

# Lake Country Pedestrian, Bike and Recreation Trails Plans

## WHAT WE HEARD REPORT



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## **Introduction**

Community input is a core component to ensuring that the Pedestrian, Bike, and Recreational Trails Plans reflect the neighbourhoods, people, climate and geography of Lake Country. Engagement opportunities provided an opportunity to not only exchange ideas, information and concerns with the community, but also establish common ground for action.

The following outlines how the community of Lake Country was engaged (i.e. “What Was Done”) and summarizes key themes and directions that resulted from community feedback (i.e. “What We Heard”).

## **What Was Done**

The following engagement activities were undertaken in Summer 2019:

1. Open Houses: Two open houses were held in the community to introduce the project, illustrate how the active transportation and recreation trails networks have evolved over time, receive feedback on the strengths and challenges of the existing networks, and identify considerations and improvements for the plans.
2. Public Survey: A public survey provided an opportunity for the community to directly share their thoughts on key issues / opportunities and provide feedback to shape the direction of the Pedestrian, Bike, and Recreational Trails Plans. The survey was comprised of a series of open and close-ended questions and was open from May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2019 to July 5<sup>th</sup>, 2019. It was available both online and in paper format.
3. Stakeholder Survey: Identified key stakeholders in Lake Country were contacted to participate in an online survey from June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019 to July 5<sup>th</sup>, 2019. The purpose of this survey was to understand local organizations’ involvement in active transportation and obtain feedback on key barriers and opportunities.
4. PARC SOAR Workshop: The District facilitated a Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results (SOAR) workshop with the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee (PARC) to obtain feedback on the District’s parks and recreational trails network.

## What We Heard

### **Public Survey**

A total of 657 responses were submitted to the online public survey (520 completed surveys, 137 partially completed surveys). All of the public survey results presented in this report include responses from both the completed and partially completed surveys.

The key findings from the survey are as follows.

### Demographic & Travel Summary

- The majority of respondents (58%) reside in Winfield. Other respondents are from the Okanagan Centre (12%), Oyama (9%), Carr's Landing (8%), the Lakes (5%), Kelowna (4%) and other places (5%) both in Lake Country but also in surrounding municipalities.
- Almost the entire sample (95%) identified themselves as year-round residents, with few seasonal residents.
- Most of the respondents (46%) belong in the 55+ age group, and a combined 51% for the 40-54 year age group (27%) and the 25-39 year age group (24%).
- Walking (84% of the respondents) and cycling (66% of the respondents) are the most common modes of active transportation being used for commuting by residents of Lake Country. Less common responses were rollerblading / rollerskating (3%), skateboarding (1%) and use of a mobility aid (1%).
- Similarly, respondents indicated that they primarily walk (91% of the respondents) and cycle (71% of the respondents) along recreational trails in Lake Country. A portion of the respondents indicated that they mountain bike (17% of the respondents).
- When asked what commuting options are most viable to them, 91% of the respondents indicated driving. Almost half of the respondents indicated walking (52%) and cycling (50%). Almost a quarter of the sample responded that transit (27%) and carpool (19%) are viable commuting options for them.
- Respondents identified that they walk, cycle and use the trail networks primarily for recreation and exercise as their first choice and as a second choice for entertainment and leisure.

## Issues & Opportunities

Survey respondents were presented with eleven options and asked to select their top issues / barriers with respect to Lake Country’s pedestrian, bike, recreation trail networks. The top five issues are presented below that broadly pertain to all three networks. Key findings include:

- Limited infrastructure and poor connectivity are two issues that have been identified in all three networks.
- Safety concerns, speed of motor vehicles, and the intersections along Highway 97 are additional barriers, which have been identified in the pedestrian and bike networks.
- For trail users, limited wayfinding, user conflicts and accessibility are the main issues.
- About 43% of the respondents indicated **safety** as the most important aspect that should be addressed in the pedestrian, bike, recreation trail networks. This was followed by connectivity with 39%, accessibility (7%) and wayfinding (5%).
- The top three **opportunities** highlighted by participants of the survey were: (1) address gaps in the sidewalk network, (2) more sidewalks, and (3) improvements to existing sidewalks / pathways.

“I live off McCoubrey Road and I can't get anywhere safely on a bicycle. OK Center Rd West is very busy and has no bike/pedestrian easement. Then at Glenmore Road even walking is unsafe due to no shoulder in spots. With all the development in this area, pedestrian and cycling routes must be developed. It is too dangerous now. Develop multi-use pathways along the major traffic routes and you will see more people commuting by cycling. I would!”  
 – Lake Country resident

	Issue 1	Issue 2	Issue 3	Issue 4	Issue 5
Pedestrian	Limited infrastructure	Speed of motor vehicles	Safety concerns	Poor connectivity	Highway 97 intersections
Cyclist	Safety concerns	Poor connectivity	Speed of motor vehicles	Highway 97 intersections	Limited infrastructure
Trail User	Poor connectivity	Limited wayfinding	Limited infrastructure	User conflicts	Accessibility

\*The selection of colours is meant to help identify patterns between pedestrians, cyclists, and trail users.

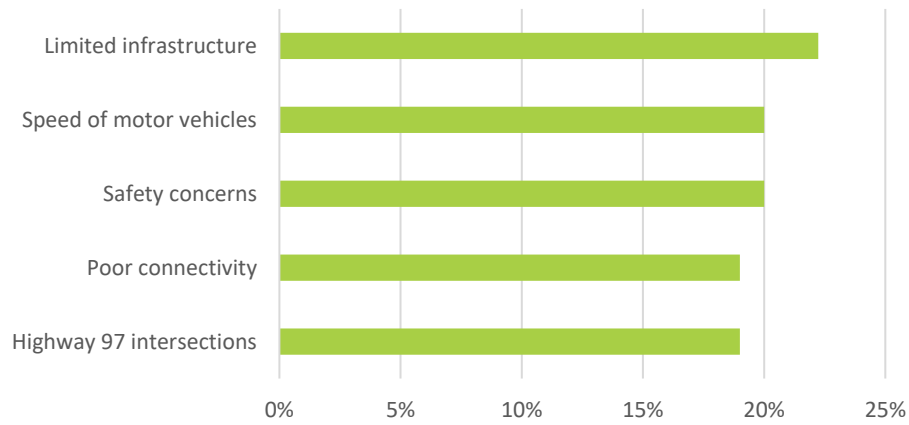


Figure 1 Top Issues Identified for Pedestrians

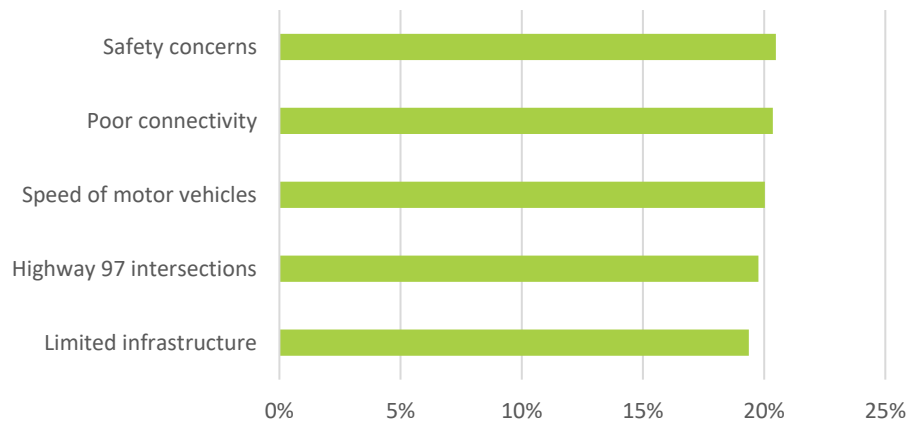


Figure 2 Top Issues Identified for Cyclists

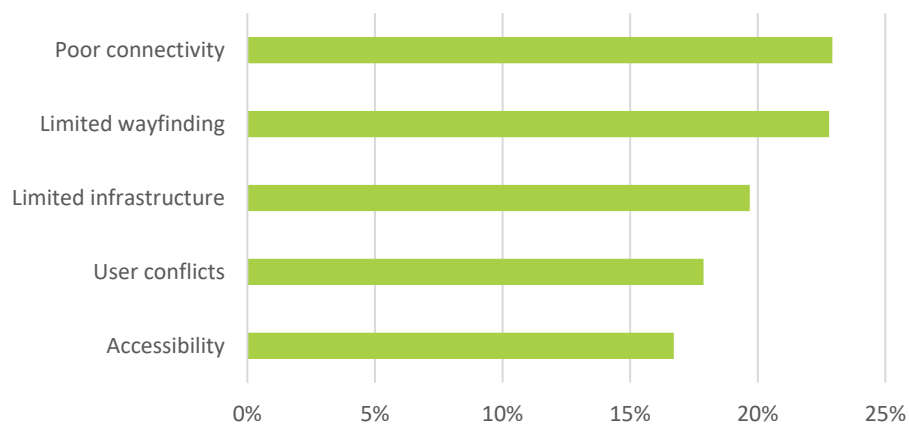


Figure 3 Top Issues Identified for Trail Users

## Key Takeaways

- Community **motivators** for choosing Active Transportation include health, enjoyment, and getting outside / access to nature.
- The **purpose** of choosing active travel is driven by recreation / fitness reasons as well as for entertainment / leisure.
- **Existing** active transportation infrastructure, notably the Rail Trail, Spion Kop, Pelmewash Parkway, Okanagan Centre road, Main Street, Oyama Road, District sidewalks, and multi-use pathways are all well used and valued.
- Core **areas** to address in the network plans include overall connectivity and safety.
- Key **opportunities** that should be addressed are to connect, expand and improve the sidewalk network.

*“Families riding bikes need to be safe on our roads. This means there must be infrastructure designed for bikes or where bikes are in mind. For example: bike lanes should be against curbs and then car parking and then cars driving. Bike paths in between parked cars and car traffic are inherently unsafe. More connectivity is needed so bikes can get to where they need to go safely with main routes in mind.”*

*– Lake Country Resident*

## **Stakeholder Survey**

A total of seven stakeholders responded to this survey, as follows:

- Ecole Peter Greer Elementary
- Macdonald Communities
- Kelowna Area Cycling Coalition
- Lake Country Cycle Ltd
- WALC – Walk Around Lake Country
- FORT – Friends of Okanagan Rail Trail
- Interior Health

## General Findings

- Stakeholders represented a range of sectors including education, non-profit organizations advocating for active transportation, a healthcare provider, developer, and a bicycle store.

- Respondents indicated that the plans could tie into Bike to School / Work Week, Kelowna's Master Transportation Plan, RDCO & Regional Partners Clean Air & Safe Routes for Schools program, Mental Health and Wellbeing: Considerations for the Built Environment, Healthy Built Environment Linkages Toolkit, BC Alliance for Healthy Living's Communities on the Move Initiative, and the BC Active Travel Plan.
- The top strengths of Lake Country's pedestrian, bike, recreational trail networks are [a] the Okanagan Rail Trail and existing infrastructure (e.g., Pelmewash Pkwy, Spion Kop, bike lanes), [b] the District's already active community, and [c] the District's scenic beauty.

### Issues & Opportunities

- Respondents identified poor connectivity, limited infrastructure and inconvenience (i.e., distances are too far, lack of routes to key destinations) as the top issues / barriers to the existing pedestrian, bike and recreational trail networks, followed by speed of motor vehicles and safety concerns.
- Examples of barriers identified included:
  - the intersection of Woodsdale and Bottom Wood Lake
  - connections between Oyama, Windfield, Carr's Landing and Okanagan Centre
  - bike lanes and sidewalks around school areas
  - connection of the Rail Trail to the airport
  - limited accessibility to trails such as Spion Kop
  - wayfinding and signage to trailheads
  - the need for a bike lane connection from the corner of Bottom Wood Lake Road/Woodsdale Road to Woodsdale/Oceola intersection and connecting to Pelmewash Parkway trail
  - the lack of bike shelters and racks at bus stations
  - the lack of lighting along Rail Trail

*"More multi use recreational trails are required. Local mountain bike trails would be amazing rather than sending visitors to Kelowna and Vernon. Safe pathways for cyclists and pedestrians linking Pelmewash and Woodsdale roads, and complete a link from Beasley park area to the rail trail. Road crowding (long term on street parking) is creating safety hazards for users."*

*–Stakeholder Survey Respondent*

	Issue 1	Issue 2	Issue 3	Issue 4	Issue 5	
Pedestrian	Inconvenience	Limited infrastructure	Speed of motor vehicles	Safety concerns	Crossing local streets	Highway 97 intersections
Cyclist	Poor connectivity	Limited infrastructure	Speed of motor vehicles	Safety concerns	Highway 97 intersections	
Trail User	Poor connectivity	Limited infrastructure	Inconvenience	User conflicts	Accessibility	

\*The selection of colours is meant to help identify patterns between pedestrians, cyclists, and trail users.

## PARC SOAR Workshop

A detailed analysis of the workshop results was completed by the District. The summary below identifies the key results from the workshop that align with the main themes from the public and stakeholder surveys.

### Strengths of Parks and Recreation Trails Networks

- The Okanagan Rail Trail
- Natural environment
- Access to recreation opportunities

### Opportunities & Aspirations of Parks and Recreation Trails Networks

- Okanagan Rail Trail being linked to neighbourhoods via the network
- Connections to peripheral services and businesses
- Continue to work with organizations advocating for active transportation such as Walk Around Lake Country
- Desire to improve safety of Highway 97 crossings (e.g., Glenmore connection from industrial / Lakestone to Town Centre, pedestrian overpass at Oceloa)
- A safe, multi-modal Town Centre and Main Street with bike parking at origin and destinations
- A loop connected around Wood Lake



## Themes & Directions

This section summarizes key themes and directions that emerged from the process and serves to deepen the understanding of existing challenges and opportunities.

### Network Gaps

Connectivity gaps or fragments in the existing networks were consistently identified as a top opportunity for improvement. Participants highlighted the need for a complete network that supports enjoyable and convenient access. Numerous examples pointed to the need to connect the sidewalk and bike networks with the recreational trails, as well as provision of such infrastructure in heavily used roads. Many participants referenced the dead-ending of sidewalks and painted bike shoulders as examples in Carr's Landing Road, Lodge Road, Woodsdale Road, and the need to complete the Okanagan Rail Trail. The lack of transit to connect to regional transit options further reinforced the need for strategic connections.

### Safety

Participants identified safety as a top concern, especially for cyclists and parents of young children. Vehicular speed, lack of separated bike paths/shoulders, and highway intersections were all expressed areas of concern.

Specific examples included safe crossings along Highway 97 (especially close to Turtle Bay), improvement of Carr's Landing Road infrastructure as it currently feels unsafe for both pedestrians and cyclists, and separated facilities for active transportation modes along Woodsdale Road to enable people to safely complete the Wood Lake loop. There was a general consensus from participants that drivers of personal vehicles and trucks are driving fast and pay little attention to active transportation mode users.

### Sidewalk Maintenance and Expansion

Participants reinforced the direct link between level of maintenance and the ability to use existing sidewalk infrastructure safely. Many expressed concerns with sidewalk condition, such as uneven sidewalks, inaccessible let downs, and street lighting, for example.

### *Wayfinding*

Numerous participants expressed the desire for better wayfinding across the trail network, and considered the limited wayfinding as a barrier for them to access trails.

### *Infrastructure Improvements*

Participants expressed desire for infrastructure improvements to directly address safety concerns, improve accessibility and support active mobility choices. Participants identified the need for a concentration of convenient routes to key community destinations as well as physically separated bike lanes, and pavement of the Rail Trail to enable regular commuting.