Policy Brief (April 1, 2024): Proposed Active Transportation Pathway from Lakestone to Downtown Lake Country

Summary/Overview

Given global climate change and the large amount of carbon dioxide emitted by cars, sustainable solutions for human transportation are needed. Lake Country is the fastest growing municipality within BC, making the mobility crisis worse as traffic congestion, air pollution, and unsafe streets decrease quality of life. Active transportation, such as walking, rolling, or cycling, has been identified as a potential solution to this problem. This brief recommends building a new fully separated active transportation pathway that links existing infrastructure from Lakestone to downtown Lake Country, BC.

Context/Considerations

Lake Country's population has increased by an average of 3.7% from 2005-2009 and this high growth rate is projected to continue and potentially increase. Thus, it is vital the mobility problem is addressed now before more residents arrive and exacerbate the problem. One such area of high growth is the Lakestone development on Okanagan Lake, a new and in-progress residential development by the MacDonald Development Corporation with nearly 200 lots for sale along with a large high-occupancy condo building.

This project fits within existing goals of the District to increase active transportation networks (such as through the Master Mobility Plan of 2021), including the goal of increasing pedestrian and cycling pathways 50km respectively by 2030. Uptake of active transportation has been shown to increase when trails are entirely separated from car traffic. The District has also identified transportation equity as a guiding principle of its transportation goals. Given the increased availability and lowered cost of e-bikes and e-scooters, increased safety of active transportation infrastructure, and higher cost of gasoline for personal vehicles, active transportation has become an attainable goal for more residents.

Recommendations

3.8km of new path along existing roads needs to be constructed (see Appendix) to connect already existing infrastructure including the Okanagan Rail Trail (16km) and Tyndall Road Multi-Use Trail (2.1km). These new paved paths will be beside existing roads, built in the same style as the Tyndall Road Trail and being entirely separated from car traffic. A short 200m pathway connecting Glenmore Rd to Read Rd will not run alongside existing road, instead through public land that can be used as a naturalized corridor for plant habitat to advance dual goals of conservation and active transportation. New improvements to the highway 97 crossing at Berry Road are also proposed, aligning with the District's already existing goals. This is projected to cost $611,800 for the new pathways, note this does not include the cost to improve the Highway 97 crossing at Berry Rd nor the naturalization costs of the 200m corridor.

Appendix – maps of proposed path

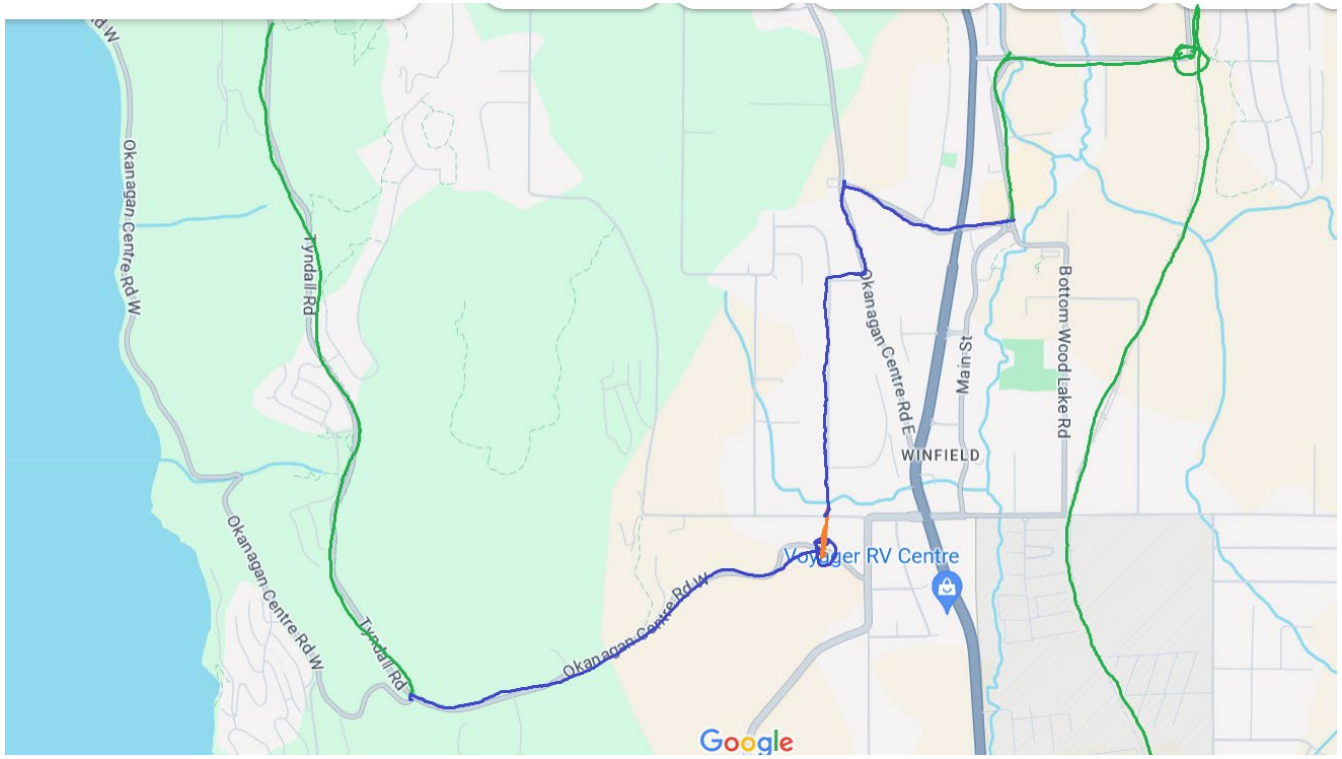

Image 1: Proposed fully separated active transportation path. Blue (3.6km) and orange (200m) paths indicate new builds, with orange path running through public land and not beside an existing road. Green paths indicate already existing infrastructure, Tyndall Road Multi-Use Path (2.1km) and Okanagan Rail Trail (16km). From left of image, Tyndall Road Multi-Use Path (in green) connects to Okanagan Centre Rd W (in blue) where new build starts and runs east. It then turns into orange path that connects to Read Rd, turns back to blue path and runs along Read Rd which curves east, turns north along Okanagan Centre Rd E, then east at Berry Rd. It then crosses Highway 97 on Berry Rd, connecting to existing bike lanes (in green) north along Bottom Wood Lake Road (unseparated, protected) and east on Lodge Road (unseparated, protected) which connects it to the Okanagan Rail Trail (fully separated).

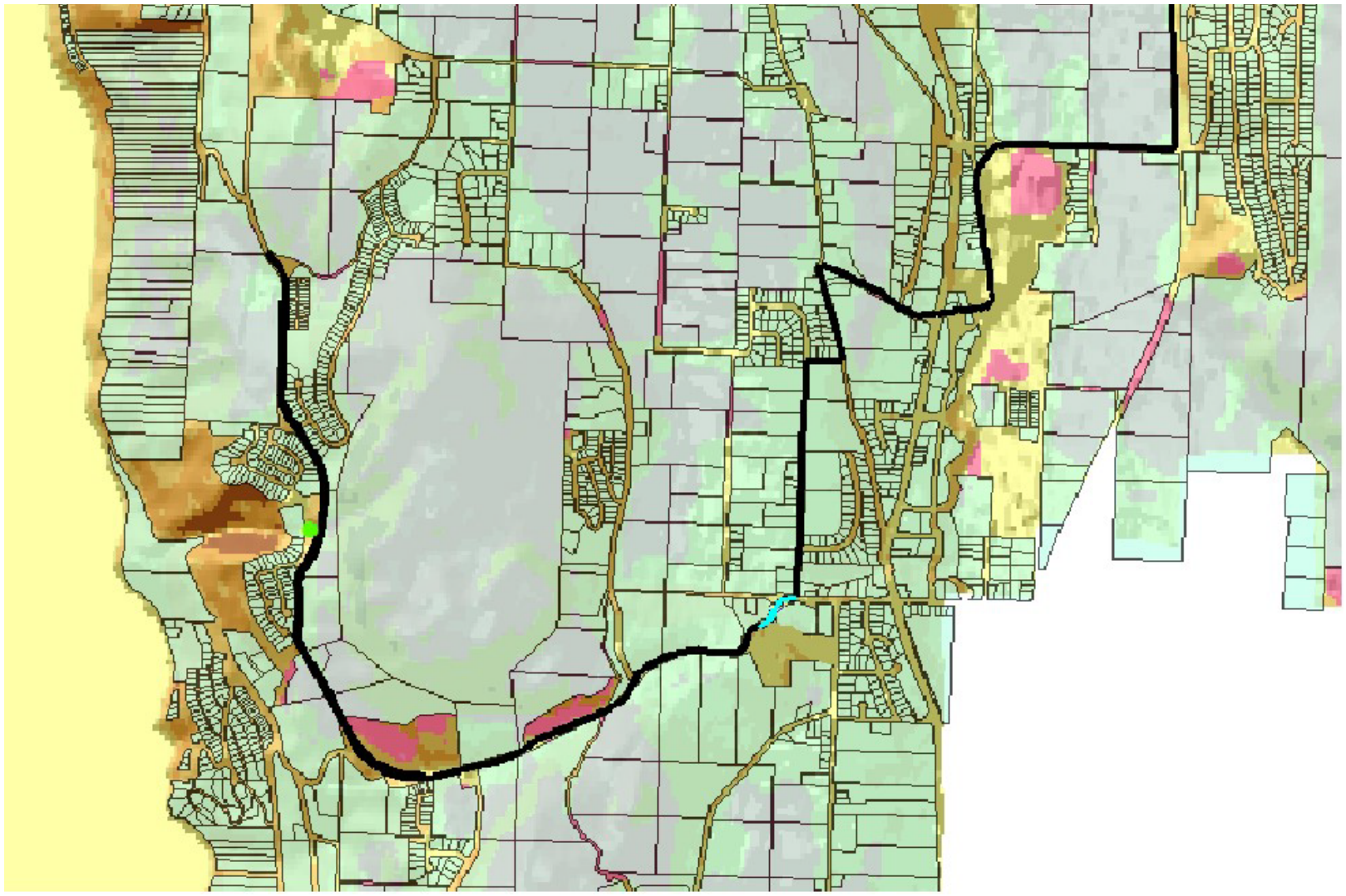

Image 2: Map of active transportation path, including proposed new 3.8km sections and existing infrastructure of Tyndall Road Multi-Use Pathway and Okanagan Rail Trail. Blue section is 200m new path through public land, not alongside existing road (equivalent to orange path in Image 1). Boxes in the map represent land use parcels.

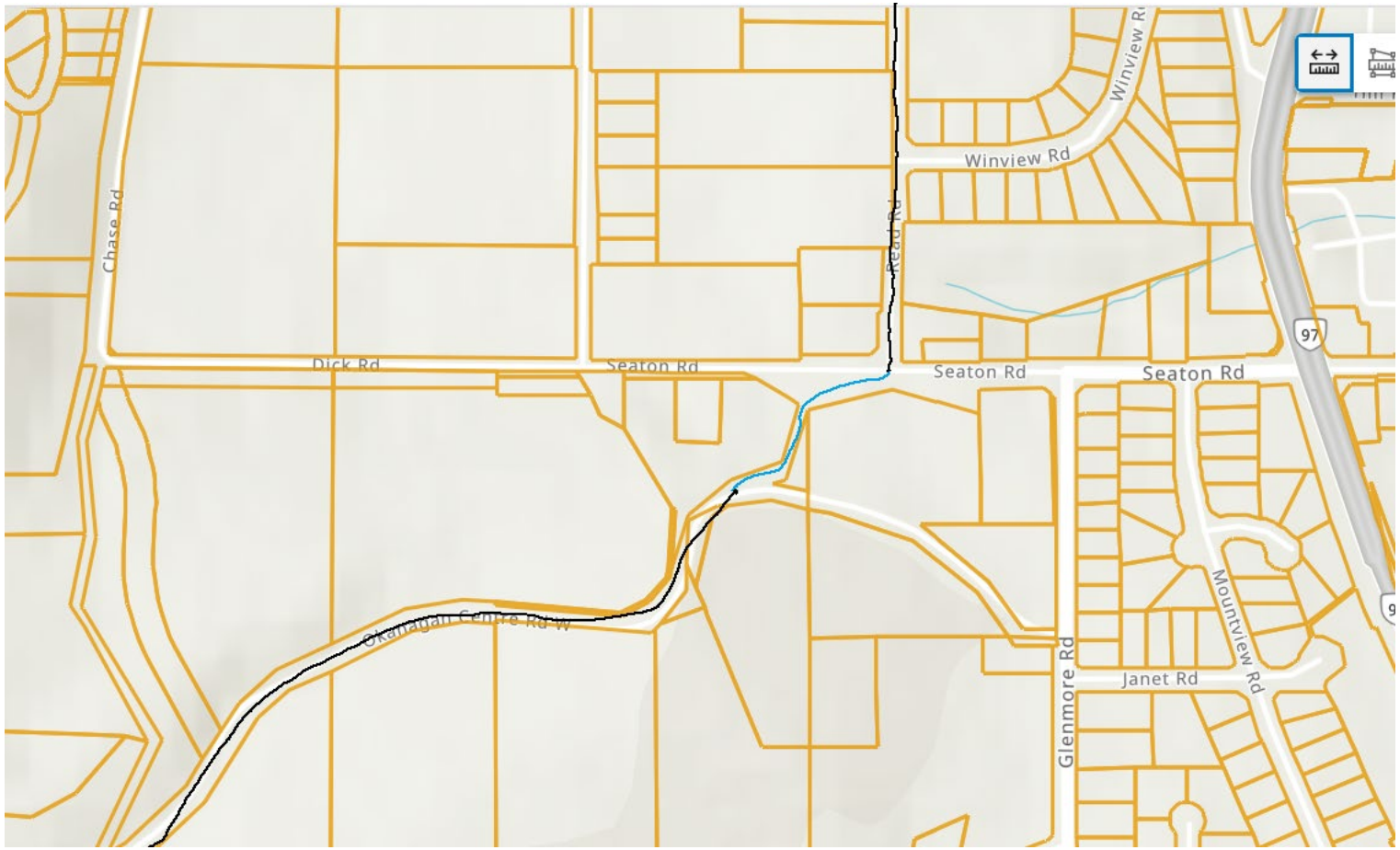

Image 3: Close up of land use parcel information. Blue line represents 200m path through public lands (equivalent to orange line in Image 1). Black lines represent new paths along existing roads (Okanagan Centre Rd W and Read Rd).

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