



What We Heard Report

Strathcona County Integrated Transportation Master Plan

MAY 2022



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The second round of public and stakeholder consultation was completed as part of Strathcona County’s Integrated Transportation Master Plan (ITMP) update process. There were two streams of engagement: a survey for the public and a series of focus groups for business, industry, youth, and active transportation users. Written submissions were also received. Survey participants were provided an opportunity to answer a series of questions to confirm community support for the five priorities identified as the ‘pillars’ of the ITMP — Safety, Connectivity, Accessibility, Efficiency, and Economy either through the Strathcona County’s Open Opinion Panel (SCOOP) or an online survey. Overall, 1,054 responses were received with 714 received through SCOOP and 340 from the online survey. Engagement with focus groups were completed simultaneously with the survey, which provided focus group participants opportunity to offer insight on the proposed strategies of the five priorities. Focus group participants supported the overall direction of the priority statements and urged the County to use action-based language when presenting the statements.

The results of the survey and the focus group’s engagement indicate that all five priorities were well-supported by the community. Overall, focus group and survey results provided valuable insight into priorities the community strongly supports and priorities that require further consideration. The results also confirm the County’s proposed direction for transportation planning and investment over the next 25 years.

THANK YOU FOR SHARING YOUR THOUGHTS AND IDEAS WITH US.

The Integrated Transportation Master Plan is critical to the future of transportation in Strathcona County. We appreciate you taking the time to tell us what you think.

The COVID-19 pandemic has touched nearly every aspect of daily life, including how we were able to connect with you during two phases of public engagement. Thank you for engaging with us virtually as we adjusted our approach. Although in-person public events are paused, the project team remains committed to sharing project information and offering meaningful public engagement as efficiently and safely as possible.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Strathcona County is updating its Integrated Transportation Master Plan (ITMP). The goal of this initiative is to guide transportation investment decisions now and into the future. As the County continues to grow and our changing needs and priorities compete for funding to support numerous initiatives, County Administration will continue to take an integrated approach to transportation planning.

The County's current ITMP was completed in 2012. Since that time, the County's population has grown by almost 15%, with the majority of growth in the Sherwood Park area. The County has implemented some of the 2012 recommendations, such as widening Sherwood Drive (Lakeland Drive to Highway 16), Lakeland Drive (Clover Bar to Highway 21) and Wye Road (Hawthorne Road to Brentwood Boulevard). Improvements have also been made to regional travel to, from, and through Strathcona County. These improvements include completion of the northeast section of Anthony Henday Drive, completion of the remaining phases of widening Wye Road, and adoption of the Bremner and Local Employment Area and Area Concept Plan.

The County's priorities have changed since 2012. Specifically, the County needs to support future growth and development as well as changing mobility needs. The ITMP update process gives the County an opportunity to review which recommendations have (or have not) been implemented and to decide which strategies are still relevant based on current and on trend land use plans, community needs, and corporate and regional objectives.

In 2022, the County's priorities include an approach that aligns with our community's changing physical, cultural, and social needs and supports community wellness through investments in land use and transportation. The Integrated Transportation Master Plan is an important component of these future plans.

ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

HOW WE ENGAGED

The engagement process creates opportunities for the public and stakeholders to provide input into developing the ITMP. This first phase began by exploring the values participants thought should be included in the ITMP. We also invited participants to identify existing transportation issues, forecast future transportation needs, and examine where the County should invest in transportation.

Participant feedback was used to develop a series of Statements and Principles to guide transportation planning decisions and investment in the County. These Statements and Principles were presented to stakeholders and the public during the second round of consultation. Future Conditions Transportation Modelling will create future scenarios for the public and stakeholders to review and provide input.

ITMP PHASES



PHASE 1

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

This phase focuses on developing the foundational understanding of current issues, needs and opportunities in Strathcona County.

•Key activities include **measuring, observing and listening.**

Spring & Summer 2021

- Online discussion boards
- SCOOP & Alchemer Survey
- Focus Group Engagement
- Existing Conditions Transportation Modelling



PHASE 2

WHERE DO WE WANT TO GO?

This phase focuses on establishing a common vision for how Strathcona County's resources and assets will evolve alongside growth and what we want to accomplish

•Key activities include **assessing, forecasting and exploring.**

Fall 2021 & Winter 2022

- Future Conditions Modelling
- Testing Solutions for identified concerns
- Evaluating future scenarios
- Focus Group Engagement to confirm priorities
- Second survey to confirm priorities from previous engagement



PHASE 3

HOW DO WE GET THERE?

This final phase focuses on creating a prioritized and staged plan that aligns with related programs to help the County guide growth-related initiatives, efforts and investments.

•Key activities include **planning, testing and prioritizing.**

Spring 2022

- Confirm priorities from previous engagement with PCM
- Implementation Plan
- Provide report to Council for acceptance
- Produce Final Report and Circulate to the Community.



HOW WE COMMUNICATED

The project team used various forms of communication to promote opportunities for engagement, convey clear and concise information in a timely way, respond to inquiries, and provide the means to report on citizen feedback, project progress and updates.

Communications tactics included:

- Targeted social media across County channels such as LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram Posts and Instagram Stories.
- News releases and media stories in the Sherwood Park News.
- Youth-focussed social media posts on secondary partner channels.

How We Communicated & Engaged



Media

1 ad and info release: February 2022



Social Media

Main: 1 Facebook post, 1 EDT Facebook post, 3 Twitter posts (Thread), 2 Instagram (1 Post/1 Story), 1 LinkedIn

Youth: Facebook, 2 Instagram (Posts/Stories)



Website

Process updates and engagement reports were provided at each phase of the project on the County website at strathconacounty.ca/ITMP



Survey

Through Survey Central and SCOOP, a community survey was opened on February 1st to February 14th.

1054 participants shared insights through the survey.



Focus Groups

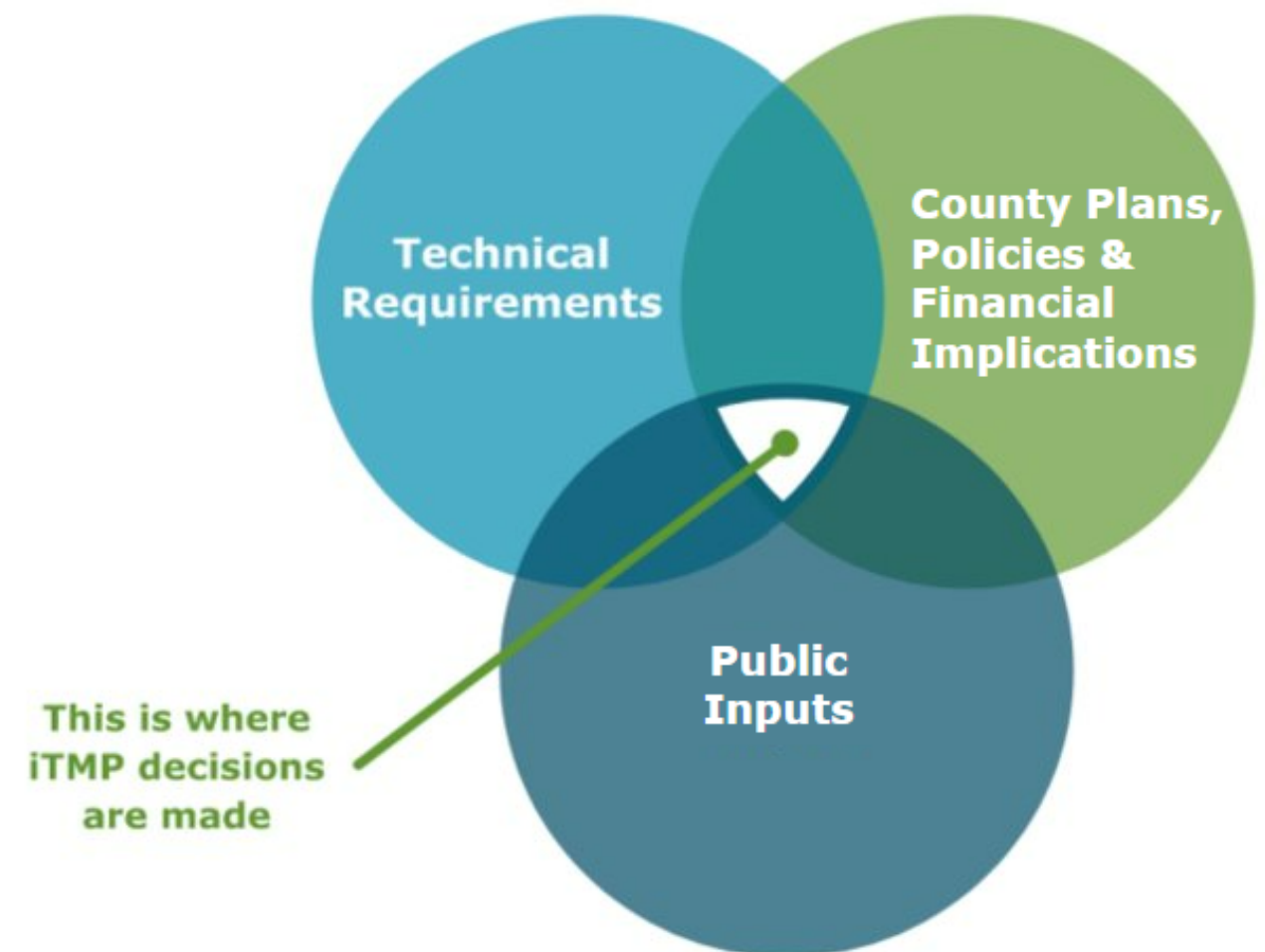
9 Focus group discussions took place: 6 with business, industry, and community, and 3 specifically with youth engagement.



The County's public engagement continuum defines the public's level of influence in engagement processes. Engagement and Communications happened at the "Listen and Learn" level.

Public input, technical analysis and Strathcona County strategic plans, frameworks, and policies will all be considered in defining the Integrated Transportation Master Plan update.

HOW DECISIONS ARE MADE



HOW WE ENGAGED

The engagement process involved:

- Stakeholders from business, industry, development, youth, and alternative transportation; and
- Members of the public

These audiences responded through a survey delivered through the SCOOP (Strathcona County Online Opinion Platform), online survey, focus groups, and written submissions.

WHAT WE HEARD

STAKEHOLDER FOCUS GROUPS

Focus groups were made up of businesses, industry, developers, active transportation, and youth representatives.

WHAT WE PRESENTED:

During the first round of engagement, participants identified values that reflected major themes that were consistent across all responses, whether from online contributions like SCOOP message boards, SCOOP survey, or virtual meetings with focus groups. The values and subsequent themes that emerged from the first round of engagement were:

- Safety
- Accessibility
- Connectivity
- Efficiency and Convenience

The project team took these themes and data and generated the following statements and priorities. In the second round of consultation, the team then asked round two focus group members for their input and concepts, asking “Did we get it right? What needs to change? Is this what you meant? How can we more accurately describe what is important to you?”

STATEMENTS

ACTION STATEMENT

Strathcona County’s vision is to become Canada’s most livable community. An effective transportation network is an integral component that promotes a safe, healthy community and strong economy. Five priorities have been identified to support Strathcona County’s strategic goals and to guide investment in a transportation network: Safety, Connectivity, Accessibility, Mobility and Economy.

THE COMMON THREAD

Using Strathcona County’s planning documents as its foundation, the Strathcona County Integrated Transportation Master Plan (ITMP) will retain common County themes and ensure all relevant plans are integrated. Health and wellness is a common thread that will guide the priorities of the ITMP. (Health and wellness have broad implications; although it refers to health and wellness of the individual, it also refers to the health and wellness of the entire community, the environment and the economic structures in Strathcona County.)

REACTION

Focus group participants supported the Action Statement and Common Thread. They said that the Action Statement represented an accurate portrayal of the views they expressed in the first round of engagement. Participants also welcomed the expansive view of health and wellness and thought it gave broader application to sustainability concepts.

This is very relevant and future focused. This works.

PRINCIPLES

Focus group participants were presented with the following principles. These principles will guide decision making and investment in Strathcona County's integrated transportation approach.

The principles were overwhelmingly endorsed by participants.

Economy: Transportation investment will support industry and economic growth.

Safety: A safe transportation network for all users is fundamental to the well-being of a community.

Accessibility: The County's transportation network will be accessible by all.

Connectivity: A healthy community requires connections between the places you work, play, and live.

Efficiency: An efficient transportation system contributes to the well-being of our economy, ecosystem, and residents.

Each principle had a series of statements that participants explored. There was strong support for the project as presented. Participants offered insight on targeted areas that the ITMP should address including a few suggestions and edits to improve the strength of the document. The project team noted these edits and where possible will incorporate them into the final version of the principles and statements.

ECONOMY: TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENT WILL SUPPORT INDUSTRY AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

- Prioritize Goods and Movement Corridors for investment and development needs. The Heartland Industrial area is recognized as a key economic driver for the County, reliant on the safe and efficient movement of goods and services.
- Continue to support the provincial highway network through efficient connections between the highway network and industry access. Support provincial policies and promote the investment of highways within the County.
- Continue to maintain a network of designated truck routes, designed to accommodate large and oversized vehicles.
- Continue to work with the Edmonton Metropolitan Region to support the integration of transportation modes and facilities to ensure economic activities are connected to markets in Canada and abroad.
- Continue to collaborate with industry partners to explore rail investment to improve inter-modal goods movement.

Rail crossings and heavy truck movement were concerns that the ITMP should address according to the focus group participants. Participants reported that heavy trucks moving between secondary roads and main arterial roads, (particularly making left turns from range roads onto main highways) increased the risk to safety.

Rail crossings create significant concerns for focus group participants from the Industrial Heartland, developers and business as the current configuration causes congestion, inefficiency, and most importantly, risks to safety. Participants emphasized safety at rail crossings must be further examined in the ITMP, especially as rail traffic is only going to grow in the region.

"On the last bullet, you want to make explicit mention of rail crossings, especially with safety. Rail crossings don't affect rail movements, they have the right of way, but as we double the total movement, rail crossings will be a source of frustration and safety concern for residents. I'm wondering if it's worth mentioning explicitly from rail investments?"

There were concerns that heavy vehicle corridors were becoming congested, especially around work sites off primary highways. This congestion will only increase with industry expansion, leading people to support designating truck routes and infrastructure in the plan.

"Heavy truck movement — there are some plans around Highway 15, there's a lot more sulfur plants and grain terminals and things happening out there. I've driven down Highway 15 now and see big trucks lined up along the highway looking to load up at the plants. We are looking at truck movements too and looking down the road to some carbon commodities. The truck route integration with the township roads and the range roads, it's getting congested in some areas"

"Access off highway networks into secondary roads is a critical area and there are days when there's lots of traffic out there. Our business doesn't have heavy traffic right now compared to some other sites, but some partnerships could lead to significant truck volume and looking at planning what that looks like"

Developing the ITMP during a global pandemic influenced peoples' thinking and experiences. Participants suggested that COVID shone a light on supply chain challenges that must be addressed.

"For me, with COVID, the movement of goods and supply chain issues have been prevalent from retail to big industry. I don't know if it's caused the ITMP to be looked at differently with traffic volume, roads, locations or people going back to work"

Some focus groups thought commuters and employees should be considered as part of the goods and services corridor.

"Is there somewhere else we talk about commuters? In the economy, the commuters are a good part of the goods and services movement. If you don't have employees that can get to your business, that affects the economy. Should commuter traffic be in here in some way? It's also a factor in economic growth. There's 15 years' worth of evidence from the business community that employees are very important to economic growth of the community"

There was support for carpooling, transit, and multimodal transportation at industry sites, but also recognition of challenges in implementation. Youth expressed that the ability to work at well-paying jobs in the industrial heartland were out of reach because of the lack of transportation. Owning, insuring, and maintaining a vehicle was not possible for many young adults, thereby limiting their career choices.

"With the younger generation, transportation plans affect our ability to hire a diverse group of people as well. Diverse transportation methods would allow us to hire different people, since different demographics have different abilities to own and operate a car"

"We are focusing on diversity, and not everyone can afford a car. So, ways to get to site that aren't a car, we'd be excited to see that"

Participants raised cautions on impacts to the environment while improving transportation corridors and wondered how future corridors would interact with natural water movements.

"Environmental implications of developments, natural water movements and wetlands and things with road development, just get that in there. Something about environmentally sensitive areas, we are being very considerate with our developments. As we develop roads, sometimes we change water flows in the area."

The Strathcona County Cycling Action Group emphasized that cycling could be an economic driver in the community.

This section is missing a statement on the fact that cycling tourism continues to grow in the County largely due to our network of high-quality rural roads. There needs to be an objective here to acknowledge and take advantage of this opportunity. There are also opportunities to host revenue generating cycling events.

SAFETY: A SAFE TRANSPORTATION NETWORK FOR ALL USERS IS FUNDAMENTAL TO THE WELL-BEING OF A COMMUNITY.

- The County shall provide a safe and inclusive transportation experience for all users of the transportation system, regardless of their transportation choice.
- Protect right-of-way for transportation facilities to maintain and improve network safety.
- Work with all industry partners to identify opportunities to improve infrastructure, such as signage, illumination, and grade-separated crossings at strategic locations to enhance the safe interaction of rail activity with other modes of transportation.
- Through planned rehabilitation projects, the County shall identify and incorporate safety improvements, specifically as it relates to more vulnerable users such as pedestrians and cyclists.
- Continue to explore lowering speed limits in urban residential areas to align with neighbouring municipalities and best practice.

Participants felt that improvements in safety, particularly around rail crossings, were most important to them.

"This whole {section} is relevant to us. Safety and economy are relevant to us. The separated crossings here are essential. The separation is expensive, who will pay for it? Railways don't want to. It can be complicated. More low hanging fruit would be building overpasses at certain crossings and close other crossings. So we need ideas other than just route separation"

"Improve the overall interactions, or total number of crossings, and in terms of signage I agree. In industrial areas, some motor vehicles don't stop at tracks, that's not good. Less crossings increase safety, but we also want to make sure vehicles can get where they need to go efficiently"

Statements addressing heavy truck traffic were endorsed.

"It ties back to safety. There's a lot of heavy movements turning left onto roads. Sometimes I abandon making turns on to certain roads because there's 12 trucks turning. I'm also thinking about residential traffic and farmers, and just think we need ways to go around congestion for everyone"

Bullet three generated much support and discussion ("Work with all industry partners to identify opportunities to improve infrastructure, such as signage, illumination, and grade-separated crossings at strategic locations to enhance the safe interaction of rail activity with other modes of transportation") Participants suggested that this point should also include heavy truck traffic in addition to rail crossings.

"This resonates with me, with industrial zones and traffic assessments and new facilities and the number of cars that hit the roads and intersections. Companies are very concerned about worker safety."

Lowering the speed limit in residential areas was generally supported although participants expressed that the County should explore multiple ways to increase road safety. In addition to lowering speed limits, participants suggested changing the driving environment, especially in residential areas.

"It's all really good. Safety is important, when we talk about lower speed limits in residential areas, we need to look at the entire network, and right of way. There's ways to increase safety without just lowering speed limits, like narrowing the roadway and having less paved surface, more boulevards, that comes to my mind."

"I've seen examples in other municipalities, at key locations like crosswalks, do curb bump outs, which force people to slow down, that's effective. And curb returns, at intersections, they project a barrier into the intersection forcing people to slow. There are many other things we could be doing to increase safety. We focus on safety of pedestrians and motorists, so things like sightlines, crosswalk locations, bumps, we really support that"

Focus group participants said road networks need to balance congestion thresholds with walkability and usability for other modes of transportation.

"The thing that's missing around safety is the approach to vehicle capacity as part of the network planning. It's challenging to build safe networks if our priority is maintaining vehicle capacity and not experiencing congestion. It results in adding turning lanes and turn bays which increases distances for pedestrians. Capacity is a challenge if we are trying to meet our congestion thresholds, so building for capacity and congestion usually comes at the expense of pedestrian safety. We need to balance that"

Some participants suggested the need for stronger emphasis on safety for cyclists in the ITMP.

"There is no statement regarding county roads and urban roads being shared safely with cyclists. This has to be acknowledged and highlighted in the ITMP. This is important given the growing conflicts that exist right now between drivers and cyclists, especially on county roads."

"We see safety as a key concern for cycling and other active transportations modes in the County. To this end, we would like to see goals and objectives included under this Priority: Education plans and strategies to increase awareness, understanding, and willingness of drivers (and cyclists) to share the road safely and to increase understanding in motorists about how cyclists travel on the roads to maintain their safety. A safety and education program needs to be developed, maintained, and updated regularly (pursuant to such a strategy being included in the ITMP) to address issues, flashpoints and updates in the County's multimodal infrastructure."

WILL BE ACCESSIBLE BY ALL.

- Continue to improve its transit system to provide universally designed facilities, vehicles, and services outlined in the Transit Master Plan to maximize accessibility regardless of age, income, and ability.
- Review street design standards to assess their impact on all users and adjust and adapt to future multi-modal needs.
- Explore transportation innovations and strategic partnerships to deliver effective and efficient alternative services (car-sharing, ridesharing, and car-pooling) to the County's businesses and residents.

There was universal support for this principle, particularly for those who have mobility limitations. Participants expressed concern that people with mobility challenges may have difficulty accessing transit or other aspects of the transportation network.

"People with accessibility issues can't use the transit system because of where the location of the bus stops are, they are too far away. And in winter they get snow built up between where the bus is and the stop and they can't access the buses. So, I just want to make sure we thought about that"

Participants also felt that the infrastructure needed to be future-focussed and consider those with mobility challenges so they could access future trails and sidewalks.

"We have to make it accessible for people today but also in the future. In the future there might be different modes for people to access our infrastructure. Paving is expensive but it opens the pathways up to a lot of different people who may not be able to enjoy these areas on a dirt or gravel pathway"

Participants expressed that there may be demographic shift on the perception of owning a vehicle. Affordability and environmental awareness were key factors in people not wanting to own vehicles. Accessibility needs to factor in alternative transportation modes for those who do not drive.

"I participate in transportation forums, and there is a lack of desire to own a car in the under 25 demographics, I think that will impact our transportation network in the future. And if they drive, they don't want to own the car. Alternatives like ride sharing, transit, and carpooling are solutions that would work for this demographic."

Youth and active transportation users emphasized the need for a strong focus on accessibility. Accessible transportation included different modes of transportation, transportation routes, and access to transportation options in rural and urban Strathcona County. While most participants drove as their main form of transportation, it was by default because other options, like transit, car sharing, and safe cycling infrastructure were not readily available. People are interested in using their bike as their main form of transportation and noted an opportunity for Strathcona County to develop cycling infrastructure throughout the county. They also emphasized safety training and education programs for bike riders and vehicle users, specifically when sharing roadways.

People also thought that 'multi-modal' was transportation jargon that weighed down the principles and statements.

"The County should continue to invest in active transportation (active vs Multi-modal? The ITMP will need to be consistent on this) infrastructure that is accessible to all transportation network users and integrated with other transportation modes and with the multi-modal transportation and infrastructure/networks of other municipalities in the Capital Region"

EFFICIENCY: AN EFFICIENT TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM CONTRIBUTES TO THE WELL-BEING OF OUR ECONOMY, ECOSYSTEM AND RESIDENTS.

- Invest in opportunities that incentivize users who reduce congestion on the transportation system.
- Explore opportunities for the use of micro-mobility innovations.
- Work with airshed partners to monitor emissions to assess the impact of transportation decisions on air quality in our community.
- Explore the use of On Demand Transit in accordance with the Transit Master Plan to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of the transit system.
- Monitor and implement advances in emerging technologies that may improve traffic flow efficiency.

Participants thought the first two bullets (reducing congestion and reducing road expansion) were opposed to each other and needed more clarification.

"These seem in opposition to each other. Reducing congestion, but reduce need for road expansion? They seem opposite, to reduce congestion you create new lanes, but to reduce expansion you create congestion. So, they seem to stop each other from advancing."

There was some confusion as to what micro mobility meant. The project team agreed to use plain language and provide a glossary of terms in the final plan.

"The micro mobility innovations, is that just movements in neighborhoods?"

"I think you need more little symbols. When I saw micro mobility, I didn't understand"

Participants felt as though multimodal transportation was the way of the future and supported this section of the ITMP. There was also a need for collaboration between Strathcona County and the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board to plan for increased efficiency and connectivity.

"But as to why are we are building cycling paths and other shared use paths; I think it's the future. Points 5 and 6, that's the future too."

"There needs to be an objective or specific direction here to work with members of the "Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board" and the provincial government to do a better job of linking our respective communities and multimodal transportation routes and infrastructure."

There was strong support for on-demand transit.

"It's almost akin to an uber. Post Covid, if we go back to rigid schedules, it will be so inefficient. We need ridership, and we need transit in these areas, and doing it in the most cost-effective manner"

"I agree with on demand transit. A major key for new communities is transit service. Looking for that, an individual has a quick trip from where they need to go from where they are coming from. Driving empty buses doesn't make sense. An on-demand system in place would be wonderful"

Transit stations or hubs should be located on the outskirts of Sherwood Park so commuters don't have to drive through the city to get to a park and ride.

Looking through the previous "What We Heard" report, the ITMP needs to help facilitate creating a transit hub on the east side. This is more about efficiency and reducing congestion more than about access. I live on RR213 and when I take a park n ride, we drive all the way through Sherwood Park. If we have a stop on the eastern side, we'd have a bus making that drive instead of having 200 cars driving through Strathcona County to get to the bus station."

Though there was support for alternative fuel sources for vehicles, such as electric vehicles, there were concerns that this would present significant infrastructure challenges. Charging stations for electric vehicles will have to be located near existing points of interest or infrastructure and have the capacity to charge many vehicles at once since charging times are longer than refilling gasoline tanks.

"Also, with emissions, one aspect is electric vehicles. The electrical distribution system comes into play in a huge way. I see that as a big challenge. Will the electrical systems in neighborhoods be able to handle all the charging and will we have solutions for that?"

"With electric vehicles, the transportation plan, as you look more at multi modal, with carpooling and busing, people will expect a place to charge vehicles. The commercial industry is 10 years behind, but there will have to be massive areas such as truck stops where people can charge their vehicles. And it's not as fast as filling up on gas. So just think about places where you can place this infrastructure near other key points of interest and infrastructure."

CONNECTIVITY: A HEALTHY COMMUNITY REQUIRES CONNECTIONS BETWEEN THE PLACES YOU WORK, PLAY, AND LIVE.

- Collaborate with key stakeholders within the Edmonton Metropolitan Region (Edmonton, Fort Saskatchewan) and Alberta Transportation, to support regional transportation projects that improve network connectivity.
- Work with regional partners to coordinate multi-modal transportation options to provide access to places of employment, education and services in urban and rural areas
- All new Area Structure Plans should continue to consider opportunities for future transit service and include connections to the County's trail network and cycling routes as identified in our Municipal Development Plan.
- Identify opportunities to enhance transportation connections to, from, and within the Rural Service Area in order to access employment areas, services, and destinations.

There was strong support for mixed use, walkable communities where residents were in walking distance of amenities and businesses. It was felt new developments should be designed with connectivity to trail systems and other multimodal transportation opportunities.

"There needs to be more diverse development, where businesses are incorporated into residential areas, so you don't need to drive to get a haircut or yoga, so you don't have to drive everywhere. I think that's a great way to develop the ITMP, to emphasize more walkable communities in the new areas"

"People need to know the feel and connectivity that exists and how our trails systems connect and how highly valued they are, so maintain that conversation. With transit, it's about the connectivity, and establishing that in new areas. Keep connectivity top of mind, with that type of feel even though it might mean higher density."

Youth emphasized the need for better connectivity between Strathcona County and surrounding municipalities such as the City of Edmonton and the City of Fort Saskatchewan. Rural youth wanted better connections between Ardrossan and rural Strathcona County to Sherwood Park. Participants emphasized that while there are options to use Strathcona County bus services into the City of Edmonton, most users would rather use a vehicle since it is more reliable and efficient. Youth who live in rural Strathcona County or need to get from Sherwood Park to rural parts of Strathcona County, also emphasized the need for safer biking options.

As Strathcona County continues to grow and develop, the connectivity between municipalities is an asset. Youth considered LRT a high priority because it acts as a second rapid transit option to the City of Edmonton.

In the next 30 years, Strathcona County should consider LRT regional transportation line as a priority for the ITMP

Participants emphasized that transportation planning cannot be limited to planning for vehicles only.

Transportation planning must assume that active transportation modes will happen everywhere therefore it needs to be incorporated in all roads/streets/intersection planning. Ensure multi-modal / active transportation issues, needs, and concerns are dealt with at a regional planning level and not just within the County.

Participants view safety and connectivity as key concerns for cycling and other active transportation modes in the County. The cycling community offered many insights into goals and objectives, connectivity, and safety that should be included. Their written submission can be found in Appendix VB.

There needs to be an anchor here aimed at identifying, developing, and maintaining a network of safe road cycling routes that are capable of supporting this growing demand and opportunity in the county.

SURVEY RESULTS

For approximately two weeks beginning on February 1, 2022, Strathcona County residents were invited to share their thoughts on a survey relating to Strathcona County's current and future transportation network. The survey was administered in two ways. First, an invitation was sent to members of SCOOP. An open online survey was also available.

The survey included a series of questions to confirm community support for the five priorities identified as the 'pillars' of the ITMP – *Safety, Connectivity, Accessibility, Efficiency, and Economy*. The survey results for each question are further discussed below.

SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

In total, 1054 participants engaged on the posted survey. The participants were asked to state where they lived as part of the demographic testing. The majority of respondents resided in Sherwood Park; however, there was still a significant number of responses from rural areas. Some people indicated they either commuted to Strathcona County to work or they preferred not to say. This is captured in the "other" line item in the table below. Both survey platforms reached a similar demographic of people, as it relates to where people live. A full breakdown of where respondents reside is presented below.

SCOOP Survey			Online Survey		
Demographic	# of Responses	% of Total	Demographic	# of Responses	% of Total
Sherwood Park	540	74%	Sherwood Park	273	80%
Rural Strathcona County	164	23%	Rural Strathcona County	52	15%
Other	20	3%	Other	15	5%
Total	714	100%	Total	340	100%

The participants were also asked to state their age, by way of 10-year age categories. The age distribution was relatively similar between the two platforms, with the online survey attracting slightly younger respondents. The age categories that had the most respondents were the 55-64 age range and the 65-74 age range, respectively. The full age breakdown is presented below. During the previous round of engagement, it was noted there was also a small number of responses from the younger population, so additional efforts were made to engage this demographic during the focus groups, as summarized in the previous sections.

SCOOP Survey			Online Survey		
Age Group	# of Responses	% of Total	Age Group	# of Responses	% of Total
15-24	8	1%	15-24	10	3%
25-34	51	7%	25-34	41	12%
35-44	109	15%	35-44	48	14%
45-54	121	17%	45-54	61	18%
55-64	170	24%	55-64	73	22%
65-74	174	24%	65-74	41	12%
75-84	46	6%	75-84	14	4%
85+	4	0.6%	85+	1	0.3%
No response/ Prefer not to say	31	4%	No response/ Prefer not to say	51	15%
Total	714	100%	Total	340	100%

QUESTION 3, 4 AND 5 SUMMARY

Question 3 focused on the priorities that had been selected through the previous phase of engagement. The question asked was: *Five priorities have been identified as the pillars of the Integrated Transportation Master Plan. These priorities will guide transportation planning and investment. Please rate your level of support for each priority.* The five priorities were safety, connectivity, accessibility, efficiency, and economy.

Overall, all the priorities were supported, with safety, connectivity, and efficiency being most supported, all receiving over 90% of responses selecting either *Strongly Support* or *Support*. The accessibility priority received approximately 85% of responses that

selected *Strongly Support* or *Support* and finally economy received approximately 77% of responses in favour. It is noted that these results were consistent between the two platforms, with the online survey generally receiving slightly increased support for all five priorities. All age categories and location categories followed similar trends and no individual groups showed a significant lack of support for any of the priorities.

Question 4 allowed for open-ended responses when respondents disagreed with any of the priorities, providing an opportunity to explain their ratings. There were 29 responses to Question 4 on SCOOP and 15 from the online survey. Among these responses were various location-specific safety concerns relating to public transit schedules, usage, and cost as well as some comments indicating that limited spending should occur at all on the transportation network.

Question 5 was also an open-ended question that allowed respondents to add any further information they thought might be missing or that needed to be considered as a pillar in Strathcona County's transportation planning and investment. There were 186 responses on SCOOP and 95 responses on the online survey. These questions validated the results and provided additional information for the report.

QUESTION 6 AND 7 DATA SUMMARY

Question 6 had a series of statements where respondents were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction with the current transportation system in the County. The options provided were *Very Satisfied*, *Satisfied*, *Neutral*, *Dissatisfied*, and *Very Dissatisfied*. In Appendix D, response summary graphs show the number of responses and percentage of satisfaction rating for each statement by survey platforms (SCOOP and online survey)

QUESTION 6 AND 7 THEMATIC SUMMARY

Based on the above results of question 6, it is evident that residents of Strathcona County are satisfied overall with the existing transportation network within Strathcona County. Residents supported the existing infrastructure that is in place for motor vehicle roadways both within the county and along the connections to surrounding communities and were also mostly in support of the cycling and walking connections within the county.

The question that resulted in the least satisfaction was on the topic of the walking and cycling connections between Strathcona County and Edmonton/surrounding communities. This is consistent with what we heard during the focus group discussions and previous

round of engagement, where the cycling community and active modes users often indicated that connections across Anthony Henday Drive are limited.

Question 7 allowed for open-ended comments where respondents were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with any of the statements. There were 202 responses to this question on SCOOP and 114 responses from the online survey. From these comments there were many location-specific requests for improvements to traffic light timings, increases in road capacity and the need for additional sidewalks and trails in older neighbourhoods and rural areas. Other comments indicated that residents were interested in improvements to cycling and walking connections between Edmonton and Strathcona County as well in rural areas, improved safety measures to limit conflict between cyclists, pedestrians, and motorists both within Sherwood Park and rural Strathcona County and improved sidewalk, trail and roadway maintenance. It should be noted that the majority of the comments were specific to walking and cycling infrastructure and safety improvements.

QUESTION 8 AND 9 DATA SUMMARY

Question 8 had a series of statements where respondents were asked to indicate how they felt about the importance of actions Strathcona County could take to improve its transportation network. The options provided were *Very Important*, *Important*, *Neutral*, *Unimportant*, and *Not at All Important*. In Appendix D, response summary graphs show the number of responses and percentage of satisfaction rating for each statement by survey platforms (SCOOP and online survey).

QUESTION 8 AND 9 THEMATIC SUMMARY

The majority of the respondents felt that all the statements provided in this section were important with all the statements receiving an average response above neutral. The question with the least support, by a significant margin, was the question focusing on alternative transportation services (car-sharing, ride-sharing, mobility service and car-pooling). This question resulted in almost an exact net-neutral response, indicating that residents as a whole did not have strong preference either way. The location of the residents and the age of residents did not present any significant skew on any of the questions following the same trends as the overall summary.

From the results of Question 8, it is clear there is strong support for collaboration between Strathcona County and nearby municipalities regarding all forms of transportation. There was significant support for the statements that outlined a focus on motor vehicles and active transportation connections throughout Strathcona County and between the neighbouring communities.

Question 9 allowed for open-ended comments where respondents felt the statement was either unimportant or not at all important. There were 90 responses to this question on SCOOP and 47 responses from the online survey. Most of the responses were from residents who did not feel alternative services were necessary. Many comments indicated that improved transit options was a better alternative than car-sharing or other similar services. Many responses indicated it is the responsibility of the individual or the private sector to explore alternative services rather than the responsibility of the County. Other comments indicated changes were not needed to the existing roadway network and that existing infrastructure should be maintained rather than investing in additional services.

QUESTION 10 AND 11 DATA SUMMARY

Question 10 asked residents to indicate their level of support for other considerations related to the transportation system. The options provided were *Strongly Support*, *Support*, *Neutral*, *Do Not Support* and *Strongly Do Not Support*. In Appendix D, response summary graphs show the number of responses and percentage of satisfaction rating for each statement by survey platforms (SCOOP and online survey).

QUESTION 10 AND 11 THEMATIC SUMMARY

The results summarized above suggest several of the statements showed a lack of conclusive support from residents. The first statement, centering around the topic of micro-mobility devices showed an average response of neutral. To further confirm the validity of the results, each age category was consistent with the overall average, all resulting in an average response near neutral. The next statement focused on improving active transportation options in rural areas, and received significant support, the most support of all the statements in this question. The third statement proposing to invest in opportunities that encourage road users to make more efficient use of road space (such as high occupancy vehicle lanes) also had an average response of neutral. Following that same theme, the fourth statement regarding alternatives to personal motor vehicles to manage congestion had a similar breakdown of responses, with an average between neutral and support. The results of these two statements further validate the results from the previous question that indicated that alternative services (car-sharing, ride-sharing, etc.) were not of high importance to residents.

From the results of these statements, it is evident there is no conclusive support for a shift away from single occupancy, individually owned motor vehicle transportation. However, it is noted there was also no conclusive evidence that indicated these statements were strongly refuted. No significant variance was noted from the age categories; however the fourth statement did receive a higher score from the younger populations, specifically in ages 34 and younger.

Finally, the statement regarding the lowering of speed limits received the least support of the entire survey. The results show the majority of respondents did not want to explore lowering speed limits, however there was still a significant number of responses that did support the statement. The average response was between neutral and do not support. This question had the highest discrepancy between age demographics with the age categories of 15-24 and 25-34 being in favour of exploring speed limits with an average response between neutral and support. It is noted for the entirety of this section no significant deviation from the trends noted was observed in the breakdown between the rural and urban population.

Question 11 allowed for open-ended comments where respondents did not support or strongly did not support any of the statements. There were 237 responses to this question on SCOOP and 106 responses from the online survey. Most of the responses were from the individuals who did not support the lowering of speed limits, further explaining their reasoning. Similarly, there were many responses from the individuals who did not support the use of alternatives to single-occupancy, individually owned motor vehicles often providing comments that the road network is working sufficiently at its current capacity and residents did not want alternate solutions to affect the network. Finally, there were also many responses that raised concerns on the safety of e-scooters and micro-mobility devices and the impact they would have on the transportation network.

QUESTION 12 SUMMARY

Question 12 was an open-ended question to conclude the survey, where residents were asked to provide any further feedback on actions the county could take to improve the safety, accessibility, connectivity, efficiency, and economy of the transportation network. There were 180 responses on SCOOP and 123 responses from the online survey. This section had a wide variety of responses.


WHAT'S NEXT

The technical team will begin traffic modelling to generate improvement scenarios for the ITMP update. In addition to the responses from SCOOP, the online survey, and focus group results, the technical team will review other Strathcona County planning documents, the recent Integrated Regional Transportation Master Plan (IRTMP) prepared by the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board (EMRB), and associated surveys to inform the plan.

The plan will be presented to Strathcona County Council in spring/summer of 2022.

APPENDIX A: NEWSPAPER ADS

April 2021



Your County. Your Voice.

Connecting The County
We're updating the plan that guides our transportation network.

Whether you drive, take transit, walk or cycle, your thoughts matter.

Strathcona County is inviting residents and businesses to share thoughts and insights as we look to plan and build a transportation network that best supports a safe, healthy community and strong economy.

The Integrated Transportation Master Plan (ITMP) guides decision-making and direction-setting related to our entire transportation network over the next 30 years. The choices we make when investing in our transportation system (roads, sidewalks, trails, transit) are critical in determining how our municipality looks and functions in the future.

We'd like to hear what is important to you about how our community moves. Strathcona County is committed to a high quality, safe and connected transportation network supporting our quality of life and place.

Visit www.strathcona.ca/ITMP to join the SCOOP community and add to the discussions.

Discussion panels open April 20th to May 4th

- Transportation and Strong Communities
- Transportation and Economic Development
- Transportation and Accessibility
- Transportation and the Environment
- Transportation and a Healthy and Active Community
- Transportation and Safety

www.strathcona.ca/ITMP

Strathcona County Transportation, Planning & Engineering
780-464-8279

STRATHCONA COUNTY

June 2021



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We'd like to hear what is important to you about how our community moves. Strathcona County is committed to a high quality, safe and connected transportation network supporting our quality of life and place.

Visit strathcona.ca/ITMP to take our community survey.

The survey opens on June 14, 2021.
It will remain open until June 30, 2021.

www.strathcona.ca/ITMP

Strathcona County Transportation, Planning & Engineering
780-464-8279

STRATHCONA COUNTY

APPENDIX B: SOCIAL / DIGITAL IMAGERY AND POST EXAMPLES

Twitter



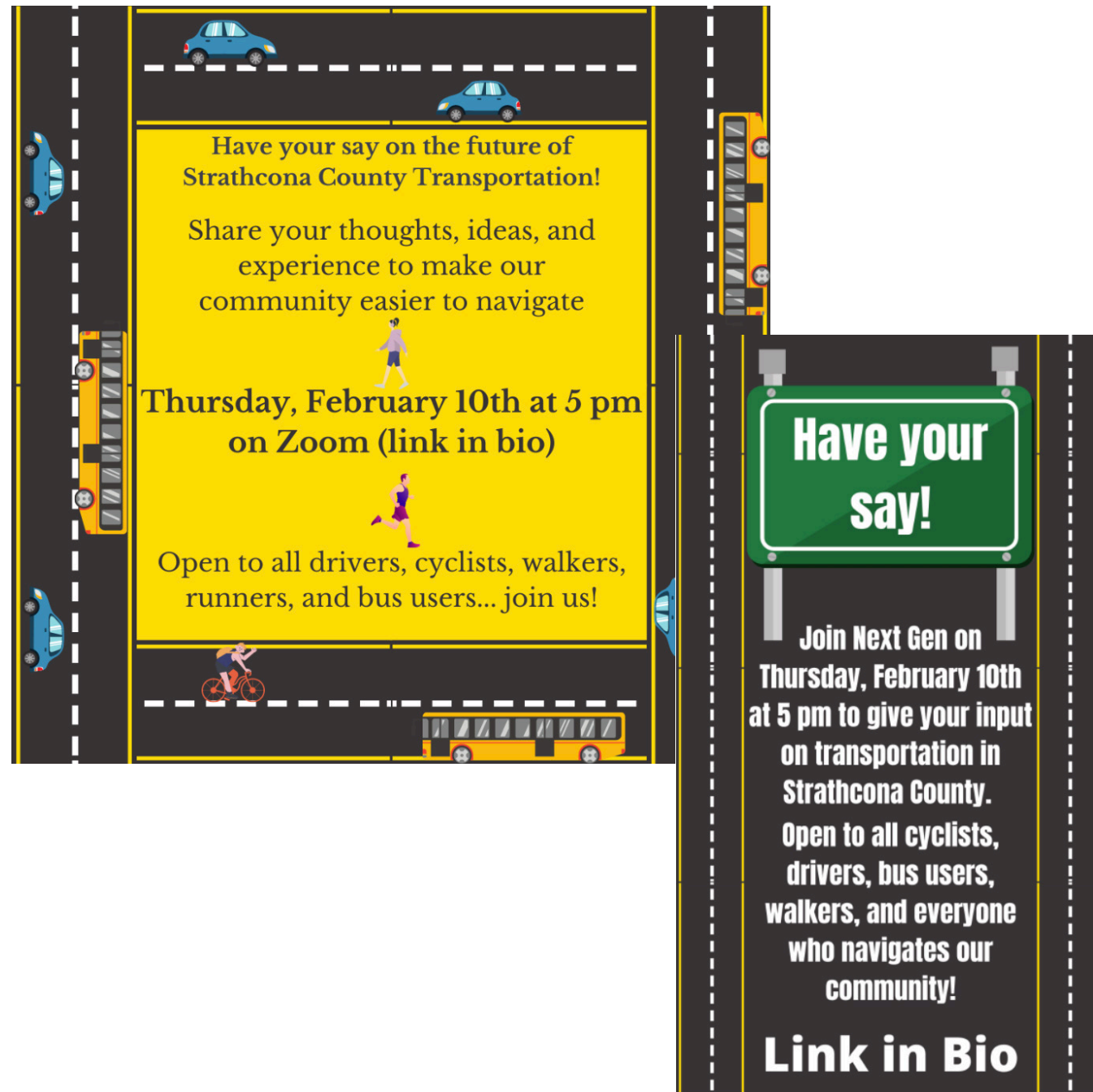
Facebook



Instagram Post



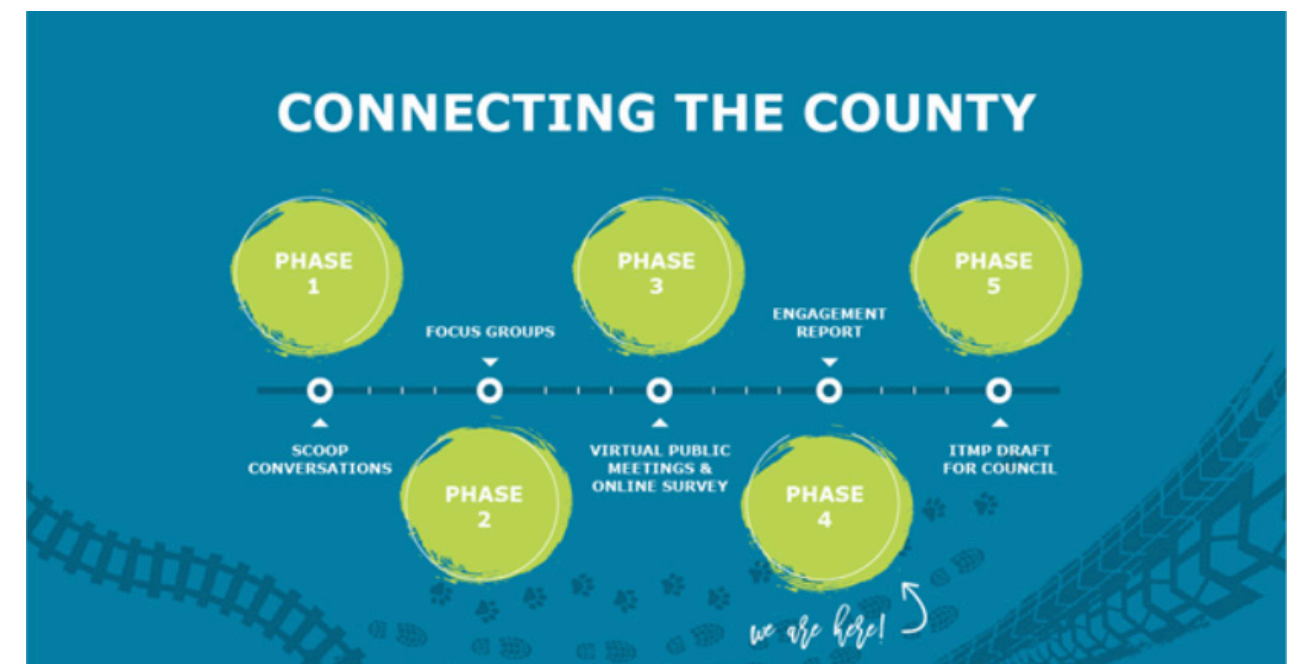
Youth Engagement Social Posts



Website Banner



Process Graphic (website)



APPENDIX C: FOCUS GROUP NOTES



Integrated Transportation Master Plan

AIHA Meeting Notes

Date / Time	June 18, 2021, 10:00am
Interviewee Name	

Theme Summary

- Rail access was the top priority, and participants expected over 50% growth in rail traffic over the next 5 to 10 years.
- Vinca Bridge was identified as a major piece of infrastructure that needed to be upgraded to better manage traffic.
- Participants indicated that they were open to collaborating with Alberta Transportation to improve the efficiency of the project.
- Participants mentioned that CIAOCs were too high.

By a wide margin, rail was the top priority for this participant group. Participants had conducted their own modeling study which showed an increase in rail traffic by 50% in the next 5 to 10 years, and with that they had identified several important rail issues such as crossings, grade separations, and other improvements with needed to be done to accommodate this growth. Related to this, they saw Vinca Bridge as a major piece of infrastructure that needed to be updated into the rail network, as well as it’s continued operation as a road bridge. Outside of the rail upgrades, participants also suggested that their relationships with Alberta Transportation could be leveraged to try to improve the working relationship between Strathcona County and Alberta Transportation to increase project efficiency. Participants also felt that CIAOCs were too high and suggested a separate meeting to discuss the issue.



Talking Points

• Introduction: Sentence completion - When I think of transportation in Strathcona County, I think about _____

- Rail is the most important form of transportation for industry (x4)
- Rail volume is expected to increase by 50% in the next 10 years
- Vinca Bridge, and upgrading it to a heavy haul bridge

“We want to help companies find sites for what they need and rail access is what they need, and most comments will be rail and how important it is.”

“In our study that we did, it shows rail volume increasing by 50% in 10 years. That will add more congestion to existing traffic.”

“I think about Vinca bridge, and the importance of turning that into a heavy haul bridge. It’s of interest to us.”

1. When you think about transportation in Strathcona County, are there values you think the County should consider? (Prompt if required...reducing carbon footprint, safety, etc.)

- The county needs to focus on expanding rail [participant shared a map with several rail crossings that needed upgrades]

“We mentioned rail because we are heavy industry and based on projects we have and potential new projects in 10 years, rail volume will increase by at least 50% in the next 10 years.”

2. What is the single most transportation related issue for those you serve? What is working well?

- Rail is the single most important issue. There will be significant growth in rail traffic in the next 5 to 10 years and the county must be prepared for that (x4)

“If you look at these orange points, (map) those are the major crossings where we need improvement based on our existing volume and then increasing volume by 50% in 10 years.”

3. How important is transportation to your members operations? How could the County improve transportation for your operations?

- Participants suggested that they could leverage their relationship with Alberta Transportation to collaborate on projects at the provincial level.
- Vinca bridge needs upgrading to be prepared for near future transportation needs, as well as the creation of other bridge crossing points in the county for the far future.



“Obviously Strathcona County has a good relationship with the province, but let’s work together to leverage our relationships and place additional emphasis for what you guys are asking. Please let us know how we can help those conversations and get those asks.”

“If we look at rail in the near term, it’s the Vinca bridge for the future. It’s supposed to be upgraded to overweight. That’s needed but it’s not in the capital plan. In the next couple of years that has to start. Looking at a 10-year time frame, we are going to see tremendous pinch points on rail. Looking 40 or 50 years, the northeast river crossing and an additional river crossing will be needed according to modeling.”

4. Thinking 5 to 10 years into the future, how do you envision transportation for you and those you serve?

- Vinca bridge will need to be upgraded to be part of a heavy haul corridor.
- Rail needs to be improved across Strathcona County.
- The current road network is sufficient, at least for maintaining investment from heavy industry in the region, however it still results in bottlenecks and congestion.

“Vinca isn’t a replacement for transportation in Edmonton, but it’s needed for heavy haul corridor. We have a gap in the provincial plan because it’s not in the capital plan, we will be in a situation here in a few years where the bridge has reached the end of its life.”

“We looked at projects that we felt that were looked at by bonafide companies with a legitimate chance of going ahead, we saw a number of specialty chemical plants, couple propane and propylene plants, and some other things, all this added up to 30 billion dollars. If we get final investment decisions, we can see the investments in the ground by 2030, and we modeled the impact on rail. If this level of investment comes, this will be the increase.”

5. Where and how should the County be investing in transportation?

- The rail system needs to be improved to accommodate 50% more rail cars in the next 5 to 10 years, including upgrading grade separations and crossings throughout the heartland area.
- Vinca bridge needs upgrades to ensure that it can handle the increased traffic in the future and be upgraded to include rail and heavy haul.
- The county could look at making its own rail right of way investments to help improve the local rail system.



“The crossing closures or grade separations you have in 5 years. We mentioned the 50% increases in volume, the whole AIHA region we have 250,000 rail cars per year. That’s essentially 20k rail cars per month. Most is on the east side of the North Saskatchewan River. That’s where we want to see investment. And looking at twinning Highway 15 you can do grade separation there at the same time, not just for the road but also the rail piece at the same time.”

“The second thing, Vinca bridge next, the next 30 years 50 years, can we turn that bridge to a road and rail bridge?”

“Last, can the county look at having some of the right of way, rail right of ways, CN and CP they are federal, but can the county put some money in to get some rail right ways in?”

6. One final piece of advice?

- Rail is the top priority (x4)
- CIAOCs are too high, and investors feel constrained by them (x2)
- Vinca bridge is the next priority (x2)
- Strathcona County should leverage their relationships with other stakeholders to but increased pressure on Alberta Transportation.
- Focus on the 5-to-10-year range, since projects typically take 4 years to build.
- The County should consider investing in municipal rail projects.

“We’ve been undertaking the designated industrial zone initiative and there’s been a lot of talk about the CIAOCs. At times, they refence it as extortion. Questioning why, what are the property taxes for, this is a levy on top of property taxes and questioning the whole thing.”

“Yea rail is higher priority. But at some point, you will have a serious problem with Vinca bridge so you can’t ignore it either”



Integrated Transportation Master Plan

Chamber of Commerce Meeting Notes

Date / Time	June 16, 2021, 11:30am
Participants	

Theme Summary

- **Ensuring effective transportation of customers and employees to businesses was a major concern for participants.**
- **Inclusivity and accessibility were also concerning, particularly for seniors and those with disabilities.**
- **The trail system was widely supported, with demand for more trails throughout the County to connect rural and urban areas and a shift to more multi modal transportation.**
- **There was strong demand for a transit hub on the east side of Sherwood Park.**
- **Creating partnerships and improving communication between the County and stakeholders was a priority for participants.**

The top two priorities for participants were ensuring the efficient movement of customers & employees to businesses, and improving accessibility and inclusiveness in the transportation network for those with who cannot drive, such as those with disabilities and seniors. Related to this, there was strong support for the trail system and multi modal transportation such as walking and bicycling, as well creating more compact communities. To help facilitate this, participants suggested creating a transit hub on the eastern side of Sherwood Park, as well as investment into future technology such as autonomous vehicles. Participants were also concerned that punitive measures would be used against cars, such as higher parking costs or other taxes, and felt that this would disproportionately affect those who rely on their vehicles, such as those who live in rural areas in Strathcona County.



Talking Points

- **Introduction: Sentence completion - When I think of transportation in Strathcona County, I think about _____**

- Moving people to businesses, both customers and employees (x3)
- The need to innovate, especially green technology (x2)
- Mass transportation/Public transportation
- Ease of access to communities within Strathcona County
- Building partnerships between Strathcona County and stakeholders

“What’s missing, my mind is open to listening to new innovations. And strengthen the relationship between Robin Hood and Strathcona County.”

“Just focus on moving people to where they live and operate. It’s about getting people into businesses.”

“I’ve been in the community since the 80s, and having dealt with many businesses, and seeing their problems, and getting employees, it was about transportation and getting to work. I’ve seen it for a long time. The other angle is the clean green aspect of transportation going forward.”

1. **When you think about transportation in Strathcona County, are there values you think the County should consider? (Prompt if required...reducing carbon footprint, safety, etc.)**

- Strong highway & rail corridors/connections to be able to move labor, customers, goods, and services efficiently (x3)
- Integrated and inclusive public transit, that can access areas current large buses cannot and is accessible for those with disabilities (x3)
- Future focused innovations such as autonomous vehicles, especially for people without licences such as senior citizens (x2)
- Sustainability & “green” solutions
- Economical solutions
- Connecting rural communities with urban centers
- Planning new communities with more focus on multi modal transportation and less reliance on cars

“Sustainable and green is important. Things around hydrogen fuel are important. But also, economical and efficient from a how do we pay for it view. We don’t want transportation to skyrocket for the sake of it. It needs to balance for the government and its citizens.”

“One issue for seniors, they won’t have drivers’ licenses. It means what are they going to do when they lose their licence. That could be autonomous vehicles, something they could own”



"In the industry side, the ability to have corridors to move goods as quickly and efficiently as possible. Good highway connections. It means getting labor in and out."

"Inclusiveness, I think we do a good job of that here. But in some areas, we don't include people with disabilities in infrastructure that complements the transit system, like visually impaired or deaf, in even crossing the street to get to a bus."

2. What is the single most transportation related issue for those you serve? What is working well?

- For transportation to be truly inclusive, moving people between their home and their employment, with special consideration for those with disabilities or rural people who may not be able to drive or ride the bus.

"Robinhood Association serves 500 clients, none drive, they have to rely on transportation system. A number of these people, work in and around Sherwood Park and need transportation to get to employment. In some cases, Sherwood Park can get them to work, but in others, we fill the void. We need more inclusiveness with this population. People need to make their way to work, and there's no DATS service here. Its integrally important to service the population."

3. How important is transportation to your members operations? How could the County improve transportation for your operations?

- The county needs to listen to business and industry demands for transportation links.
- Communication from the County should be improved.
- Accessibility to public transportation, especially for those with disabilities, must be improved.
- Transportation should seek to include internet/communications access, since many people (especially in the post COVID world), are working from home and using the internet as a substitute for their commutes.
- The county needs more signage for wayfinding.

"Listen to what businesses are telling us. I've heard on many occasions, a transit line to an industrial area in the business park would be appreciated, but it never gets approved because there's no immediate demand for it. It's just listening to what our colleagues are telling us. Its not earth shattering."

"We are doing a great job in many respects, but we aren't there yet. We need to improve for people with disabilities and seniors. You don't know how those will affect you until life changes."

"If more people are working from home, and more kids at taking school at home, then that's on internet access, and good access to internet is huge issue in rural communities, its not transportation, but it always comes up and it's a part of it."



4. Thinking 5 to 10 years into the future, how do you envision transportation for you and those you serve?

- There should be a transit hub on the east side of Sherwood Park.
- The ways that people get to employment could be an issue, especially with unforeseen events like COVID, or through poor accessibility to public transit.
- Offering alternative & multi modal transportation should be a major focus, especially autonomous vehicles and trail systems for walking/biking.
- There will be increased demand for compact communities, as seen in Bremner, with better walkability and less car access.

"We have Wye road and Baseline road on the west with transit hubs, so everyone has to drive through Sherwood Park to get there, and congests the roadways. Why can't we get a depot on the east side, or wherever appropriate? Why is everyone driving through Sherwood Park to get to a station, why can't they ride a bike or walk to the east side? Or for the rural people to the east?"

"Business needs good qualified talent, and to get that they need to get to your place of employment."

"In Bremner, it's about walkable communities, with everything about 10 to 15 minutes' walk and interspersed throughout the community, that's a great way to deal with our environmental footprint, people want compressed compact communities."

"Autonomous vehicles are critical, and alternate mobility sources. People will want alternate ways to get around. We need that trail system well maintained, and easy to get where you are going. I know people, in Broadmoor, they use they trails system to walk to work from Glenallen. Those options need to be easy and well maintained. We need that mobility planning, we have cut curbs, and get up and around on curbs, and if we need the alarm on the cross walk, we need to get that working."

5. Where and how should the County be investing in transportation?

- The county should invest in more transit hubs on the eastern part of Sherwood Park (x2)
- The county should invest in partnerships so as to not duplicate services
- There should be more investment into the trails system, especially in filling in the "missing links" and gaps in the network.

"An eastern hub for transit would be great for me and the folks in the rural areas. That would be amazing."

"We have a great trail network. But there are parts that are incomplete. There are trails running from Clarkdale Meadows, and then a missing link to Heritage Hills, missing a connection at Baseline Road. The corridor is there, but we haven't completed it yet."



6. One final piece of advice?

- The County should not use punitive measures against cars encourage multi modal transportation, since many people are reliant on their vehicles and stranded without them and it disproportionally affects rural communities (x3) Measure outlined in the EMRB Transportation Plan appear punitive.
- The County needs to maintain good communication with businesses and other stakeholders in the area.
- There needs to be more consideration for people coming from Edmonton to Sherwood Park, not just the other way around.

“Adding or increasing parking fees, or charging gas tax fees, that’s punitive, that’s not inclusive. That excludes cars. We need to look at other ways to get funding. For many people, it’s too far to walk or bike, they have to drive. We shouldn’t be punitive, as this article states, for how we get funds to fund this. If we want to pick on people with cars that’s not inclusive.”

“The business community itself, we need to engagement with them. They are the ones investing in the expansion. Land purchases, new buildings, but their employees are important to consider. Just have those conversations with the business community.”

“The car is imperfect, but it has worked for the last 100 years. I don’t want us to ignore it for the next 100 years, but we need to be ready for what’s next. To punish people to be driving isn’t the best route, but there are options to improve behaviors.”



Integrated Transportation Master Plan
Meeting Notes

Date / Time	June 18, 2021, 9:00am
Participants	

Theme Summary

- **Flexibility and the ability to adapt to change was the top priority for participants.**
- **Accessibility, especially to new major highways such as the Yellowhead & Henday, as well as to new developments was a major challenge.**
- **Participants indicated they had significant challenges in their relationship with the government, in particular Alberta Transportation.**
- **Participants felt that infrastructure requirements were inefficient and led to overbuilding many of their developments before there was a suitable tax base.**
- **Electrical infrastructure was seen as the largest issue when looking to the near future, with the electrification of fleets and increased power usage across homes and businesses.**

Participants of this session saw that their environment is rapidly changing and above all else required the flexibility and nimbleness to adapt to the needs of the market. Changes such as increased working from home, electrification of vehicles & increased power needs, demand for compact and walkable communities, and autonomous vehicles were all seen as major impacts on developments; participants felt that regulations were not keeping pace with these changes. This lag creates friction between orders of government and the development community, and reduced their business efficiency, wasting resources. In particular, they saw infrastructure requirements to be too rigid, especially for new development without the population to support the funding for the infrastructure. Despite these issues, participants were generally supportive of the ITMP and urged flexibility.



Talking Points

• Introduction: Sentence completion - When I think of transportation in Strathcona County, I think about _____

- Access to major roadways, such as the Yellowhead and Henday.
- Future technology such as autonomous vehicles.
- Changing development practices and the movement to “urban villages” with compact walkable communities and multi modal transportation as the focus.
- Government entities can stifle innovation, specifically Alberta Transportation.
- “Right sizing” development, to fit with current and near future needs, to not waste resources.

“When I think about transportation in the county, they’ve done great, but we need to monitor what’s happening, there could be impacts with automation in the next 5 to 10 years. Also access to Henday is important.”

“I think there’s a change in the way people look at transportation, people being encouraged to use of public transport, foot traffic, more communities are developed to be more of an urban village setting, where you aren’t going all over Sherwood Park”.

“Alberta transportation continues to be a roadblock and a gap in us being innovative for the future, and I think that will continue to be a roadblock and I hope we can move past that.”

1. When you think about transportation in Strathcona County, are there values you think the County should consider?

- Good planning and staging; development must be future focused, and planned for what is needed in the near future and timed to coincide with growth (x4)
- Improved communication and relationships between the County, developers, and the public regarding development (x2)
- Changing demographics who value multi modal transportation and less commuting (x2)
- Allowing development before full infrastructure build outs
- Strong support for the trail system

“Long term planning, that has to be a primary one. With new development, it’s establishing the network for future development and how future development ties into this. And ways for when future traffic comes, you aren’t stopping everything to construct and widen roads, and at the same time not overbuilding where you are having wide roads with no one on them.”



“Timing of infrastructure, and allowing development to proceed before full infrastructure build out. There are ways to do that, and people don’t like that, but there’s effective ways to build out communities, and do it well. We have a short construction season, there will be problems, but if we communicate effectively and have a good plan in place and showcase that, everyone will see what the guide posts are and what we want to achieve.”

“The value is having the staging and progression of infrastructure, and then potential barriers to offsite infrastructure and what is actually required to access the community. Partnerships moving forward is key, especially with Alberta Transportation. Fostering that and really getting that going in the right direction so we are all successful and all on the same page.”

2. What is the single most transportation related issue for those you serve? What is working well?

- Recognition that there are different trends in different communities, and not one size fits all (x2)
- Linking employment nodes and residential areas must be improved upon
- Connectivity to major highways such as the Yellowhead and Henday is a challenge for industry
- Working with Alberta Transportation is a major challenge
- Walkability, and meeting the multi modal demands of new generations is working well, but can still be improved on

“Walkability is a big one, I think that’ll be the biggest one in how far we are commuting.”

“Working with Alberta transportation can be difficult. They control the access to and off Yellowhead and that’s tough. Getting equipment in and out of Strathcona County is difficult. It needs to be efficient. If they have to weave in and out of neighborhoods, they’ll just find somewhere else to place their business.”



3. How important is transportation to your members operations? How could the County improve transportation for your operations?

- Finding ways to reduce infrastructure requirements in how developments are staged (x2)
- Accessibility is a major issue for developers, and ensuring that developments can be accessed easily through arterial roads would be an improvement.

“It boils down to accessibility. Off of Cloverbar road and Cambrian, we are challenged with Alta link overhead. And the positioning of businesses, and how many right ins and right outs, so people drive through the community to get to commercial areas, instead of facilitating access through the arterial, and the arterial just doesn’t seem to be used as effectively as it could be with all directional opportunities.”

“I think its access. Access to the neighborhoods, effective access. It’s important for us to provide this, it triggers infrastructure ahead of its time, and who pays for that. Looking at future planning and nodes, knowing there’s major infrastructure triggers already noted, there’s that balance between making it peaceful to develop and actually coming up with the funds to address all the improvements Alberta Transportation requires.”

“The long-term aspect always looks at completion, that’s important to target, but sometimes it’s at the expense of being flexible and staged investment. And expense to the ability to get to the market at the time. We need to react quickly, and if we have to stage infrastructure that’s an important goal for us.”

4. Thinking 5 to 10 years into the future, how do you envision transportation for you and those you serve?

- Electric vehicles will be an important aspect soon, therefore, developments and infrastructure must be prepared for increase power usage (x2)
- Changes to density, communications, and multi modal transportation may lessen the need for cars in the future, such as working from home or living within walking distance of your employment.
- Electric vehicles will grow to include things such as bicycles, scooters, Segway’s, and many other types of traffic that may not be on roads.

“There’s no questions electric vehicles will be an important aspect moving forward. There’s a critical mass forming and there will be more investment coming from major companies, so in terms of power requirements, that’s important, have enough power to juice the cars overnight.”

“But immediate concern, is electricity. When we build out a cul de sac, a transformer we put out, not everyone can charge their car, there’s not enough juice... that’s not necessarily transportation, the



electrical side of the business is playing catch up, and that infrastructure just isn’t there in some communities.”

“Electric bikes too, not just cars, different types of electric vehicles that are moving. Test project in Beaumont, they exist. Well see electric vehicles on sidewalks and paths, its already starting.”

5. Where and how should the County be investing in transportation?

- There should be consideration to reexamine road cross sections and infrastructure requirements as development trends shift.
- Being flexible and adapting to change, including letting developers take risks and try new ideas and solutions.
- The county should invest in fostering relationships between developers and Alberta Transportation so they can all work collaboratively as needs change.

“I think foremost, it’ll be important to spend efficiently. If that means looking at road cross sections, do more with less, that’s important to us. We think efficiencies can be built into every system. Challenging the status quo is what we will focus on.”

“I think the biggest challenge, we are building roads for today and trying to project for the future. At some point you will have roads based on older standards, and you need to transition to what you need for today, and also what you need for tomorrow. We are always adapting that’s part of it... We can project what we think, but the people who are buying homes in 10 years are 15 right now. We need to look at the next class of homeowner and what’s important for them.”

“Obviously none of us have a crystal ball. But we need to react to trends and to be successful, what we need is to create those partnerships to make sure we are planning ahead. And Alberta Transportation, creating those collaborative relationships and getting ahead of it. While we are planning for the future, some utilities are playing catch up and planning for 70 years ago.”

“Let’s not be afraid to make mistakes. That’s ok. Developers want to try some flexibility. Maybe to take a pilot project, take that risk to see if it works. We might make mistakes but that should be ok to take that chance.”



6. One final piece of advice?

- The County must be flexible and be able to take risks with new ideas (x2)
- The County should be focused on growth and investing in development.
- Partnering with stakeholders is always in the best interests of the County.
- Infrastructure roll out must balance with the population.

“When looking to invest, focus on growth and compounding investment. If the county puts a dollar in, what will it trigger in terms of private investment. If you put a road through an undeveloped area, it might spur development, then you have more tax base. Focus on growth and what your investment might trigger”.

“Flexibility to try new and different things. Maybe that’s not the right course but at least we tried.”

“I’ll stick with partnerships and expanding the stakeholders, making sure we bring the right stakeholders to the table.”

“I’d say infrastructure roll out and expansion has to balance population growth. We can invest millions into areas where there’s no population to pay back the infrastructure investment.”



Integrated Transportation Master Plan

Meeting Notes

AIHA Focus Group

Date / Time	June 28, 2021, 6:30pm
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Theme Summary

- **Accessibility for those with disabilities was the top issue.**
- **Public transit requires improved accessibility at bus stops, and more bus stops, to make it easier for those with mobility issues to safely reach their bus stops.**
- **Many destinations need to reassess their accessibility, as participants felt there were many places where handicap stalls had curb cuts in the wrong spots, or even no accessibility options in some cases.**
- **Winter maintenance on the sidewalks and at bus stops was a major concern, especially for those with mobility issues.**
- **There should be more consideration for people with different types of disabilities, such as blindness or autism, not just those with mobility issues.**

Accessibility for those with disabilities was the topmost concern for participants. This included both physical disabilities, such as mobility issues or visual impairment, as well as mental disabilities such as autism. Improving accessibility was mostly focused at the public transportation network, and ensuring that all users could get to bus stops, and then easily board the bus and get to where they want to go. Outside of public transit, there were also concerns over accessibility on the sidewalks and at destinations, such as with handicap parking stalls, speed bumps that impaired access, wheelchair ramps, or other accessibility options being available. Winter maintenance was another major issue, since those with mobility issues could not navigate snow covered sidewalks to even get to bus stops. Lastly, ensuring rural access to public transit was also an issue, for both the able bodied and the disabled.

Talking Points

- **Introduction: Sentence completion - When I think of transportation in Strathcona County, I think about _____**
 - Accessibility for all users in all spaces (x3)
 - Transportation for students into Edmonton to post-secondary institutions (x3)
 - Strathcona County already has high quality transportation services, although they can always be improved (x2)
 - Transportation into Edmonton for events



- Multi modal transportation including bicycles, walking, trails, driving, and transit.
- Interconnectivity between rural areas and subdivisions being excellent

“I think of everyone being able to get where they want to go without anything to impede them. Whether its driving and parking or taking the bus, accessibility issues affect us all and if you need to park in a handicap space, you need it to be maintained.”

“When I think about transportation in Strathcona County, I think about efficiency of students who take classes in Edmonton. They have transportation that takes them straight to Edmonton, stops right at the U of A.”

“I think there needs work on the mobility side of it, but it’s far better than Edmonton I’ve found.”

1. When you think about transportation in Strathcona County, are there values you think the County should consider?

- Inclusion: everyone should have access to transit and the transportation network in general. (x2)
- Rural areas need better access to the transit network. (x2)
- There needs to be better transit accessibility for people with disabilities.
- Safety: especially for pedestrians and cyclists.

“What I think about is inclusion, everyone has access to the network we have. In particular I mean the transit system. We don’t all always have access at all times. I’m talking about an issue we brought up previously, and that’s access to buses. These stations are backwards for handicap people, they might have to cross a median or snow to get on a bus, that’s an issue. Also, people that live in growth areas of the county, where for example, Fountain Creek, they don’t have the same access as Sherwood Park.”

“Connectivity, inclusion, and safety. Biking is a big thing, my neighbors felt unsafe, you can’t go for a long time on just one trail. It’s definitely not connected in rural areas. And if you had accessibility issues on a sidewalk, you’d have to walk on the road.”

2. What is the single most transportation related issue for those you serve? What is working well?

- Accessibility is a major issue for those with disabilities, at times even making getting to a bus stop impossible. (x3)
- The transit network is well connected and allows most users to get where they want to go.
- Accessibility must be considered for those with both physical and mental disabilities.



“The biggest issue is accessibility. Sometimes, I can’t get to my bus stop from my house. It’s too far for my wheelchair, and getting through the path there’s a dip, it’s too dangerous for me to get there in the winter, I would just get stuck. But the transportation system works well once you are on it, and for someone who is able bodied, it works very well.”

“Having the sidewalk curb cuts or extensions out to the bus stop, making sure wheelchairs and walkers, and things, my grandma couldn’t go anywhere where there wasn’t a sidewalk there.”

“My son is well suited to the transportation network; it’s well suited to his needs. There’s bus stops close by. But when he lived with me it was a challenge, especially with timing after rush hour. Especially when you have to dial in and ask to get picked up. I don’t know if there’s a way to make it easier. Maybe an online tool to make it easier.”

3. How important is transportation to your members operations? How could the County improve transportation for your operations?

- The county could add more bus stops to improve accessibility for those with disabilities. (x3)
- The county needs more consideration for winter maintenance, operations, and even snow clearing bylaws to increase accessibility for those with mobility issues. (x3)
- The county should consider some type of benefit or discount to help support those on AISH or facing poverty.
- It is estimated that 20% of the Strathcona county population has a disability of some sort, so the transit and transportation networks must accommodate those people.
- There should be an accessibility review for handicap parking spaces and other similar areas to see if they are set up correctly.
- Some road features, such as speed bumps, have unintended impacts on those with disabilities.
- There should be consideration for improved dust abatement and drainage on newer developments so that stripped lots awaiting construction don’t spill mud, water, or other debris onto sidewalks.

“We are winter community, and access to even a snow clearing bylaw, the snow clearing issue of how often the snow gets cleared. What’s the responsibility of our citizens? And how to enforce that so that someone in a wheelchair can get onto the sidewalk? Also, bus stops are badly configured. Perhaps just a concrete pad would help between the curb and where the bus stops.”

“We’ve also heard that there should be more bus stops so its not so far for people with mobility issues”

“There are people with autism that don’t have mobility issues but other issues, we have the blind, deaf, so on, we know that there is a large percentage of our population that has difficulty accessing facilities in our county.”



“Relook at where the handicap spots are. In relation to where the ramp is to get up. There are a few spots that have handicap spots in one spot, but the ramp is on the other side of the parking lane. They are in 2 different spots. Just be aware of that, and maybe adjust that”

4. Thinking 5 to 10 years into the future, how do you envision transportation for you and those you serve?

- Autonomous vehicles could give those with visual and other impairments the ability to drive and be independent users of the transportation network.

“My friend is blind, and she always wanted to drive, and she actually did it on a county road with her mom. But if you get a visionary, truly make transportation accessible and place the independence and control in the hands of everyone.”

5. Where and how should the County be investing in transportation?

- The county should invest in a program that allows businesses to assess how accessible their buildings are for those with mobility issues.
- The county must invest in charging stations for electric vehicles.
- There should be more investments in improving accessibility around the county, such as in creating curb cuts, extended sidewalk bump outs for bus stops, street crossings for people with visual and mobility issues, and other improvements.

“If there was some way to give businesses money to assess their buildings, to see how accessible they are for people with mobility issues, I know the building I work in is not.”

“I’ve travelled around the world, and in Norway, and you see, they have great incentives for electric vehicles, and one incentive is charging stations open to the public and they are open everywhere. I wouldn’t buy an electric vehicle today because I don’t think it’ll get me to where I need to go. But I have a hybrid, and I think that’s the way to go until we get proper charging stations.”

“I’m thinking curb cuts, bus stops, accessible bus stops”

6. One final piece of advice?

- Improving accessibility for those with disabilities can be life changing.

“We’ve had a conversation on accessible bus stops. And there’s a plan in the county, and I think it’s sufficient. But if we only change 10 stops a year to accessible status, that’s not enough, we need to make it so someone like Sarah in the wheelchair doesn’t need to go on the road to get to the bus.”



Integrated Transportation Master Plan

Meeting Notes

AIHA Focus Group

Date / Time	June 30, 2021, 8:00am
Participants	

Theme Summary

- **Safety was the top priority**
- **There were different needs for commuter vs recreational cyclists, and commuter cyclists faced the most issues, particularly on major roads which they felt were unsafe**
- **Participants felt that both drivers and cyclists needed more education on the rules of the road, and furthermore, that the Traffic Safety Act needed to be updated**
- **There were major pieces of infrastructure missing, such as bike racks, connections between trails, cycle friendly crosswalks, and more**
- **Roads and paths needed better maintenance and road infrastructure to accommodate cyclists safely, for example wider shoulders, properly cleaned shoulders, or sewer grates that could be ridden over**

Safety was the top priority for the Cycling Coalition. There were significant concerns about vehicle and cyclist interactions, road maintenance, and having protected infrastructure for commuter cyclists on major roads. There were also concerns about the current path network not having proper interconnectivity, and missing many pieces of essential infrastructure like bike racks. Behind many of these issues was the need to update the Provincial Traffic Safety Act, and to increase education for cyclists and drivers on the rules of the road. Participants felt that most recreational cyclists were well served by the trail system, but the missing piece was for the commuter cyclists and how they operate off of the trail network. Major commuter routes were identified as Baseline Road, Wye Road, and Yellowhead Trail, all of which needed better cycling infrastructure such as wider shoulders and better maintenance.



Talking Points

- **Introduction: Sentence completion - When I think of transportation in Strathcona County, I think about _____**
 - Cycling for recreation and commuting (x2)
 - Safety on roads for cyclists (x2)

“There was an accident of mine almost 2 years that almost killed me with a truck that ran a stop sign.”

“We use our bikes for appointments and to get around the County. Most cycling is just to go to the park. For 8 months we hardly take our cars out of the garage. Just take the paths mostly. We are from the UK and have always used bikes.”

1. When you think about transportation in Strathcona County, are there values you think the County should consider?

- Safety should be the top value
- The County already has excellent cycling infrastructure; however, it needs better interconnectivity if it wants to attract more cyclists
- Opportunities for tourism from cycling
- Designing denser communities with walkability and cycling in mind
- Reducing reliance on motor vehicles

“I rode my bike downtown for years, but it’s not safe. If I want to take bike paths, there’s still areas that aren’t safe. There are problems going back to the transportation safety act, but people aren’t well trained on rules of the road and how to be safe around cyclists. There has to be more public info out there to let people know how to share the road. Some basic things, the person who hit me, a lapse of judgement on his part. Rumble strips would have reminded him that he had a stop sign.”

“I’m from Europe too. I share values with Trish and Jim. One is the integrated aspect of transportation; I think it’s fragmented right now. The other, are we putting too much value on cars to make it difficult for other forms of transportation to be valued? ... What is the role of cars and how do you change the dynamics of thinking in the County?”

“The role of cars, we are interested in mitigating the climate crisis, and things like noise, pollution, the speed, those are things we don’t value. Why we value cycling and walking, it’s for those reasons”

2. What is the single most transportation related issue for those you serve? What is working well?



- The legislation around cycling is outdated and must be updated (x2)
- Lack of infrastructure, such as bike racks or cycle friendly crosswalks
- The trail system doesn’t accommodate all types of users, especially commuter cyclists
- There needs to be better connectivity between trails
- There are barriers that prevent trail use by other types of users, such people on trikes, and too many stop signs.
- Safety for cyclists on the road, especially shoulders that aren’t wide enough

“I came to Strathcona County to work for the County, and I was attracted by the trails, but I realized that the trails weren’t meant for me to commute, they were focused on meandering with your children.”

“Connectivity for sure. Some lovely trails but they just stop, like at Cloverbar Road.”

“And the barriers, a person on a trike couldn’t get through, people on scooters couldn’t get through, and there’s barriers that cross each other. Stop signs at every intersection, which means you are supposed to stop and get off and cross.”

“What we are dealing with here, is the underlying issue, old legislation. Until that changes, we have to set up a system that removes risk and the opportunities for conflict and provides options for cyclists. Bike paths are great for young cyclists, school age kids, recreation, people who just want some fun without traffic. But the minute you talk about commuting, then you run into the issues of convenience and safety and speed. But that gets back into legislation and driver training causing issues right off the bat”

3. How important is transportation to your members operations? How could the County improve transportation for your operations?

- The County should create separated bike lanes for commuters on major roads (x2)
- There needs to be more driver training and education on the rules of the road and how to interact with cyclists
- The County should create more safe connectivity with Edmonton for cyclists, in particular, on Yellowhead Trail, Baseline Road, Anthony Henday, and Wye Road.
- Roads need better maintenance and cleaning to ensure safety for cyclists
- Sherwood Park could easily create connections to other bike trails from other municipalities, like Fort Saskatchewan, Ardrossan, or Edmonton

“I think it’s the best long-term solution, for example Baseline and Wye Road, they could have bike paths and feed onto them from the range roads. So, separated. You’ll get more people using them.”



“You create anger with drivers, “why aren’t the cyclists on the bike path? why are they on the road”, and you get the aggressiveness, and that comes down to driver training. People need to understand that you need to share the road. Especially if you want to bring people here for tourism, this is coming, here’s how you need to behave. You need to educate the cyclists as well, since there isn’t any education at all for them.”

“We don’t have safe connections to ride all the way into Edmonton so that’s a huge issue. The Yellowhead you have higher speeds and not wider shoulders and people not expecting cyclists and once you are in Edmonton you are stuck on the Yellowhead and there’s no way out.”

“I go down Baseline Road, and it’s not great, the shoulders are not clean. You have to ride as close to the shoulder as possible, but it’s never clean so I’m always near traffic, and they intentionally drive past me at 80km an hour, and it’s not safe... Wye Road, has massive drain grates on the side of the road. They will eat your bike. You have to go around. Simply putting them perpendicular to road it would fix that. No one thought of that though.”

4. Thinking 5 to 10 years into the future, how do you envision transportation for you and those you serve?

- There will be more people using cycling as a means to commute
- New communities such as Bremner will see increased cycling, and the County needs the infrastructure to support that
- There will be increased recreational cyclists on rural roads in Strathcona County coming in from other regions as tourists
- Safety is an ever-present issue

“If we go forward with Bremner, it needs to take this into consideration. That community should be built with the appropriate bike paths built in, and connected with Fort Saskatchewan and the rest of Strathcona County, and build those long-term routes for cyclists. The county has an opportunity to bring people in from far and wide.”

“Lot’s people live in Strathcona County and work in Edmonton or Fort Saskatchewan. I do lots of riding in rural Strathcona County, and people come from all over the capital region to ride out here.”

“There are increasing cyclist in the rural areas. And we don’t want to see incidents or serious injuries there.”

5. Where and how should the County be investing in transportation?



- The County should support a cycling committee that can represent the needs of the cycling community
- There should be more investment into wider and safer shoulders on main roads, especially commuter routes like Wye Road, Baseline Road, and Yellowhead Trail.
- There should be increased education for drivers and cyclists on how to share the road
- The County needs to advocate for updating the Provincial Traffic Safety Act
- There should be investment into bikes for short term rentals, similar to the electric scooters in Edmonton or bike rentals in European cities

“My first request is a cycling advisory committee to provide feedback. To include all kinds of cyclists. My cycling may not be the cycling that others do. Have a commitment to provide feedback. There’s lots of low-cost things to do to increase integration of cycling, bike racks, education, development plans. I think we need to work with the cycling community on potential dangers in rural areas and find ways to work together.”

“I think given the roads we already have, giving thought to wider safer shoulders that would support more active cycling. Wye Road has issues, so making the shoulders safer would be in everyone’s best interest.”

“An education program, to reduce conflict between motorists and cyclists.”

“I think that Strathcona County and all the municipalities need to look at info on where these conflicts come from and what causes accidents and what needs to change in the Traffic Safety Act, and remove the actual drivers of the conflicts. The language needs to be updated and needs to be amended. People think they know what cyclists should be doing, but cyclists know that if they do those things it’s dangerous”

6. One final piece of advice?

- Roads, sidewalks, and paths all need better maintenance

“And the median on Baseline Road and Sherwood Park Freeway, they rebuilt the median, but left a gaping hole on the shoulder that would eat a bike.”



Integrated Transportation Master Plan

Meeting Notes

AIHA Focus Group

Date / Time	June 29, 2021, 8:00am
Participants	

Theme Summary

- **Creating an industrial logistics hub with infrastructure to accommodate rail, sea cans, trucks, and pipeline was a major priority**
- **Expansion and improvement of the rail network was another major priority, especially eliminating at grade crossings**
- **Finding ways to incorporate public transit for workers to access industrial sites was seen as a viable solution to congestion in the area, though there were concerns about ridership**
- **There were concerns that the County, as well as other levels of government, were not investing enough into land purchases for future infrastructure such as rail**
- **Industrial work sites need to be more accessible, as they often have issues at rail crossings**

The main priorities for the NCIA Focus Group were to create and improve the rail network and to create a world class industrial logistics hub focusing on new infrastructure. Currently there are a number of rail crossings at the same grade as the roadway, which causes significant congestion. Separating these crossings was a major priority, as well as expanding the rail network to accommodate the expected growth in the region. The industrial transportation hub was envisioned similar to major industrial shipping hubs such as in Singapore or Rotterdam, with infrastructure to support rail, trucks, Sea Can shipping containers, pipelines, and other modes of transportation, with suggestions that industrial sites in the region should use public transit to access the area instead of personal vehicles.

Talking Points

- **Introduction: Sentence completion - When I think of transportation in Strathcona County, I think about _____**
 - Commuter, commercial, and industrial traffic (x2)



- Transportation on the main highway corridor
- High speed transit to surrounding areas like Fort Saskatchewan
- The need for a logistical hub to support growing industrial development
- Rail roads, especially safety at rail road crossings

“I’m thinking we are in need of a logistics hub. There will be new investment into the petrochemical industry in the next 20 years and we need to be ready for that.”

“I think about commuter traffic and commercial and industrial traffic as well.”

1. When you think about transportation in Strathcona County, are there values you think the County should consider?

- Movement of people (employees), goods, and products
- Most industrial products leave by rail, so there needs to be more support for the rail system
- Pipelines must be considered as transportation, since that is a major way petrochemicals are transported
- Commuter traffic must be safer and more consistent, especially around rail road crossings
- Investment into growth and new infrastructure
- Safety and consideration of residential traffic

“So, value movement of employees, movement of products. How do we improve on that to foster growth? If the rail system won’t let you get products out, what’s the point. You will stifle your economy.”

“When we do this ITMP project we need to look forward, what’s the growth we expect? We hear this in the heartland conference, industry needs the signal that the County is thinking about a logistical hub, it will attract investment. We have skilled labor, feed stocks, but no infrastructure. Looking at our site, we need growth, rail, everything needs to be built for each investment.”

2. What is the single most transportation related issue for those you serve? What is working well?

- Pipeline, rail, and road all need to work together
- There needs to be more focus on growth, infrastructure, and the future needs of industry in the area
- Industrial work sites must be more accessible
- The lack of an industrial logistics hub for industry will be an issue

“Because we have pipeline, rail, and road, they all need to work together. Achim said it, we need to look at the region, what would a world scale transportation hub look like, and do we have that today? We don’t, so what does it look like and how do we get there and to foster industrial growth.”



“We’ve also had situations in the past, especially for employees getting to work, we’ve had situations where people didn’t want to work out here. We need to think about those things. We can’t do what we do without people.”

3. How important is transportation to your members operations? How could the County improve transportation for your operations?

- The County should create a future focused industrial logistics hub, with all infrastructure needed for new forms of transportation including sea cans, rail, pipeline, air, and road.
- Improving rail roads to remove road/rail interactions
- There needs to be improved access for large trucks and other vehicles on the road
- The County could support the creation of connecting industrial sites to the public transit network to reduce congestion in the industrial areas

“Looking at transit-based systems to get people to and from industrial sites. Very complex. We haven’t thought enough about it. Thinking about a future state. Should that be transit based, getting people out of their cars, freeing up space on the highways? That would require thought. If people want to go for lunch how do they do that, and all the different places of work. It has value but how do we make it work so people use it and get out of their cars.”

“We need to be bigger than just rail. Sea can shipping containers are a very common way to get goods from A to B. To handle them you need cranes and trains. We need to cover all these elements in our future hub. Someone might say we don’t have sea can traffic right now. And that’s the problem. We need to look to the future. Our business is taking hydrocarbons, and transforming them into the next level product, we can ship in sea cans. Thinking about sea cans is something the heartland hasn’t thought about yet.”

“For us, rail transportation and congestion, and finding ways of getting in and out of the region with large trucks and access onto the one highway. We have commuters and inter modals, so any way to reduce congestion in that zone. Rail access is big, its full now. More access to it would be a benefit for all our facilities in the heartland here.”

4. Thinking 5 to 10 years into the future, how do you envision transportation for you and those you serve?

- There will be more need for rail
- Any land for an industrial logistics hub or rail expansions will need to be purchased now, since it will become unfeasible in the future
- Transit to industrial sites could significantly reduce congestion and improve efficiency

3



“So, expanding rail, that always means additional tracks, and hubs, and connection points. All of those are challenging because that requires land and the purchase of land. And that’s where government comes into play. If you are thinking 50 years out, just like for pipelines, someone needs to purchase that land. If you wait for that future state, it will never be available.”

“There’s responsibility from the government to start this infrastructure. I think about 2 big hubs, Rotterdam and Singapore. Rotterdam is a nightmare. They just try to cover it with more roads and it doesn’t help. Singapore, there is a big barrier, then you have to jump on a shuttle. Nobody wants to travel through 4 sites to get to their 5th site. But the Singapore government didn’t give people a choice though. They have to go there. They learned to live with the shuttles. As they go to the separate sites, they learn it’s not so bad. So, if we think about this, it has to be combined with the government and our NCIA, we represent all the industries here, no one can do this alone. But there it works.”

5. Where and how should the County be investing in transportation?

- The County should invest into land acquisitions now for future growth, such as rail expansion or an industrial transportation hub.
- The County should invest into transit advocacy programs to educate workers on the wider benefits of using transit, as well as policies that encourage ridership
- The County should invest in improving road grade rail crossings, such as on Highway 15

“One challenge, of any democratic society, there’s a challenge in what you can and can’t tell people to do. In Alberta, it’s getting people out of their vehicles. Ridership in Calgary and Edmonton, its low, people prefer to drive. Unless you have governments say, “no parking in downtown, the only way to get in is by bus or bike”, if governments don’t take that stance, then getting into buses will be difficult.”

“Comparing to what we need, there’s visionary thinking needed, and the Province needs to reserve and buy land in corridors, think about rail track and faster highway connecting us, from here to Edmonton, west, corridors means buying land. the Provincial Government should think about that in the next 30 years. We will have new traffic, but I don’t think its economical to go to the high-speed rail for commuters, we don’t have the density for that.”

“One opportunity for investment is level crossings. Doing grade separations at crossings isn’t trivial, it’s expensive, but there’s a couple that I think it makes sense. That needs to be looked at region wide. It’s a significant cost.”

6. One final piece of advice?

4



- The County needs to eliminate traffic bottlenecks consistently over the next decade to ensure smooth traffic flow

“When you go back to where you started, where Highway 21 hits Yellowhead. This junction, the 21 goes above yellow head and under rail track. This crossing, people had to stop at in the past. The rail goes over the 21, and the 21 goes over the Yellowhead. I’m sure it cost a fortune, but it allows traffic to flow. If we find a junction like this we need to invest now. The next 10 years need to be like this. The next 10 years needs to eliminate these points were people get nuts. And this is a good example where this is solved now, people can flow in all directions.”



Integrated Transportation Master Plan

Meeting Notes

Robin Hood Association Focus Group

Date / Time	June 30, 2021, 8:00am
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Theme Summary

- **Improving the accessibility and inclusivity of transit was the top priority.**
- **On demand transit services were seen as a viable strategy to improve transportation in the County, especially if the buses were equipped to handle those with disabilities.**
- **Winter maintenance of sidewalks was a challenge, especially for those with mobility issues when the walks weren’t cleared.**
- **There were concerns over the aging population, and how to provide inclusive and accessible transit for them as they age.**
- **There was a concern that bus stops weren’t accessible, or in the right locations, to accommodate those with disabilities and the destinations they need to get to such as medical facilities or major shopping centers.**

Transit was a major concern for the Robin Hood Association. A significant portion of their budget is now dedicated to transit services, a role which is not their core mandate, due to a gap in transportation services for those with disabilities from the County. The people they serve have difficulties accessing bus stops, especially in the winter, and are again challenged by the buses themselves not accommodating for certain disabilities. Ensuring that the County can invest in more accessible and inclusive transit services, including on demand services, would be helpful, as well as subsidizing bus passes for seniors, people with limited incomes, and others at the Robin Hood Association. Participants also noted that the population in the County is aging, and the transit network must be able to accommodate the increase in people who cannot drive and will rely on transit.

Talking Points

- **Introduction: Sentence completion - When I think of transportation in Strathcona County, I think about _____**
 - A warm feeling from good services
 - Inclusion of those with disabilities

“Welcoming, community minded, good location in Alberta. A good feeling when you arrive e in Sherwood Park. A warm feeling because of the people and services provided.”



“Our client base, being disabled, they desperately rely on transportation. Inclusion of our very vulnerable population is something a transportation system needs to embrace.”

1. When you think about transportation in Strathcona County, are there values you think the County should consider?

- Accessibility, especially for those with disabilities (x2)
- Inclusion, especially for people with different disabilities
- Reliability

“a large population of the people we support, since they need a wheelchair, they can’t get on the bus sometimes. Even getting to the bus stops can be a challenge. Access to support their independence is sometimes limited.”

“One thing we’ve had challenges with, a lot of clients work with or at various businesses, and they rely on transit to get to work, and they find to get to a convenient location to catch a bus, sometimes it’s impossible. I know we can’t have bus stops everywhere, but without a DATS program or something like that they have no way to get to work.”

2. What is the single most transportation related issue for those you serve? What is working well?

- Public transit is the main form of transportation for the people that the Robin Hood Association serves, and they find that it is often too difficult for many people with disabilities to either get to bus stops or get onto the buses effectively.
- There are challenges for those with disabilities navigating winter sidewalks, especially in snow or ice when the walks haven’t been cleared.
- The Robin Hood Associations core mandate is not transportation, and they have to spend an increasing number of resources on transportation services.
- Current on demand transportation services are very expensive for most people, such as Taxis or services like Driving Miss Daisy.

“I’m thinking of an individual we serve. An independent wheelchair user with a job. Some bus stop designs don’t allow her to get on, and to secure her wheelchair on the bus, she needs help she can’t physically reach around and do that herself.”

“In the winter the sidewalks aren’t cleared. So, the staff actually shovel the walks for her. We are about supporting independence. Also, the incline on the hill to the bus stop is so much so that she can’t maneuver her wheelchair. And then a shelter would be needed as well at the bus stop.”

“We operate 17 vans, 15 para transit vans, 2 driving teams. We provide over 4000 runs a week. We have 40 people a day. It was never a thought that we would take over transit in Sherwood Park. It’s



just slowly crept in as transit couldn’t get people to places. We have received no funding, just donations. It’s a struggle.”

“Individuals that live in private homes, they do contact Driving Miss Daisy, but it’s expensive, and people are on AISH, and it’s quite exorbitant for them”

3. How important is transportation to your members operations? How could the County improve transportation for your operations?

- Public transit is the main form of transportation for most of Robin Hood Associations members, and without it they become isolated since most can’t drive themselves.
- Accessible public transit improves quality of life for everyone.

“Every day we receive emails for seniors living in homes in Chartwell looking for transit. We don’t have the capability for that, but our service is about getting people to where they need to go. Medical runs are a huge part of what we support. So, we have kept growing with the organization. It’s both on demand trips, and consistent things like getting to work.”

“To provide high quality of life to everyone. To provide that, transit is really important

4. Thinking 5 to 10 years into the future, how do you envision transportation for you and those you serve?

- There will be more demand as more people join the Robin Hood Association, and people transition from children’s services to adult services within the organization.
- Concerns that Robin Hood Association’s resources will be strained by its growing demand for transit.
- The population is aging, and the transportation system must accommodate them and any changes they may require.

“We do provide services for youth, over 500 families receive support. So eventually those 500 children will grow into the adult program. We’d love to continue to grow our transit department and access our on-demand services, but as we grow the needs are immense. The transit services take away our ability to provide our other services.”

“We have a lot of seniors. We have lots of retired clients. How do we provide for them? Transportation is something we have to address as well. They need to get around.”

5. Where and how should the County be investing in transportation?

- On demand transit services that are accessible for those with disabilities from the County could lessen the burden on the Robin Hood Association to provide transit services.



- The County could subsidize bus passes for those with disabilities, those with low incomes, and the people involved with the Robin Hood Association.

“[When asked about on demand transit services] That would solve some issues we face. Getting people who aren’t close to a transit stop.”

“So, a number of individuals receive subsidized bus passes, but we need to purchase 200 bus passes per month to support our clients, and that’s expensive. A shared bus pass system used to work but now that doesn’t work. And a few years ago we were looking at free bus passes for our staff, but that sort of fell through, but that could be a huge amount of funding that we don’t have. We can’t keep up with it, that’s for sure”

6. One final piece of advice?

- In addition to growing the amount of disability friendly buses, the County needs to be mindful of the routes of those buses to include popular destinations such as doctors’ offices and other health related locations, especially as the population ages.

“Also, with mobility buses, there are more appointments and more specialized doctors, and mobility bus is no longer an issue because they often don’t go to those locations anymore. So, growing the locations those buses go to, especially as the population ages and grows, we’ll need that.”



Integrated Transportation Master Plan

Meeting Notes

Agriculture Services Board

Date / Time	June 16, 2021, 9:00am
Participants	

Theme Summary

- **Participants were generally very happy with the current state of the transportation system, but recognized that there is room for improvement**
- **Safety was the top priority, especially when large agricultural equipment and other users (such as cyclists) interact on the roads**
- **The trail system was widely supported, with demand for more trails throughout the county to connect rural and urban areas**
- **Education was a concern, in both educating the public over the needs and dangers of agricultural equipment on roads, and ensuring that all users are educated on the rules of the road**
- **North-South corridors, autonomous vehicle legislation, and connectivity for new developments were topics that participants suggested needed more resources**

Safety was the top priority for participants, especially when considering large agricultural equipment sharing the roads with other users. Expanding cycling and the trail system were also popular ideas, though there were concerns over safety as well as educating people on the rules of the road. There were concerns over improving connectivity for agricultural equipment, especially designating north-south corridors, but overall participants were all pleased with the current transportation network in Strathcona County. Participants were also interested in green/low carbon transportation solutions, such as cycling, but also autonomous vehicles.



Talking Points

• Introduction: Sentence completion - When I think of transportation in Strathcona County, I think about _____

- Acknowledgement that current system is above average, but can still be improved (x5)
- Urban expectations in rural environments (x2)
- The Commute—our citizens commuting to work every day
- Changing/adapting to changing world
- Efficient interconnectivity
- Movement and transportation of agricultural machinery and equipment
- Concerns over amount of traffic lights
- Diversity in transportation system users (heavy equipment, horses, pedestrians, cyclists, etc.)

“Roads are the trails of our lives. It’s not just your grandfathers farm anymore, the world is changing, how can we make the world better for a specialized municipality?”

“That’s the balance, city expectations in a rural environment.”

“I think of privilege. We are one of the only municipalities that has more pavement than gravel in the rural area, that’s a privilege.”

1. When you think about transportation in Strathcona County, are there values you think the County should consider?

- Rural roads have competing uses, such as urban users and cyclist’s vs heavy agricultural equipment, and the urban users may not understand the safety concerns or needs of the farm business.
- Safety concerns over cyclists on rural roads following rules of the road.
- Highlighting beautiful places with the trail system
- Education on rules of the road
- Public transportation solutions for rural areas

“We spend a lot of time hauling horses and cattle so education in terms of the different people sharing the roads. On my road, lots of people biking, and we are hauling equipment. So, education and safety are essential.”

“It’s a privilege to pick a new trail in Sherwood Park to walk every day. You have highlighted the beautiful places in Sherwood Park, it’s a great use of those places—keep that up.”

“Education, letting people know farm equipment doesn’t move as fast. And along with the cyclists, we are happy to share our roads, but they need to understand riding single files. And also respecting the



rules of the road, stopping at stop signs, cyclists just rolling through stops it can be sketchy. So just safety and sharing the road and education.”

“Busing out to the hamlets, I don’t know if that’s something that can be looked at for sustainability or not.”

2. What is the single most transportation related issue for those you serve? What is working well?

- Farm equipment needs room on the road and consideration from other users, along with education on the impact farmers make to our economy and sustainability.

“From the rural ag farmer rancher perspective, it’s the size of the equipment, the seeders take up massive amounts of space. ... It’s just the size of space we take up. The challenge is people don’t know or respect the size and the time, and the value that farmers put to the GDP. If people could understand the impact that farmers make the GDP and the economy locally and nationally it would help.”

3. How important is transportation to your members operations? How could the County improve transportation for your operations?

- Managing travel demand and making sustainable development decisions
- Put up signage in agricultural areas cautioning users about heavy equipment.
- There should be consideration for designated North/South heavy equipment corridors.
- Consider developing amenities closer to Highway 14; currently people must drive all through Sherwood Park to access amenities.

“Managing travel demand. I live near highway 14. But Sherwood Park, everything is on the north end, Wye Road, I don’t know if there’s a plan, but demand seems Baseline north. It’s closer to go to Wye Road than the other roads. Lots of times its just faster to go to 17 Avenue in Edmonton. I don’t know if that’s part of sustainability—but it means a lot of extra driving.”

“On highway 2, Glen Park Road, it’s an ag road, they have “warning agricultural equipment” signs, just to keep people’s eyes open. Just so people know to slow down or drive carefully in certain areas. I thought that was interesting on Glen Park.” (Leduc County)

“More designation for routes for agriculture. As things get busier and move farther out, I don’t know if that’s a plan. Widen 1 range road out of 6, so it’s a more usable route from north to south. East west we have a few big routes that facilitate larger traffic. The north-south is tighter. So maybe things like that, where we have designation, maybe 1 out of 6 we make a better route, we obviously don’t have the money to widen every route.”



4. Thinking 5 to 10 years into the future, how do you envision transportation for you and those you serve?

- Legislation for autonomous vehicles and farm equipment is needed, as those vehicles are already in use.
- Safety for future users is a concern.

"Getting legislation in place for autonomous farm equipment. They are legally allowed to drive on their property, but not on public roads, so crossing roads, so that will be important because that's important for right now."

"Making sure there's shoulders and safety on the rural routes, that's where our kids will be."

5. Where and how should the County be investing in transportation?

- Safety should always be a top priority, including improving road features and signage about possible dangers.
- Upgrades should be done in consideration for new developments, such as Pointé-aux-Pins Acres and Bremner.
- There are other documents, such as an Agricultural Master Plan, that the county should reference for transportation needs.
- There should be investment in multimodal, safe, low carbon transportation options like bike trails.

"I'll pick on safety. Range road 204. There's a turnout to Hastings Lake, and then to the south lots of subdivisions. Then the end of the road connects to a wide paved section near Beaver Creek. But that road is used a lot and there's a ton of accidents there I know, so maybe look at a way to widen or improve that area."

"Safety has got to be number one. There's often in the news, accidents causing death. Maybe commuting with highway 16, maybe better signage, that this is a high turnoff. There's a bit of a hill there, I think it catches people by surprise especially in rush hour. If you go through there, there are a lot of accidents. Always near RR 215."

"I'm going to steer us into the future, and point us to Pointé-aux-Pins Acres, and hopefully in the near future we will have a facility that will attract a lot of people to our county with ag type vehicles, just wondering if that's something people have thought about for the approach on highway 16, 534 and RR 235, just to accommodate agriculture facility?"



"The county did complete an Agricultural Master Plan, there was a section on ag traffic, in 2005. The ag corridor between highway 16 and highway 15, and it's hard for ag to haul grain between there without a road all the way through, so that was identified, so you can go back and check that."
"I think that bike and walking paths that are safe, I know people that would bike from the rural area but you don't want to bike down highway 21 where it's not doubled. I think investing in low carbon ideas, I think I would look at that, a trail or something where people would bike if it was safe."

APPENDIX D: SURVEY DATA

