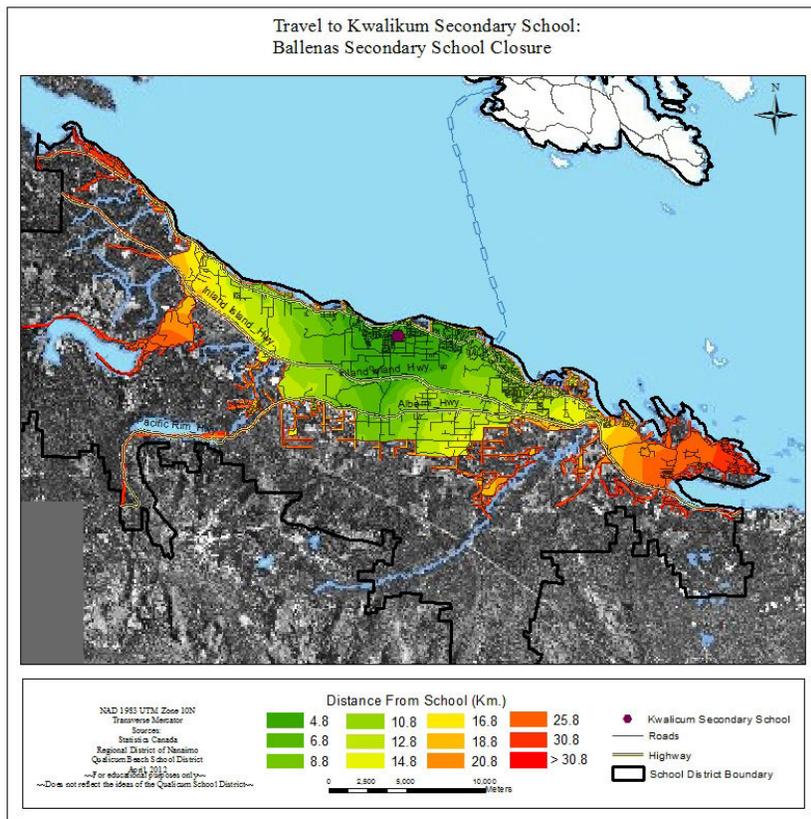




## Participation in Global Knowledge Economy starts Locally

Vancouver Island University student, Erin Phillip, presented her Transportation Analysis, along with a presentation by former Mayor Art Skipsey, at the 2012 Population Forum held in Qualicum Beach, April 12, 2012. Studies of issues relevant to communities, like Erin’s, are an excellent way to engage students as well as provide practical experience to apply theory. Presentations of studies provide community members with important information with which to make informed decisions and also prepare students, and the communities that support them, to gain high paying jobs in the growing global knowledge economy.

Figure 1. Example of a Transportation Analysis Map by Erin Phillip



Erin’s skills with the latest in Geographic Information Systems technology along side Art’s wisdom from years of experience, and the author’s descriptions of population change, provided relevant information to address issues of importance to the community.

Erin was also able to show how her skills could be applied to other studies including comparisons with alternative transportation opportunities.

Bill Gates, in his call for improvements to education, endorses “engaging” students as the best way to educate. He also points to the importance of funding research to support and encourage students thereby providing the opportunities to participate in the knowledge economy.

By engaging students in studies of relevance to communities, not only do students gain valuable experience, community members benefit by becoming better informed. As well, forums like these help build bridges between age groups and lower technological barriers to being informed.

Communities around the world are adapting by varying degrees to the knowledge economy. Removing blocks to public data, and allowing funding are realistic, achievable advancements. Creating a culture that nurtures scientific inquiry, by making public data available to the public, by funding students, and by encouraging public presentations offers opportunities to refine decision making, reducing cost, error, and time when addressing issues of relevance to community members.

With support and encouragement, students, and the communities that support them, will be better able to benefit from participation in the growing local and global knowledge economy.

