

Town of Lacombe 2004 Trail & Sidewalk User Survey

Background

In late 2003 the Town of Lacombe undertook a traffic study and the development of the Municipal Development Plan. In the course of the public input phase of these projects it became evident that additional data was needed to address the needs of the non-vehicular traffic (walking and cyclists). In order to acquire a base level of data regarding pedestrian traffic the Recreation Services and Planning and Development Departments developed the Trail & Sidewalk User Survey.

Purpose of the survey

The purpose of the Trail & Sidewalk User Survey was to help determine the public's level of usage and satisfaction with the location and standards of the town's existing trails and sidewalks. The outcome of the survey was to provide data that would assist future planning of Lacombe and help to create a liveable community that strives for a balance between the needs of the pedestrians and vehicles as well as provide for a safe and enjoyable walking experience.

Methodology

An initial General Resident Survey was developed. A pre-test among town staff was conducted for input into refining of the survey tool. A second survey targeting school-age children was a modification of the General Resident Survey.

The General Resident Survey was distributed with the January 2004 Town water bill mailings to approximately 3,300 municipal accounts. Respondents were requested to complete their surveys and return them to the Town Office by January 31.

With cooperation from each of the schools in the community, the School Survey was circulated to grades two, four and six plus the senior high social studies classes and a selected grades in the junior high schools.

In addition to answering a series of questions respondents were asked to indicate on a map of the town their typical and/or daily walking route. The data from the maps was entered into the GIS for analysis. The frequency of use of the various trail routes is identified in the following maps:

Total Traffic -- This is a combination of the data from both the Resident and a random sample the Student Surveys

Resident Traffic – Resident Survey only

Student Traffic Map - random sample of Student Surveys only

To encourage respondents to submit their surveys' one corner of the survey provided the option to submit one's name for a draw for a pool pass at the Lacombe Kinsmen Aquatic Centre.

Highlights of Results -- General Resident Survey

- The total number of respondents to the survey was 277
- Of the 277 respondents 97.5% used the sidewalks and trails
- The largest numbers of users are between the ages of 35 and 64 (67.7%)
- The majority of the users are female (53%)

- The use of the trails based on the neighbourhood one resided in was
 - Downtown area (north of 50th Ave to 56 Ave) 24.4%
 - Regency/Lincoln Park/English Estates 19.6%
 - Willow Ridge/Fairway Heights 14.4%
 - Elizabeth Park/Woodlands and the Lakes 14.1%

- Frequency of use
 - 56% of those that used the trails used them daily
 - 29% used them weekly
 - 10% used them occasionally

- Resident's first choice of where a traffic light should be located:
 - C & E Trail and Woodland Dr 32%
 - Enhance Hwy 12 & 2 12%
 - Woodland Drive & Hwy 2A 10%

- The three main reason respondents use the trails is for fitness, pleasure and cycling
 - For Fitness 82.3%
 - For Pleasure 78.7%
 - Cycling 31.0%
 - Walk to School 12.3%
 - Walk to Work 19.5%

- 87% of the respondents encounter trail/sidewalk sections that require them to cross the road to continue on their route

- Those reporting that their neighbourhood sidewalks are kept clear of snow and ice always was 26.7% and sometimes 56.3%
- 95.7% of the respondents were aware of the bylaw that requires property owners and tenants to clear their sidewalk of snow or ice within 48 hours of the occurrence.
- 87% of the respondents feel safe walking in all areas of the community
- The top three locations where respondents feel traffic lights for pedestrian are most needed are:
 - C & E Trail and Woodland Drive
 - Enhance Highway 12 & Highway 2A
 - Woodland Drive & Highway 2A
- 72.2% of the respondents feel the well-treed boulevards and attractive streetscapes are very important to their walking experience
- 68.8% felt adequate resting places along sidewalk and paved trails was very important or important, 75.1% feel they are very important or important along the natural trails
- 69% of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed somewhat that dedicated bicycle lanes should be developed to encourage alternative transportation modes

September 24, 2004