

**WHAT
WE
HEARD.**



**PUBLIC
PARTICIPATION**

Airdrie Active Transportation Plan

Project Overview:

The City of Airdrie is reviewing our active transportation network to develop an Active Transportation Plan (ATP) and understand where there are opportunities for improvements. Active transportation relates to human-powered and power-assisted forms of travelling and takes many forms, including walking, bicycling, wheelchairs, assisted mobility devices, e-scooters, e-bikes, skateboards, rollerblades, and transit.

Through public engagement, the City wanted to learn about resident's active transportation experiences within the city, issues they may experience with the existing network, and ideas that could be considered for network recommendations included in the ATP.

Date: October 17, 2023

Prepared for City of Airdrie by: ISL Engineering and Land Services

Executive Summary

The City of Airdrie is reviewing our active transportation network to develop an Active Transportation Plan (ATP) and understand where there are opportunities for improvements. Active transportation relates to human-powered and power-assisted forms of travelling and takes many forms, including walking, bicycling, wheelchairs, assisted mobility devices, e-scooters, e-bikes, skateboards, rollerblades, and transit.

Through the engagement process, the City wanted to learn more about active transportation experiences within the city, issues residents may experience with the existing network, and ideas that could be considered in the plan. The engagement process included an online survey available between September 8 and 25, 2023 and a pop-up booth at airdrieFEST on September 9, 2023, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. The project team received 203 responses to the online survey and engaged with over 120 people at the pop-up booth at airdrieFEST.

Generally, residents noted that they enjoy walking and bicycling on the many trails throughout Airdrie for recreation purposes. Residents noted that completing missing sidewalks/trail connections throughout the city, additional pedestrian bridges across Highway 2 and railway tracks, trails along Highway 2, 24 Street and 8 Street would improve connectivity within Airdrie and to/from Calgary. Some residents noted that improved transit service would encourage more residents to use active travel modes. Some noted that improving signage, information about how trails connect, lighting and improved intersection safety throughout the city would also encourage more active travel mode use. Some were concerned about the safety of e-scooters on city pathways.

Feedback received from residents and interested parties will be reviewed by the project team and inform the recommendations developed for the ATP. The ATP will be finalized and shared with Airdrie residents and interested parties in Spring 2024 on the City's website.

Project Information

The City is working to evolve planning policies to further define active transportation and create a strategic vision and plan for active modes of transportation in our community. This process includes exploring the gaps in the existing network, potential barriers, opportunities for improvement, industry best practices, and alignment with other City policies and plans to create an Active Transportation Plan (ATP) for Airdrie. The ATP will align with the City's Municipal Development Plan, Land Use Bylaw, and the Great Places Plan.

The ATP will incorporate feedback from residents and will be presented to Council for approval in Spring 2024.

Public Participation Approach

Public Participation Objectives

The following are the overarching objectives of the Public Participation Approach:

- Provide opportunities for the public and interested and affected parties to:
 - understand existing network conditions (strengths and challenges) and opportunities for active transportation infrastructure improvements.
 - understand the public's vision for active transportation in Airdrie.
- Build public awareness about active transportation and its benefits.
- Gather community-based data to inform the ATP.

Public Participation Activities

The public participation process included one online survey and one pop-up event. Project information and the online survey was available on the City's webpage and shared at the pop-up event.

Public Participation Activity	Audience	Timeline	Number of Engagements
Online Survey	General public and interested and affected parties	September 8 to 25, 2023	203 responses
Pop-Up Event	General public and interested and affected parties	Saturday, September 9, 2023 airdrieFEST (11 a.m. – 4 p.m.)	Over 120 participants

What We Asked

We asked the public and interested and affected parties to share how they experience active transportation. We also asked what their ideas and challenges are relating to active transportation in order to understand existing network conditions and opportunities for infrastructure improvements. Feedback gathered at the pop-up event and online will be used to guide the project team's technical analysis and will be considered in the development of the options and recommendations for the ATP.

How People Were Notified

The engagement opportunities for the ATP were shared via the City's project website and social media channels, with local newspaper ads, at the airdrieFEST pop-up booth and by direct emails to interested parties.

Summary of Public Participation Input

Generally, residents noted that they enjoy walking and bicycling on the many trails throughout Airdrie for recreation purposes.

Challenges with active transportation modes identified by residents included missing sidewalks/trail connections, unpaved/uneven pavement or feeling unsafe crossing intersections on bike. Some were unsure of how pathways were connected throughout the city and want improved wayfinding. Several comments were received about limited transit service which forces residents to rely on driving. A few residents were also concerned about the safety of e-scooters on city trails.

Resident ideas to improve active mode connectivity included completing missing sidewalks/trail connections throughout the city, adding sidewalks in industrial areas, additional pedestrian bridges across Highway 2 and railway tracks, adding trails along Highway 2, 24 Street and 8 Street to/from Calgary. Some residents expressed that improved transit service would encourage more residents to use active travel modes. Some noted that improving signage, information about how trails connect, lighting and intersection safety throughout the city would also encourage more use of active travel.

Pop-up Event Feedback Highlights

In the section below are the questions asked and key themes identified based on feedback received from attendees of the airdrieFEST pop-up event.

Q: What are your ideas to improve active transportation in Airdrie?

- Many attendees noted that the trails in Airdrie are great and well maintained and that they didn't have ideas for improvement.
- Several attendees suggested that bike trails between Airdrie and Calgary are needed along either side of Highway 2, along 24 Street and/or 8 Street to allow people to commute to/from Calgary for work or other purposes.
- Several attendees suggested that additional pedestrian bridges could be added near Veterans Boulevard, Edmonton Trail/the car dealerships, or Yankee Boulevard to cross Highway 2.
- Some attendees noted that improved transit service (e.g., additional times, stops, routes) would support more residents, especially youth, to take transit and also use active transportation modes of travel. A reserve bus service and additional transit service to Calgary and Red Deer were also suggested.
- A few attendees suggested better transportation options between Airdrie and universities in Calgary.
- A few attendees suggested that protected bike crossings at road crossings would improve safety for people who bike.
- Some attendees noted that connectivity within and between neighbourhoods and to schools could be improved in areas such as Bayview, Bayside, Meadowbrook and Ravenswood.
- Some other ideas included:
 - Improved wayfinding (signage on trails, online trail maps)
 - Minimizing the number of bridges closed at the same time
 - Improved maintenance (snow clearing, garbage and weeds)
 - More amenities (docks in bayside, garbage cans, benches, bike racks etc.)
 - Improved standards (wider pathways, dedicated bike lanes on major routes)
 - Adding rental bicycles with baskets for shopping and commuting
 - Education for drivers for safety of pedestrians and cyclists

- Site specific improvements
 - Improved rail crossing on Yankee Valley Boulevard
 - Adding a rail crossing to Sierra Springs Common from Morningside

Q: What are some challenges you experience with active transportation in Airdrie?

- Many attendees noted that the trails in Airdrie are great, well-maintained and they don't experience any challenges using the trails.
- Some attendees noted that there are some paths in need of repair or paving in neighbourhoods such as Sagewood, Waterstone, Chinook Park, and the Southpoint Dog Park.
- Some attendees noted that steep grades in areas like Bayside Boulevard bridge, bumpy sidewalks downtown and high crosswalk ramps in Woodside create challenges for active mode users.
- Some attendees noted that missing sidewalks or connections in areas such as the east side Allen Street, 3 Avenue North, Veterans Boulevard, Reunion Loop, Main Street across from Walmart, and East Lake Road.
- Several attendees noted several safety concerns that cause challenges for active mode users such as cars stopping in crosswalks, paths that only connect by crossing major intersections, high traffic volumes during peak times and crossings on Yankee Boulevard across Highway 2, sightlines from Coopers Plaza, e-bikes and e-scooters on trails, train crossing between Midtown and Ridgeway and drivers generally driving too fast.

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PROJECT: Airdrie Active Transportation Plan
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Online Survey Feedback Highlights

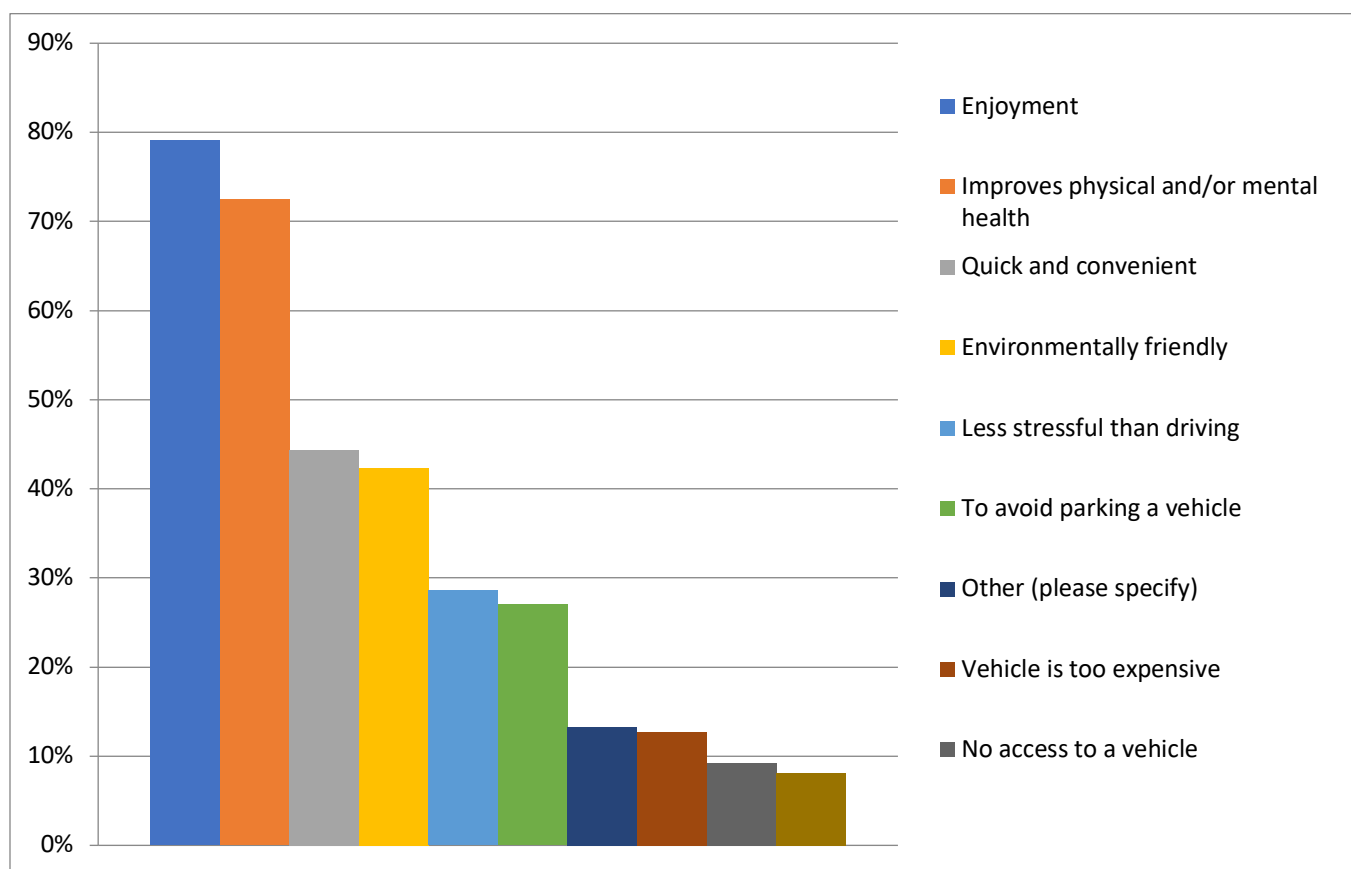
The section below includes key themes from feedback received from participants of the online survey.

Q: How often do you travel using active modes of transportation?

- Most respondents indicated that for more regular daily commuting (2-4, 4-7 days per week) they were most often using a vehicle, but for more infrequent travel throughout the week they were biking and walking.
- Most respondents indicated that they most often walk and bike for recreational purposes.

Q: When you DO travel by active transportation what are the main reasons for doing so?

- Main reasons for travelling by active transportation modes: 79% of respondents indicated that they use active transportation for enjoyment, 72% because it improves physical health and/or mental health and 44% because it was quick and convenient.

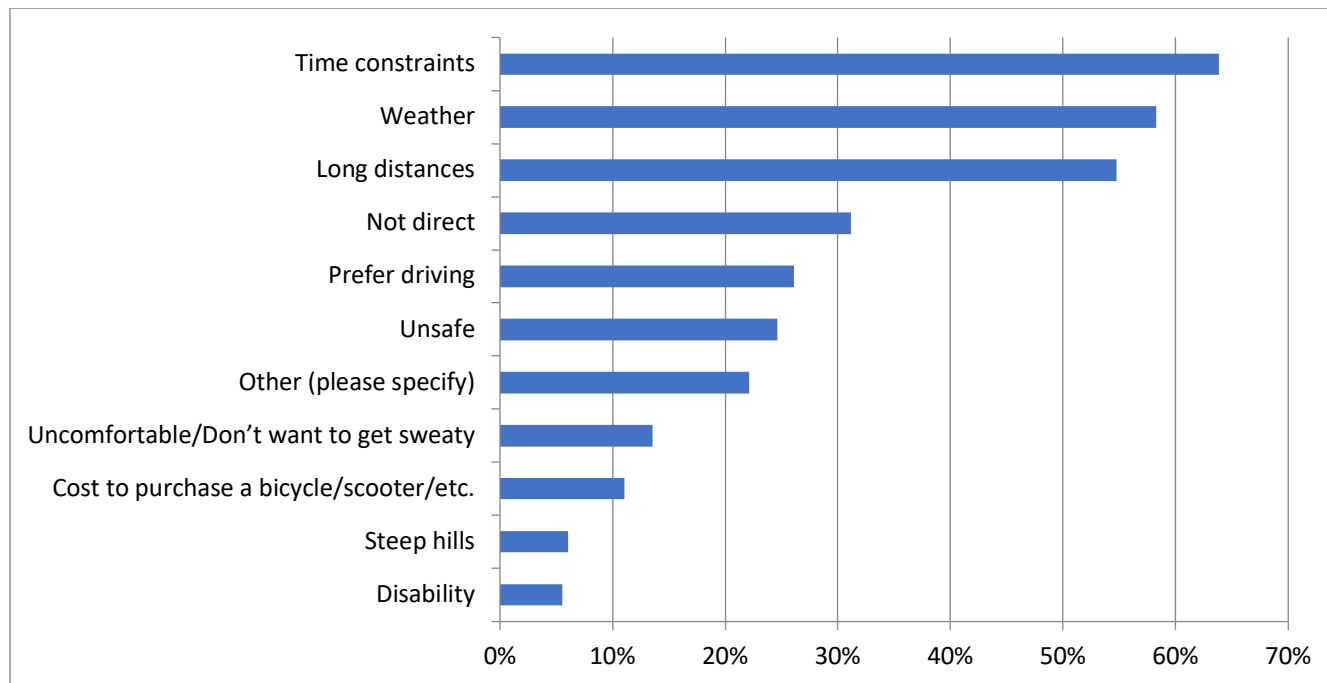


Other (please specify):

- To make an outing into a longer trip.
- To avoid traffic congestion and delays.
- For short distances.
- More affordable way to travel.
- To train for a competition.
- Public transit is slow and not public friendly.
- As a child-friendly way to travel.
- The expense of gas.
- Easy to use for short errands.

Q: When you DO NOT travel by active transportation what are the main reasons?

- Main reasons for not travelling by active transportation modes: 64% of respondents identified time constraints as being the reason for choosing not to travel by active transportation. 58% indicated the weather as being the main constraint and 54% of respondents indicated long travel distances.



Other please specify:

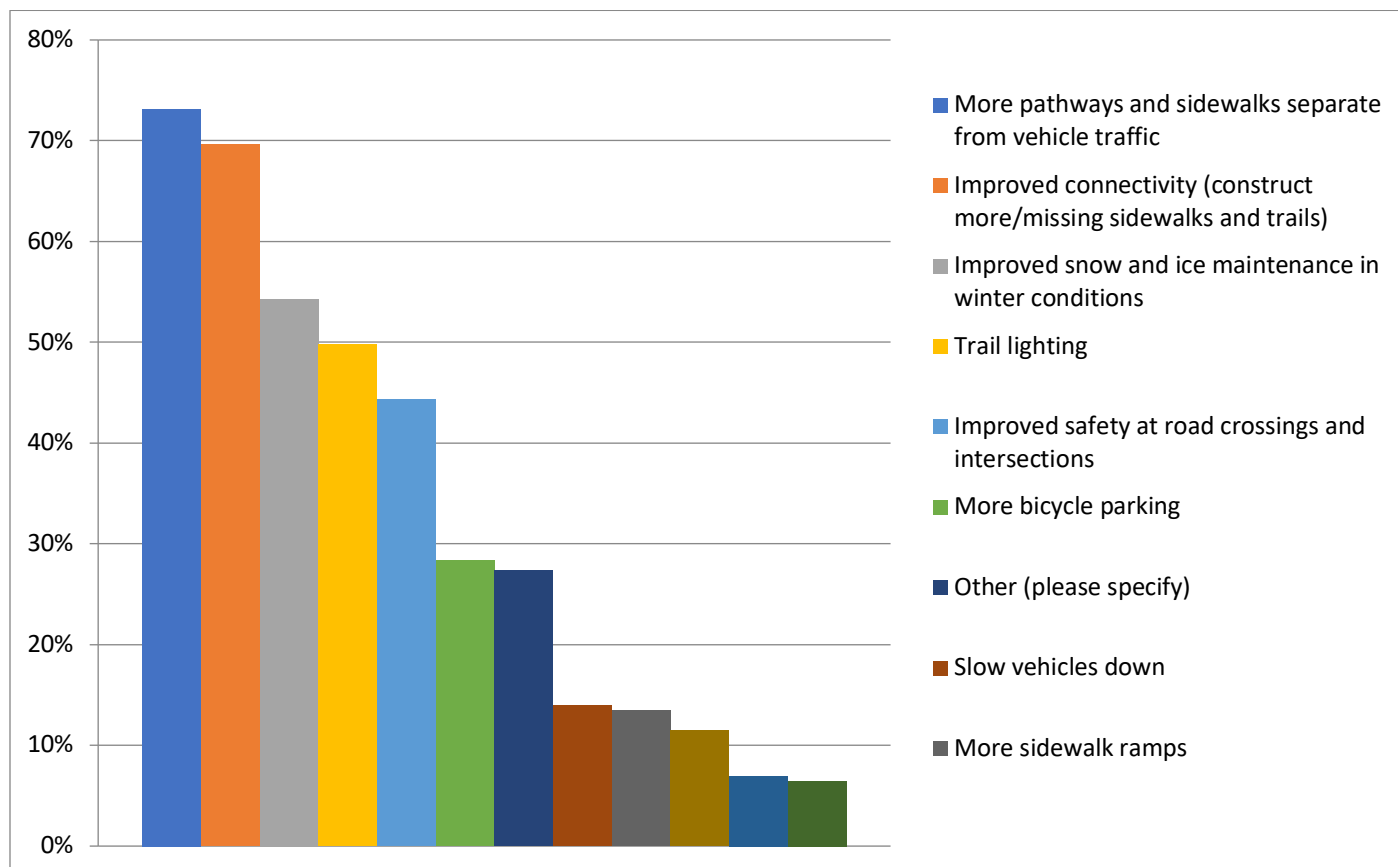
- Airdrie does not have end of trip facilities or bike lockers.
- Not enough safe bike paths.
- Timing, much faster to drive than take public transit or other modes of transport.
- Busy pathways
- Challenging transit schedule.
- Transporting multiple family members.
- Transit is too far and not safe to walk to.
- Passenger and cargo requirements.

Q: Safety travelling by active transportation modes:

- Most respondents indicated feeling very safe walking and driving, and somewhat safe bicycling in the city.

Q: What would make trips by walking or bicycling trips more comfortable for you?

- 73% of respondents indicated that more pathways and sidewalks separated from vehicle traffic would make trips by walking or biking more comfortable. 79% of respondents indicated that improved connectivity would improve their comfort and 54% indicated that improved snow and ice maintenance in winter conditions would help.

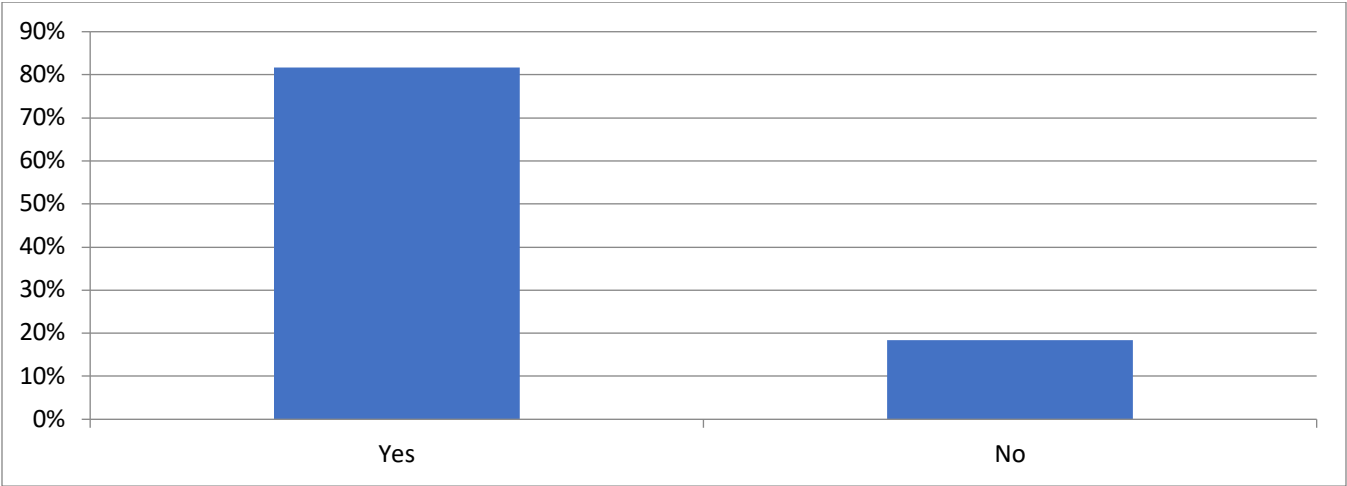


Other (please specify):

- End of trip facilities and bike lockers.
- More neighborhoods with retail density to encourage pedestrian friendly shopping.
- Keep the electric bikes, scooters off the path to improve safety.
- Improve safety at road crossings.
- Businesses closer to my neighbourhoods.
- Dedicated bike lanes.
- More pedestrian bridges and less crosswalks.
- Separation from dogs on pathways to protect bicyclists and those who wheel from conflicts.
- Enforce pathway safety rules.
- More access to all areas of interest in Airdrie.
- Repair the bike paths and multi-use pathways.
- Slower speed limits for e-scooters.
- More benches to take a break.

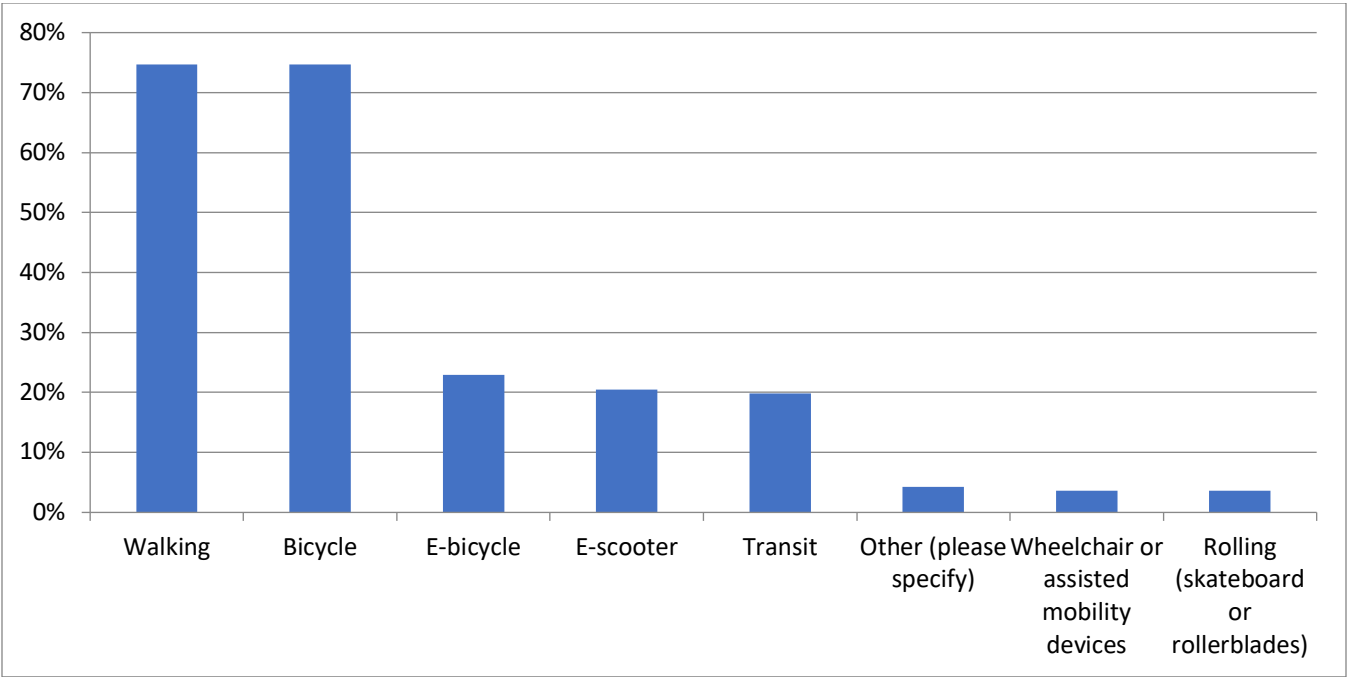
Q: If you currently make trips by motor vehicle, would you be interested in making some of these trips by active transportation (e.g. walking, bicycling, etc.) if the network better met your needs?

- 82% of respondents were interested in switching some of their typical motorized vehicle trips to an active transportation mode instead.



Q: If you were to make trips by active transportation, how would you choose to travel?

- 75% of respondents indicated that they would take more trips by either walking or by bicycle, and 23% by e-bicycle.



Other (please specify):

- Running
- Transit
- E-Scooter
- Golf cart, Segway or vespa scooter
- One-wheel

Q: Ideas and challenges related to active transportation in Airdrie:

- The need for dedicated bike lanes city-wide.
- A dedicated pathway to and from Calgary.
- E-scooter management is needed to improve safety and avoid conflicts with other active transportation modes on the pathway system.
- Address gaps in the pathway system.
- Transit system improvements are needed.
- Improved intersection safety throughout the city.
- Pathway lighting and wayfinding signage is needed to improve safety.
- Design neighbourhoods to be closer to businesses.
- Pathways should be designed to connect to key shopping areas.
- City-wide pathway maintenance improvements are needed.

What's Next & Timelines

Feedback received will be used to develop network options and recommendations for the ATP. The ATP will be shared with Council in Spring 2024 for approval.

Contact Information

For more information regarding the project, contact:
Billie-Jo Arnott, Team Leader Transit and Active Transportation
City of Airdrie
Email: billie-jo.arnott@airdrie.ca
Phone: 403-948-8800