

Bike to School Education Pilot Project: Final Project Report

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October 14, 2017*



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Summary

The following report officially wraps up the Bike to School Education Pilot Project. From April through October 2017, two participants were trained in delivery of bike education. The participants promoted cycling education throughout Port Alberni specifically developing a bike education curriculum for Wood Elementary School. The participants gained public speaking, community liaising, and engagement skills. In addition, the two participants strengthened their understanding of computer technology and developed analytic and writing skills while networking across Port Alberni and beyond. The community gained new bike advocates and many people had the opportunity to experience cycling and learn cycling safety through the biking program.

The project was overwhelmingly positive. As one teacher said “This has been a highlight for us as teachers. Our school population has the highest rate of poverty in the district, and many of the kids had never been on a bike before. After we did this, not only did every kid involved learn how to ride a bike effectively, but we noticed some school-wide changes. An increase in students riding bikes to school. An increase in helmet use in all students who ride bikes. An increase in parents walking/biking their kids to school instead of driving. I think that’s pretty amazing! The whole school is healthier due to this project!”

A joint initiative of Cycle Alberni and Island Work Transitions, the Bike to School Education Pilot Project grew out of a community interest of having more cycling education. That, paired with the ongoing need to create employment solutions, led to a Job Creation Partnership program and a \$50,000 grant from the Province of British Columbia. The Bike to School Education Pilot Project brought together Cycle Alberni, Island Work Transitions, Wood Elementary, Ozzie’s Cycle, the City of Port Alberni, and INEO Employment Services to purchase bicycles, provide bicycle education, give two community members valuable job training and experience, and create this bike education program. The program aim was to promote cycling as an accessible transportation option and healthy lifestyle choice for students, while fostering independence and building social capital.

Overall Project Statistics

Throughout the course of the project, 5 elementary school classes (approximately 25 students per class) had the opportunity to learn bike skills, 12 community rides were hosted, and 8 public events included a bike safety component executed by the Bike to School Education Pilot Project. Over 410 people interacted Education with the cycling information at events and nearly 200 people got on bikes and rode with Bike to School Pilot Project Participants, and the participants coined 'Wheely Fun Alberni'. These statistics are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Project Statistics and Event Attendance

BIKE TO SCOOOL EDUCATION PILOT PROJECT: EVENT STAISTICS					
	classes	rides	events	Event	numbers
Riders		12		Summer rides	24
				2 Summer bike rodeos	12
	1			School bike rodeo	30
	4			School classes	80
			1	Bike jamboree	50
				total riders	196
interactions			1	Earth day event	50
			1	Cycle Mania	20
			1	Walk with your doc	100
			1	Fall fair	120
			1	Canada Day Parade	120
				total interactions	410
total connections	5	12	8		606

Surprises

Project coordinators and teachers and administration alike were surprised that there were a significant number children in each class (grades 5-7) who had never ridden a bicycle before or who didn't have confidence operating a bicycle. When the program began, about 85% of the students had ridden a bicycle before and about 50% were confident riding a bike. By the end of the program students were biking across town, while not everyone was confident, bicycle skills were greatly improved.

Another surprise, for coordinators and participants alike, was the learning curve required for the participants to get up to speed with cycling before they could ride with the students. Day by day the learning process helped to inform curriculum development in addition to the personal growth afforded. Throughout the course of the program participants cycled a combined total of nearly 500 km. The distance cycled by the participants is shown in the plot below.

What Participants had to say

“Course complete good feedback. Community feedback great program.” – Program Participant 1

“Where do I go from here? So many doors have opened up, now is the time to decide which ones to walk through!” – Project Participant 2

What Project Partners had to say

A survey was sent to representatives of the 8 organizations that were involved in the project. Of those, 6 responded to the call for feedback. All responded affirmatively to the project indicating an 80% or higher satisfaction with the project. All organizations responding to the survey indicated that they would be interested in being involved if the project were to continue in the future. Five out of six organizations responding indicated that they would be able to support the project to the same extent as they did this time around.

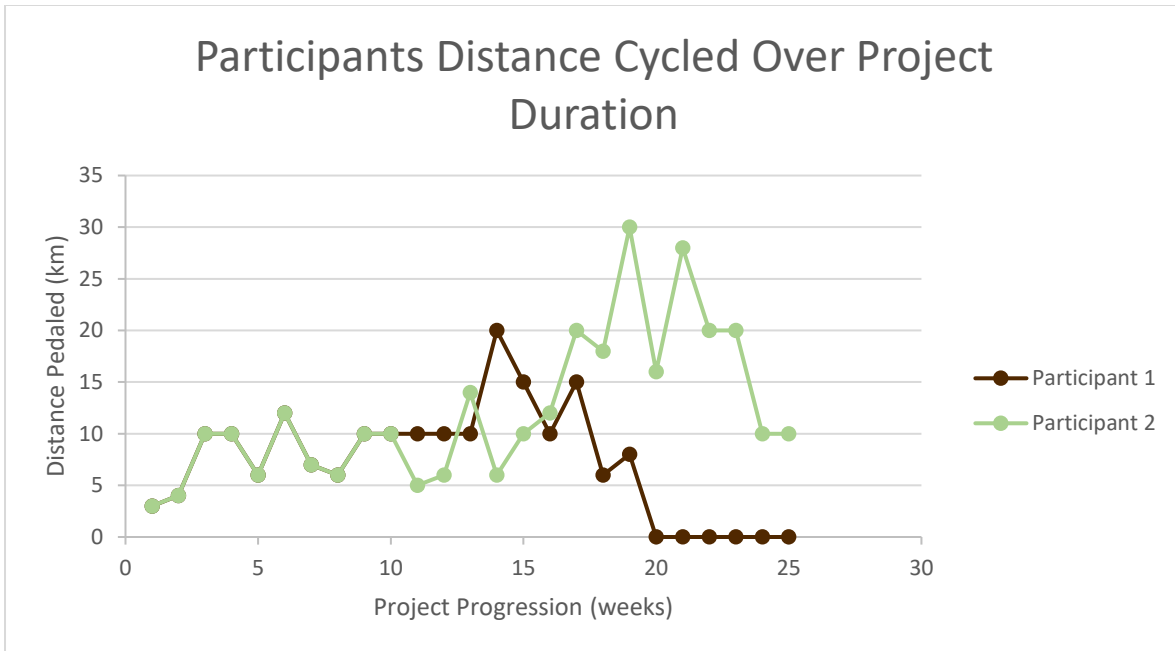
“Thanks for providing this opportunity to our students.” – Wood School Principal

“I think that this is an excellent project” – Ozzie’s Cycle

“The training for the participants was our organization's primary goal, and we are pleased with those results - one participant is already employed. The coordination and delivery of the project was executed with a high level of commitment and expertise. Additionally though, the project has been very successful at raising the profile of cycling as an important and enjoyable activity for kids.” – Project Proponents



Figure 2: Grade 7s posing for a photo during lunch at McLean Mill; rest stop mid ride.



What Students had to say

“I really like that you helped me ride my bike. What I didn’t like, I only got to do two bike rides and I would like more bike rides.” – Duncan, grade 6

“I really like it and my favorite was the Harbor Quay and I have nothing bad to say” – Parker, grade 6

“I liked riding the bikes around town and doing the obstacle courses. I didn’t like riding up the steep hills in the hot weather because I died. They can improve on not going up big hills in the scorching hot weather.” –Lillie, grade 6



Figure 3: Break at McLean Mill; final class ride October 11, 2017.

Next Steps

As this pilot project wraps up significant conversations have been had with different interest groups to assess the resources that would be required to allow the project to continue. Four proposed budget scenarios for continuation of Wood School Bike Education program after the JCP pilot project ends October 13th 2017 arose from those conversations. Costs estimated are for a 1 year period. Input from teachers indicates that it would be desirable to have ongoing support throughout the school year so that rides (and field trips) can occur in an ongoing way. Therefore it has been deemed that scenario 4 is the preferred scenario to continue the bike education project with two classes at Wood Elementary School.

Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3	Scenario 4
No External Staff Support	External Staff time for Training	External Staff time for Training and Project Management	External Staff time for Bike Support throughout school year
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bike Maintenance \$3000.00 	6 week program x 2 classes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - \$3600 class staff time - \$3000 bike maintenance - \$400 Project Admin 	6 week program x 2 classes Organizing/Hosting a bike jamboree Limited project development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - \$3600 class staff time - \$3000 bike maintenance - \$1500 events, advertising, promotion - \$1200 Project Admin 	Scenario 3 plus weekly bike <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - \$3600 class staff time - \$3000 bike maintenance - \$1500 events, advertising, promotion - \$1200 Project Admin - \$11,200 bike ride staff time - \$1000 project supplies
Total Annual Cost \$3,000*	Total Annual Cost \$7,000*	Total Annual Cost \$9,300*	Total Annual Cost \$21,500*

*Additional bike ride support crew and meeting space will be required (in kind assumed).

Some ideas that came forward as to what project partners would like to see changed if a Bike to School project were to continue are:

- Getting older students interested in mentoring younger students about bike safety and using bikes as a mode of transportation
- Bike safety staff employed for the entire school year to facilitate the project and provide quality adult supervision to meet insurance requirements (a 10:1 ratio of children:adults)
- Participation by more schools, and perhaps more integration with Parks & Rec.
- more volunteer supports
- Smaller bikes for younger classes

Hopefully opportunities will emerge for the continuation of this, or a similar project. In the meantime, the Bike to School Education Pilot Project has had a significant positive impact on Wood School students, with Wood School community, project participants, and indeed the wider community of Port Alberni. These successes, these bike rides, and the legacy of this project will be felt well into the future.