

# Report

**City of Merritt**  
**REGULAR Council Meeting**  
**August 4, 2020**

**File Number: 0530**

**To:** Scott Hildebrand, Chief Administrative Officer  
**From:** Don McArthur, Planning Manager  
**Date:** July 30, 2020  
**Subject:** Active Transportation Plan Existing Conditions Report

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

**THAT Council receive this report as information.**

**Background:**

At the July 21, 2020 Council Meeting, staff presented the results of the first Active Transportation Plan survey. Based on the responses from residents, several opportunities have been identified for improving active transportation infrastructure in the community:

1. *Reducing Conflicts Between Active Transportation Users and Motor Vehicles*
2. *Prioritizing Multi-use Paths and Trail Network*
3. *Improving Connectivity*
4. *Installing Bike Parking*
5. *Installing Benches, Washrooms and Other Amenities*
6. *Adding and Improving Sidewalks*
7. *Ensuring Accessibility*
8. *Promoting Active Transportation*

Bringing the analysis of existing infrastructure and the survey results together, the consultant has provided an Existing Conditions Summary Report (Attachment A).

**Reducing Conflicts Between Active Transportation Users and Motor Vehicles**

Survey respondents noted a lack of dedicated and separated bike lanes and intersection safety as the main challenges for cycling and walking in Merritt. Reducing

the conflicts between motor vehicles and pedestrians/ cyclists will be important to encourage residents to walk or bike.

Many long form responses were received on the need to resolve conflicts between motor vehicles and pedestrians/ cyclists. Several responses are listed below.

“Not enough room for both bikes and vehicles on the road, so vehicles often pass unsafely - too close or going too fast.”

“Drivers don't understand that bicycles are supposed to be on the road not the sidewalks.”

“I just feel a designated bike lane or two from Diamondvale area to the downtown core would make cycling a lot safer...I know many drivers would appreciate a designated bike lane as it would keep cyclists off the road more.”

“I think the main tension is from the lack of designated bike lanes as well as lack of communications/endorsement from the city for cyclists.”

“There are several places that feel extremely unsafe - narrow road without shoulder near [Exit 290]. I get nervous when I see Mom's with babies in strollers walking this in the dark.”

“Crosswalks ignored by traffic.”

### Prioritizing Multi-use Paths and Trail Network

The survey results revealed that residents enjoy walking, rolling, and cycling for exercise and to enjoy nature and wildlife, so connecting to and expanding the City's multi-use pathway and trail network represents a significant opportunity.

Several long form responses were received on the need for additional paths and trails, including those listed below.

“Lack of a circle walking trail.”

“I would like a connection from the walking bridge at the end of quilchena to the hill by the cement plant.”

“Lack of trails in every neighborhood. Would be great to have a few lit walking rings, one at each end of town.”

### Improving Connectivity

Respondents also indicated a desire for improved active transportation connections, both within the community and regionally. Ensuring that neighbourhoods and key amenities, such as commercial, educational and transit destinations, are connected to the City Centre will help ensure a well-connected community and a vibrant downtown

core. Building stronger regional connections could help to strengthen the tourism sector while better connecting Merritt with its neighbouring communities, including First Nations.

Numerous long form responses were received on the need for connections within the community and regionally, including those listed below.

“A proper trails plan linking all sections of the town.”

“Connecting Bench to downtown.”

“[Connection] to Lower Nicola.”

“Voght street through to Highway 5A. No safe route past gasoline alley to Bus, restaurants and Walmart.”

### Installing Bike Parking

Merritt residents expressed a need for bike parking facilities, so that bikes can be safely locked while shopping or at work. The City Centre, grocery stores, shopping centres, parks, recreation facilities, schools, the Library and City Hall were all identified as locations where additional bike parking facilities are needed.

Several long form responses were received on the need for additional bike parking, including the responses listed below.

“Risk of bike theft whenever you are inside businesses, etc.”

“Security issues, can’t leave bike unattended...”

### Installing Benches, Washrooms and Other Amenities

Respondents also identified the need for benches, washrooms, waste receptacles, dog waste bag dispensers, and other amenities to be located along walking routes and in downtown. Providing sitting areas is especially important for elderly residents.

Several long form responses were received on the need for additional benches, washrooms, and other amenities, including the responses listed below.

“No green spaces with benches in city core to rest.”

“Lack of washroom access along walking areas.”

“Lack of waste bins in Merritt - when I walk my dogs and pick up they ‘go to the bathroom (#2)’, I have to carry the bags with me for the whole walk as there is a serious lack of garbage bins around residential neighbourhoods. It would be nice to see garbage cans at every bus stop.”

### Adding and Improving Sidewalks

When asked to identify the barriers to walking in Merritt, residents indicated that lack of sidewalks and the condition of sidewalks prevent safe and enjoyable walking in the community.

Many long form responses were received on the need for additional and improved sidewalks. Several responses are listed below.

“No sidewalks along some busy streetways.”

“Most sidewalks are narrow and cannot handle a stroller and child walking side by side.”

“Armstrong Street and Ransom have no sidewalks and the road has potholes and rough pavement all over. I use a walker and it is impossible to go on it.”

“Sidewalks have over grown branches that hit you in the eye”...Neighborhood streets need more attention, not just main streets.”

### Ensuring Accessibility

In order to ensure all residents and visitors are able to move around the community in a safe and enjoyable manner, marginalized populations who rely on active modes must be supported, and people of all ages, abilities, genders, ethnicities, and other identifying factors must feel safe and comfortable when travelling throughout the City.

### Promoting Active Transportation

There is an opportunity to promote active transportation as a regular, convenient, and enjoyable mode of daily transportation, helping to reduce the stigma of walking and cycling as a primary transportation mode.

### Next Steps

The next phase of the project will focus on charting the course for the future of active transportation in Merritt. Based on input received from the public and stakeholders, a future vision, supporting goals, strategies, actions, and a proposed active transportation network will be developed. Further opportunities for engagement will take place in the 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 Existing Conditions Summary Report

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Don McArthur**  
**Planning and Development Services Manager**