

BIKEWAYS & PATHWAYS MASTER PLAN

3.0 STAKEHOLDER AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

3.1. OVERVIEW

An extensive public engagement process that included internal and external stakeholders to identify and understand all of the issues associated with the bikeway and pathway system was fully integrated in the planning process. This integrated approach provides necessary credence and validity to a plan that evolved as a result of its strong connection to the community.

There were four major phases in the stakeholder and public engagement process:

Phase 1 – Project Initiation

The first phase of public engagement was an Open House to inform the community of the City's intention to develop the Bikeway and Pathways Master Plan and to obtain community input.

A Stakeholder Committee representing a spectrum of community and user interests was formed, and was consulted throughout the project. The initial Committee meeting introduced project team members, provided project background, context, and the Master Plan development framework.

Phase 2 – Interactive Site Tour

Stakeholder Committee members attended an experiential and interactive workshop to develop a vision statement that would bring focus and direction for pathway development and guide their work. A guided bike tour of bikeways and pathways around Lethbridge provided insight into “what is” and “what could be,” identifying existing and potential functions, uses, and linkages for bikeways and pathways.

Phase 3 – Vision and Guiding Principles

Based on recreation trends, community values, best practices and long term sustainability principles, the Stakeholder Committee developed guiding principles that formed the foundation of the Bikeway and Pathway Master Plan. Examining alternative forms of transportation assisted in identifying additional opportunities for linkages.

The Stakeholder Committee met to review and comment on the vision, guiding principles and preliminary concepts for the Bikeway and Pathway Master Plan. A public Open House and subsequent presentation of this vision to Lethbridge City Council provided opportunities to obtain further input to finalize the Master Plan concepts.



BIKEWAYS & PATHWAYS MASTER PLAN

Phase 4 – Report Back

A second Open House was an opportunity to present preliminary recommendations for future bikeway and pathway development and to receive feedback. This information was used to fine-tune the preliminary recommendations.

3.2. OPEN HOUSE SUMMARY

Two Open House sessions were hosted to inform the public of progress on the Master Plan, solicit comments on work completed and to gather feedback.

3.2.1 Open House 1: May 30 - June 1, 2006

The first Open House was held in conjunction with the Parks Master Plan Open House sessions in the north, south and west quadrants of Lethbridge. The Master Plan project team attended to provide information and to gather input on developing the plan by asking participants to provide their comments on the following:

1. How bikeways and pathways are used throughout the city;
2. Areas in the city where bikeways and pathways function appropriately for their intended use;
3. Locations in the city where improvements to the bikeway and pathway system are required;
4. Additional bikeway and pathway system elements for consideration.

The Open House was successful and well received. Informal conversations with the planning team and written feedback form comments identified the following commonalities:

1. Increased connectivity is required across major roadways such as Highway 3;
2. Top-of-bank to top-of-bank connections are required across the Oldman River;
3. Improved on-road routes are required, especially in the downtown area;
4. Segregation of pathway users according to specific use and speed of travel is desirable; and
5. Identify routes and pathways with special features and areas of interest in Lethbridge.

3.2.2 OPEN HOUSE 2:

November 1, 2006

The second Open House was held in the fall of 2006, followed by a week long display in Lethbridge City Hall.

BIKEWAYS & PATHWAYS MASTER PLAN

This Open House was to inform the public of the planning process and work completed to date. As with the first series of Open Houses, the second Open House was combined with the Parks Master Plan Open House. The public was asked to review and comment on:

1. A draft conceptual Master Plan incorporating input from the first Open House and Stakeholder Committee sessions;
2. The draft vision for bikeways and pathways;
3. The draft bikeways and pathways classification system;
4. Areas identified for upgrades or new facilities; and
5. Proposed design guidelines for bikeways and pathways.

Open House participants were also asked to provide comments on the Master Plan to date, and to identify those elements most important to them. Comments received were generally positive, with the following identified as having the highest priority:

1. Complete identified gaps in the existing pathway network (such as locations adjacent to the golf club in the river valley);
2. Construct a pathway along Scenic Drive;
3. Improve on-road bikeways;
4. Identify a location for a top-of-bank crossing together with opportunities to coordinate with other city transportation initiatives; and

3.3 STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOPS

Stakeholder opinions and feedback provide an opportunity to understand the specific needs of a broad cross-section of a representative demographic. Key stakeholders involved in this process included:

- Dave Ellis, Parks Manager, City of Lethbridge
- Tom Hopkins, Manager of Recreation, Parks and Culture, City of Lethbridge
- Dave Mitchell, Parks Development Manager, City of Lethbridge
- Kevin Jensen, Public Operations Coordinator, City of Lethbridge
- Susan Dakin, Environmental Services Manager, City of Lethbridge
- Darwin Juell, Transportation Manager, City of Lethbridge
- Bob Harri, Planner, City of Lethbridge
- Allan Covey, Senior Project Administrator, City of Lethbridge
- Coreen Putman, Nature Interpretation Coordinator, Helen Schuler
- Coulee Centre, City of Lethbridge
- Jessica Deacon-Rogers, Nature Interpretation Technician, Helen Schuler
- Coulee Centre, City of Lethbridge
- John King, Transit Manager, City of Lethbridge

BIKEWAYS & PATHWAYS MASTER PLAN

- Wade Coombs, Transit Planning and Scheduling Manager, City of Lethbridge
- Keith Sumner, Senior Investigator, Consumer Services Division, Service Alberta
- Roy Pollmuller, Headwinds Cycling Club
- Ron Bain, Runners Soul / Moonlight Run / Ladies Fest
- Cole Iwassa, Runners Soul / Moonlight Run / Ladies Fest
- Terry Schwengler, Ultra Marathon
- Louise Arsenault, Walk 'n Talk Walking Club
- Lori Chaki Farrington, Healthy Communities
- Monica Stewart, Nordbridge Senior Centre
- Diane Schebel, Lethbridge Senior Citizens Organization (LSCO)
- Karen English Many Fingers, Aboriginal Council of Lethbridge
- Jeff Blinco, Boys and Girls Club
- Nancy Stroeve, Boys and Girls Club
- Richard Quinlan, Species at Risk Biologist, Sustainable Resource Development
- Lina Neufeld, YWCA
- Tammy Reum, Y Fun Run
- Alf Heggedal, Past President, Urban Development Institute (UDI)
- Maureen Calder, Chair, Lethbridge School Board
- Bob Short, Arthritis Society
- Bob Pike, Instructor, Criminal Justice Program, LCC
- Ray Dorosz, Lethbridge Track and Field
- Bertil Johannsen, LCC Track Club / Cross Country / 10-4 Race Organizer

3.3.1 Stakeholder Workshop 1:

July 12, 2006

The first Stakeholder Workshop was an opportunity for participants to review feedback from the first Open House. This group tested and validated the feedback received and identified additional priorities for bikeways and pathways. Some of the key recommendations from this session included:

- Consideration be given to youth and the elderly with respect to mobility and accessibility;
- Identify pathways for specialized activities including mountain biking and trail running;
- Identify events on pathways, such as running races for consideration;
- Trail head and parking facilities are required, especially in the coulees and river valley;
- Identify a top-of-bank connection across the Oldman River for ease of commuting.

BIKEWAYS & PATHWAYS MASTER PLAN

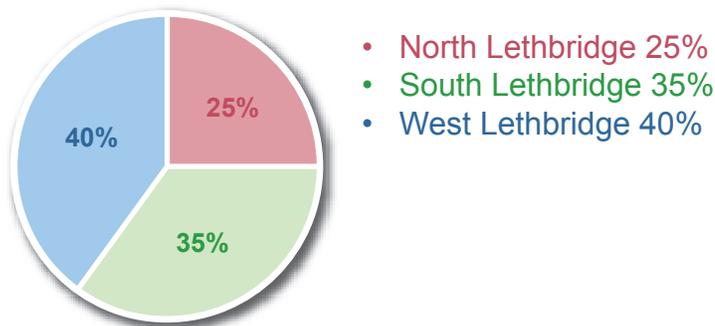
3.3.2 Stakeholder Workshop 2: October 25, 2006

Following the first Stakeholder Workshop, the planning team analyzed the work and recommendations to date. A second Stakeholder Workshop was held to develop a vision to guide the overall plan. Working with a broad range of stakeholders with a variety of interests, a vision for bikeways and pathways was developed. Guiding principles and a framework for completing the Master Plan was developed.

3.4 COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

A Community Needs Assessment provides an opportunity to gather citizen opinions and attitudes regarding a defined issue. The information gathered provides valuable information about how citizens rank issues, problems and opportunities about those things that matter to them.

As part of the public engagement process, Lethbridge residents provided input on the existing bikeway and pathway network. Captured data was synthesized in stakeholder workshop sessions resulting in a list of community needs and wants. A total of 140 residents participated at the two Open Houses held in North, South, and West Lethbridge, with 85 written comments received. Responses by area are as follows:



The demographics illustrate current multiple use activities on Lethbridge pathways including:

- Exercise/ Fitness
- Recreation
- Dog Walking
- Walking
- Hiking
- Running
- Rollerblading
- Cycling
- Mountain Biking
- Senior's Leisure Activities
- Commuting; to work, shopping or to attend community events
- Local Organizations: Lethbridge Walk'n Talk Club

BIKEWAYS & PATHWAYS MASTER PLAN

Response commonalities include access, safety/education, and special use facilities

The following list represents general desires recorded:

- Access:
 - o Pathway connections between:
 - Downtown linkage
 - Lethbridge Country Club and Battleship Island
 - Paradise Canyon and RiverStone
 - Fairmont Park and Southgate/ Coulee Creek
 - North and South Lethbridge
 - Research Centre, Chinook Business Park and 43rd Street
 - Helen Schuler Nature Reserve and Peenaquim Park
 - Bull Trail Park North and Elizabeth Hall Wetlands
 - o Overcome Barriers with a pedestrian bridge over arterial roads and the Oldman River:
 - Pedestrian overpass: Crowsnest Trail, Whoop-Up Drive, 43rd Street
 - Oldman River Crossings: Crowsnest Trail and Chinook Trail
- Safety/ Education:
 - o Develop pathway network signage throughout the city
 - o Focus on safe road crossings for all users
 - o Propose a By-Law requiring mountable warning bells on bicycles
 - o Increased pathway lighting at Henderson and Nicholas Sheran Park
 - o Introduce wider pathways to accommodate multiple users
 - Separate paths for pedestrians and cyclists
- Special Use Facilities:
 - o Introduce more mountain biking trails and facilities
 - o Introduce more public facilities and rest areas

Through roundtable discussions, the Stakeholder Committee synthesized public feedback and prioritized a list of quick improvements that would create an immediate impact on the bikeways and pathway system. It was determined that addressing the missing links first and achieving connectivity would increase public use and general awareness. These links include:

- Connection between North/ South to downtown
- Connection between East/ West to downtown
- Connection above and below the Lethbridge Country Club
- Connection to Popson and Cottonwood Park

BIKEWAYS & PATHWAYS MASTER PLAN

- Connection from University Drive to Paradise Canyon
- Connection across the Oldman River and the Crowsnest Trail
- Connection between Helen Schuler Nature Reserve and Peenaquim Park, through the existing gravel pit
- Connection across the CPR High Level Bridge
- West bank link through Bull Trail Park North
- Connection to the North Rugby/ Soccer Field Complex
- Connection to Chinook Business Park and the Alberta Research Centre

Once an improved network is in place, the focus will shift to other priorities related to safety, public education and promotion.

3.5 DIRECTIONS AND OUTCOMES

The public participation process and stakeholder consultations were an integral part of the Master Plan process with outcomes and recommendations from that process considered and integrated into the Plan to the maximum extent possible. These included:

- A range of uses and needs should be accommodated in the bikeways and pathways network;
- The vision for Lethbridge bikeways and pathways was crafted based on public input and consultation, reflective of community values;
- Transportation and recreation are important considerations in the development of bikeways and pathways;
- Planning guidelines and framework were validated by the public and key stakeholders;
- The priorities outlined in Section 8.1 were identified through the public engagement process;
- Phased implementation with a focused, clear outcome is important to the public.