

Municipality of Clare
Active Transportation Plan

WHAT WE HEARD REPORT

Formative Engagement





Municipality of Clare Active Transportation Plan: What We Heard Report – Formative Engagement

December 2025

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INTRODUCTION



About the Project

The Municipality is committed building a community that prioritizes the well-being and quality of life for residents through effective long-term planning, as well as recreation services and programming. As part of this commitment, the Municipality is developing an updated Active Transportation Plan (ATP) that will make walking, biking, and rolling in Clare a safe, accessible, and convenient option for residents and visitors of all ages and abilities.

The ATP aims to enhance connectivity and social cohesion throughout the Municipality. By prioritizing the well-being and quality of life for residents and visitors alike, the Plan will support healthier and more sustainable modes of transportation. The Plan will also aim to:

- Identify areas where infrastructure upgrades would make active transportation more comfortable and convenient for people of all ages and abilities.
- Expand active transportation opportunities around schools, community spaces, and business/retail hubs.
- Explore opportunities for developing new active transportation infrastructure that would connect existing facilities or create new destinations.
- Educate community members on the benefits of active transportation and how to walk, bike, and roll in Clare safely.
- Develop an implementation strategy that priorities policies, programs, and infrastructure recommendations that are achievable and actionable in the short-, medium-, and long-term.
- Explore connections with the Provincial Blue Route cycling initiative and other regional plans.

Project Timeline

The project kicked-off in September 2025 with a comprehensive background review and site visit to the Municipality. This was followed by our first round of engagement, which launched in early October. Based on community input and our technical review, we will develop a draft ATP and active transportation network. Once the drafts are completed, they will be shared with community members for feedback and to gauge support. Feedback from the second round of engagement will be used to refine and finalize the ATP. The final ATP is intended to be presented to Council in March 2026.



How This Report Will Be Used

This report captures what we heard during the Formative Engagement Phase, ensuring transparency and accountability by sharing how community input has been gathered and considered. It also gives community members a chance to see the big picture – what others view as important, key themes, and emerging ideas.

Combined with background research and technical expertise, community insights will directly inform the next steps of the project.

WHAT WE DID



Engagement Overview

Formative Engagement was open from October 6 to 29, 2025 and included an online survey and interactive map where participants could share their current experiences walking, biking, and rolling in Clare. This phase also included a series of stakeholder conversations and a pop-up event.

The intention of the first phase of engagement was to gain an initial overview of active transportation desires, challenges, opportunities, and experiences to inform the draft Plan. A main goal of this engagement was to also identify key areas for focus and to set priorities.

Guiding Questions

This phase of engagement was focused on answering the following questions:

- What is currently working well for active transportation in the Municipality of Clare?
- Where is existing active transportation infrastructure falling short or not meeting needs?
- Is there anywhere you would like to use active transportation to travel, but are unable to? What are the barriers?
- How can the Municipality make active transportation more welcoming, inclusive, and accessible?

What We Did

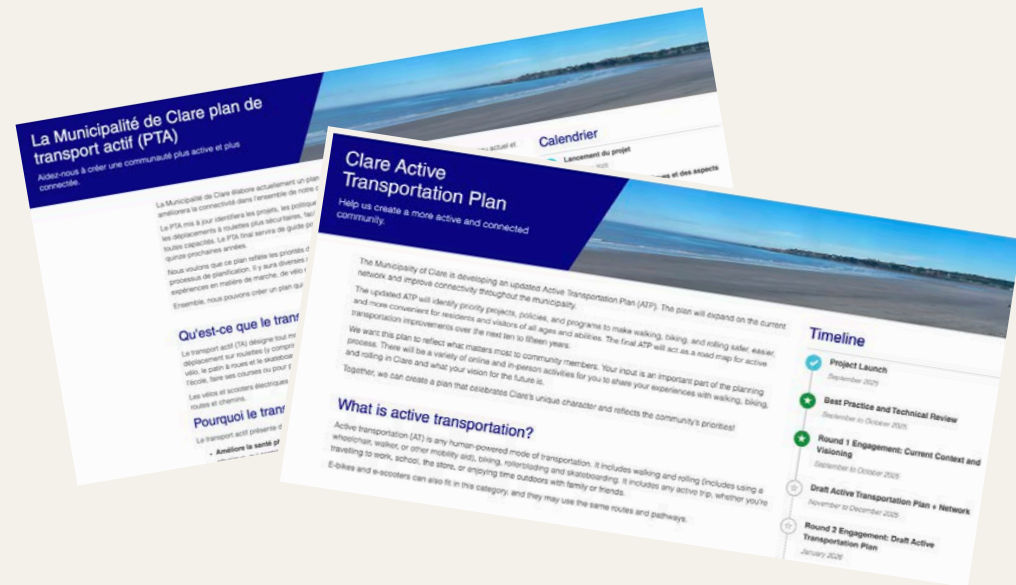
Project Website

A project website was set up in both English and French using the Social Pinpoint platform. The project site is used to provide important information about the project (the who, what, where, when, and why) and upcoming or ongoing engagement opportunities so that community members feel informed and empowered to help shape the future of active transportation in Clare.

You can visit the project pages at the links below:

English site: <https://speakupland.ca/clare-at-plan>

French site: <https://speakupland.ca/la-municipalite-de-clare-plan-de-transport-actif-pta>



Online Activities

The first phase of engagement included several activities aimed at gathering feedback from residents, frequent visitors to the community, local businesses and other community stakeholders.

Public Survey: The online public survey was open to community members to gather input from as many people as possible. The questions were focused on understanding how people currently walk, bike, and roll in Clare and what improvements they would like to see in the future. **The survey was completed by 252 people.**

Interactive Map: An interactive map was also available for participants to share location specific feedback, including things they like and dislike, opportunities, or general comments. **We received 35 comments on the interactive map.**

Pop-up Event

The project team hosted a pop-up event at the Saulnierville Foodland on October 18 from 9am to 1pm. The pop-up event served as an opportunity to promote the project and encourage participation in the online engagement activities.

Stakeholder Conversations

To ensure specific voices were heard and consulted, including under-represented groups and those with significant knowledge on the topic area, we conducted a series of stakeholder conversations. Groups we met with include:

- Villa d'la Baie
- Inclusion Clare
- Coucher du Soleil
- Belliveaus Cove Development Commission
- Accessibility Advisory Committee
- Association Clare Rails to Trails

Youth Workshop

Active transportation is particularly important to youth as a means of independence, recreation, and commuting to and from school, yet they are group often excluded from engagement. To ensure we heard from youth in Clare, the project team hosted an in-person session with students at Ecole Secondaire de Clare to learn where students are travelling, what challenges they face when walking and biking, and what new routes or facility types they would like to see.

WHAT WE HEARD



The following is a summary of what was heard through the engagement activities. A wide range of opinions were shared, but some key themes emerged. All feedback received is valuable and will contribute to shaping the foundation of the final design options.

Key Takeaways

- Walking is the most common form of active transportation. Most respondents walk regularly, especially during the spring, summer, and fall.
- Perceptions of safety vary significantly between walking and biking. While most respondents feel at least somewhat safe walking, only a small portion feel safe biking or using other active modes. Narrow shoulders, high vehicle speeds, and driver behaviour all affect comfort.
- Lack of infrastructure is the biggest barrier, with sidewalk and crosswalk improvements being the top priorities. The need for sidewalks was frequently heard through the survey and in conversations with key community groups. These upgrades are seen as essential to support walking in more locations and seasons.
- There is a desire for safer, more connected cycling options. There is a growing cycling culture in Clare, but minimal separated or protected bike infrastructure. Separated bike lanes, shoulder bikeways, and paved multi-use paths were viewed as the most important additions for making cycling more appealing.
- Wayfinding improvements would help make the network easier to use. Respondents asked for clearer, more frequent signage, improved wayfinding at trailheads, and online maps showing active transportation routes throughout the Municipality.



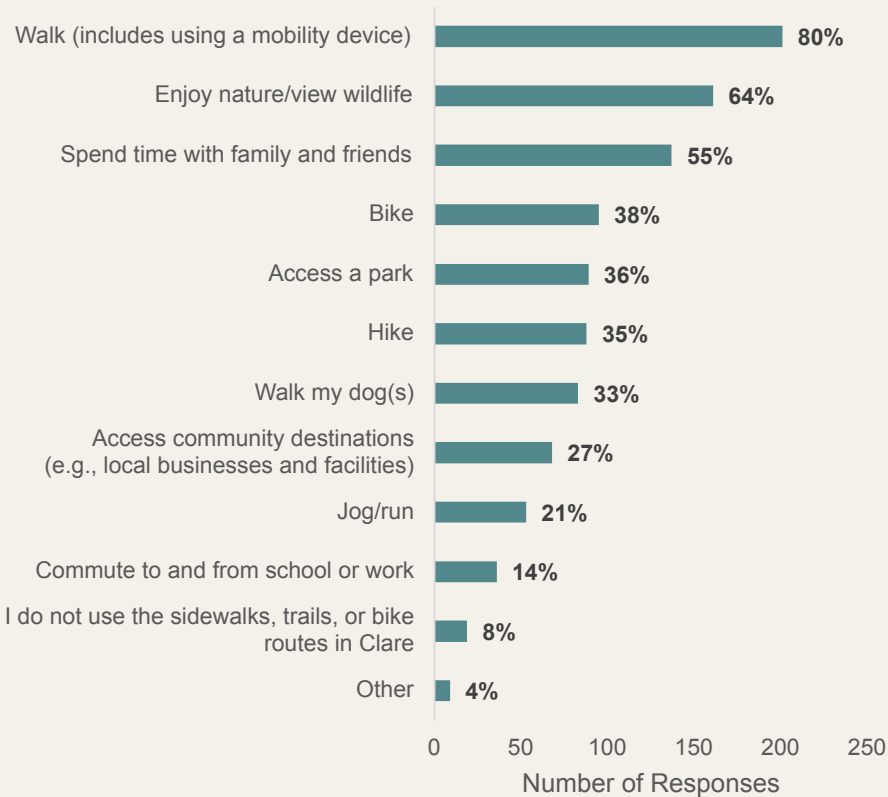
Online Survey Results

The survey received 252 responses, however respondents were not required to answer every question. Total responses are included in the summary of each question.

How you Move

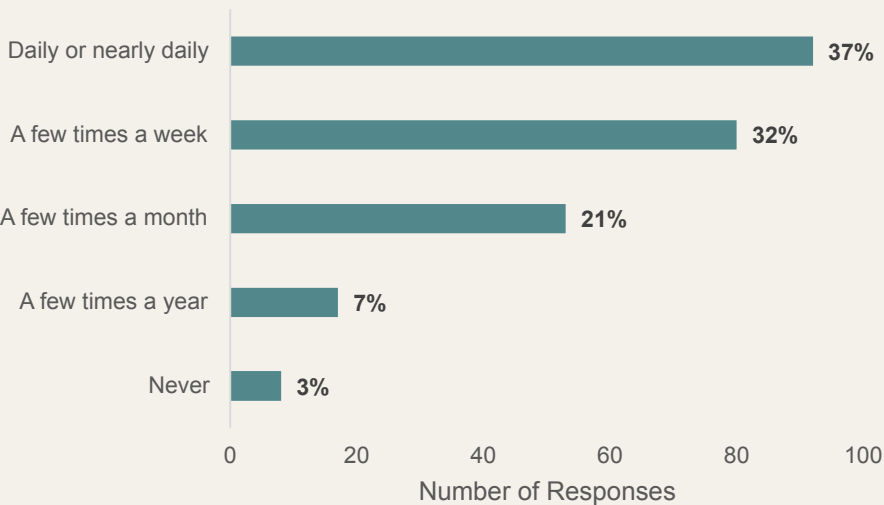
How do you use Clare’s existing active transportation network? This includes sidewalks, trails, and bike routes. Select all that apply. (250 responses)

The majority of survey respondents use Clare’s existing active transportation network for walking (80%), enjoying nature and viewing wildlife (64%), and to spend time with family and friends (55%).



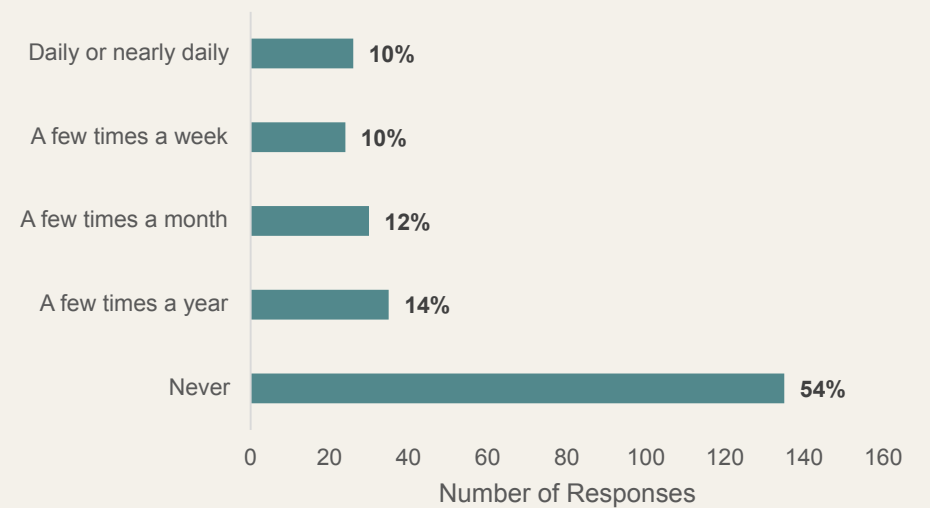
How often do you walk, bike, or roll for recreation purposes? (250 responses)

37% of survey respondents typically use active transportation for recreation purposes on a daily or nearly daily basis, followed by 32% who do so a few times a week.



How often do you walk, bike, or roll for commuting purposes? (250 responses)

More than half of survey respondents (54%) never use active transportation for commuting purposes, but 10% of respondents said they commute by walking, biking, or rolling on a daily or nearly daily basis.



Where are your favourite places to walk, bike, or roll in Clare? (213 responses)

The most popular locations identified by survey respondents included:

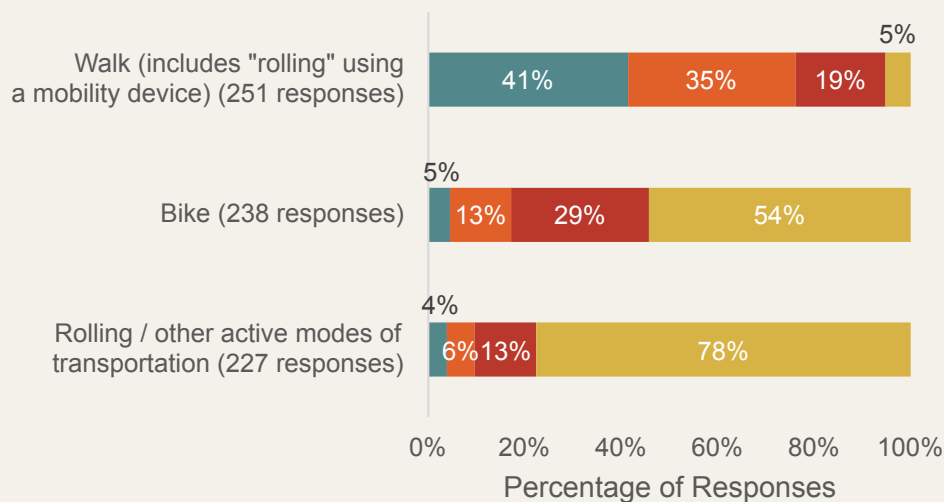
- **Le Petit Bois:** Respondents appreciate the area for its scenery, accessibility, and natural setting.
- **Belliveaus Cove Boardwalk:** Identified as a popular area for walking, many respondents said they use the boardwalk on a daily basis.
- **Beaches:** Mavillette Beach, Cape St. Mary, and Pointe-de-l'Egise were all identified as beaches or coastal areas participants like to spend time at.
- **Sidewalks:** Sidewalks are highly valued where they exist, with some respondents saying they will only walk where there is sidewalks because they feel safe.
- **Rails-to-Trails:** Participants use these trails for walking, jogging, and biking, but some shared frustrations about the damage caused by ATV usage.

Walking and Cycling Habits

During the spring, summer, and fall, how often do you walk, bike, or roll?

During the seasons with better weather, 41% of respondents said they walk on daily or nearly daily and 35% walk a few times a week.

18% of respondents said they bike daily or a few times a week during the spring, summer, and fall, and 10% of respondents said they roll or use other active modes regularly.

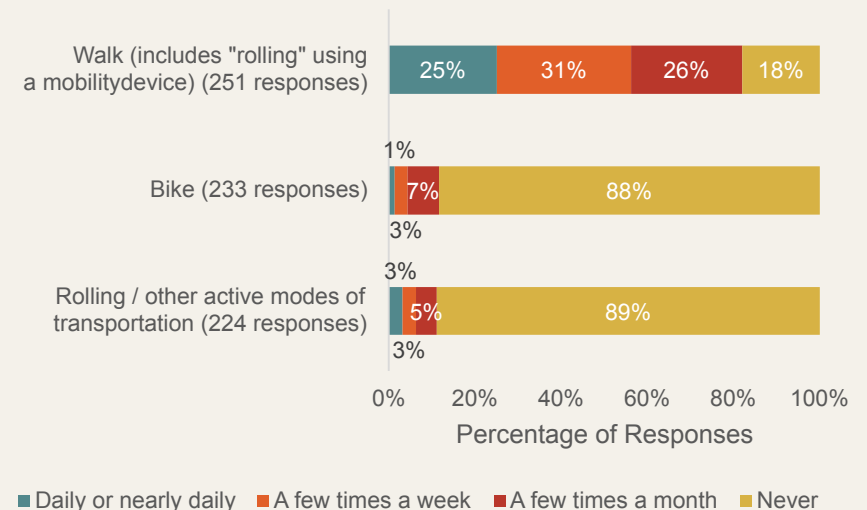


■ Daily or nearly daily ■ A few times a week ■ A few times a month ■ Never

During the winter, how often do you walk, bike, or roll?

During the winter, the number of respondents who regularly walk drops to 25%, but the number of respondents who walk a few times a week stays nearly the same at 31%.

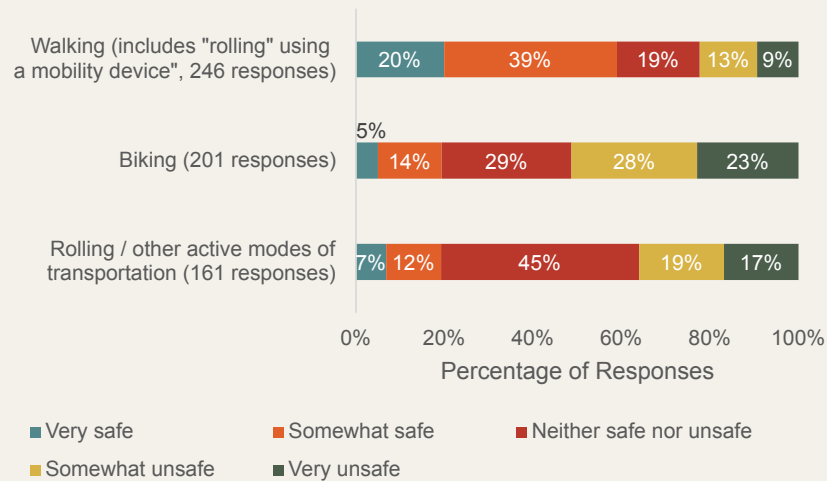
The number of respondents who regularly cycle drops to 4% during the winter months, and 6% of respondents said they roll or use other active modes daily or a few times a week.



■ Daily or nearly daily ■ A few times a week ■ A few times a month ■ Never

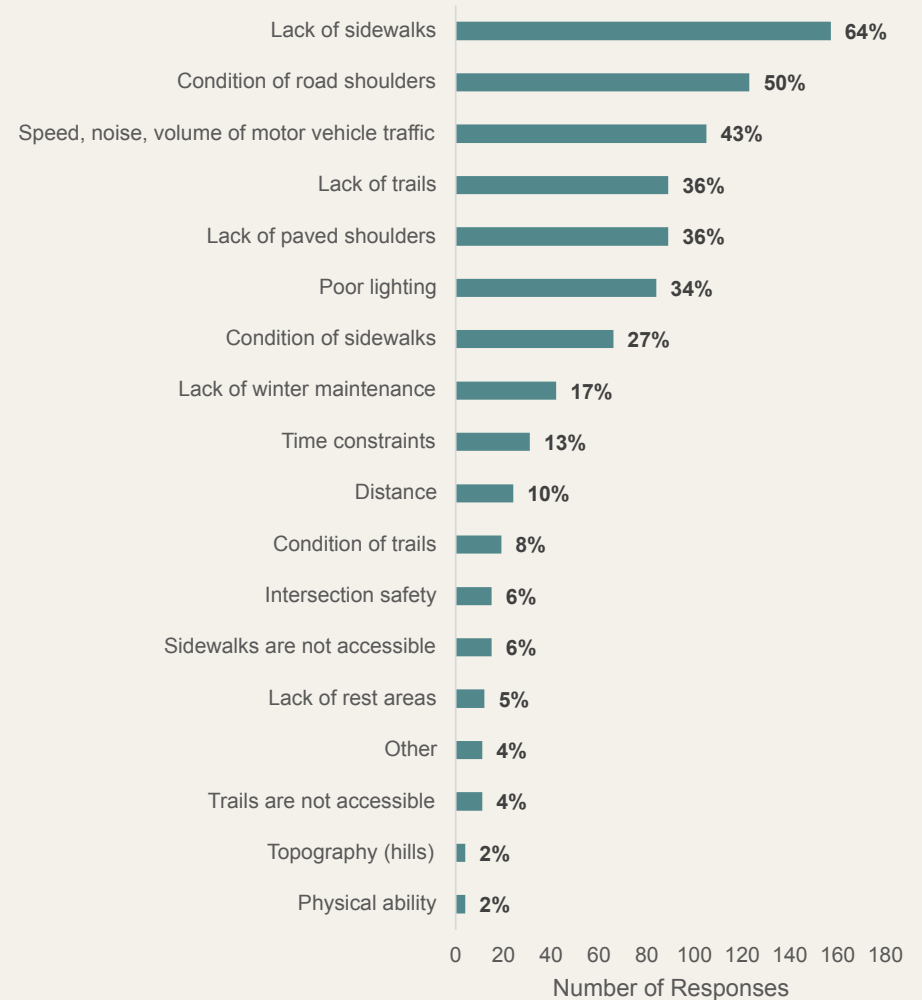
How safe do you feel walking and biking in Clare?

More than half of survey respondents (59%) said that they feel very or somewhat safe when walking in Clare. Significantly fewer respondents feel safe biking or rolling in Clare. 19% of respondents said they feel very or somewhat safe when biking, rolling, or using other active modes in Clare.



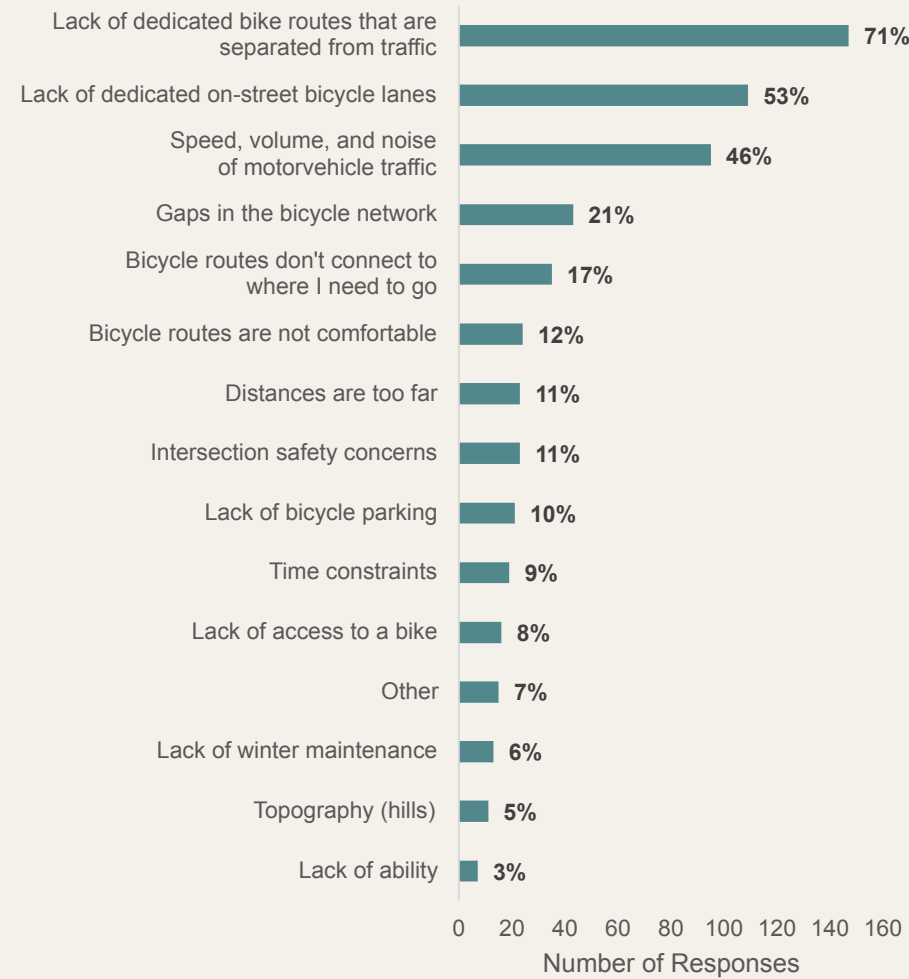
What are the barriers for walking more often than you do? Select up to 5. (245 responses)

The top barriers for walking more in Clare were identified as lack of sidewalks (64%), condition of road shoulders (50%), and the speed, noise, and volume of motor vehicle traffic (43%).



**What are the barriers for biking more often than you do?
Select up to 5. (206 responses)**

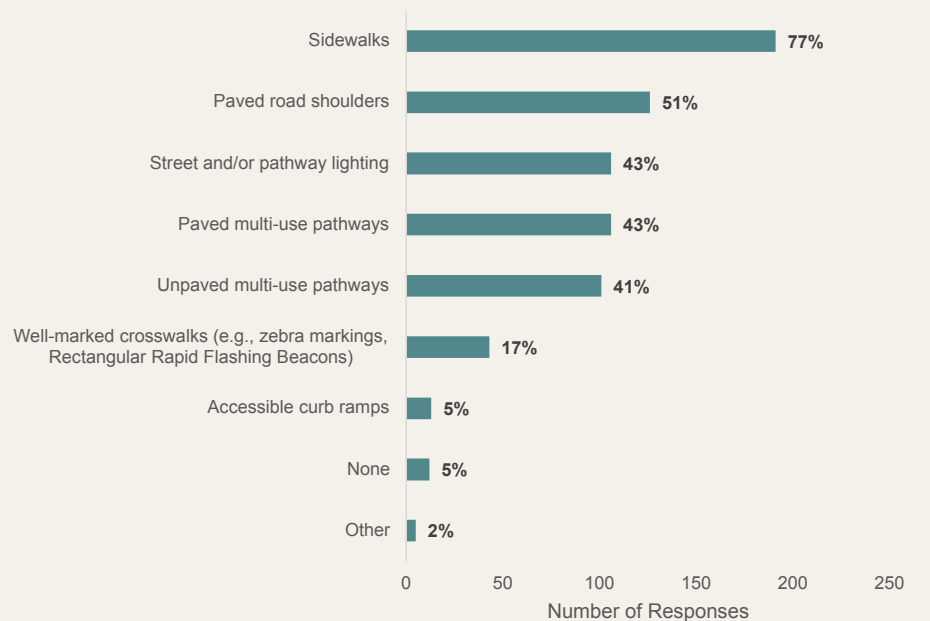
The top identified barriers to biking more are lack of dedicated bike routes that are separated from traffic (71%), lack of dedicated on-street bike lanes (53%), and the speed, volume, and noise of motor vehicle traffic (46%).



Active Transportation Improvements

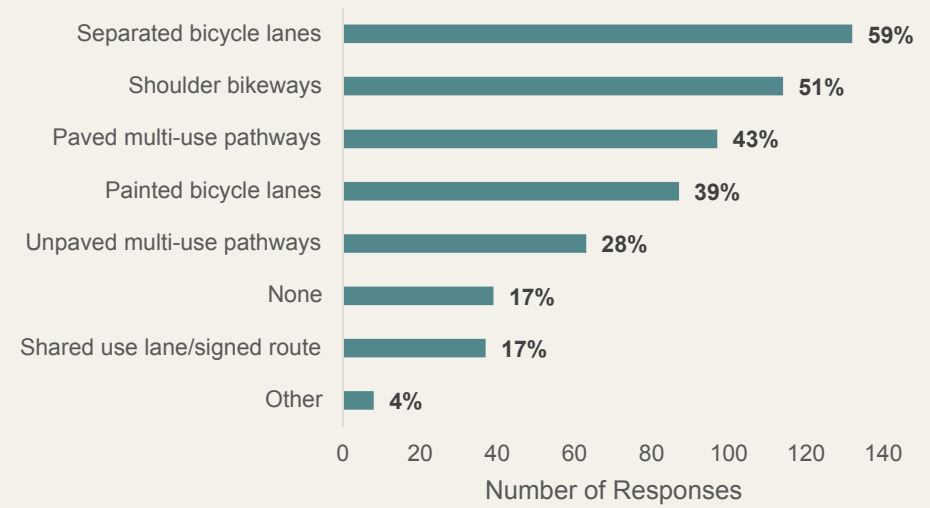
**What types of walking (including with mobility devices) infrastructure would encourage you to walk more in Clare?
Select all that apply. (247 responses)**

To improve walking in Clare, respondents would like to see more sidewalks (77%), paved road shoulders (51%), and street and/or pathway lighting (43%).



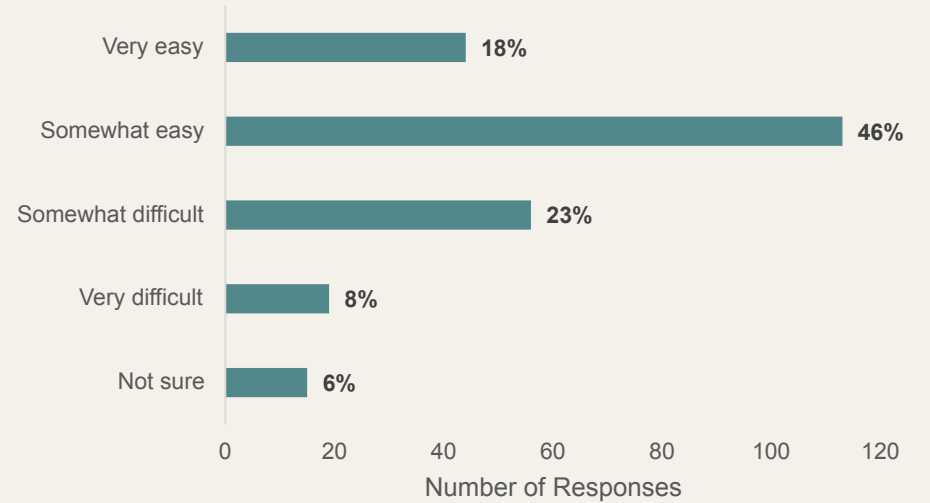
Which types of cycling infrastructure would encourage you to cycle more in Clare? Select all that apply. (224 responses)

To make cycling more approachable, respondents would like to see separated bicycle lanes (59%), shoulder bikeways (51%), and paved multi-use pathways (43%).



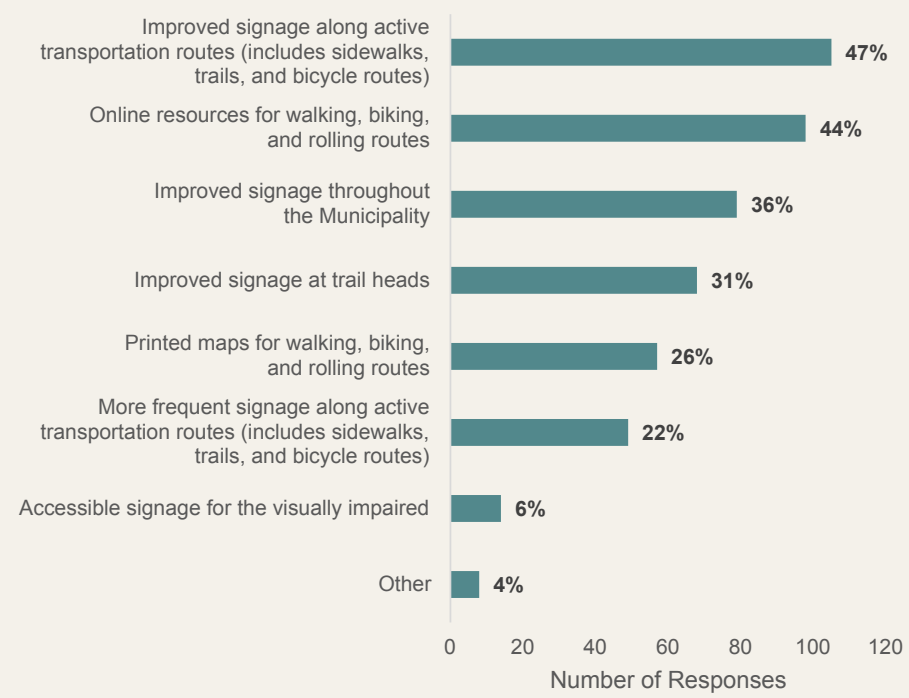
How easy is it for you to locate active transportation facilities (including sidewalks, trails, or bicycle routes) in Clare? (247 responses)

The majority of respondents (64%) feel it is very or somewhat easy to locate active transportation facilities in Clare.



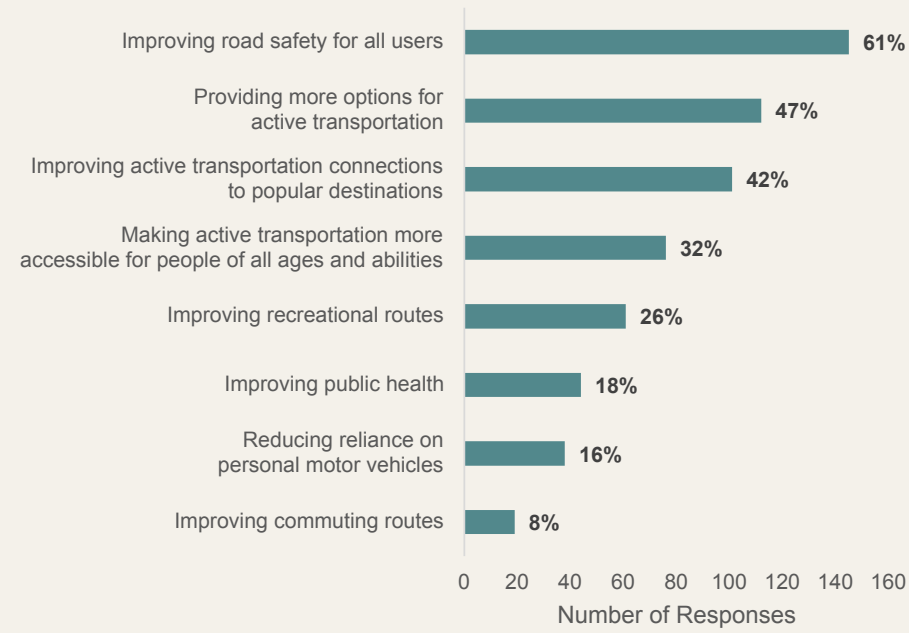
What wayfinding improvements would you like to see in Clare? Select up to 3. (222 responses)

When considering ways to improve wayfinding in Clare, respondents indicated they would like to see improved signage along active transportation routes (47%), online resources for walking, biking, and rolling routes (44%), and improved signage throughout the Municipality (36%).



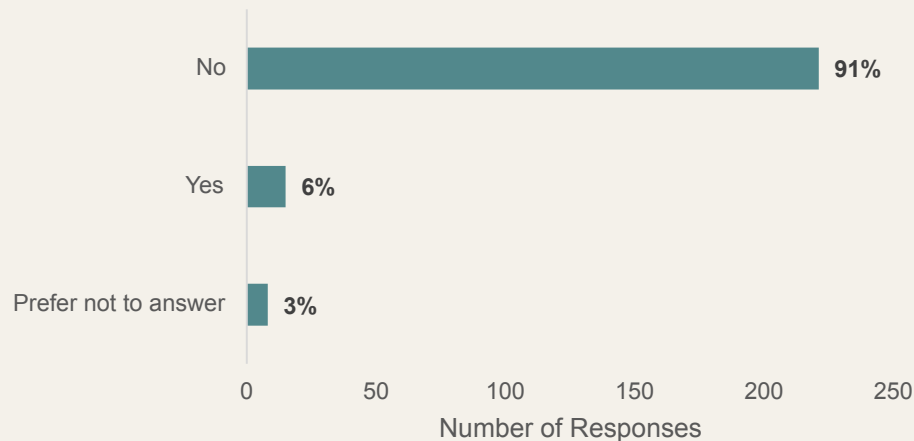
As the Municipality develops the updated Active Transportation Plan, which of the following outcomes are most important to you? Select up to 3. (239 responses)

Most respondents (61%) said that improving road safety for all users should be a priority for the Active Transportation Plan. This was followed by providing more options for active transportation (47%), and improving active transportation connections to popular destinations (42%).



Have you faced any barriers or challenges related to active transportation because of your race, national or ethnic origin, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, family makeup, housing status, or other factor? (244 responses)

The majority of respondents (91%) have not experienced any barriers or challenges related to active transportation.



If you are comfortable, can you share examples of these barriers or challenges? (20 responses)

Commonly mentioned barriers or challenges included:

- **Dangerous interactions with motor vehicles:** Participants shared experiences of feeling unsafe when drivers do not slow down or give space on narrow roads. Some participants shared examples of “near misses” with motor vehicles, describing needing to jump out of the way when motor vehicles swerve to the side of the road to avoid pot holes.
- **Personal safety concerns:** Several respondents who identify as women shared feeling unsafe when walking in isolated areas, especially near parked vehicles with people inside. Some participants also shared stories of their children feeling unsafe and intimidated by motor vehicle drivers.
- **Accessibility challenges:** Respondents with mobility challenges shared how they experience barriers to participating in active transportation due to narrow or non-existent pedestrian infrastructure.

What could the Municipality do to address these barriers or challenges? (34 responses)

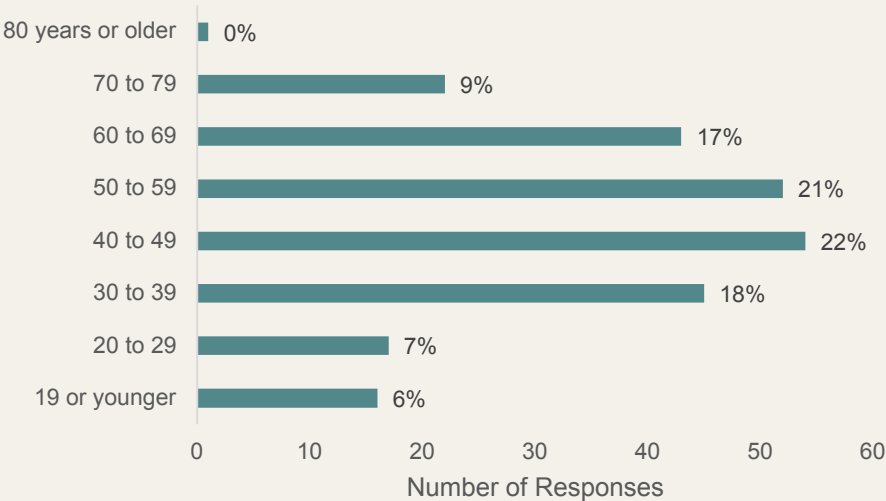
Participants shared the following suggestions for how the Municipality could address the above mentioned barriers and challenges:

- Expand and improve the sidewalk network
- Widen road shoulders and add bike-friendly infrastructure
- Improve pedestrian crossings and signage
- Support more education, awareness, and community education

Survey Demographics

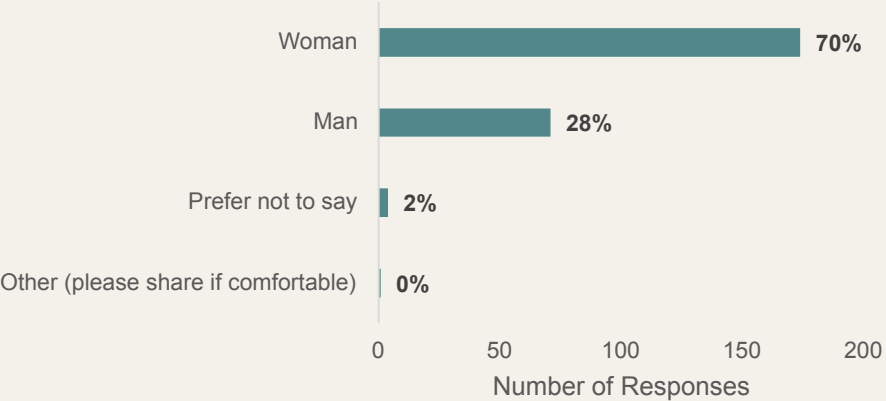
What is your age? (250 responses)

Survey respondents reflect Clare’s general population well based on data from the Statistics Canada 2021 Census, but there are gaps in the representation from residents under 19 and over 80 years old.



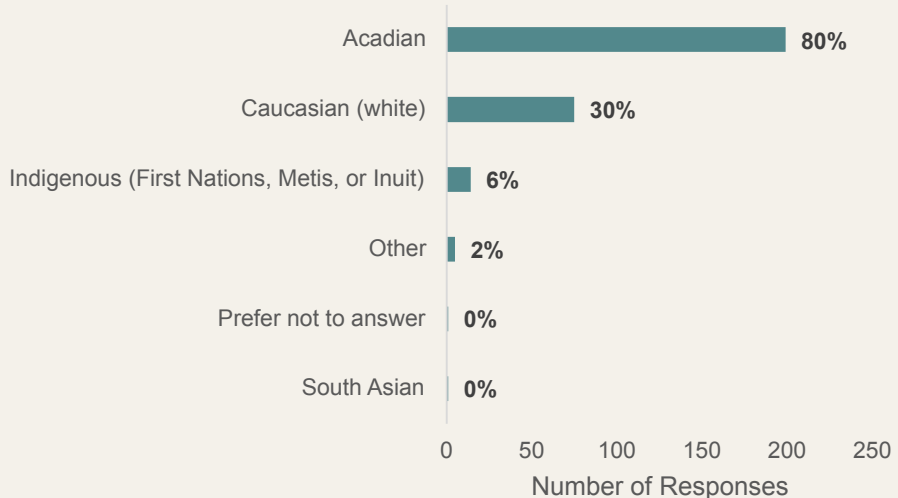
What gender identity do you most associate with? (250 responses)

Compared to 2021 Census data, respondents who identify as women are over represented in the survey responses.



Which of the following best describes your ethnic or cultural background? Select all that apply. (250 responses)

There is a strong Acadian culture in Clare, and that was evident in our survey responses. The 2021 Census data shows 45% of Clare residents identify as Acadian and another 26% identify as French.

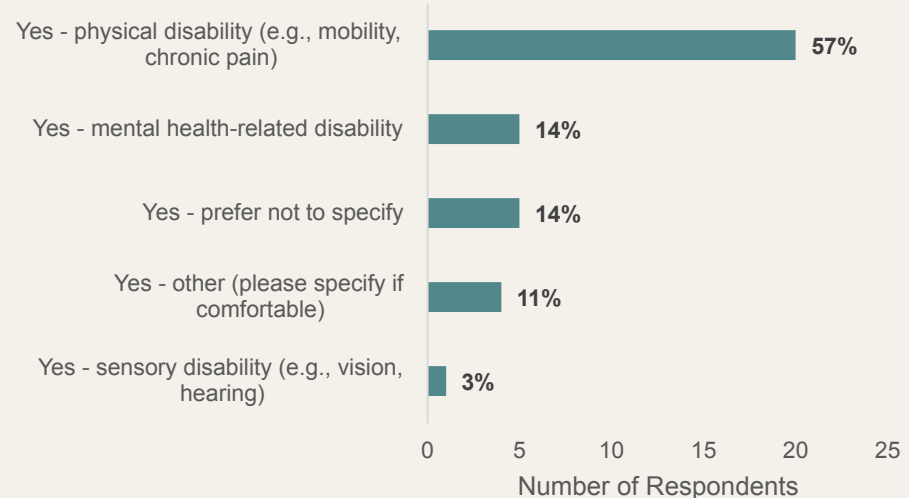


Do you identify as a person living with a disability? Select all that apply. (245 responses)

The majority of respondents (86%) indicated that they do not identify as a person living with a disability.

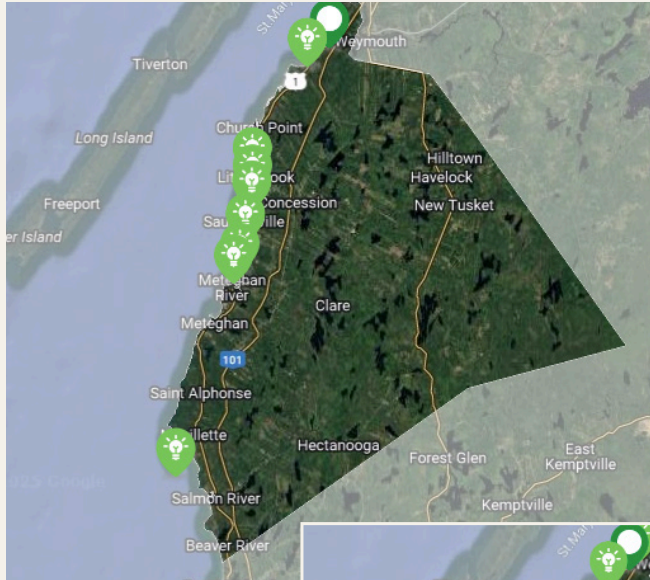
The graph below shows the results of those who identify as a person living with a disability (35 responses).

Based on data from the 2022 Canada Survey on Disability, 37.9% of Nova Scotia residents identify as living with at least one disability. When comparing our survey respondents, people living with a disability are underrepresented in our analysis.

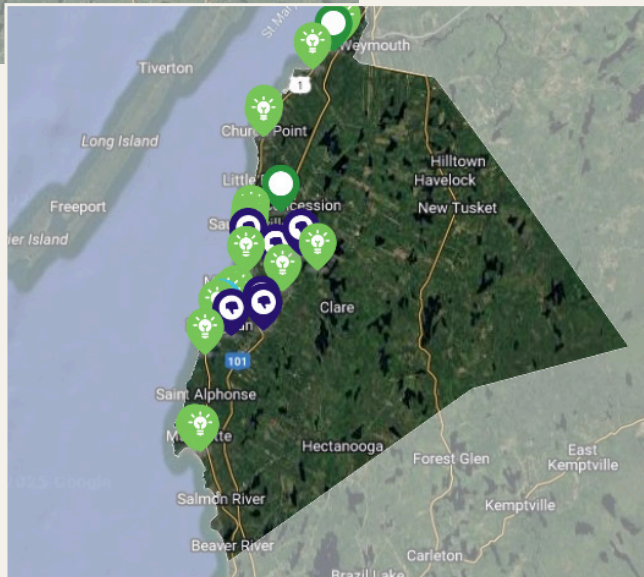


Interactive Map Responses

Participants were able to provide location-specific feedback on an interactive map. We received 35 comments. Responses have been summarized by location below.



Screen captures of the map pins from the project websites.



Belliveaus Cove

- Want sidewalks, specifically connecting from the road to the park and trails.

Pointe-de-l'Église

- Need well marked crosswalks to safely access key destinations.
- Sidewalk in this area switches sides of the street, and participants shared a need for a crosswalk.

Comeauville

- Good spot for a mountain biking park.
- PF Comeau Road in need of repairs.

Little Brook

- Need sidewalks in this area to connect to Université Sainte-Anne.

Lower Concession

- Want to see more active transportation facilities in land, not just along the coast.

Lower Saulnierville

- Extend sidewalks to connect to key destinations.
- Also need safe crosswalks.

Mavillette

- Suggest adding a sidewalk or trail to connect nearby destinations (i.e., Mavillette Beach and Cape Saint Mary's).

Meteghan and Meteghan River

- Need crosswalks, especially near areas with vulnerable populations (seniors, students).
- Need crosswalks with flashing beacons.
- Expand sidewalk network and connect existing sidewalks.
- 2 Division Road and Maxwellton Road are dangerous for people walking and biking. The road is busy, narrow, and there is barely a shoulder.
- Would like a bike path along the Meteghan River.

Rails to Trails

- Loose gravel is difficult to walk and bike on.
- Do not feel safe sharing the trail with ATVs.

St. Bernard

- Strong desire for sidewalks.

Saulnierville

- Expand sidewalk network to connect to key destinations, including the grocery store and shops.

Smuggler's Cove

- Suggest adding sidewalks to connect to tourist destinations.

Next Steps

The drafting of the Active Transportation Plan is underway, incorporating community ideas and insights, including what we heard through the Formative Engagement Phase and a comprehensive technical background review.

Once the draft Plan has been developed, we will be engaging with community members, community organizations and stakeholders in early 2026 to refine the Plan and ensure it aligns with community desires, strategic planning, and regional needs.



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