

Report

City of Merritt
REGULAR Council Meeting
July 21, 2020

File Number: 0640

To: Scott Hildebrand, Chief Administrative Officer
From: Don McArthur, Planning Manager
Date: July 15, 2020
Subject: Active Transportation Plan Survey 1 Results

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council receive this report as information.

Background:

As part of the Active Transportation Plan engagement process, residents were invited to provide input on the challenges they face when using active modes of transportation in Merritt as well as the opportunities for improvements. The online survey was available through the City's website and promoted heavily through social media and other marketing tactics from June 19 to July 8, 2020. In total, 164 responses were collected.

Perhaps not surprisingly, only 7% of respondents indicated they commute by biking, while only 8% commute by walking. 84% commute by automobile, either alone or by carpooling.

There appears to be a correlation between the small percentage of active transportation commuters and the feeling of safety while cycling or walking. 49% of respondents indicated that they feel mostly unsafe or very unsafe while biking, while 18% indicated a similar feeling of not being safe while walking.

The main cycling related issues identified by respondents are safety related, including a lack of bicycle routes that are separated from traffic (61%), lack of dedicated on-street bike lanes (61%), and intersection safety (40%). Additional concerns include gaps in the bicycle network (39%) and lack of bicycle parking (33%).

When asked what facilities would encourage residents to cycle more, 72% of respondents indicated they would like more paved multi-use trails, while 51% want separated bicycle lanes. Both forms of paths increase safety by separating people who are biking from vehicle traffic.

In addition to safety related issues, the lack of bike parking is a major deterrent to cycling for residents. When asked where bike parking is most needed, 70% of respondents indicated downtown requires additional bike parking. Grocery stores (64%) and Shopping Centres (51%) were also high on the list, indicating that business owners may want to consider adding bike racks at their existing businesses. The proposed Zoning Bylaw includes bike parking requirements for new businesses, which will help to address this issue over time.

Similarly to cycling, the main barriers to walking identified by respondents are safety related, and include a lack of trails (43%), lack of sidewalks (42%), poor lighting (31%), conditions of sidewalks (31%), intersection safety (26%), and speed and noise of automobiles (22%).

Survey respondents were also asked in what neighbourhoods they would like to see active transportation improvements. The top choice was the City Centre, followed by Diamond Vale.

The results of the first survey will inform the types and locations of infrastructure that is proposed in the Active Transportation Plan. An additional survey will be launched in the late summer, and engagement events will be held this Fall.

Options / discussion

1. That Council receive this report as information.

Financial / Risk Implications:

N/A

Others Consulted:

N/A

Attachments:

Attachment A – Active Transportation Plan Survey Results PowerPoint Presentation
Attachment B – Active Transportation Plan Survey Summary Report

Respectfully submitted,

Don McArthur
Planning and Development Services Manager