What We Heard Report: Edmonton Bike Plan

Phase 3 Engagement: Priorities + Tradeoffs

SHARE YOUR VOICE
SHAPE OUR CITY

Edmonton
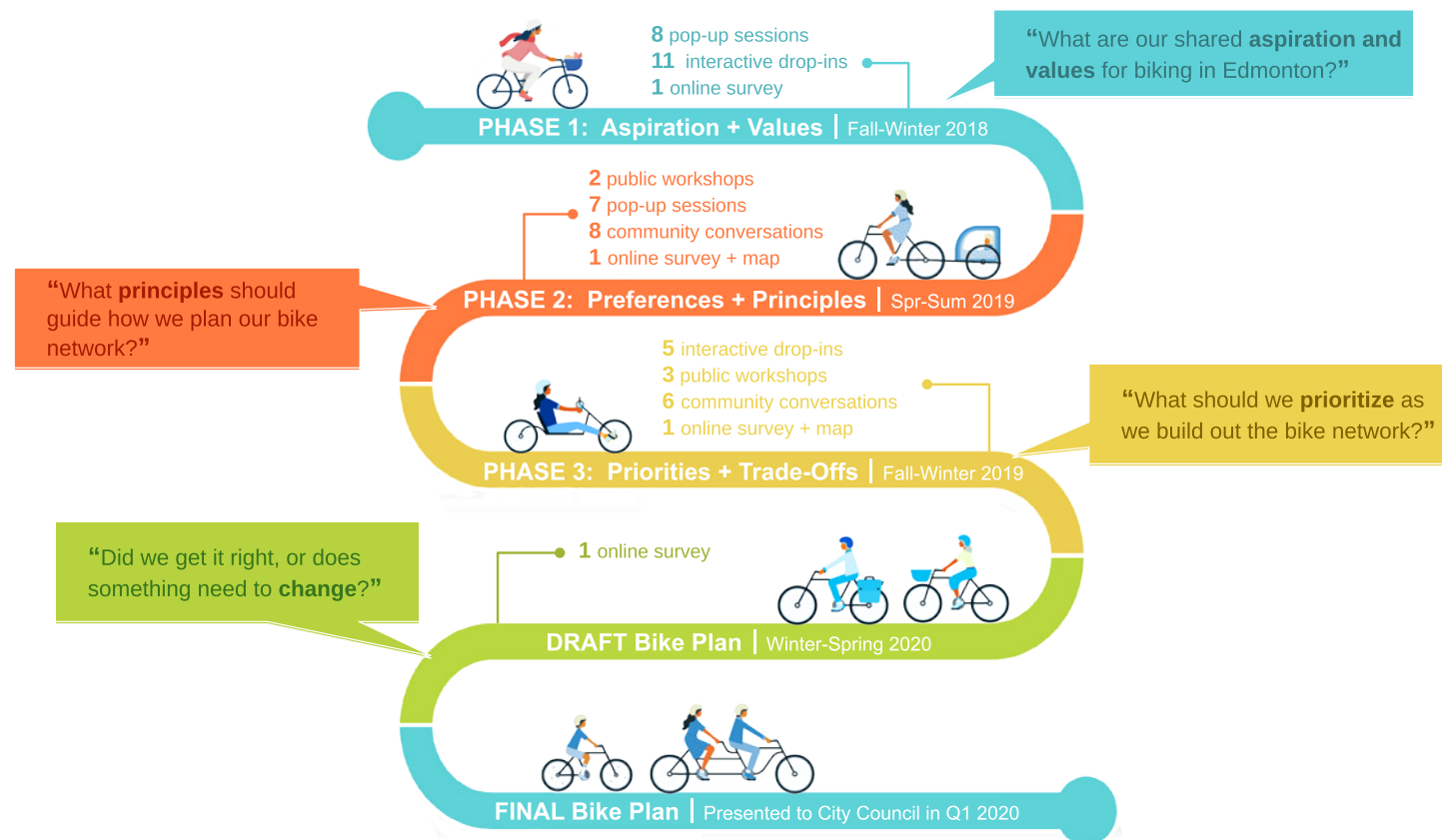
January 2020

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1.0 Project Background & Context

The Bike Plan will be a high-level strategic plan that guides the continued improvement and growth of the bike network and supporting programs

To get it right, the project team has been talking to Edmontonians to gather their thoughts about the existing bike network and what should be considered as the City plans for the future. In addition to input from Edmontonians, the plan will be informed by lessons learned through recent changes to Edmonton's bike network, spatial analysis, as well as best practices . The Bike Plan is being developed in three phases, with engagement as an integral component of the process .

8 pop-up sessions
11 interactive drop-ins
1 online survey

"What are our shared **aspiration and values** for biking in Edmonton?"

PHASE 1: Aspiration + Values | Fall-Winter 2018

2 public workshops
7 pop-up sessions
8 community conversations
1 online survey + map

"What **principles** should guide how we plan our bike network?"

PHASE 2: Preferences + Principles | Spr-Sum 2019

5 interactive drop-ins
3 public workshops
6 community conversations
1 online survey + map

"What should we **prioritize** as we build out the bike network?"

PHASE 3: Priorities + Trade-Offs | Fall-Winter 2019

1 online survey

"Did we get it right, or does something need to **change**?"

DRAFT Bike Plan | Winter-Spring 2020

FINAL Bike Plan | Presented to City Council in Q1 2020

In each phase, community members have participated, both in-person and online, in a wide variety of ways. Edmontonians who have participated in more than one phase have had an opportunity at engagement events to learn how their input was used to inform the development of the plan. This has supported ongoing communication with the public throughout the project, and fostered an inclusive and transparent engagement process.

1.1 Phase 1: Aspiration And Values (Completed)

Pop-up events, interactive drop-in sessions, registered workshops, and an online survey took place from September to November 2018.

The focus of Phase 1 was to learn:

+ Is Edmonton a bike-friendly city?

+ How do people imagine biking in Edmonton in the future?

+ What are our shared aspiration and our values for biking in Edmonton?

The Phase 1 public engagement was at the ADVISE and REFINE positions on the Public Engagement Spectrum.

1.2 Phase 2: Preferences And Principles (Completed)

The goal of Phase 2 engagement was to better understand the choices that Edmontonians make around biking, and the reasons behind those choices. At the CREATE position on the Public Engagement Spectrum, engagement activities included pop-up events, registered workshops, an online survey, community conversations and focus groups. These events took place between May and July of 2019.

The focus of Phase 2 was to learn:

+ How will the aspiration and values take form?

+ What is important in how Edmonton builds its bike network?

+ What do people value in choosing a bike route, and how does this change for different trip purposes and conditions?

+ How do people feel about supporting elements such as end of trip facilities, interactions with public transit, and sharing bike lanes with other modes of transportation?

The feedback collected in Phase 2 was a key input to the development of bike network principles that will guide how the future bike network grows.

1.3 Phase 3: Priorities And Tradeoffs (Completed)

Building on what was learned in Phases 1 and 2, Phase 3 prioritized Edmontonians' preferences for two areas: the Network Map, and Program Areas.

Through registered workshops, community conversations, drop-in sessions, and an online survey, Phase 3 engagement explored:

+ What do Edmontonians think about the draft version of the Bike Plan Network Map?

+ Do our draft Bike Network Principles and Map hit the mark? What's missing?

+ Where should we focus our resources to improve biking in Edmonton in the short and the long term?

+ What trade-offs do we need to consider in implementing the Bike Plan?

+ How do we balance building out the physical bike network with supporting program areas such as education, wayfinding, and bike parking?

+ What goals and actions should be identified as part of implementation?

Phase 3 public engagement was at the **REFINE** position of the City of Edmonton Public Engagement Spectrum.

ADVISE
The public is consulted by the City to share feedback and perspectives that are considered for policies, programs, projects, or services.

REFINE
The public is involved by the City to adapt and adjust approaches to policies, programs, projects, or services.

CREATE
The public collaborates with the City to develop and build solutions regarding policies, programs, projects, or services. This can include community initiated engagement.

DECIDE
The public is empowered to make decisions directly or on behalf of the City about policies, programs, projects, or services.

2.0 Phase 3 Engagement: What Was Done

The Phase 3 public engagement key objectives were to:

+ Validate the Bike Network Principles

+ Seek general impressions on the draft Future Bike Network Map, familiarize people with the four map layers, and seek input on which aspects of the network should be prioritized and why

+ Gather input on the draft approach for each program area and understand priorities among program areas

+ Determine preferences on where to focus efforts and resources as the City moves ahead with the Bike Plan, understanding the rationale for trade-offs between network build-out and program areas.

Input in Phase 3 was gathered using several tactics for public engagement:

+ Registered public workshops

+ Drop-in events

+ Community conversations

+ Online survey

+ Input to online maps (Heat Map and Story Map)

By providing a range of engagement opportunities both in person and online, at multiple times of the day and week, and in different parts of the city, the project team strived to make the public engagement as accessible, convenient and meaningful as possible.

2.1 Public Workshops

Three workshops were held in November 2019. Participants pre-registered for the events, which were each two hours in length, and designed as interactive, hands-on sessions. Childcare and bike-related activities were provided for children, and food was available.
In all, 75 people attended the three events.

Sat, Nov. 2
10am–12pm
Mill Woods Seniors and Multicultural Centre

Tues, Nov. 5
6pm–8pm
Commonwealth Recreation Centre

Wed, Nov. 6
6pm–8pm
Crestwood Community League Hall

Workshop Format

At each workshop the project team gave a presentation outlining the process to date and input received in previous phases that was used to create the draft Network Principles and Network Map. Following the presentation, participants gathered in table groups, each with a facilitator, a recorder, a large map, and handouts describing network principles, network map layers, network build-out options, and program areas.

Activity 1: Network Map Impressions & Priorities

During the first exercise, participants referred to the **Network Map** (Appendix A) and discussed their overall impressions. Participants then selected discussion cards which had specific questions designed to familiarize the group with each of the **Network Map Layers** (Appendix B): missing links, substandard bike routes, future bike routes and River Valley connections. Participants were then asked to prioritize the options they felt were most important when building out the network map. They were given tokens worth 20 points and invited to place their tokens on the options they felt were most important and discuss why they made the choices they did.

Activity 2: Program Area Approaches & Priorities

The second exercise focused on **program areas** (Appendix C). Each program area had a suggested approach for implementation. Participants were invited to comment on the approach proposed for each program area and rate the approach on a spectrum of strongly agree to strongly disagree. They were also invited to prioritize the program area they felt was most important; each participant was given three marbles with which to cast their votes.

Activity 3: Network vs. Program Area Priorities

The wrap-up activity asked participants to determine where the City should focus its efforts when building out the plan: should the City direct its resources to building out the network, or emphasise the program areas? Each table had a spectrum indicating **'Network' or Program Areas'** (Appendix D) and participants were invited to put a sticker on the spot on the spectrum that best reflected their choice. Participants then discussed their choices.

Display boards outlining project background and the Network Principles (Appendix E) were also available at the workshops.

2.2 Community Conversations

The Bike Plan public engagement process included Community Conversations to target key stakeholders to more fully understand their needs and how a comprehensive Bike Plan could support their work. Structured conversations were held with representatives of groups and organizations that had an interest in the Bike Plan and cycling in Edmonton.

The focus of the conversations was to seek input on the Network Principles, Network Map and Program Areas. Each conversation was tailored to the specific interests or goals of the organization. This engagement method, in its flexibility, enabled the project team to dig deeply into perspectives, priorities, opportunities and concerns around specific aspects of the Bike Plan work.

These conversations proved extremely valuable, in part because many of the participants were not only seasoned cyclists, but also ambassadors for biking in Edmonton and leaders within their communities. As such, they were frequently thinking beyond (or in addition to) their own personal needs to what would support other riders or would-be riders, and the benefits biking would bring to our community.

The following organizations were engaged through community conversations:

+ **Environmental Advisory Committee**
November 13

+ **Edmonton Mountain Bike Association**
November 20

+ **Supporting Youth to Ride (Ever Active Schools, Edmonton Public School Board, Edmonton Catholic School Board and Bike Edmonton)**
November 21

+ **Bike Edmonton**
November 21

+ **Post-secondary Institutions #1 (NAIT and NorQuest)**
November 26

+ **Regional Stakeholders**
November 28

+ **Paths for People**
November 28

+ **Post-secondary Institutions #2 (University of Alberta)**
December 5

2.3 Drop-In Events

The Bike Plan project team partnered with The City Plan and Community Energy Transition Strategy staff to hold joint "Engage Edmonton" drop-in sessions at the following locations:

+ **Londonderry Shopping Centre**
+ **The Meadows Community Recreation Centre**
+ **Southgate Shopping Centre**
+ **West Edmonton Mall**
+ **Edmonton Tower**

Participants were invited to review and leave comments on display boards outlining the Network Principles and the layers of the Network Map, as well as a large floor map showing the Future Bike Network itself. Staff were available to engage in conversation and answer questions. The drop-in sessions were very valuable in reaching a broad cross-section of community members with diverse perspectives (including those who don't ride a bike), and giving people an opportunity to engage either very briefly or in a more in-depth manner.

2.4 Online Survey

An online survey was conducted from Nov. 2-21, 2019. The study population was primarily Edmontonians 18 years of age and older, but also included some respondents from the area around Edmonton.

Survey respondents were either selected randomly from a general-population panel or voluntarily chose to participate by accessing an open link on the City of Edmonton website.

The survey addressed similar topics as the workshops, community conversations and drop-ins, including:

+ **What should be prioritized within each of the project streams: a) building out the bike network vs. b) advancing program areas**
+ **How to balance resourcing of the two streams**
+ **Input on the approach proposed for each program area**
+ **Outstanding concerns**

In total, the survey gathered 1,500 responses, comprised of 1,028 responses from the general-population panel and 472 through the website open link survey.

2.5 Online Maps

In addition to the input collected in person and through the online survey, there was also a desire to collect location-specific input on the draft Network Map through an online format. This gave people who were unable to attend in person an opportunity to provide their input, and helped to refine the information included on the map.

Heat Map

The Heat Map enabled participants to review the draft network map as a whole, then select which quadrants of the city they wanted to view and respond to in detail. Two questions were asked for each quadrant selected:

+ *Tell us what on the map you SUPPORT*

+ *Tell us what on the map NEEDS TO CHANGE*

In addition, a general question was asked about the network as a whole: *Do you have any other general comments you would like to share about this future bike network?*

The Heat Map was shared in two ways: through a mixed-topic Insight Community survey (Nov. 12–21, 2019) and through an open link (Nov. 13–30, 2019). The Insight survey generated 2,307 responses, and the open link generated 71 responses.

Story Map

The Story Map is an online interactive map tool that allows participants to learn how the Network Map was developed, and then drop pins on the map and provide comments. It was available from Dec. 5, 2019 – Jan. 6, 2020.
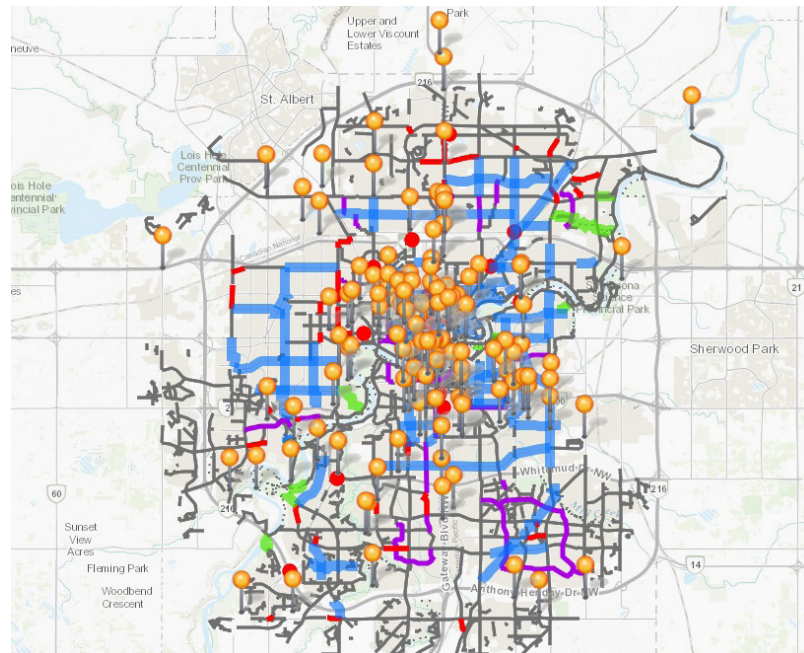
3.0 Engagement Participation & Communication

In total, over 4,000 Edmontonians were engaged in Phase 3.

ENGAGEMENT TACTIC	PARTICIPATION
Public workshops	75
Community Conversations	30 (representing 14 organizations)
Engage Edmonton Drop-ins	200
Online Survey	1,500
Story Map	131 comments
Heat Map	2,378

Figure 1: Engagement Participation by Tactic

An extensive communications / marketing program was undertaken by the City of Edmonton in support of Phase 3 engagement for the Bike Plan.

The range of communications activities included:

+ **Project website**

+ **Project newsletters**

+ **Social Media (Twitter, Facebook + Instagram)**

+ **Stakeholder emails**

+ **City of Edmonton engagement calendar**

+ **Print media**

+ **Posters and bookmarks**

+ **Road signs**

+ **Digital ad boards (LRT + rec centres)**

4.0 What We Heard

This section provides a summary of what we heard during Phase 3 engagement from participants pertaining to the key topic areas addressed:

+ **Network Principles**
+ **Network Map**
+ **Network Priorities**
+ **Program Area Approach and Priorities**
+ **Priorities between Network Map and Program Areas**

4.1 Network Principles

The Network Principles will inform the future build-out of Edmonton's bike network (see Appendix E for a complete list of the principles). Input on the draft principles was invited at the drop-ins, workshops and community conversations. Overall, the draft Network Principles were very well-received. Suggestions for changes included the following:

Safety
All participants agreed that safety is fundamental to the delivery of the Bike Plan and must be a given, especially if cycling is to be appealing to less confident riders. Some suggested that safety be presented as supporting or foundational to the other principles – as something that would never be "traded off" or compromised for other things – instead of being a principle itself. They felt that this could also help with shifting the narrative to creating a healthy, happy city, not merely a safe city, and avoid promoting a culture of fear around biking. Others felt it was important to keep safety at the top of the list of principles.

Attractiveness
One group suggested that Attractive, which arguably could be interpreted to refer only to aesthetics, could be replaced by "Appealing," which could represent an overall goal to make cycling an easy, obvious choice for many reasons. Additionally, it was suggested that opportunities to create gathering places could be built into this principle.

Integration with Other Modes
During the community conversations, it was suggested that by removing "with other modes," the principle of integration could be applied more broadly – e.g. integration with other built form. In addition, integration with transit was highlighted as a priority among students, many of whom travel from adjacent municipalities or suburban neighbourhoods.

Health & Comfort
Participants noted that this principle could apply to community health as well, as the network has the potential to connect people to one another as well as to destinations.

Other
Several other topics were raised as potential principles or elements to incorporate:

+ **Climate change mitigation** – could support measures like tree-planting along bike routes, which would provide co-benefits for other City strategies like the Winter City Strategy, Breathe and the Community Energy Transition Strategy

+ **Continuity** – the concept of creating a system that is predictable and dependable for all users. This could be accomplished in a variety of ways, from network design to consistent infrastructure to maintenance to wayfinding

+ **Placemaking** – making the network vibrant; more than just getting from A to B (creating bike facilities, end-of-trip facilities, bike "hubs"). There is also opportunity to create place around these corridors and destinations

+ **Inclusivity** – all modes in all corridors so that cyclists can conveniently get to places they need/would like to go

4.2 Network Map

Input on the draft Network Map was collected at drop-ins, workshops, community conversations and via the online Heat Map and Story Map. This section summarizes the comments received through all of these engagement activities.
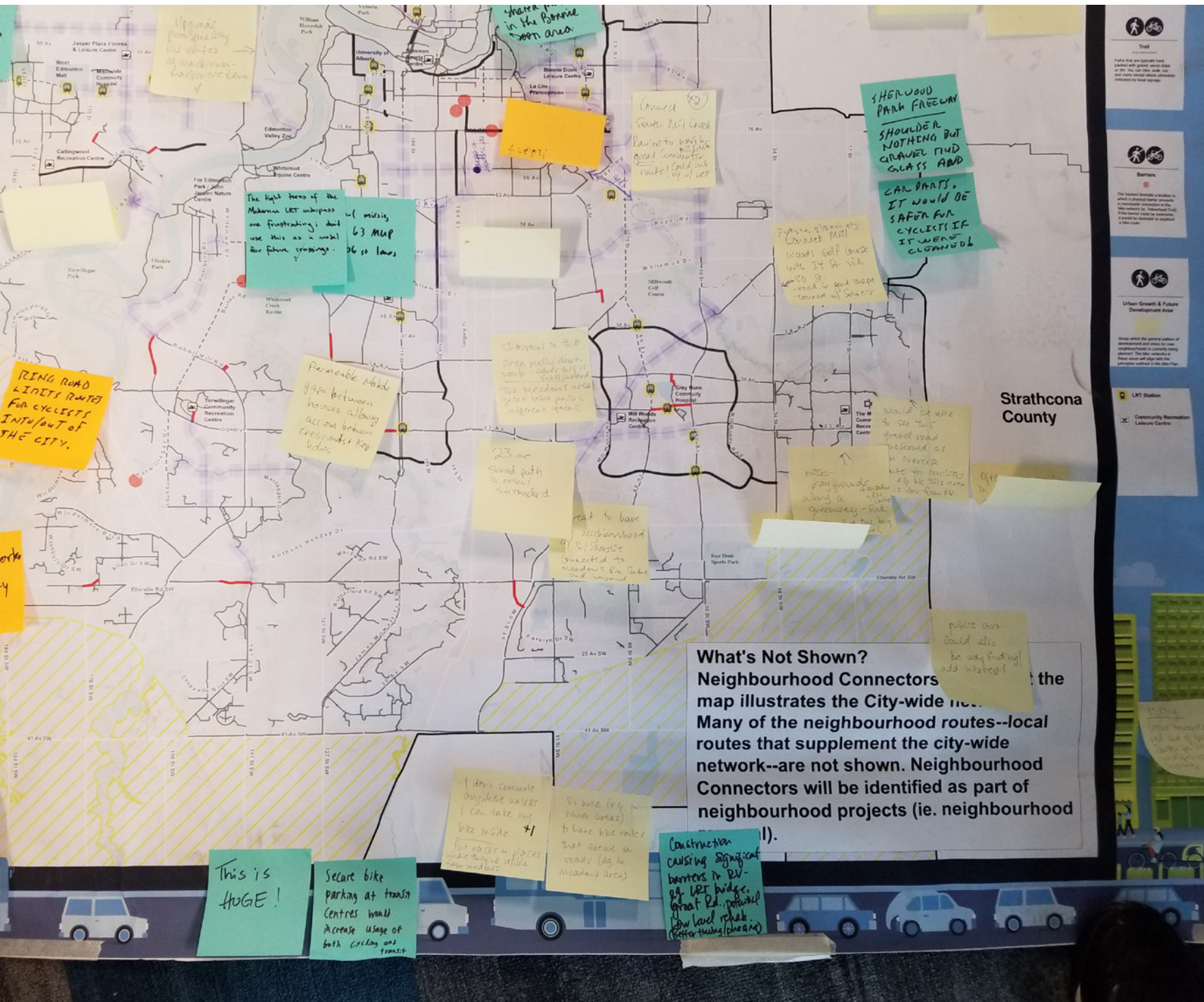
The draft Network Map was generally supported by participants. Concerns or suggestions for improvement were as follows:

Map presentation

Several considerations specific to how information is presented on the map were identified:

+ **Some noted they had difficulty interpreting the map and found it too cluttered or not informative enough, though many of these concerns were addressed once facilitators walked them through the layers.**

+ **Some suggested there might be value in more specifically identifying the type of bike facility on planned or existing routes, and what is accessible for different levels of rider. (Note: More detailed information was shared separately through the Story Map tool, including facility type for existing and planned infrastructure.)**

+ **At the scale presented at in-person events, some found that it was difficult to tell if bike routes went to desirable places.**

+ **Some participants suggested two maps might be more effective – one with recreational routes and one for commuting/more direct transportation.**

+ **Some inaccuracies on the map were brought to the attention of the project team.**

It is important to note that this map is intended for planning purposes, to provide direction around future build-out of the bike network. It is different from the existing Edmonton Bike Map that is shared with the public as a trip planning/wayfinding tool, which also highlights facility type.

Additional routes

Some participants stressed the importance of prioritizing citywide east/west and north/south bikeways to enable people to travel safely from all parts of the city to the core or across the city. Such connections, it was argued, would strongly support directness, connectivity and equity, all of which appear in the Network Principles and/or Values.

Additionally, the need for new/better connections in the following locations was flagged:

+ **Routes (and good transit integration opportunities) to adjacent municipalities – e.g., St. Albert, Sherwood Park, Spruce Grove**

+ **Stronger connections to the River Valley – e.g. from 107 Ave and from west end neighbourhoods to MacKinnon Ravine**

+ **Safer connections across major roadways – e.g. Yellowhead Trail, Whitemud Drive, Anthony Henday Drive and Calgary Trail**

+ **Safer routes along arterials and other important connectors – e.g. 149 St, Kingsway, Princess Elizabeth Ave., 106 St. and 95 Ave.**

+ **Safe routes through industrial areas, which currently show as a gap on the map**

+ **Improved local networks – e.g. Bonnie Doon neighbourhood**

+ **Safe connections to key destinations – e.g. Valley Zoo, Mill Woods Golf Course**

+ **Safe routes along LRT corridors**

The heat map and Story Map showed particularly strong support for bike routes to and through downtown, and along key travel corridors like 118 Ave, Jasper Ave and Ellerslie Road. There were also recommendations to strengthen some of the future routes shown on the map by filling in small gaps or extending the routes, such as along 113 St, Stony Plain Rd and Ellerslie Rd, to create strong N/S and E/W connections.

Detailed input received in the Story Map can be reviewed in this spreadsheet.

Reclassification of routes
In some cases, people offered comments on routes that they felt should be represented differently on the map, such as existing routes that are considered substandard based on experience. The 23 Ave shared use path was offered as an example.

Design suggestions
Some suggestions had more to do with the design of bike facilities – for example, tight turns on some ramps/underpasses (e.g., McKernan LRT underpass) are challenging.

Missing Links/Barriers
A number of additional missing links were flagged for consideration by the project team (e.g. 63 Ave. shared use path to 106 St. routes; North to South Mill Creek Ravine, which was flagged as having the potential to be a great commuter route; and 102 Ave to ICE District). Some crossings were flagged as being problematic and effectively functioning as missing links (e.g. 100 Ave at 116 St). Participants also agreed with many of the barriers identified, such as the rail yard at 76 Ave and access into and out of the River Valley.

4.3 Network Priorities

Input on how to prioritize build-out of the bike network was invited at the workshops, drop-ins, community conversations and via the online survey. Participants were invited to prioritize four options: 1) filling gaps in the existing network, 2) building new routes, 3) upgrading existing, substandard routes and 4) strengthening connections to the River Valley trail network. This section summarizes what participants felt should be prioritized, and why.

Overall Prioritization of Network Build-out Options
At all in-person events as well as amongst cyclists who responded to the online survey, addressing missing links in the existing network emerged as a clear priority. Of survey respondents who ride a bike, 40 per cent ranked it most important, alongside 43 per cent of network priority votes cast at the in-person events.
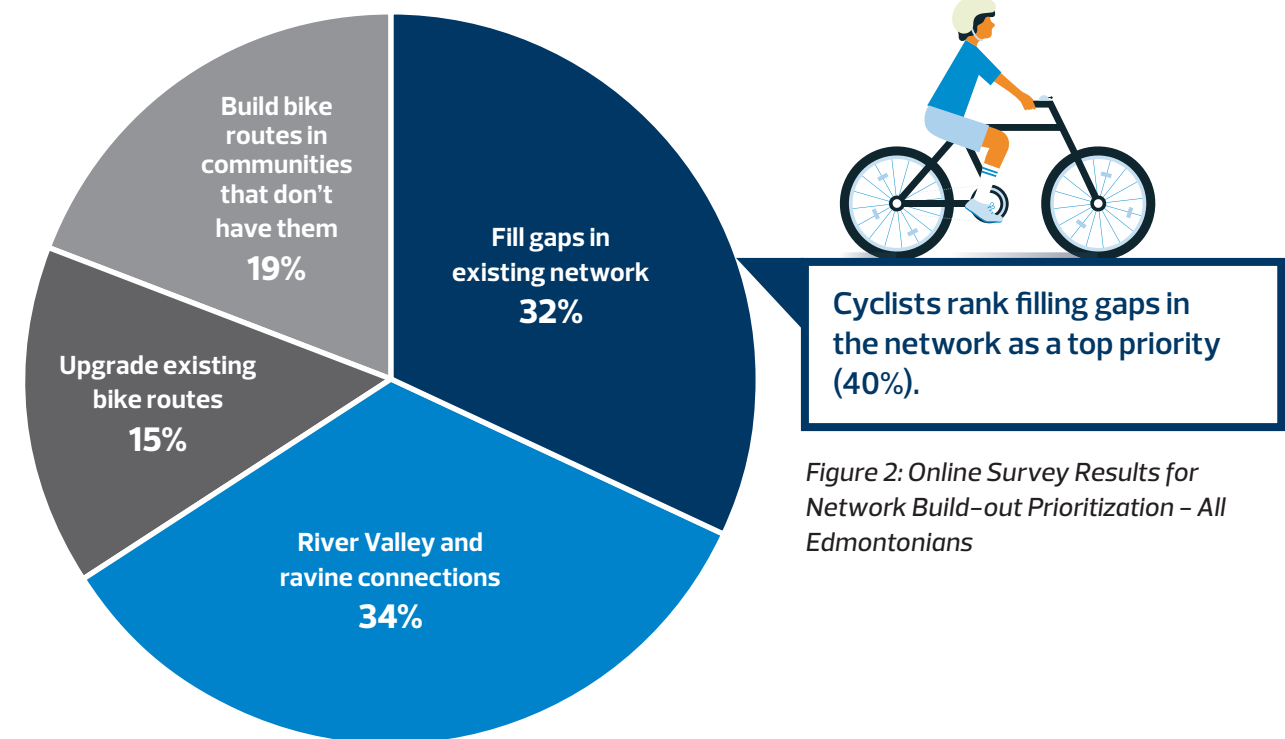

Build bike routes in communities that don't have them
19%

Fill gaps in existing network
32%

Upgrade existing bike routes
15%

River Valley and ravine connections
34%

Cyclists rank filling gaps in the network as a top priority (40%).

Figure 2: Online Survey Results for Network Build-out Prioritization – All Edmontonians

As shown in the survey prioritization summarized in Figure 2, Edmontonians *overall* (including those who bike and those who don't) prioritized River Valley and ravine connections first, at 34 per cent, with filling gaps in the network coming a close second at 32 per cent. Building new routes and upgrading existing bike routes came out as third and fourth priority amongst online survey respondents, at 19 per cent and 15 per cent respectively.

Amongst in-person event participants, building new bike routes and upgrading existing routes emerged as second and third priorities, at 28 per cent and 19 per cent of the vote share, with River Valley connections coming a distant fourth, at only 10 per cent. This breakdown is shown in Figure 3 below.
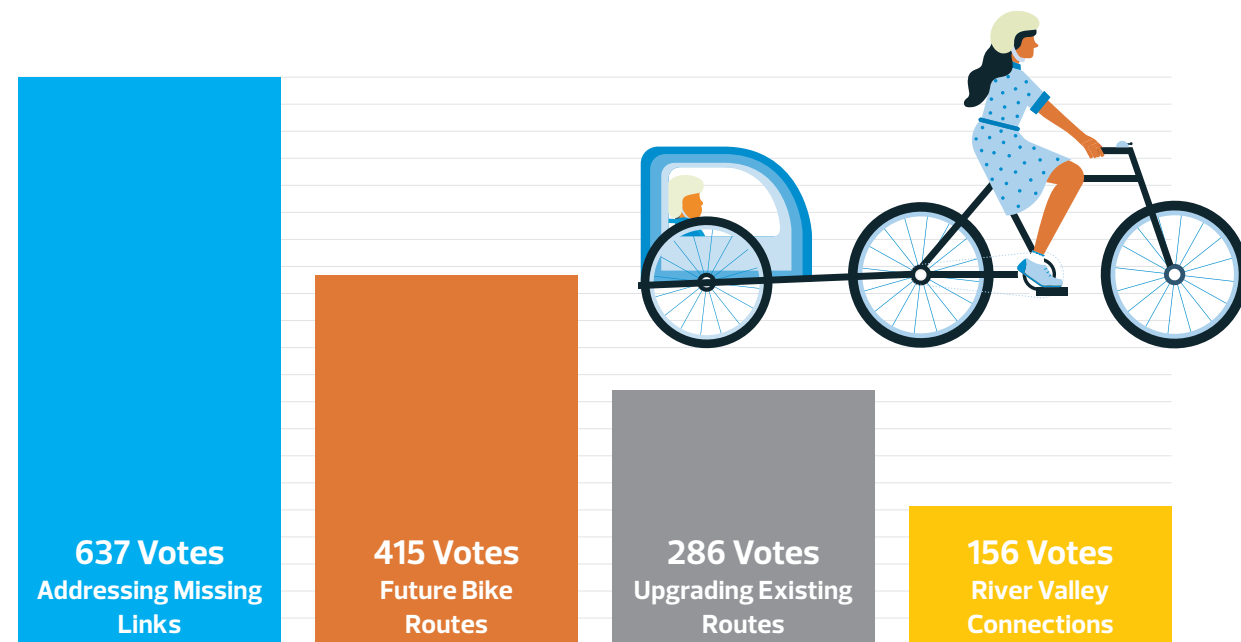

Figure 3: In-Person Results for Network Build-out Prioritization Activity

Getting to Why

At each of the in-person events, as well as in the online survey, participants were invited to share not just their priorities, but why they responded as they did. That input is summarized here.

1. Addressing Missing Links

The primary reason listed for prioritizing missing links (among both in-person and online survey participants) was that doing so would make the existing network significantly safer and better-connected, and thus more functional for a relatively low investment compared to constructing new routes. In short it is an efficient option.

Participants noted that prioritizing this option would result in more people biking, and greater diversity amongst those who ride, as the network would both be and feel safer for riders of all levels of ability. By removing or mitigating currently dangerous or uncomfortable situations, including crossing at busy intersections, riding in heavy traffic, using roads in poor condition, and eliminating gaps in the network, it would improve access to the existing network for more Edmontonians citywide. Lastly, it could improve connectivity of the network to desirable destinations.

"We have some fantastic infrastructure, but there are huge gaps – e.g. using the funicular and getting to the downtown grid."

"Our neighbourhood currently has a bike network, but it doesn't connect well with other neighbourhoods."

It was noted, however, that addressing missing links should not come entirely at the expense of some key new routes, including northeast Edmonton, which was identified as significantly underserved. Participants also urged the project team to ensure that schools are well-connected to other important community centres (e.g. commercial areas, rec centres, etc.), and pointed out that missing links need to be addressed at multiple scales, including within neighbourhoods. The importance of connecting the existing networks on the south side and downtown with good routes was also stressed.

2. Improving River Valley and Ravine Connections

Participants emphasized that the river valley system is an important part of Edmonton's bike network for both recreational and commuting purposes. As a system that is generally separated from car traffic, the river valley can provide a safe, comfortable experience for first-time or less confident riders, or those who simply prefer not to ride in proximity to cars. It also offers unique riding opportunities - such as mountain biking – which would be difficult to replicate elsewhere. Its natural beauty makes it an attractive destination for Edmontonians and tourists alike, and its extent and positioning through the city also make it a valuable commuter corridor.

While the scope of the Bike Plan is limited to connecting the river valley to the urban bike network at the top of bank (with the river valley itself falling under the purview of the Ribbon of Green strategic plan), engagement reinforced that these connections are important and more urban routes need to connect to river valley and ravine routes. The river valley presents unique challenges for cyclists, notably steep hills at access/egress points, potential conflict with other users, and wayfinding, which the Bike Plan could help mitigate.

"It is hard to get by bike from where I live to the river valley."

As identified above, some survey respondents who do not ride and/or who identified as "unlikely to use the bike network" noted that they prefer that bike facilities do not impede car traffic, or that they simply do not support bike lanes. These respondents were more likely to vote for river valley connections over on-street options; 12 per cent of respondents identified this as their primary reason for voting this way.

"[This option] doesn't interfere with car traffic, and provides recreational enjoyment in the river valley."

Other unique river valley challenges and opportunities are discussed further in the program areas section below.
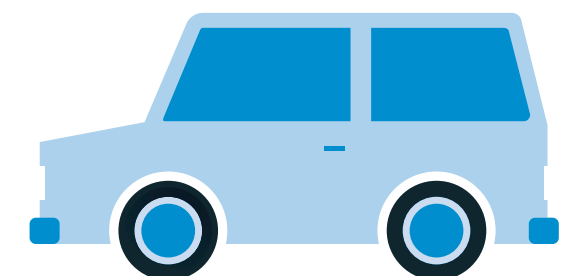
3. Future Bike Routes

Providing access for new/more diverse riders and extending opportunities for current riders were highlighted as key reasons that people voted for "future bike routes," both at in-person events and in the online survey. Participants stressed the importance of communities outside the core having access to the bike network, both supporting new ridership and enabling people who are already riding to access more of the city.

"I would love to have the option biking from the neighbourhood I am in, in order to get to where I need to get to in the city."

Access to safe riding for more vulnerable community members was also raised as important consideration, particularly for those who may not be able to afford a car and/or who may rely on a bike for transportation. The importance of building out the network to provide more equitable access was noted a number of times, especially to underserved areas like the north side, and countering the perception that bike infrastructure is only for the "elite." A balance should be found between addressing some critical gaps downtown and providing for people further out, to build ridership citywide. The concept of building "bike highways" out from the core – spokes other parts of the city to this network – was noted, as well as a need for good routes within neighbourhoods to local hubs like schools.

Strengthening Edmonton's bike culture through the sheer prevalence of bike infrastructure was another reason provided for prioritizing new routes. More routes also provide options for riders, and enables them to make different decisions depending on who they're riding with, when they're riding and why they're riding (e.g. a leisurely Sunday ride with children vs a commute to work).

4. Upgrading Existing (Substandard) Routes

The desire for a safer, more comfortable user experience was noted as a key reason participants selected "upgrading existing routes" as a priority. Again, this would improve conditions for existing cyclists and also draw new ridership. Many participants noted that they, or someone they know, have been put off riding by infrastructure that is in poor condition. Narrow routes/bridges, user conflict, inconsistency or inappropriateness of facility type (e.g. shared road/high traffic), potholes, tree roots, cracks, uneven pavement, poor/lack of lighting or signage, dangerous crossings (e.g. the need for light-controlled intersections) and worn pavement markings were all noted as concerns. On the other side, some noted how attractive, high quality, well-maintained infrastructure can generate a positive biking culture and create pride in the community.

"Before building new routes, make what is there the best it can be."

Similar to reasons offered for filling missing links, participants noted that upgrading substandard routes could provide some quick, low-cost wins that could significantly improve rider safety and experience. It was stressed by some participants that the City should differentiate between "uncomfortable" substandard routes and those that are truly dangerous, and prioritize the latter. Others highlighted the importance of deeply understanding the experience of diverse users on different route types and considering the user experience we want for the future.

4.4 Program Areas

Program areas are elements that support the physical bike network to make biking an easier, safer and more enjoyable option. Input was collected on two aspects of the program areas: 1) the proposed approach to delivery and 2) which areas should be prioritized and why.

Overall Prioritization of Program Areas

It was stressed to in-person engagement participants that all program areas are important and will all be addressed in the future. The exercise was intended to get a sense of whether there are some that clearly rise to the top and to which resources should be focussed in the near term.

Online survey respondents identified Laws & Policies (22%), Education (18%) and Integration with Transit (14%) as the top priorities. The following reasons were provided:

+ **Laws & Policies:** both people who drive and those who ride need to understand and abide by the rules and etiquette of the road

+ **Education:** to increase safety for all road users, leading to respectful sharing of the roadway

+ **Integration with Transit:** so that people riding long distances can use transit for part of their trip; to reduce reliance on cars; and to improve access to the bike network.

At the in-person events, participants flagged Maintenance, Wayfinding, Laws & Policies and End of Trip Facilities as their priorities.

Agreement with Proposed Approaches

Based on the results of the online survey, the majority of Edmontonians agree with the approaches proposed for each program area. The highest level of agreement was for Integration with Transit, at 71% "Strongly" or "Somewhat" Agree; the rest of the program areas spanned from 71% to 57% agreement (End of Trip Facilities). Importantly, Edmontonians were generally in strongest agreement with those program areas they identified as being most important – namely Transit Integration, Education, Lighting and Laws & Policies. Overall, survey respondents who ride a bike expressed stronger agreement with the proposed approaches than other Edmontonians.

Suggestions to Strengthen Proposed Approaches

Wayfinding

This was frequently noted as a priority, for both new and existing routes. Participants who highlighted this priority wanted:

+ Consistent, predictable, continuous infrastructure as a cue to riders about what space is for bikes and where the route is

+ Physical signage to key river valley access points, along key bike corridors, and indicating distances and direction to key destinations

+ Maps, both print and digital

+ Wayfinding in critical areas- e.g. downtown (congestion)

+ Major cross-city connector routes that are consistent, predictable; could have marker/signpost signs at bike scale directing people to key destinations; especially for first-time riders, this is huge – lowers the stress level, makes more attractive

+ Creativity in route naming, as well as using public art to serve as wayfinding

+ Clear cycling detours during major events (e.g. Fringe Festival)

"I'm familiar with the city but find the bike routes very difficult to navigate."

"Just like with cars: people need to have clear picture of available routes and best connections."

Lighting

Lighting was seen as being important for safety and something that could support more people – especially women – to ride at night or on dark winter mornings or evenings. It was also seen as having value in making bike routes attractive and interesting at night, and to help with wayfinding. There was some discussion about lighting of River valley routes. Some felt lighting was important, especially for routes identified as (potential) commuter corridors, while others expressed concern about ecological impacts. It was suggested that lighting at the yellow-red end of the spectrum is better for health and wildlife (vs. white lighting), and motion-sensing lighting was also identified as a possible solution. Some experienced cyclists suggested that good bike/helmet lighting can be very effective for seeing the trail ahead, and being seen by others, reducing the need for costly lighting infrastructure.

"Lighting serves both cyclists and walkers. It makes biking and walking safer and promotes active transportation."

"Good lighting promotes use of bike routes all times, not just when the sun is shining."

Laws & Policies

Regarding laws and policies, participants stressed again the need for clarity amongst all road users about what is allowed. Some noted that people currently break laws just to be safe (or to do what they think is safe), and that they should not be penalized (e.g. ticketed) for doing so. A few participants stated the importance of terminology and language, for example, to use "driver" and "cyclist" instead of "car" and "bike" to appropriately address responsibility. Enforcement was also a common theme: some suggested increasing fines for drivers who disrespect cyclists or drive dangerously around them. Others recommended cameras to catch drivers disobeying "no right on red" rules. Lastly, some specific suggestions around potential laws, or changes to existing laws, were offered, for example, a bylaw requiring a 1 or 1.5m separation between cars and cyclists, permitting Idaho stops and forbidding the use of high-powered e-bikes on bikeways.

Maintenance

A number of issues and opportunities related to maintenance were raised:

+ The importance of ensuring that bike paths are not blocked by utility vehicles or construction – once we have the infrastructure, need to protect it and keep it clear

+ A plan for long-term maintenance of shared use paths in suburban neighbourhoods – given that many were built around the same time

+ Maintenance for winter riding is critical, and this should include investing in the maintenance of sidewalks to ensure that seniors, people with disabilities and strollers can safely walk without needing to rely on bike lanes. Some stressed the need for snow and ice clearing to bare pavement and the use of de-icer to make biking safe for even more vulnerable riders. It was noted that maintenance of alleys on designated bike routes is currently neglected, and that the delay in clearing residential street networks makes accessing designated bike routes difficult after a heavy snowfall.

+ Important to clear bike routes in all seasons, including spring sweeping, gravel, leaves, etc.

"Safety comes first and this is the area where I see safety coming into play. Drivers and bicyclists need to be aware and practice the law of the roads/pathways, sidewalks, etc."

"Infrastructure that's not clear is useless to me, and I just end up back on the road. Let's get the basics down first, and keep bike lanes and bikeways clear of snow, ice, leaves, dirt and well-maintained."

Bikeshare

Bikeshare was regarded among many as a positive option. Some participants noted the merits of a publicly-funded "Montreal-style" bikeshare which would increase safety through the sheer number of riders. It would also support a healthy city and provide a reliable year-round micromobility option (vs. e-scooters, which present some winter challenges). Integration of a bikeshare system with transit was seen as critical. Bikeshare was frequently raised among representatives of post-secondary institutions that are currently disconnected from the bike network, such as NAIT and Concordia.

"I do not regularly bike and I think bikeshare allows people like me to use bikes with the convenience of not having to buy my own and have someplace to store it."

Some questioned the value of a bikeshare program, pointing out that Edmonton's downtown core is less dense than that of others, and that many prefer to use their own bike.

Interestingly, e-scooters were raised even more frequently than bikeshare. They have proven very popular among students, though it can be challenging for post-secondary institutions to work out licensing with vendors and campuses currently represent a "frozen zone" for e-scooters. The challenges associated with e-scooters also extend to riding with children. Rules currently require that riders must be 18 or older, and doubling up on a scooter is not permitted. On the plus side, e-scooters are seen to have potential to help build the rationale for bike routes.


Integration with Transit

Integration with transit is seen as a critical piece of the Bike Plan. Participants noted that our city is so spread out, some people will never consider biking such long distances. Transit makes biking possible for people who live on the outskirts of the city or in adjacent municipalities. With the changes to come as a result of the bus network redesign, biking was seen as having the potential to be a first/last km solution in some cases. The importance of supporting youth in learning how to link modes safely (bike/bus/bike combo) was highlighted again. Good bike path connections to LRT stations were also highlighted.

"To make biking completely successful, it needs to be integrated with the regular transit system."

There was strong concern amongst workshop attendees and other participants about the peak hours restrictions for bikes on the LRT and the barrier it poses for potential bike commuters. One participant also noted that an additional challenge in that taking a bike on the LRT currently requires being able to hold it securely for the whole ride, keeping the brake on and ensuring it doesn't fall on another passenger, which can be difficult for some. She suggested it would be better to have the option to secure it somehow for the ride, such as a dedicated LRT car for bikes. Such a space could also allow pedestrians, with an understanding that it's a "bike storage" car first. Other participants flagged the need for an easy transition from biking to LRT and back to biking with accessible stations that minimize the need to haul a bike up and down stairs. Participants also stressed the importance of secure bike parking at transit centres and LRT stations, a topic that was explored in some detail in Phase 2 engagement.

Finally, an app to facilitate bike/transit integration was recommended.
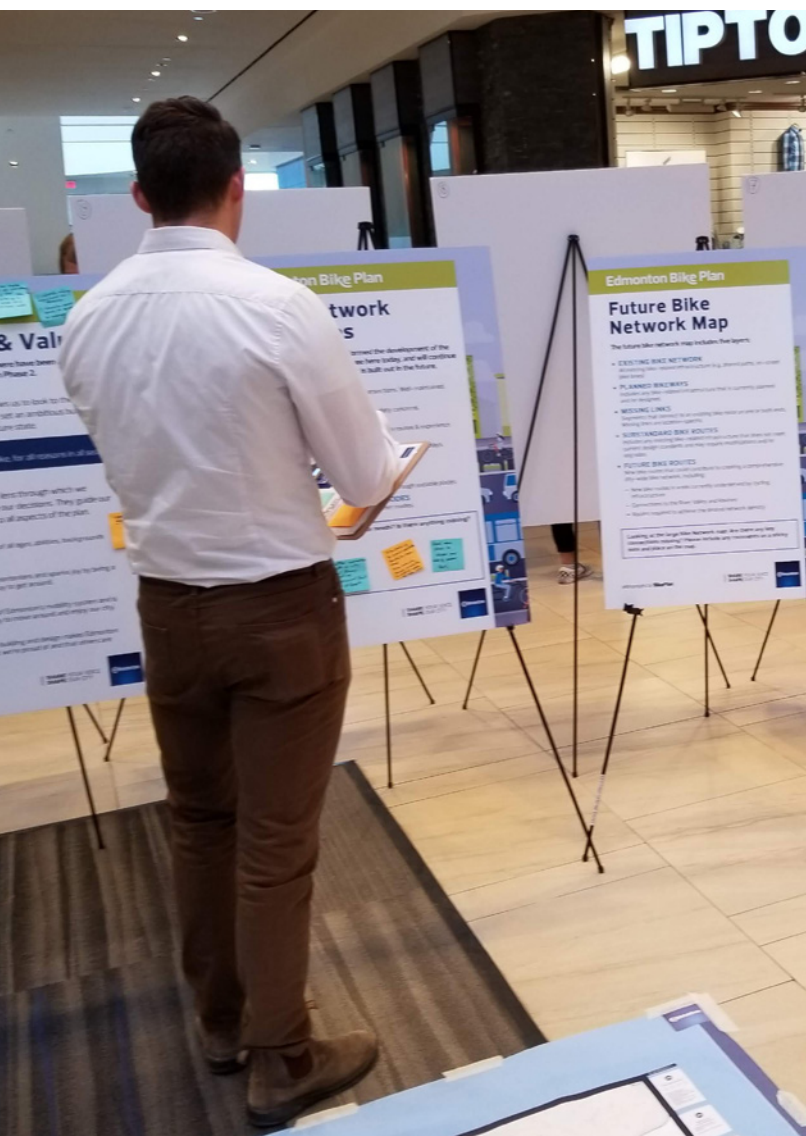
Encouragement

Encouragement was frequently mentioned as a priority in the context of building a culture around biking, especially among young people. One participant noted that "a strong bike culture accelerates everything." The following points were offered by participants:

+ Partner with local community organizations who are engaged in this work

+ Highlight local success stories for exciting, workable solutions and build on their momentum to help "normalize" cycling as a behaviour and a choice

+ Develop City messaging that brings road users together around shared outcomes rather than polarizing perspectives

+ Continue work to position Edmonton as a vibrant winter city. Without public recognition of and support for winter cycling, the Bike Plan could lack traction

+ Seize opportunities for the City to lead by example, e.g. having staff at events on the bike paths and in the community, offering incentives for employees to ride

+ Have bike ambassadors in each part of the city to support new riders, and create a "Back on the Bike" program for seniors

+ Focus on young people as a way to initiate a culture shift

+ Continue positive, community-building events like Open Streets 2020

+ Ensure good performance monitoring to demonstrate success, and to show who is benefitting and how

*"People need to be helped in developing a sustainable bike culture."*

"Open Streets 2019 changed the way our city sees itself."

Education

Participants stressed that education for all road users is needed – for drivers, for cyclists and other micro-mobility users and for pedestrians. Education should include both what is legal and what is safe and unsafe. Having community-based education programs so people know how to ride safely in their neighbourhoods was recommended as a good starting place, and then that knowledge could extend to the rest of the network. The City's "Language of the Trails" campaign (Summer 2019) was noted as a positive example of education. Education around the benefits of biking, to individuals and to the community as a whole, was also stressed as being important. Other specific training was also suggested, e.g. on use of bus bike racks.

"Education is necessary both for car drivers and for bicycle riders. I have seen drivers who make it unsafe for bicyclists, but also bicyclists who make it unsafe for pedestrians."
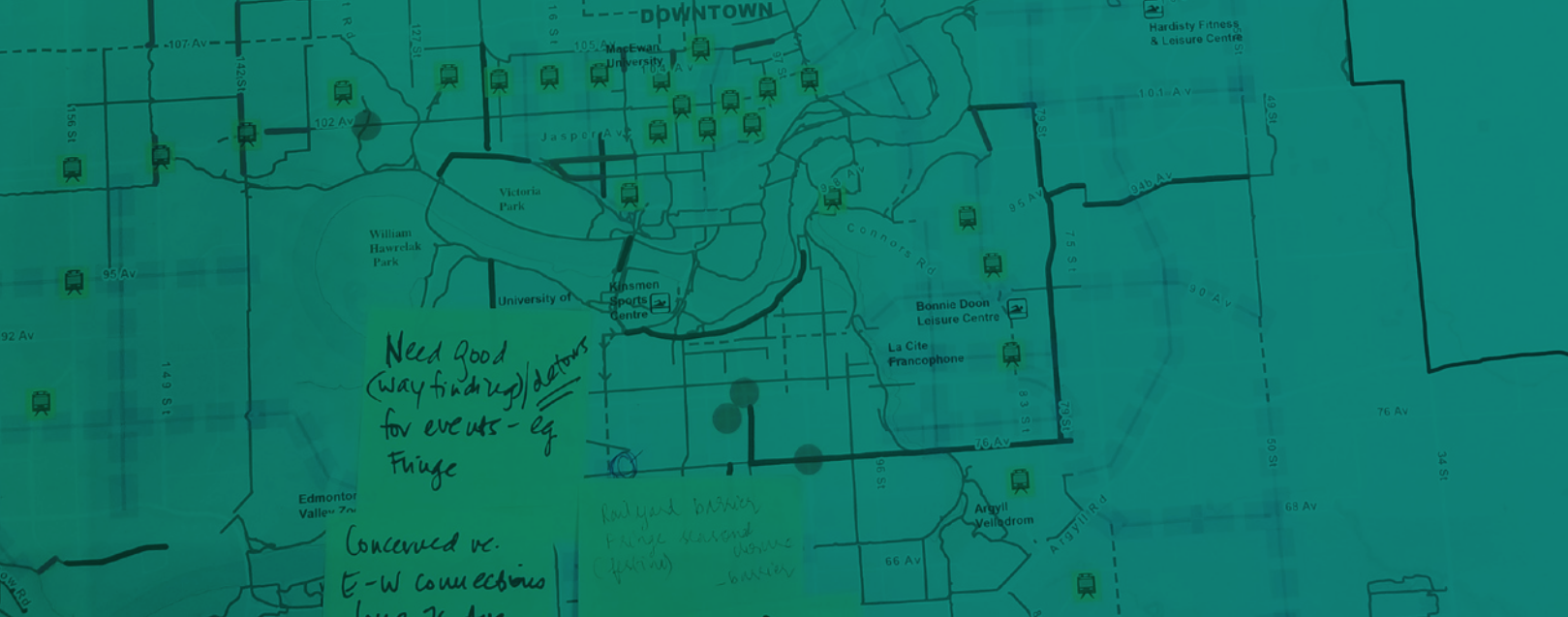
End of Trip Facilities

Participants emphasized the need for more, better quality, well–situated bike parking, and for additional facilities (e.g. showers, lockers) to support riders in choosing a bike for any trip purpose.

Bike theft remains a major concern and participants noted that if cyclists can't rely on secure bike parking, they may not ride. Some participants felt that strategies focusing on reducing bike theft should be added to this program area approach.

"I believe the risk of theft and the hassle of where to put the bike, keeps people from using bikes as a continuous mode of transportation." – Survey respondent

"It is very difficult to find good bike lock up racks which are small enough for a small u–lock and in well lighted safe places in this city." – Survey respondent

There is a strong desire for more bike racks at or near key destinations (e.g. cafes, office towers, transit centres, schools, parks), and for sheltered racks in open spaces. Bike racks should meet the City's standards, and should accommodate atypical bikes (e.g. trikes, cargo bikes, hand cycles, etc.). Racks should be located in places that are well–lit and well–used (not isolated), and ideally visible from destinations. More bike corrals at City events are desired. Participants encouraged the standardization of bike parking at new businesses, as well as a program to celebrate bike–friendly businesses (gold/silver/bronze levels with criteria for each).

"I would like to ride my bike to more festivals, events and restaurants, and I want to know I'll have a safe place to store it if I do."

Additional facilities, such as showers and lockers, are also desired, especially at places of work, to support bike commuting. Some suggested encouraging incentivizing private building owners to include such facilities, and to allow public (non–tenant) use.

4.5 Network Map vs. Program Area Priorities

At the workshops, in the community conversations and in the online survey, participants were invited to weigh in on whether the City should emphasize 1) build–out of the physical network, 2) advancement of program areas, or 3) a balance between the two.

At the in–person events there was a clear preference for building out the network. Participants stressed that only the City can advance the development of infrastructure, whereas community partner organizations can likely support much of the work set out in the program areas. Others offered the perspective that without a strong network, the program areas were not very relevant, or from another angle, that once the network is in place, the other work will follow naturally.

"As the infrastructure is created, people's natural curiosity will bring them out to use it. The other issues are important, but without a better network, we can't get around the city."

Those who did vote for advancing program areas first felt that program areas are what make cycling attractive to most users by improving the user experience and will do the most to increase ridership.

For those who felt that there should be a balance between building out the network and program areas, they felt that both were equally important. Emphasis was placed on addressing missing links and improving the functionality and quality of experience of what we already have through the program areas.

In the survey, no clear preference emerged which could suggest that either the majority desire balance, or that they were simply undecided.

"These programs can work together in reaching the best result. I think both are important and necessary for a safe and functional bike network."

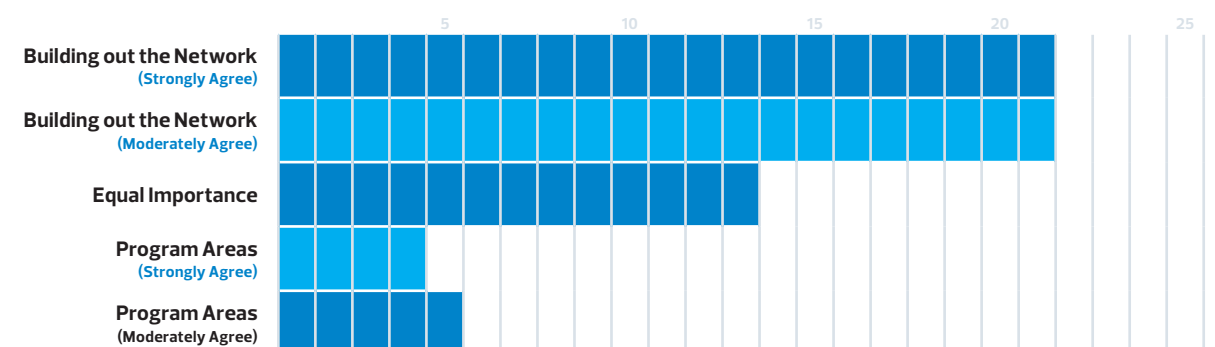**Activity 3: Network Build–out vs. Program Areas Spectrum**

Figure 4: In–Person Results for Network Build–Out vs. Program Area Activity

5.0 How Input will be Used

Input received during Phase 3 engagement on the Bike Plan will be used, together with technical analysis and best practice research, to develop the full Bike Plan document.

Some of the changes which public engagement has already informed include:

+ **Refining the Network Principles**
  including changing "Integration with other Modes" to "Integration" generally, to speak to integration of bike facilities within streets and neighbourhoods, as well as the broader mobility network

+ **Refining the draft Bike Network Map**
  including addressing some inaccuracies and omissions and adding some additional new routes

+ **Supporting decisions about what to prioritize as the network is built out**
  Namely starting by filling gaps in the existing network to maximize its effectiveness while strategically building out new routes as opportunities arise

+ R**efining the approach for each program area**
  including the addition of some new actions

+ **Supporting decisions about what to prioritize**
  between the different program areas

Input will also inform the creation of the Bike Plan Implementation Plan following approval of the Bike Plan strategy document.
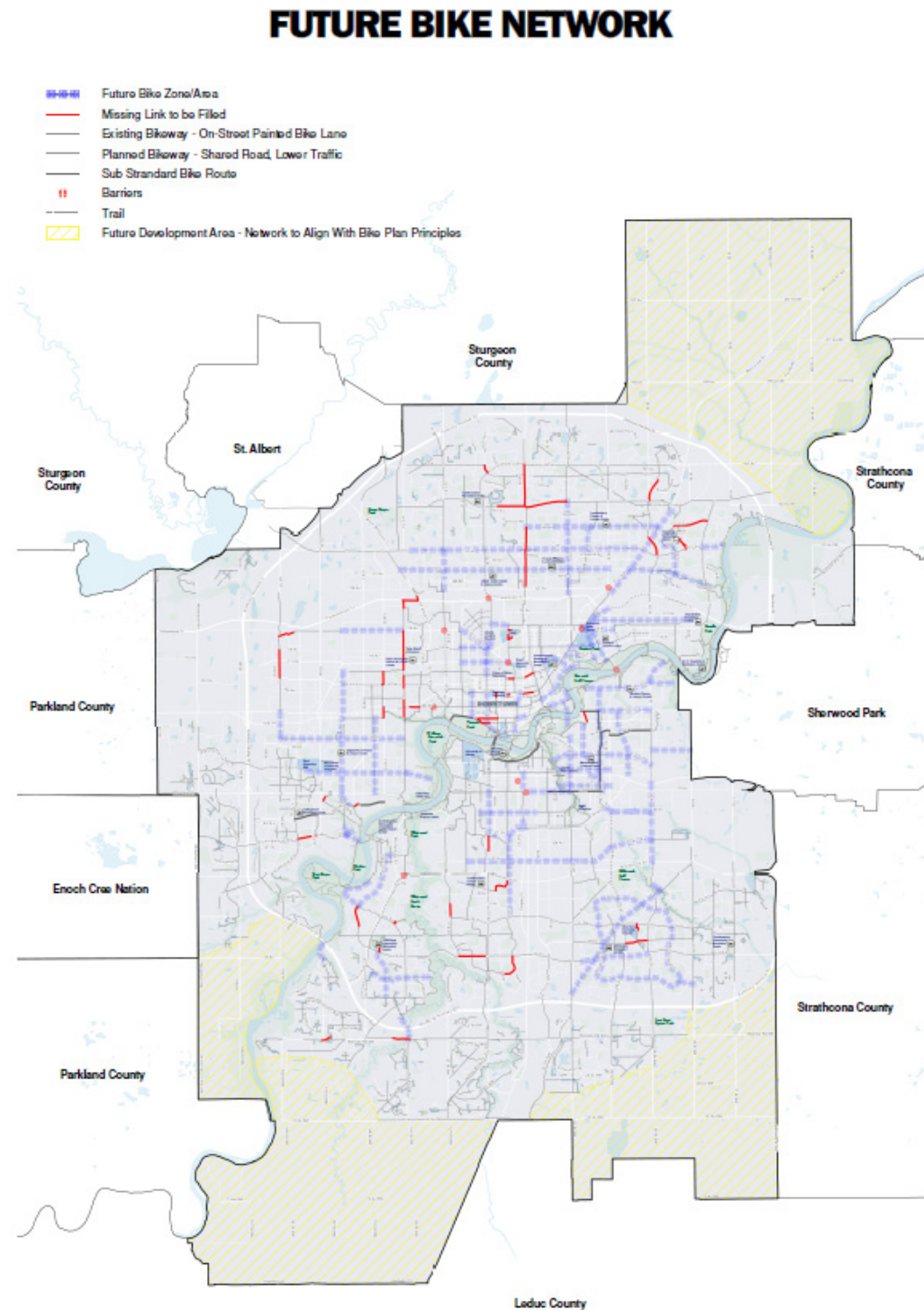
Thank You!

Thank you to everyone who contributed thoughts, ideas and concerns in Phase 3 – we are extremely grateful for your input and we look forward to continuing the conversation as we prepare to share the Bike Plan with City Council and the community.
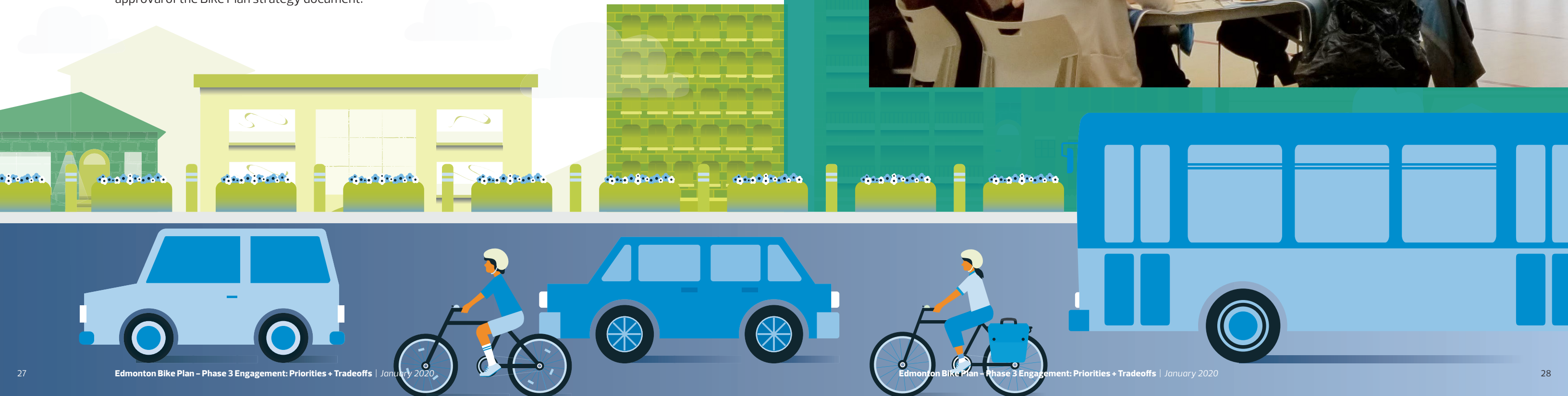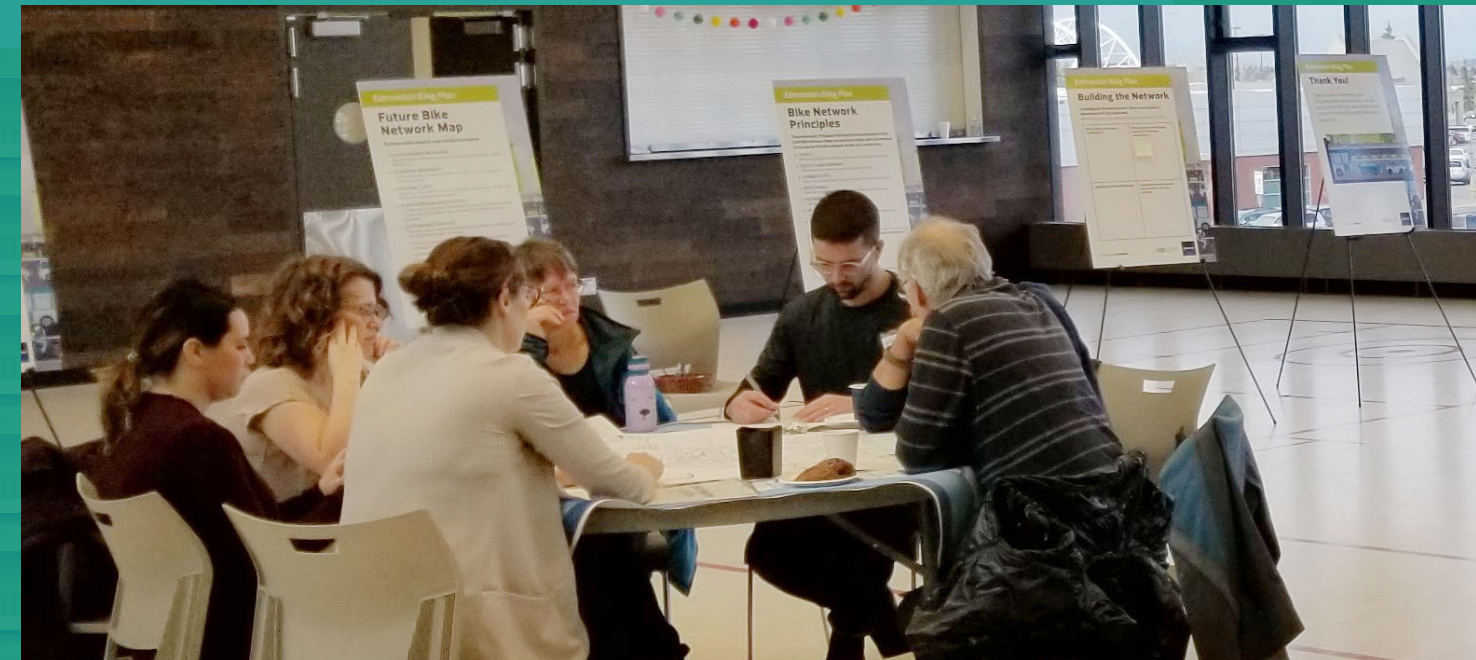
Appendices

APPENDIX A: Draft Bike Network Map

FUTURE BIKE NETWORK

APPENDIX B: Network Build-out Options

1. Address Missing Links
Missing links are segments that connect to an existing bike route on one or both ends. Missing links are location-specific.

2. Upgrade Substandard Bike Routes
Includes any existing bike-related infrastructure that does not meet current design standards and may require modifications and/or upgrades.

3. Build out Future Bike Routes
New bike routes contribute to creating a comprehensive city-wide bike network, including:

+ New bike routes in areas currently underserved by cycling infrastructure

+ Routes required to achieve the desired network density

4. Improve Connections to the River Valley and Ravines
Improve or create new connections between the river valley/ravines and the rest of the bike network.

APPENDIX C: Bike Plan Program Areas

LIGHTING | Lighting helps riders find their way. It increases everyone's safety and makes urban spaces more vibrant and attractive.

WAYFINDING | Wayfinding helps people know where they are and find their way in unfamiliar places. Maps, signs, and web apps—even the design of buildings and spaces—can help riders and pedestrians find their way.

ENCOURAGEMENT | A strong bike culture helps riders become comfortable with cycling and encourages positive public attitudes towards cycling

EDUCATION | A successful bike culture depends on riders who bike safely around pedestrians and vehicles and drivers who drive safely around bikes and bike lanes.

LAWS & POLICIES | Laws and policies help make the transportation system safer by influencing how people ride and drive and supporting bike-friendly communities

MAINTENANCE | Maintenance for bike routes includes seasonal cleaning and sweeping; clearing snow and treating surfaces with de-icer; and fixing potholes and keeping pavement markings visible.
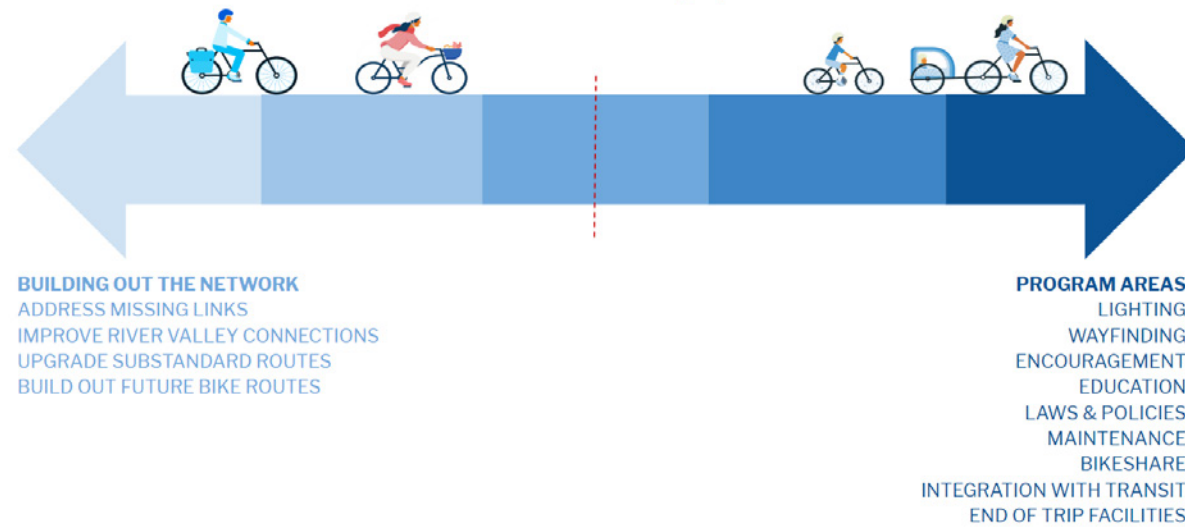
BIKESHARE | Bike share allows people to rent a bike for a short time, often for use in specified areas. E-bike share and e-scooter share are related programs. Many bike share systems in other cities across North America have recently been replaced with e-scooter share.

INTEGRATION WITH TRANSIT | Bikes are a great way to connect with transit at both ends of a trip. Riders who use transit can also increase the range of trips that are possible by bike

END OF TRIP FACILITIES | Facilities at the end of bike trips make it more convenient and feasible to cycle to work, shopping, dining and events. Facilities include parking and repair stands for bikes as well as change rooms, lockers and showers for riders.

# APPENDIX D: Network Build–out vs. Program Areas Spectrum

What should the City prioritize?

BUILDING OUT THE NETWORK
ADDRESS MISSING LINKS
IMPROVE RIVER VALLEY CONNECTIONS
UPGRADE SUBSTANDARD ROUTES
BUILD OUT FUTURE BIKE ROUTES

PROGRAM AREAS
LIGHTING
WAYFINDING
ENCOURAGEMENT
EDUCATION
LAWS & POLICIES
MAINTENANCE
BIKESHARE
INTEGRATION WITH TRANSIT
END OF TRIP FACILITIES

APPENDIX E: Network Principles

1. Safety | Minimizes conflict on routes & at intersections. Well–maintained.

2. Health and Comfort | Minimizes stress, anxiety & personal safety concerns.

3. Connectivity | Gap–free access to desired places. Choice in routes & experience.

4. Directness | Prioritizes straight, direct routes with minimal stops and delays.

5. Network Density | Grid size matches demand.

6. Attractiveness | Routes are attractive, interesting and go through sociable places.

7. Integration with Other Modes | Network is mutually supportive of other modes.
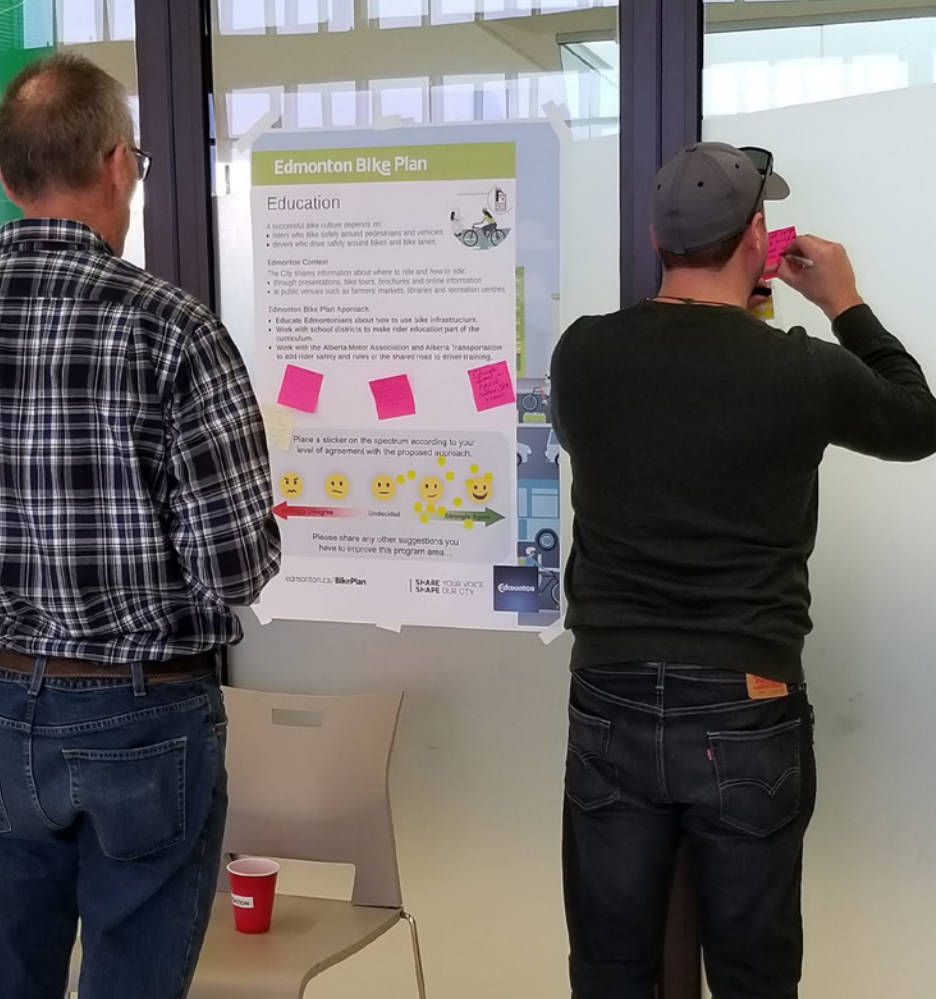
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