m crest/curve	0.6m/lane	0.6m	2 lanes **
Major Rural	25m/80'	80km/hr	18.1m(59.4')	6.7m(22') 7.3m(24') crest/curve	10.3m(34.8') or 10.9m crest/curve	1.2m/lane (3.9')	0.6m	2 lanes

\* Constructed top width for each bicycle shoulder lane can range from 0 to 1.2 meters on both sides for each section as designated in an Island Specific Cycle route plan.

\*\* Constructed top width for each bicycle shoulder lane can range from 0.6 to 1.2 meters on both sides for each section as designated in an Island Specific Cycle route plan.



“Major Rural”

# North Road in Gabriola Village

- 50 km/h
- No pedestrian path
- No cycling lane
- No curb
- Only 1 crosswalk in the village area
- No stop signs for North Rd. traffic



In effect there is a highway through the middle of Gabriola's Village!



# Significant changes since the 1992 LOA was signed

- ▶ the *population has increased* to 4033 (2016) from 2579 (1991) - almost 60%,
- ▶ *60% more traffic coming off the ferry* in summer—much of it through the village—than in winter,
- ▶ *More than double the number of commercial establishments* in the village area,
- ▶ *climate change* has forced us all to accept the imperative of finding alternatives to motor vehicles, and
- ▶ **Gabriolans want a more pedestrian- and bike-friendly village.**

# Vision for a complete multi-modal street for Gabriola Village



- 40 km/h
- Pedestrian space
- Cyclist space
- Additional crosswalks
- Traffic calming

Student sketch from Design Workshop by  
Vancouver Island University  
Master of Community Planning Program

**This vision cannot be achieved because  
of the 1992 IT-MoTI agreement**

# Why Does Village Vision Matter?

There is pressure to rethink governance

Dissatisfaction with the current arrangement is increasingly being expressed through referendums to incorporate

- ▶ Bowen became a municipality
- ▶ Gabriola strongly rejected the idea of incorporation
- ▶ Salt Spring has had two referenda and each resulted in rejection

***But is replacing what we have with another hierarchical, formalized, mandated state entity really the answer?***

# What is wrong with the current system?

- ▶ Fragmented mandates result in planning and service gaps
- ▶ Governance bodies operate at different scales and act hierarchically
- ▶ Formal governance structures can be bureaucratic and find it difficult to think outside the box of their mandates
- ▶ There is no requirement or duty to engage in collaborative planning

# Why Village Vision Works

- ▶ It is non-hierarchical
- ▶ It can take action in the gaps between mandates
- ▶ It is not constrained by mandate
- ▶ It focuses on opening spaces for citizen input & participation
- ▶ It is not position-based or aligned with a particular point of view
- ▶ It has no formal structure, does not look for funding or approval, and is beholden to citizens not funding bodies

# What is right about the current governance arrangements?

- ▶ The LTCs and RDs are on the ground in their communities
- ▶ The LTC, in particular, is committed to place-based governance
- ▶ There are lots of gaps in capacity and mandate - leaving lots of spaces for citizen groups to occupy

# A New Governance Paradigm

- ▶ Formal governance structures play an important role in legislating, regulating, incentivizing, penalizing and investing
- ▶ *But*, they are constrained by limited mandates and sluggish processes
- ▶ Community/citizen-led action is not constrained in this way, can work in spaces unoccupied by the state, or unimplemented by the state.
- ▶ The challenge is for the formal structures of state to find ways to collaborate with autonomous citizen-led initiatives



Thank you