

Move Commute Connect

WHAT WE HEARD REPORT







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INTRODUCTION

The Province of British Columbia has developed an active transportation strategy to increase the number of British Columbians who chose active transportation to get around. We want to ensure that the Strategy reflects the needs and priorities of British Columbians of all ages, genders, abilities, socioeconomic levels and geographies. To support this, we reached out to Indigenous communities, local communities, stakeholders and the public for input. The engagement was designed to connect with and hear from active transportation users, advocacy groups, planners, engineers, health professionals and elected leaders who are working to make active transportation options safer, more convenient and accessible for their communities.

From March 1 to April 15, 2019, we heard from more than 180 stakeholders on the successes, challenges and opportunities for advancing active transportation in the province. During the same period, we also received more than 1,800 comments from the public through our online engagement platform about their thoughts on how we can best promote active transportation in the province. Public input, along with research on best practices and input from active transportation groups, transportation providers, local and Indigenous communities and an inter-ministry working group helped us create a shared vision for active transportation and identify initiatives and actions that we could take to increase active transportation use throughout the province.

This report summarizes what we heard during regional forums and from the online engagement.

More than 1,800 comments were shared through the CleanBC engagement website. View all direct input online – <https://engage.gov.bc.ca/activetransportation/>



DEVELOPING THE STRATEGY

In September 2018, 30 representatives from 17 ministries attended a workshop to initiate discussion about development of a provincial active transportation strategy. The workshop resulted in 47 recommendations to support the growth of active transportation, grouped under four key themes (or pillars): build; educate and encourage; leadership; and safety. These pillars were used to frame the discussion with stakeholders and structure the feedback.

Engaging with the public

The GovTogetherBC platform hosted the online engagement program and explored three discussion questions posted two weeks apart from March 1 to April 15. Over the course of the six-week period, we received more than 1,800 comments. The three questions were:

- What does active transportation mean to you and how does it fit into your life?
- What are some of the challenges in your everyday life that prevent you from moving towards using active transportation modes? What are some of your concerns about active transportation?
- What is the most important action that government can take to promote active transportation? What is unique in your community or region that needs to be considered?

After the stakeholder and online public engagement closed, we presented key preliminary themes to members of the Planning Institute of British Columbia and the BC Alliance for Healthy Living in two interactive webinars.

Online engagement

A webpage: engage.gov.bc.ca/govtogetherbc/consultation/active-transportation/ was created to host information about the active transportation engagement program and to solicit feedback from the public. All comments received during the engagement period can be found on the webpage.

Engaging with regional stakeholders

Between March 1st and March 15th, we held regional fora in eight communities across the province: Surrey, Vancouver, Penticton, Courtenay, Nelson, Terrace, Prince George and Victoria. Invitations were sent out to more than 600 stakeholders representing 350 municipalities, regional districts, advocacy groups, school districts, non-profit organizations and businesses. Over 180 stakeholders attended a session in or close to their community.

In the forums, we solicited input in a variety of ways using a mix of small group (table) discussions exercises followed by a world café style event. At the end of the forum, each participant was given five dots and asked to identify the key priorities required to advance active transportation. Each table had a facilitator to record the discussion to ensure all input was captured. Below are the topics we explored during the forums:

Exercise 1: Active Transportation Discussion

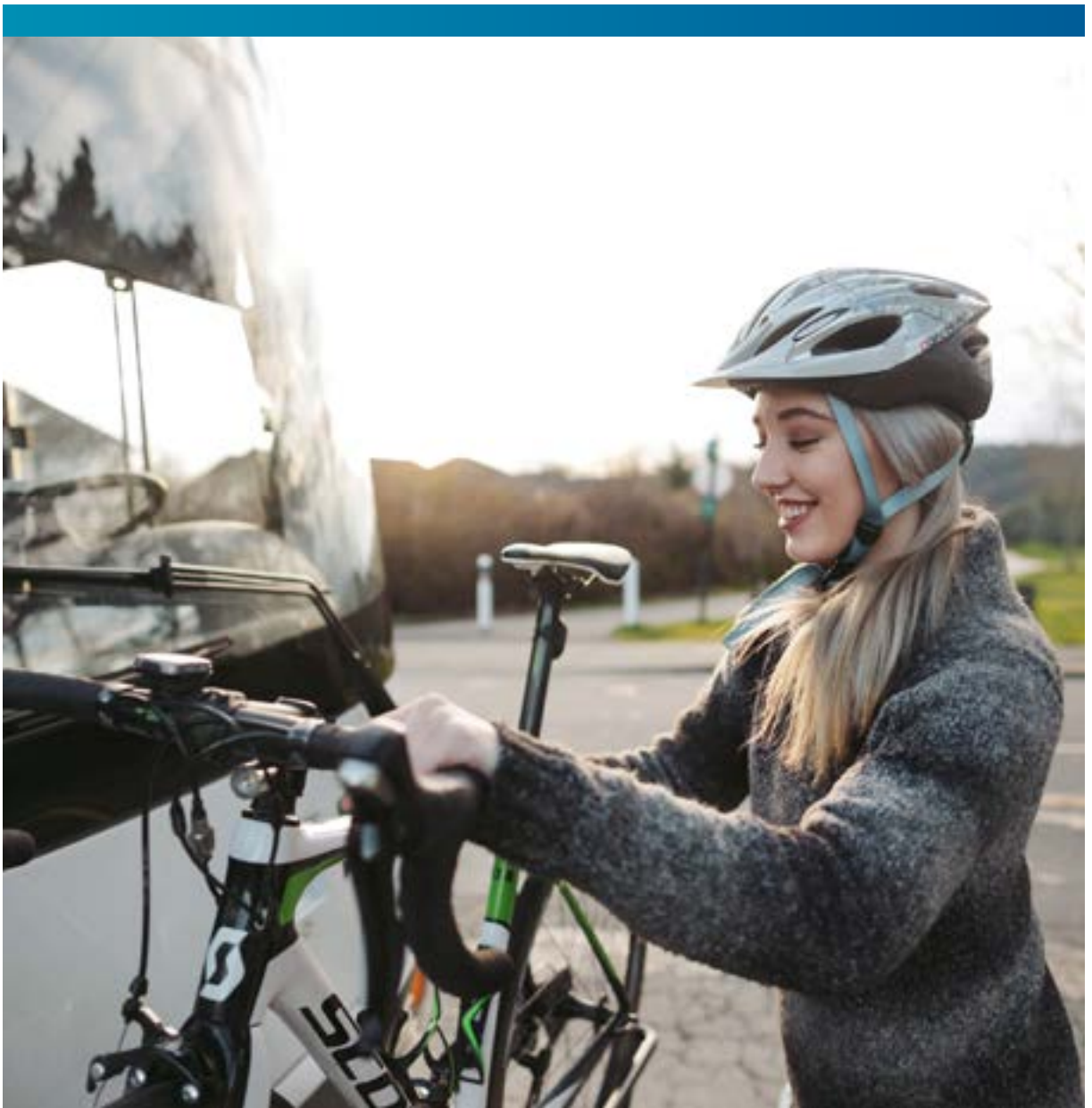
Each table was asked to discuss the following three questions:

1. What is currently being done in your community for active transportation?
2. What are some of the successes in active transportation? Where has progress been made?
3. What are the barriers to active transportation?

Exercise 2: The four pillars

Each table was asked to discuss the four pillars and to identify potential changes or additions. Based on this discussion, the definitions of the pillars were revised for exercise 3.

Exercise 3: World Café—Strategies and Actions associated with each pillar



WHO WE HEARD FROM

In communities

- **8 regional forums** in Surrey, Vancouver, Penticton, Courtenay, Nelson, Terrace Prince George, Victoria
- More than **180 participants** representing more than **130 organizations**

Online

- **1842** submitted comments
- **2 webinars** with 160 participants
- **383** email submissions
- **8,378** Website visits

Stakeholders

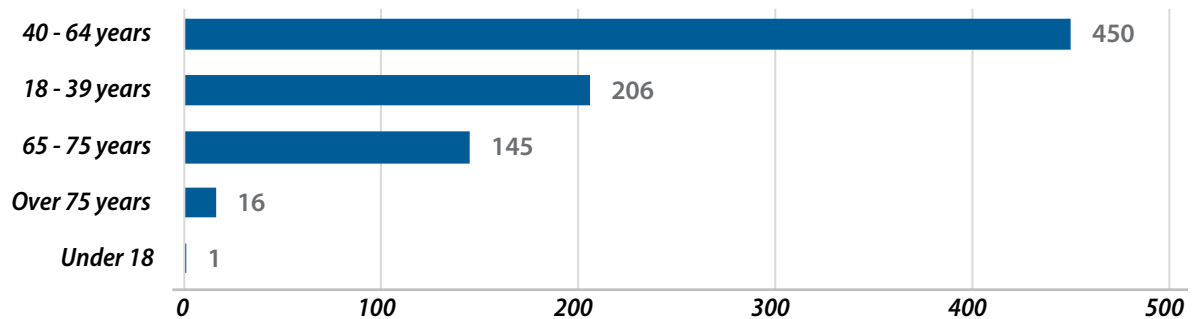
We wanted to hear from a diverse range of stakeholders from all areas of the province, so we organized a number of regional forums and invited stakeholders who could provide a wide range of experiences and views.

- **Local governments**
 - *Indigenous Governments*
 - *Municipal governments*
 - *Regional districts*
 - *Islands Trust Council*
 - *Union of BC Municipalities*
- **Academic institutions**
- **Student unions**
- **Active transportation advocacy organizations**
- **Active transportation and mode-share businesses**
- **Environmental groups**
- **Seniors' organizations**
- **Accessibility organizations**
- **Health authorities and health-related stakeholders**
- **School districts**
- **Insurance Corporation of British Columbia (provincial insurer and safety regulator)**
- **Transit authorities**

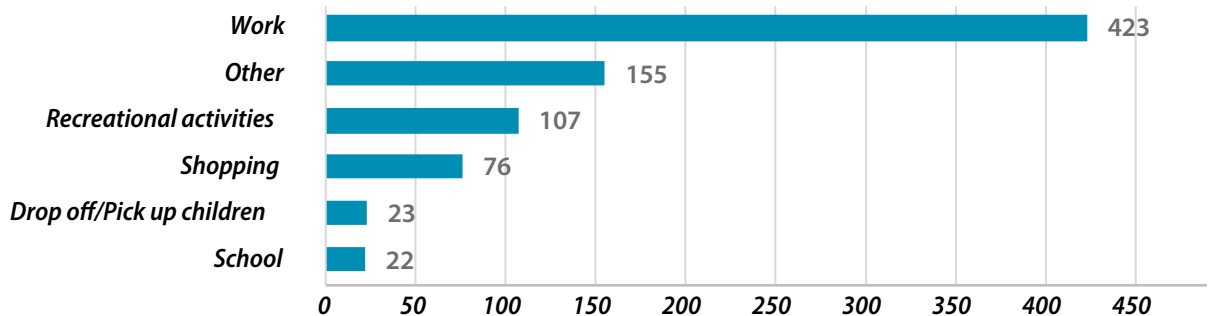
Public

We also wanted to hear from all British Columbians to understand what active transportation means to them, the challenges they face using it, and the opportunities they see to improve it in their communities. Through the online engagement we heard from people throughout the province, although a large majority of participants identified themselves as living on Vancouver Island or in the Lower Mainland. Respondents were most likely (52 percent) to use active transportation to commute to work and to fall in the 40—64 age range. Although typical distances travelled varied significantly, five to 10 kilometres was the most common distance.

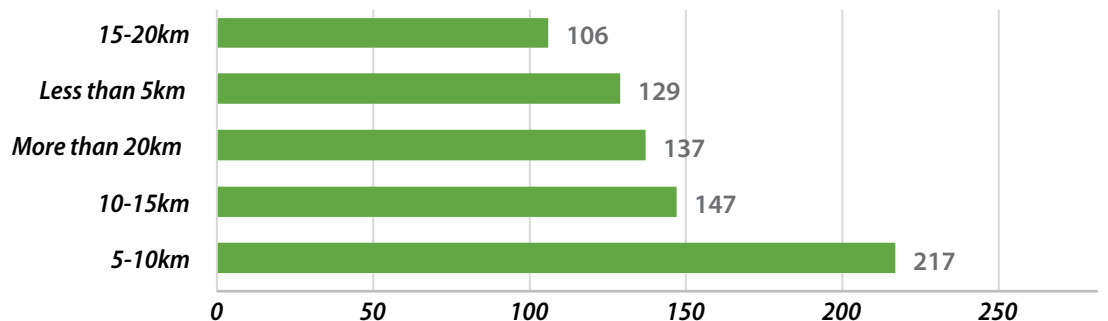
Number of participants by age



Number of participants by type of primary commute



Number of participants by typical distance travelled



WHAT WE HEARD

Regional Fora

Current successes

Residents and communities across the province are integrating active transportation into how they get to places of work, play and for their day-to-day activities. In many communities, walking, cycling and even cross-country skiing are practical and enjoyable options to get around. We heard about the many success in shifting to towards more active transportation in communities big and small. Shifts in investment, community support and education in support of active transportation are all leading to greater health, social and economic outcomes.

Lower Mainland

- Active transportation advocacy groups provide cycling education programs in elementary schools and help students gain the knowledge and skills to safely use active transportation to get around the Lower Mainland
- The City of Surrey recently adopted the Vision Zero Surrey Safe Mobility Plan with the goal of having zero people killed or seriously injured on its roads
- Municipal policies and bylaws are in place to encourage the integration of active transportation infrastructure into new developments in many communities
- Increased supportive active transportation infrastructure on public transit system such as bike parkades, bike racks on buses and Skytrain

Southern Interior

- Communities in the Okanagan are educating residents about how to use active transportation networks in their areas, such as Vernon with its 'How We Roll' Guide
- Indigenous governments, municipal governments, regional districts and the Province are working together to connect communities through the Okanagan Rail Trail for active transportation and mobility-assisting device users



Vancouver Island and coastal communities

- Active transportation is popular on Vancouver Island with strong uptake in communities like Campbell River, where Bike to Work Week has been happening for more than two decades
- Multi-use trails, such as the Cowichan Valley Trail, are popular and help to promote active transportation in the region
- Bikes share programs are making it easier for residents in Victoria, Saanich, Esquimalt and Langford to get around by bike
- The City of Powell River adopted the Municipal Cycling Plan to expand its cycling network

Kootenay and Boundary

- Active transportation is a popular way of commuting for residents in Nelson; 31 percent of Nelson residents walk or cycle to work
- Big uptake in e-bike purchases and use
- Castlegar has been taking a complete streets approach to include sidewalks and bike lanes on Columbia Avenue

North Central

- Parking restrictions in downtown Terrace are used to encourage active transportation by visitors and shoppers
- In Terrace, multi-use paths (such as the Grand Trunk Pathway) offer popular, safe pedestrian and cycling routes
- Prince George has more than 70 kms of bike lanes connecting the city
- Initiatives such as free transit during Bike to Work Week in Prince George encourages residents to try alternative ways of getting around



Challenges to active transportation

While there are many successes across the province when it comes to the advancement of active transportation uptake and infrastructure, we also heard that there is more we can do to make walking, cycling and other forms of people-powered transportation a better option for getting around.

People shared with us the barriers that they, their neighbours and their organization's members face when it comes to active transportation. Common challenges raised by forum participants across the province include insufficient or absent:

- Infrastructure
- Safety
- Funding and resources
- Leadership, legislation and regulation
- Community design and land use
- Education
- Support for active transportation modes
- Data and research
- Partnerships

Infrastructure

The lack of infrastructure was the top challenge that came up during regional forums. Participants throughout the province identified that the car-centric infrastructure that makes up much of the transportation networks in our province is a barrier to advancing active transportation. Specific examples given include:

- Shoulders on roads that are too narrow, making it feel like active transportation infrastructure is competing with car infrastructure.
- Connectivity was also identified as a challenge with inter-regional connections between smaller communities lacking, particularly in the Southern Interior and Northern Central parts of the province.
- There is also a lack of connectivity within communities themselves. There are gaps when it comes to bike paths and sidewalks, creating interruptions in trips. In some communities, infrastructure like sidewalks are limited to the downtown core. In places where there are bike lanes, there is often a lack of supportive infrastructure such as secure bike storage or end-of-trip facilities,
- Street furniture like bus shelters, benches and street lighting can also limit the accessibility, safety and security of connections to other active modes.
- Gaps with connections on public transit or infrequent service were also identified as barriers.

Safety

Safety was the second most talked about challenge to advancing active transportation. It was framed as the biggest barrier to active transportation modes like cycling. Some stakeholders shared that they've known family, neighbours and friends who have been hurt while cycling or walking. Safety issues can be seen in:

- The lack of infrastructure, such as sidewalks and separated bike paths
- Absent or insufficient speed enforcement
- Roads designed for cars—not to protect vulnerable road users like pedestrians and cyclists.

Stakeholders told us that women and Indigenous people experience the lack of safety on the road in heightened ways. The lack of lighting on paths makes female pedestrians and cyclists feel unsafe on the roads, while the lack of inter-regional connections between interior communities that led to the Highway of Tears (Highway 16) are a high priority for local Indigenous communities. Participants said that in some cases, highways cut across active transportation routes and paths, creating additional hazards. For people using mobility aids, seniors, and caregivers with strollers, the lack of curb cuts and uncleared sidewalks can result in higher risk of physical harm.

Funding and resources

Funding to advance active transportation is a challenge for municipalities and organizations of all sizes across the province. The lack of sustainable and predictable funding for active transportation infrastructure and programs makes it difficult to plan for the long term. Participants expressed that one-time grants, while helpful, can also be limiting as additional funding is often required for maintenance or retrofitting. In communities with a smaller tax base, funding for active transportation is often particularly limited and can compete with other pressing local priorities.

For non-profits, there is a desire to include active transportation programs—such as walking clubs for older adults—and infrastructure—such as end-of-trip facilities in their buildings—but the lack of funding limits the possibility of these programs.

In addition to funding, stakeholders identified that they lacked the in-house expertise and knowledge on the topic of active transportation.

Leadership, legislation and regulation

During all the regional forums, stakeholders brought up the challenges of working with dated regulations and legislation that limit the advancement of active transportation in their communities. The *Motor Vehicle Act* was identified as a key piece of legislation that needed to be updated to include pedestrians, cyclists and new mobilities (such as e-bikes and scooters). Stakeholders said that updating the *Motor Vehicle Act* could better protect vulnerable road users, such as pedestrians and cyclists, and could help to integrate new modes of transportation, such as e-scooters, which did not exist when the Act was written. Forum participants also expressed that an updated Act will also provide greater clarity on the rules of the road for all road users.

In addition to the *Motor Vehicle Act*, stakeholders identified a lack of jurisdictional clarity on some roads as a barrier with people not knowing whether certain sections of the road network were a local or provincial government responsibility.

Stakeholders also shared that, due to the Community Charter, municipalities are unable to reduce default speeds on their roads. Some municipal representatives also expressed that they would like to be able to charge developers a Development Cost Charge to fund active transportation infrastructure in the area.

Community design and planning

We heard that the way communities are planned is a challenge to advancing active transportation. In less-densely populated cities, trips to work, activities and grocery stores are predominately made by car into a downtown centre away from homes. Planning in communities has historically been designed for

car use, which has created sprawling communities where the distances and times between destinations are significant if using active transportation.

In addition to planning within communities, stakeholders highlighted that regional planning lacks coordination. Active transportation networks need to extend beyond municipal boundaries, providing connections to neighbouring communities. Stakeholders also suggested that the lack of active transportation design practices to guide infrastructure development is a challenge. For example, without shared design practices there is a lack of consistency on issues like road shoulder widths.

Car culture

Stakeholders shared that in their communities, car use remains the dominant form of transportation. As a result, there is a strong car culture that reinforces the sentiment that roads are exclusive to cars. Participants also shared that some community members feel that funds set aside for bike paths is a poor use of public funds.

Education

We heard that there is a gap in active transportation education, resulting in people feeling unsafe or unwilling to try it as an alternative mode of travel. We also heard that education is needed around emerging supportive infrastructure and new mobility options. For example, people who obtained their driver's licence prior to green bike boxes may need information about how they work. Stakeholders shared that there is a lack of cycling programs to encourage more people to walk, cycle or use public transportation. We heard that education is needed for decision makers, engineers and planners on the benefits of active transportation, why it needs to be incorporated into community planning and why it should be a priority. Education about the options for community members is also important, along with information on existing active transportation networks and routes.

Data and research

Information is also needed to inform decision-making. Currently, many feel that it's difficult to make good decisions without data related to active transportation. For example, we heard that there is limited knowledge when it comes to pedestrian and cyclist collision data.

Partnership

Stakeholders shared with us that there are some good examples of partnerships and collaboration across municipalities, regional districts and the Province, but more is needed.

Connectivity on trails

Forum participants representing smaller communities expressed that there are challenges to building partnerships with private landowners to enable greater trail access on corporate and private lands. They shared that connecting some of the gaps in trail networks would increase active transportation participation.

Pillars

To help frame discussion at the forums, we shared the four pillars that were identified by the inter-ministry working group as areas that needed to be enhanced to support the development of the Active Transportation Strategy. Participants were invited to discuss each pillar and expand on them. Below is a snapshot of the type of discussion and how participants helped to further define the pillars:

- **Building** + infrastructure + design + planning + maintenance + connectivity
- **Encouragement and Education** + shifting culture
- **Safety** + health + security
- **Leadership** + governance + legislation + regulation + vision + collaboration + evaluation

Suggested pillars: innovation, technology, funding, finance, policy, legislation, regulation, accessibility

Principles

At nearly all of the regional forums, participants expressed that pillars to the active transportation strategy need to sit on a foundation of principles to help guide and ground goals. As a result, discussions were had about what principles should be included to ensure the success of the Active Transportation Strategy.

They said there is common alignment across all levels of government working to advance active transportation. When describing principles, some participants drew diagrams of how they would fit with the pillars, similar to a foundation or roof of a building.

Principles that emerged include: accessibility, sustainability, equity, accessibility, funding, safety, environment, measures and targets, accountability, partnerships and collaboration.



Action areas

Stakeholders shared with us ideas to consider when developing the Active Transportation Strategy. The section below reviews the feedback we received during the world café session of the regional forums. The feedback has been themed into four categories of commonly suggested actions, strategies, initiatives and programs:

- Increasing safety for all road users
- Growing the culture of active transportation
- Building safe and connected active transportation infrastructure
- Championing active transportation leadership

The following section expands on the key themes and provides a summary of suggested actions and initiatives.

Increasing safety for all road users

Safety was a high priority for people of all ages and abilities, and better education was identified as a tool to increase safety for all road users. Safety by design, embedded in policy and incorporated into the design of active transportation infrastructure, was also identified as a tool for improving safety. Other ideas include:

- Explore province-wide opportunities for road user education. For drivers, this could be training or licensing on sharing the road with other users. For cyclists and pedestrians there were suggestions around safety education programs that could be incorporated in the school curriculum. Examples of such initiatives include: HUB Cycling's 'Everyone Rides Grade 4 - 5' program, bike rodeos and the general inclusion of active transportation as a part of the school curriculum
- More education to address new micro-mobilities like e-scooters and emerging supportive infrastructure such as green bike boxes
- Province-wide safety education campaigns and programs on how to use public transportation and active transportation
- Adopt Vision Zero approach to safety when designing roads
- Apply accessibility lens to active transportation design guidelines by including features such as curb cuts and sidewalks
- Create standards for enabling infrastructure such as signage, lighting, crosswalks and pedestrian bridges

Forum participants identified a number of regulations, policies and pieces of legislation that could be adjusted or adopted to advance active transportation to improve safety and increase uptake. Specific comments include:

- Adopt regulations to increase minimum distances between bicycles and cars
- Explore opportunities for enforcement to better protect vulnerable road users
- Update the *Motor Vehicle Act* to include vulnerable road users, such as pedestrians and cyclists, for better protection; the Act should also look into clarifying the different needs, rights and responsibilities of road users
- Investigate opportunities to lower neighbourhood speeds, such as enabling municipalities to reduce speeds to 30 kph, and re-evaluate school drop-off zones and school speed limits

Growing the culture of active transportation

Forum participants highlighted that more is needed to encourage British Columbians to try active transportation. Suggested tactics include promoting the benefits of active transportation and expanding existing active transportation programs, as well as:

- Expand initiatives such as Bike to Work Week, bike rodeos and car-free days across the province to encourage British Columbians to try alternate ways of travelling
- Work with other ministry initiatives, such as Destination BC, to include active transportation in their campaigns
- Work with partners like health authorities to develop a province-wide promotional campaign highlighting the health and economic benefits of active transportation
- Review mandatory helmet laws for adults, as it may discourage some from cycling
- Work with small businesses and non-profits to increase active transportation participation; this could include wellness programs to encourage employees to walk or bike to work, or grants to help start a walking club for seniors

Incentives to foster active transportation participation were also identified as ways to increase active transportation, including:

- Remove the Provincial Sales Tax or create a rebate program for e-bikes
- Explore opportunities to lower public transit fees or to make it free
- Expand the Carrot Rewards application to more broadly include active transportation

A safe and connected active transportation network

Regional forum participants identified a number of ideas related to the development and implementation of active transportation design guidelines and standards to better connect the province's infrastructure in a safe and inclusive manner:

- Create provincial design guidelines to shape the planning, building and maintenance of infrastructure—such as sidewalks, bike lanes and end-of-trip facilities—and are adaptable to meet the unique active transportation needs and challenges of different communities

- Identify gaps in the cycling and pedestrian network and work towards making them safer and more connected. Improve multimodal connection points such as bike storage on ferries and increasing the number of bikes that can be placed on bus bike racks
- Adopt bylaws to ensure bike paths and sidewalks are cleared of snow, leaves and debris
- Update BC Building Code to include supportive active transportation infrastructure such as end-of-trip facilities, bike parking, pedestrian paths, bike pumps and tools in new developments
- Local governments to explore updating policies such as official community plans and regional growth strategies to encourage greater density, connectivity and access to services and amenities that can be accessed by people of all ages and abilities. Similarly, examine transportation plans to plan and consider alternative forms of transportation
- Explore opportunities to convert former rail lines and bridges into multi-use paths
- Develop trail development and maintenance standards for the province
- Explore working with private landowners to better connect and extend trails

Championing active transportation leadership

Regional forum participants highlighted that the Provincial Government can lead both internally and externally to advance active transportation. Stakeholders identified a number of actions to increase walking, cycling, and access to public transportation for public employees and within government buildings:

- Include active transportation health and wellness credits for public sector employees
- Identify opportunities to include end-of-trip facilities in provincially owned and leased buildings
- Add bicycles to the Province's vehicle fleet
- Apply GBA+ or an alternative equity framework when developing the Strategy to ensure active transportation works for people of all ages and abilities throughout the province
- Embed active transportation in other provincial priorities, such as the Poverty Reduction Strategy, to achieve better outcomes.

Stakeholders shared a number of other initiatives that the Government of B.C. should explore:

- Create a resource centre to provide expertise and education on active transportation best practices to local governments and organizations seeking to advance active transportation in their communities
- Create funding opportunities to build active transportation infrastructure. Suggestions included looking into development cost charges to be used as a tool for municipalities to generate capital to build and maintain sidewalks, bike paths and other supportive infrastructure
- Invest in public transit to better connect communities and their connections to the wider regions
- Conduct research on active transportation to fill the current knowledge gap around topics such as safety

Online

Through our EngageBC online engagement, we heard from British Columbians about what works and what doesn't work about active transportation, and what needs to happen to make it better.

What active transportation means to British Columbians

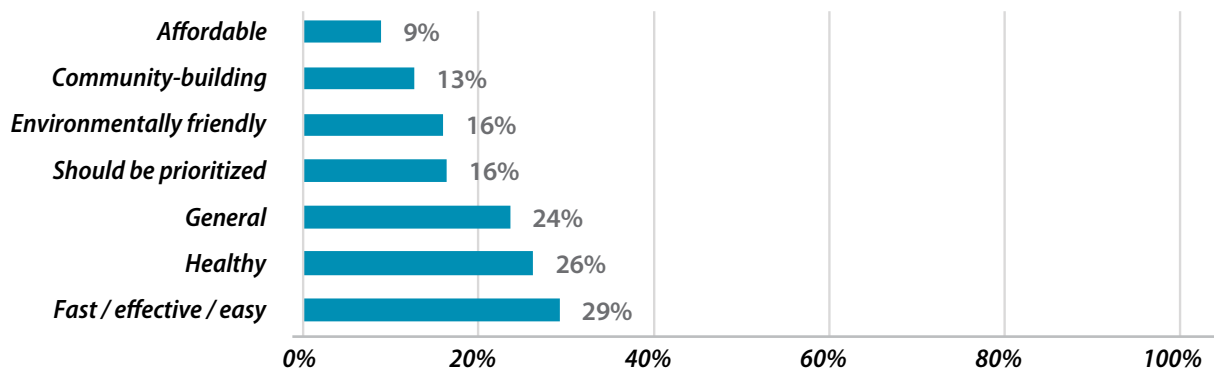
Background/overview

When we posted our first discussion topic ('What does active transportation mean to you and how does it fit into your life'), people interpreted it in two primary ways.

Some respondents took 'what does active transportation mean to you' literally, providing their definition of the term. Many people defined active transportation as 'people-powered' or as anything but private or single-occupant motor vehicle use. Some went into more detail, with definitions ranging from simply walking and cycling, to also including wheelchair use, running, e-bikes, rollerblading, skateboarding, or scootering (among others). Many people also expressed the importance of connections, such as ferries and public transit, and of a well-integrated transportation system overall. Some people specifically mentioned values, such as accessibility and safety, as key to the definition of active transportation: that it should be a way of getting around that anyone can use, regardless of age, physical ability or income.

We also heard about the ways in which active transportation works and fits into people's lives and ways in which it does not. Comments were sorted into one or more themes within either or both of these categories. There was no limit to the number of themes that could be assigned to each comment and many people's comments touched on ways that active transportation both did and did not fit into their lives—as well as suggestions to make it fit better.

What works



Active transportation fits into British Columbians' lives in many different ways. Nearly one-third of respondents (29 percent) indicated that they find active transportation to be a fast, effective and/or easy way to get around. People said that it works well with connections to other modes, like public transit, that it is a source of independence and that it is a fun way to travel. Some highlighted benefits

such as being relatively unaffected by traffic congestion and being in control of their own commute times. Electric bicycles were mentioned by many people as being an important part of their lifestyle and mobility.

“Active transportation is essential and natural in my life. I’m lucky enough to live close to amenities, my work, my daughter’s daycare such that I either ride or take transit. I walk to the shops most of the time, walk to parks and to the community centre. If I’m going further or am short on time I ride or take the bus.”

“It is everything, it is how I move to complete daily tasks. I walk to visit shops and services, make appointments, visit friends, and patronize local businesses.”

“I have lived in the Cowichan Valley for over twenty years, and I rode my bike, weather permitting, to work each day and for errands in town, for many of those years.”

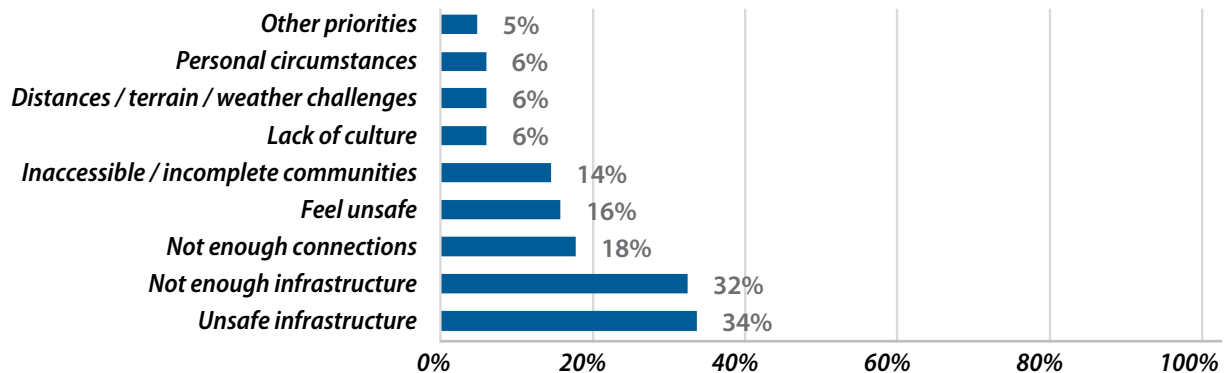
One quarter of people also discussed the health benefits of active transportation (26 percent): that it improves both physical and mental health and is a good way to exercise.

“Cycling and walking are good for my health and like many cyclists, I am not overweight. I am 78 years old and don’t take any medications.”

Almost one quarter of people (24 percent of responses) expressed general support for active transportation, with some saying that it gives them personal freedom and frees them from depending on cars. Sixteen percent of people specifically said that active transportation programs and funding should be prioritized, especially relative to motor vehicles.

Although less popular than the above themes, many people talked about the environmental (16 percent) and community (13 percent) benefits of active transportation. People discussed the positive effects that active transportation has on air quality and climate change. Some also shared that active transportation makes them more in touch with their neighbours and broader community or brings them closer together with their family. Around nine percent talked about the affordability of active transportation—especially compared to motor vehicles, but also to public transit—in terms of both actual cost and secondary benefits such as reduced healthcare costs.

What doesn't work



Although many people talked about many ways in which active transportation is important to them, many also spoke about the ways that active transportation currently doesn't work well, or doesn't fit into their lives.

A shortage of safe infrastructure was, by far, the most common theme that we heard. Respondents told us both that there simply isn't enough infrastructure (32 percent of comments), but also that there is specifically not enough safe infrastructure (34 percent).

Many people focused on the need for more infrastructure to better connect municipalities and regions with each other and to help people move around their neighbourhoods. They talked about a lack of bike lanes and sidewalks both in their community and throughout B.C., as well as discontinuity in existing networks. For example, some people mentioned that bike lanes end abruptly at borders between communities. A need for connections between communities, including on highways, was a common theme.

A large number of comments specifically discussed safety concerns with infrastructure—either that existing infrastructure is unsafe, or that there isn't enough safe infrastructure overall. Some talked about the difficulty of travelling on highways, with speeding cars posing safety hazards due to narrow road shoulders or absent bike lanes, and the need to have safe options to travel on these routes. Many also highlighted safety concerns with existing infrastructure—particularly that many shared-use paths, bike lanes or sidewalks are not physically separated from motor vehicles with some kind of barrier.

A smaller proportion of people (16 percent of responses) spoke to feeling unsafe—not necessarily actually being unsafe. They shared their concerns about seeing nearby drivers as potential dangers, both in terms of accidents and being exposed to vehicle emissions. Some also talked about conflicts between cyclists and pedestrians—that cyclists sometimes move too quickly and too close to people who are walking on shared-use paths or sidewalks. A few expressed that they feel unsafe using active transportation when there is snow or ice on the ground.

“I have been yelled at, honked at and squeezed off the road. I constantly realize how vulnerable I am to automobile traffic as it would take only 1 mistake by a driver to cause me serious injury or death.”

Around 18 percent of responses talked about other kinds of transportation, like public transit and ferries, and how they connect with active transportation. Limited access public transit was raised as an issue

by many people—particularly those from more rural areas. Some people said that although they have access to public transit, it doesn't go everywhere that they need it to or doesn't connect well with active transportation. For example, some were concerned that there often aren't enough places to put bicycles or strollers on buses and SkyTrains. A number of people suggested creating new connections, like high-speed rail or other rapid transit, or bike or e-bike share networks. A few people suggested that transit fares are too expensive, especially when travelling with a family, which makes cars a more attractive option.

Also on the theme of infrastructure, 14 percent of comments talked about the need for more accessible or 'complete' communities. Many people said that although 'downtown' or other urban areas work well for active transportation, we need to start designing communities to be work better with active transportation. This includes having places to work, live, shop and play all within comfortable walking or cycling distance, or easily accessible with connections like public transit.

Other themes that we heard include the unique barriers to active transportation that some people face (such as people with disabilities, seniors, or families) (six percent of responses), the challenges posed by long distances, geography and weather (six percent), and the need for a cultural and educational shift from a motor vehicle-focused society to one that prioritizes active transportation (six percent).

"My active mode of transport is a power wheelchair. It's everything, my way of moving. For me, for example, I'm looking for ways that sidewalks in urban environments are made more accessible to me, that curb cuts are in all the right places. However, I'm also looking for access to nature with trails being built that are appropriate for wheelchairs to roll on."

"Active transportation doesn't work for everyone. We have disabled people and seniors who must rely on a vehicle to get to and from appointments. There will ALWAYS be this demographic and we cannot leave them in the lurch."

"As a senior I'm becoming painfully aware that the focus of "active transportation" appears to be on able-bodied individuals. Accessibility is essential otherwise the barriers to participate fully is severely curtailed. That includes safe sidewalks, marked curbs/cut-outs, universal way-finding aids, etc."

Around five percent of responses shared that active transportation generally does not fit into their life and/or that they do not like it. Some suggested that no more bike lanes should be built, and that active transportation infrastructure takes away from motor vehicle infrastructure (like parking and road lanes). Some of these comments also discussed other challenges listed above, such as long distances or disabilities, that make them rely on motor vehicles.

Active transportation challenges and barriers

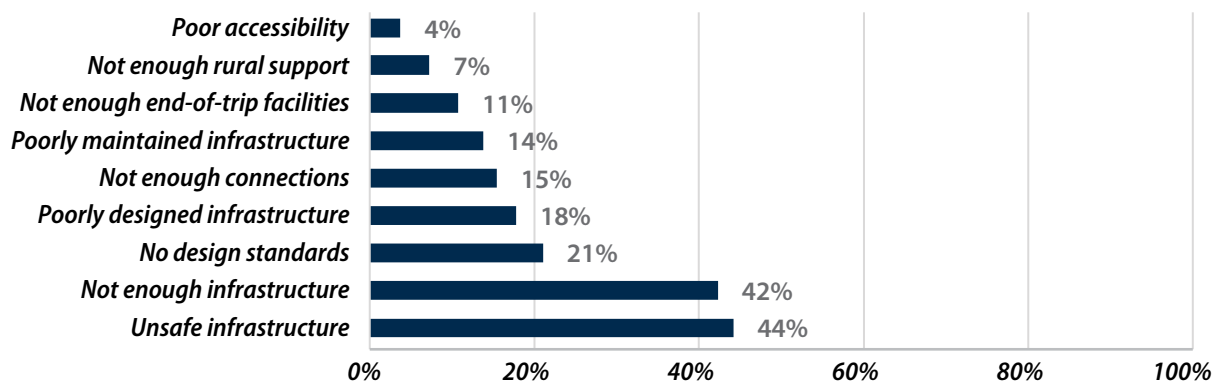
Background

In our second discussion question, we asked: ‘What are some of the challenges in your everyday life that prevent you from moving towards using active transportation modes? What are some of your concerns about active transportation?’

What we heard aligned with much of the ‘what doesn’t work’ feedback we heard from our first discussion question. Because this question was more focused, we have created more detailed themes to pinpoint some of the more specific challenges British Columbians encounter.

Broadly, what we heard fell into three categories: infrastructure, policy and funding, and education and culture. Within each of these categories, we have identified more specific themes. These themes summarize what the public sees as the biggest challenges facing active transportation growth in B.C.

Infrastructure



Infrastructure was the dominant topic of conversation: nearly one half (44 percent) of responses to this discussion question touched on the topic of unsafe infrastructure, alone. We’ve heard clearly from British Columbians that a lack of safe, connective infrastructure is the most common barrier that people face when it comes to using active transportation. People expressed that infrastructure that isn’t physically protected from motor vehicles does not work for them. Some also talked about the challenges resulting from narrow road shoulders and a lack of traffic calming in neighbourhoods.

“Busy roads with vehicles and inadequate space and separation is the biggest barrier for using bikes more often, especially when it comes to cycling more with my family.”

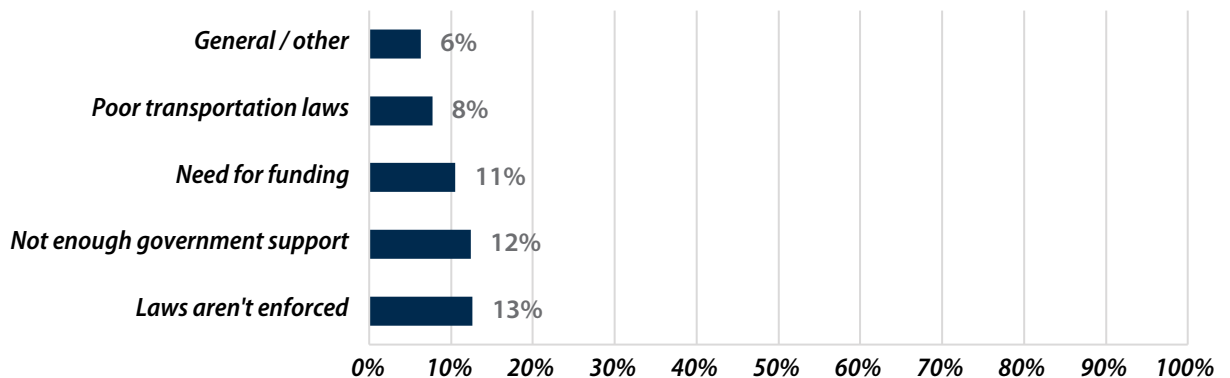
A general shortage of infrastructure was also a major theme with 42 percent of responses. People talked about difficulties making complete journeys using active transportation due to abrupt endings to bike lanes or sidewalks, and highways that are often have nowhere to ride or cycle. Eighteen percent of responses touched on the theme of poorly designed infrastructure. Topics included poor timing of traffic signals with ineffective pedestrian control and that active transportation users are often exposed to dirt and fumes from motor vehicles. Poor maintenance of infrastructure—especially insufficient snow and ice or debris clearing—was a quite common theme, with 14 percent of responses.

“Icy bike paths, bike routes and sidewalks are a big problem. I slipped on ice while riding my bike in December. When I was at emergency, there were several other people there who had been injured by slipping on ice.”

Insufficient connections with other ways of getting around—like public transit and ferries—was also a popular theme, with 15 percent of responses. People also discussed a shortage of end-of-trip facilities (11 percent), a lack of infrastructure specifically in semi-urban and rural areas (seven percent), and the accessibility challenges that people with mobility issues face (four percent). Twenty-one percent of people highlighted the absence of province-wide design standards that incorporate best practices for active transportation infrastructure and complete communities.

“The highway... is the most direct route to my work, yet so dangerous to ride my bicycle on. Why is there not a parallel bike/walk path along all BC highways?”

Policy and funding



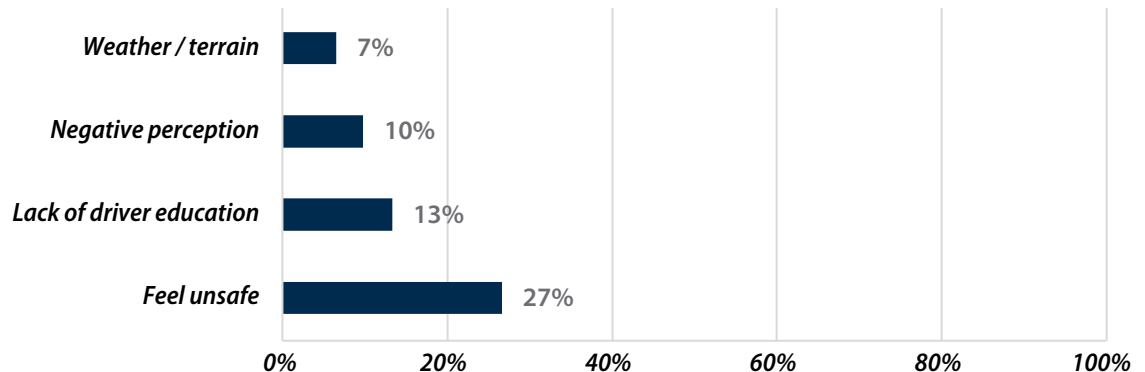
Although not as many comments fell under this category as infrastructure, there were still many popular themes. The lack of enforcement of traffic laws was a concern that was mentioned in around 13 percent of comments—particularly speed limits, parking in bike lanes and theft. Some people (eight percent) also suggested that current laws are not meeting their needs as active transportation users, suggesting that speed limits are too high and that the current ‘share the road’ approach is unsafe.

“Our justice system also fails to police and prosecute life-threatening (or deadly) acts by car drivers. The threat of cars also prevents many others from pursuing active transportation.”

Around 12 percent of responses suggested that government—provincial, regional or local—isn’t supportive enough of active transportation. Comments discussed policy that is often reactive rather than proactive and the lack of cooperation between jurisdictions (and how it leads to inconsistent infrastructure, signage and rules). Quite a few people (11 percent of responses) talked about the lack of funding for active transportation, especially at the municipal level.

“Municipal Bylaws preventing skateboarding and other modes of active transportation on city property, sidewalks, streets and bike lanes including fines and even confiscation of equipment leads to unsavoury relationships between participants and authorities tasked with enforcement. This is a tremendous barrier to me engaging in active transportation in my city.”

Education, culture and other responses



Around one quarter of responses (27 percent) talked about feeling unsafe using transportation. People discussed a sense of ‘competition’ with motor vehicles that leads to tense situations, and that the risks from being unprotected so close to drivers makes them reluctant to use active transportation more often.

“I love to cycle. Having to ride anywhere near traffic and leaving it where it could be stolen scares me. As a senior I use my e-bike regularly and I would use it more if I didn’t have these fears.”

Thirteen percent of responses spoke to the lack of driver education on how to behave around active transportation users, as well as a lack of education about active transportation in general. Many people (10 percent of responses) also discussed that the way society views active transportation is a barrier to it becoming more popular. Some spoke to the perception that active transportation is viewed as recreational, or something associated with negative social statuses. Others talked about feeling like active transportation is seen as being a threat to motor vehicles and people who use them.

“I feel like there isn’t enough education for drivers (and some cyclists) on what the rules are and how to safely co-exist. I’ll have drivers honk at me because they don’t seem to understand that I’m actually following the rules.”

A relatively small number of people (seven percent) talked about weather (particularly snow) and geography or terrain as a barrier that they face.

Actions to promote active transportation

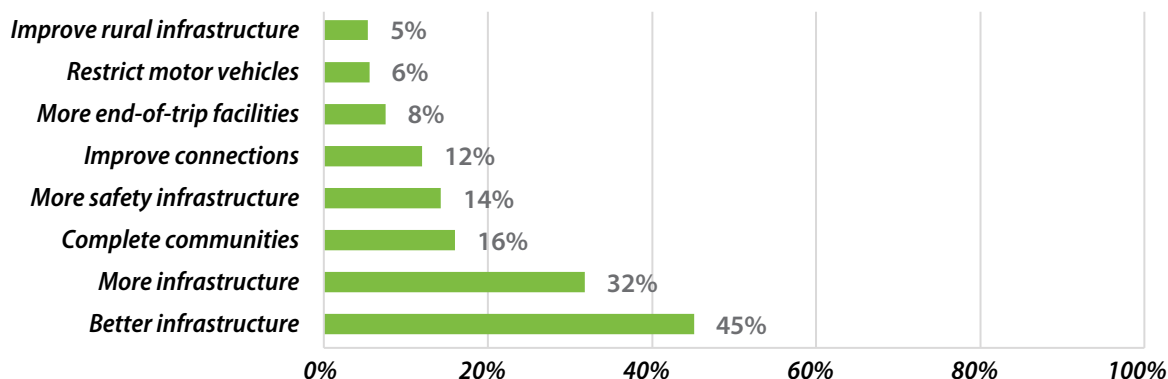
Background

In our first two discussion questions, we heard from British Columbians about how active transportation fits into their lives—including the ways in which it does not. We also heard about the challenges they experience using active transportation, and the barriers that prevent them from using it more often.

With our third discussion topic, we looked for solutions. We asked British Columbians: **‘What is the most important action that government can take to promote active transportation? What is unique in your community or region that needs to be considered?’**

The responses to this question will help us identify the specific actions that the Province can take to promote active transportation both broadly and in individual communities.

Infrastructure



As in Question 2, infrastructure was again the most popular topic. Nearly half of the responses (45 percent) we received discussed the need to improve or better maintain the quality of active transportation infrastructure. Under this theme, people talked about the need for not just more, but safe infrastructure. For many people, this means the physical separation of active transportation users from motor vehicle users—either with barriers, or distance. Some also mentioned a desire for better lighting or signage, or wider road shoulders in more rural areas. People also talked about the importance of maintaining infrastructure and keeping it clear of snow and debris. A related theme (14 percent of responses) was the desire for more safety-specific infrastructure—red light cameras, signage, and improved pedestrian crossings.

“I would like to see better bike lanes maintenance and infrastructure. The basic bike lanes currently in Richmond are barely adequate. Often time road debris ends up in the bike lanes which result in many flat tires”

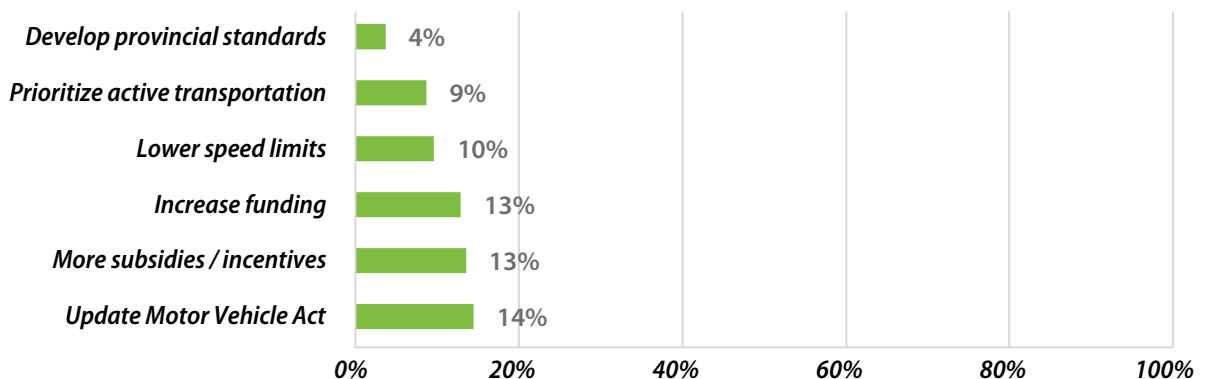
In addition to the need for safer and higher-quality infrastructure, a large number of responses (32 percent) spoke to the need for simply having ‘more’ active transportation infrastructure: more bike lanes, sidewalks, shared-use paths, crosswalks and trails, all contributing to a more connected active transportation network within communities and across B.C. Some (eight percent) also highlighted a need for more end-of-trip facilities, like bike storage lockers and change rooms.

Also on the topic of connectivity, twelve percent of responses discussed the need to improve connections with other ways of getting around, like public transit and ferries. This includes transit with more extensive and frequent service that is also more friendly to active transportation (for example, plenty of bike storage) and more park and rides so people don't need to rely on motor vehicles for their entire journeys. Supporting this is a desire (16 percent of responses) for more active transportation-oriented communities: promoting urban design that creates 'complete' communities, with homes, jobs, schools and amenities all close enough together that people can comfortably use active transportation to get around.

A smaller number of people (six percent of responses) suggested putting more restrictions on motor vehicles, such as reducing the minimum road lane width or limiting places where motor vehicles can access (especially in urban areas). Some (five percent) also emphasized the need for more infrastructure in rural and semi-urban areas, specifically.

“Walking and biking on Cortes Island is dangerous as the roads are narrow and without shoulders. On parts of the island well used hiking trails provide connections between hubs. Increasing these types of trails and adding paths along roads where trails aren't feasible would encourage more people to leave their cars at home.”

Policy and funding



Updating the *Motor Vehicle Act* was the most popular theme in this category, with 14 percent of responses. People emphasized, overall, the need to make the Act more inclusive of active transportation and more protective of vulnerable road users. Specific changes included:

- Increasing fines or other punishments for traffic violations (especially those that are dangerous to active transportation users)
- Increasing the minimum distance to pass a cyclist
- Removing the mandatory helmet law
- Clarifying laws around e-bikes, e-scooters and other new technology
- Changing the name of the Act to make it more inclusive, such as the 'Road Users' or 'Road Safety' Act

Although it may also fall under the *Motor Vehicle Act*, the desire for motor vehicle speed limits to be lowered was identified as a separate theme due to the large number of responses (10 percent). Some people suggested that limits should be lowered, generally, while others focused on lowering limits to 30 kilometres per hour in residential or urban areas.

“Update the *Motor Vehicle Act* to recognise vulnerable road users (VRUs) as a distinct class of road user deserving of extra-legal protections from dangerous driving behaviours and fault in collisions.”

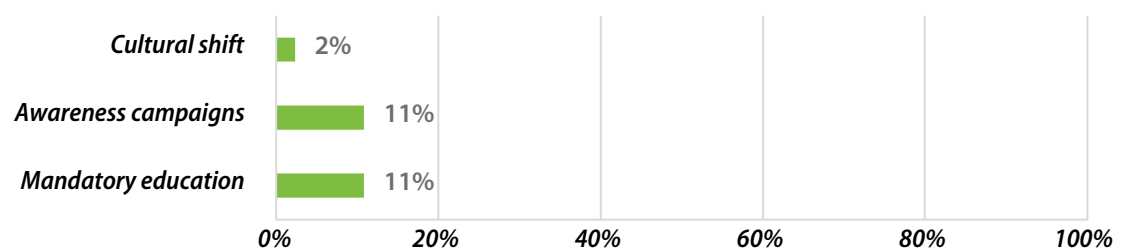
A need for more funding was another major theme, with 13 percent of responses. People spoke to a desire for more funding overall, but also specifically for municipalities and for the purpose of improving infrastructure. A large number of people (13 percent of responses) also expressed support for subsidies and incentives for active transportation use, such as removing sales tax on e-bikes or providing rebates, free or subsidized (e-)bike share networks, discounted or free transit or ferries.

“Offer incentives to be active transportation users. These could include tax breaks on PST or cash incentives to purchase bicycles and ebikes.”

Around nine percent of comments urged that active transportation should be prioritized over motor vehicles, or should see similar levels of investment. A small number of people (four percent of comments) suggested specifically that the Province create active transportation standards, which could include level of service, infrastructure design and best practices.

“Cycling, walking, and public transit should receive a much larger percentage of the transportation budget. Many communities are trying to do this, but as a province we need to pick up the pace.”

Education & culture



A small number of people (two percent of responses) spoke to the broad need for a cultural shift in favour of active transportation, while many more discussed more specific actions that should be taken. The comments in this category fell under two major themes, each with 11 percent of responses. The first suggested making road education that is inclusive of active transportation mandatory—possibly as part of the driver’s licencing program or in school curriculums, among other options. The second focused on awareness campaigns that educate people on more specific aspects of active transportation: how to use it or how to share the road with people who do.

“The most important actions would be better driver training and education to ensure drivers are aware of pedestrians and cyclists, the legal space required, to slow down, to be kind.”

CONCLUSION

British Columbians shared more than 3,000 ideas on how to advance active transportation in our province. Participants also shared with us their frustrations and challenges to accessing safe, connected and easy-to-use active transportation infrastructure. While barriers exist, we also heard that there are many ways in which active transportation benefits our environment, communities and the economy. Despite these challenges, British Columbians offered actions, strategies, solutions to make walking, cycling and wheeling around better for people of all ages and abilities.



June 2019

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