Okotoks Transit Fixed-Route

October 2026

WHAT WE LEARNED



ShapeOurTown.Okotoks.ca

Background

Shaping the Future of Transit

It has been one year since Fixed-Route transit service launched in Okotoks. To help evaluate the service and inform future transit planning, the Town invited residents to share their experiences, priorities, and ideas for improvement. Feedback was collected on the current service as well as potential future enhancements, including route coverage, stop locations, service hours, weekend service, accessibility, and long-term transit needs.

Our Goals

1. Gather rider feedback on the first year of Fixed-Route service to understand what is working well and where improvements are needed.
2. Understand community priorities for Fixed-Route transit service in order to help guide future transit planning and Council decisions as part of the 2027-2030 budget cycle.



2026

TIMELINE

AUG 31 TO SEP 16

Gather input from transit riders and residents through online survey.

SEP 8 TO SEP 14

Gather in person feedback at engagement pop-up events at the Seniors Club, Recreation Centre and Public Library.

OCT 26

Engagement findings, recommendations and future options presented to Council at the October 26 Council meeting and available to the community.

NOV 17 TO NOV 19

Council decides on any transit service enhancements or changes that will be made for the next 4-year budget (2027-2030) as part of Budget Deliberations.

2027 Q1 TO 2030 Q2

Implement any Council-approved service changes, subject to funding and operational readiness.

Community Engagement

Through the community engagement process and the Town's four guiding engagement principles, we are committed to listening to community perspectives and sharing how the input gathered contributes to future transit decisions.

Community feedback will be considered alongside ridership, service performance, accessibility, operating costs and available resources to inform recommendations to Council. Any service changes remain subject to Council approval and budget decisions.

Who did we engage?

Okotoks residents were engaged online and in person. Participants included regular transit customers, occasional riders, and residents who have never used the Fixed-Route service, ensuring feedback reflected a range of experiences and perspectives.

- Transit customers who use either Fixed-Route or On-Demand service were sent email invitations to provide feedback. Information was also available on all transit buses.
- Shape Our Town registered members, who have indicated an interest in Community Health & Safety, and Movement & Transportation.
- Citizen Panel, a group of engaged citizens who signed up to be contacted for public consultation opportunities.
- In an effort to provide more equitable access to participate, the opportunity to take the survey over the phone was offered, information was dropped off to seniors residences and pop-up events were hosted at the Recreation Centre, Public Library and Seniors Centre.

LEVEL OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

This project falls within the **CONSULT** level.

291
Residents provided feedback online

122
Community members engaged at four in-person pop-up events

199
Comments provided on open-ended question

514
Community members visited the Shape Our Town engagement page

**The survey received 291 responses, compared to 809 responses during the 2025 pre-launch Fixed-Route transit engagement. Although similar outreach and promotion tactics were used, participation was lower in 2026.*

	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
GOAL	To provide balanced and objective information to assist the public in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain feedback on analysis, issues, alternatives and decisions.	To work with public to make sure concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE	"We will keep you informed."	"We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge your concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision."	"We will work with you to ensure your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision."	"We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible."	"We will implement what you decide."

PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

The Town of Okotoks is committed to the following guiding principles every time we engage with the public. These are the foundations of our practice.

ACCOUNTABLE

We uphold commitments made to the public. We evaluate our processes and outcomes, in order to learn from our experiences, track our progress, and improve over time.

TRANSPARENT

Clear, timely and complete information is provided to share processes and decisions.

EQUITABLE

Diverse opportunities are provided so that perspectives and ideas from all interested parties are considered.

RELATIONAL

We value the people we are engaging with and put them in the center of our processes, building relationships, understanding and trust.



Highlights

A total of 291 residents and transit customers shared their feedback, providing valuable insight into what is working well, where improvements may be needed, and which potential transit enhancements are most important to the community.

- Among respondents who used either Fixed-Route only or both Fixed-Route and On-Demand, transit is primarily used for commuting to work (45%), running errands and shopping (38%), and accessing downtown destinations (33%).
- The ability to travel without booking in advance was the most valued benefit of Fixed-Route service, selected by nearly 43% of riders.
- Across all transit users, service frequency, schedule timing, and stop locations emerged as the most common transit challenges with Fixed-Route service.
- Service frequency was a top challenge for transit users, identified by 50% of those who used either Fixed-Route only or both Fixed-Route and On-Demand, as well as 40% of On-Demand only users.
- Westmount, Sheep River and Wedderburn ranked as the top 3 neighbourhoods for future service expansion.[1] At the same time, 'no expansion needed' ranked 3rd overall among all response options.
- Saturday service was the top-ranked option for future service hour expansion.
- Later weekday service was the second-highest ranked service hour enhancement, with 62.6% supporting weekday service until 9 p.m. or later.

On-Demand-only riders and non-users

- Among On-Demand users, 60% indicated a preference for On-Demand transit.
- Among non-users, most preferred to drive (56%), or walk, bike or scoot (21%).
- Weekend and late-evening service were the top priorities among those who don't currently use Fixed-Route service. Full-day weekend service ranked highest, while 52.9% of On-Demand-only riders preferred weekday service beyond 9 p.m.

[1]Drake Landing was excluded from this question because it has already been identified as the first priority area for future Fixed-Route service expansion, based on 2025 engagement findings.

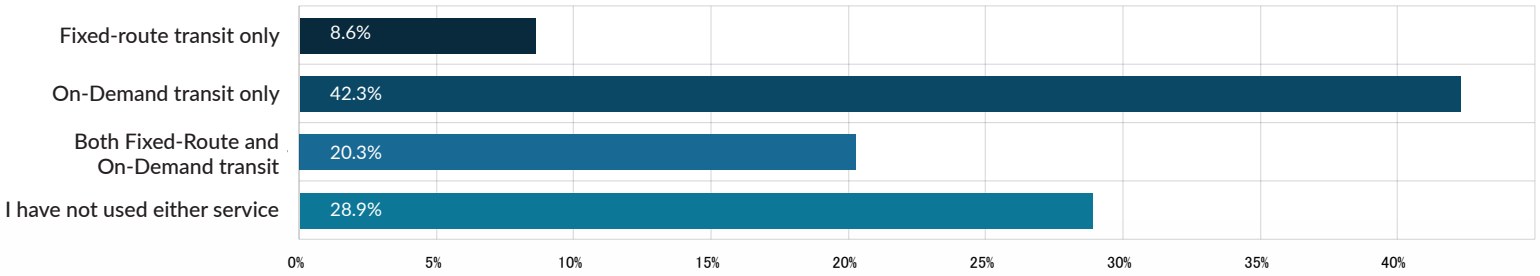
Thank You for your feedback

We appreciate everyone who shared their experiences and feedback during this engagement. Your participation helps ensure future transit planning is informed by the voices of the people who use transit today, those who may use it in the future, and the broader community. Thank you for helping shape the future of transit in Okotoks.



Transit Service Use

Which transit service(s) have you used in the last 12 months?*



Overall, 71.2% of respondents had used at least one Town transit service in the previous 12 months, while **28.9% had used Fixed-Route transit**.

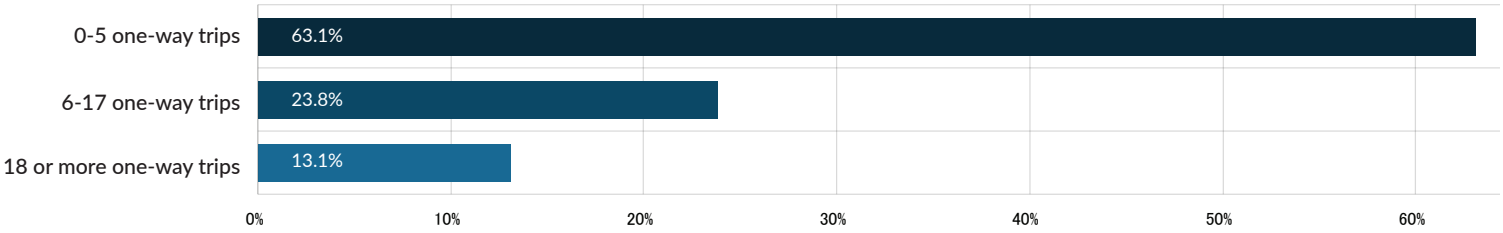
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Fixed-Route User Experience

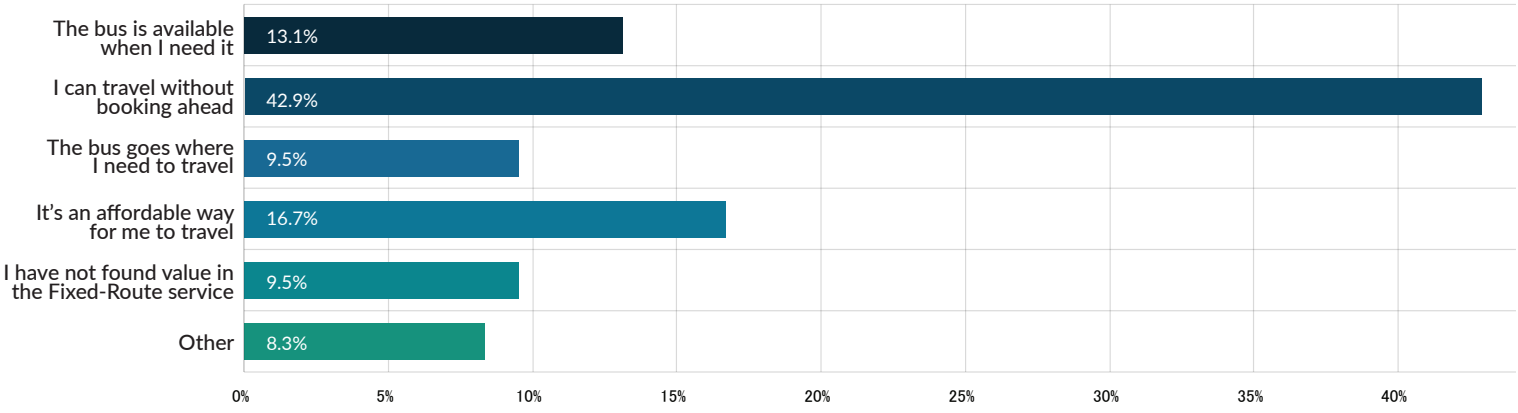
84 of 291 (29%) of survey respondents have used Fixed-Route transit in the last 12 months

In a typical one-month period, how many trips do you make on Fixed-Route transit?*



Although 29% of respondents had used Fixed-Route transit, most of these riders (63%) reported taking five or fewer transit trips in a typical month.

What have you valued most about using Fixed-Route transit in the last 12 months?*



The flexibility to travel without booking in advance was the feature respondents valued most, with nearly 43% of Fixed-Route riders selecting this option.

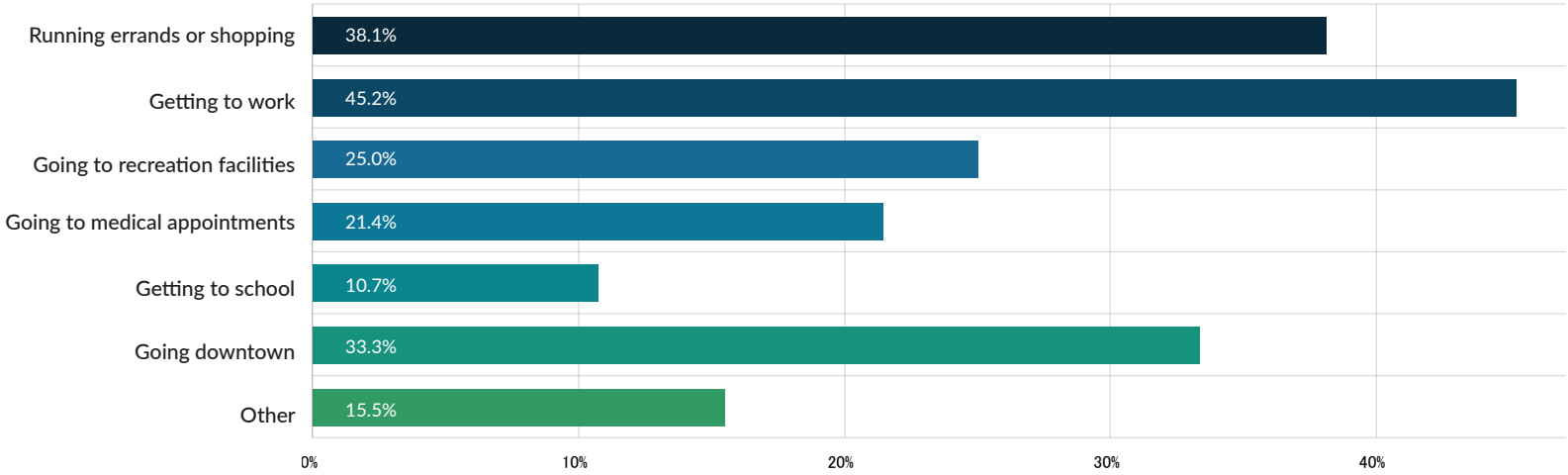
**Respondents were asked to select all that apply; therefore categories aren't mutually exclusive and aren't intended to total 100%.*

Values may not always sum to 100% due to rounding.

Fixed-Route User Experience

84 of 291 (29%) of survey respondents have used Fixed-Route transit in the last 12 months

Thinking about the last 12 months, what have you most often used Fixed-Route transit for?*



Top 3 Fixed-Route Uses

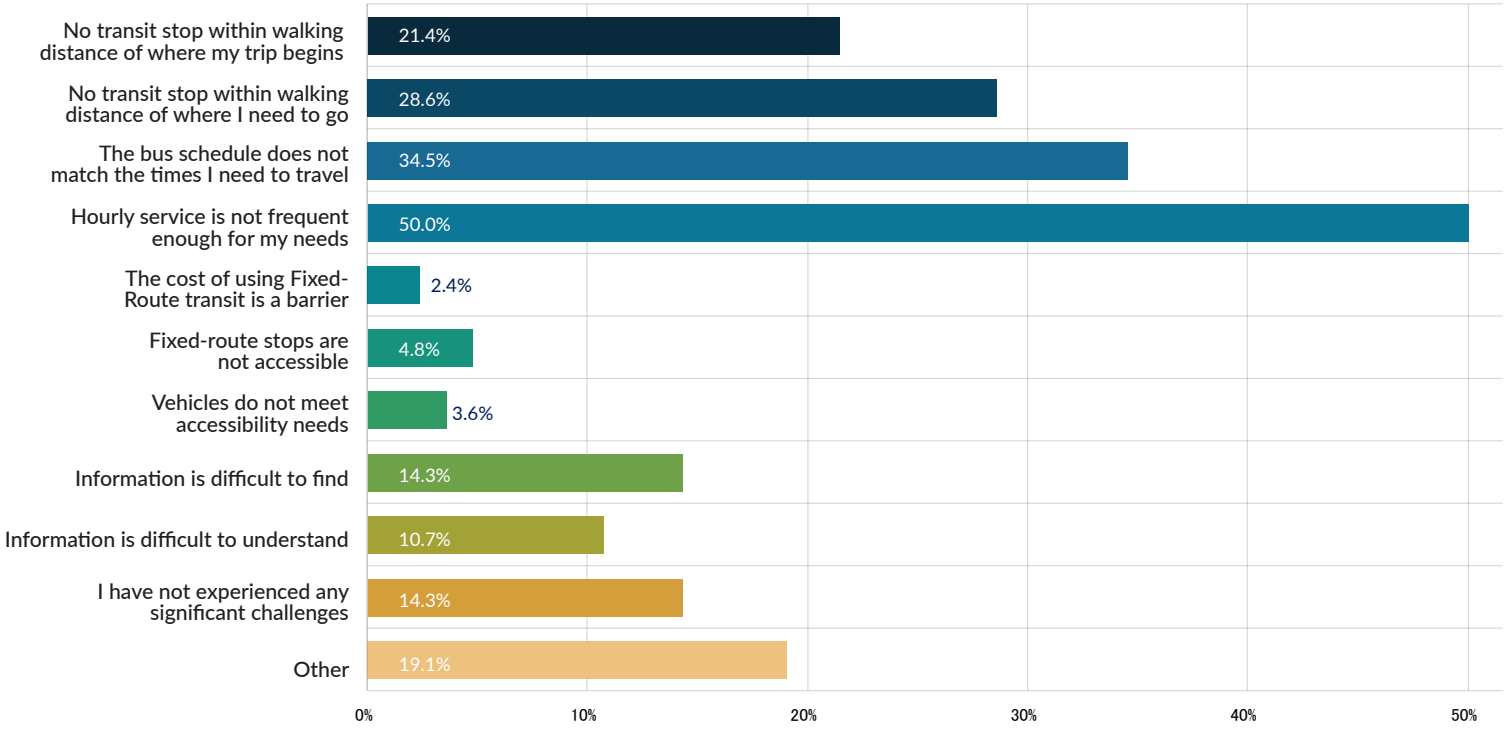
Getting to Work	Errands or Shopping	Going Downtown
45%	38%	33%

Respondents were asked to select all that apply; therefore categories aren't mutually exclusive and aren't intended to total 100%.

Fixed-Route User Experience

84 of 291 (29%) of survey respondents have used Fixed-Route transit in the last 12 months

What has been the biggest challenge with using Fixed-Route transit in the last 12 months?*



Top 3 Challenges

Hourly Schedule (Frequency)	Schedule Timing Doesn't Work	Stops Too Far From Destination
50%	35%	29%

Walking distance and stop spacing

Bus stops are generally planned about 300 to 500 metres apart. Transit planners often use a walking distance of about 400 metres, or a 5-minute walk, as a general guideline when considering how closely stops should be located to homes, workplaces and destinations.

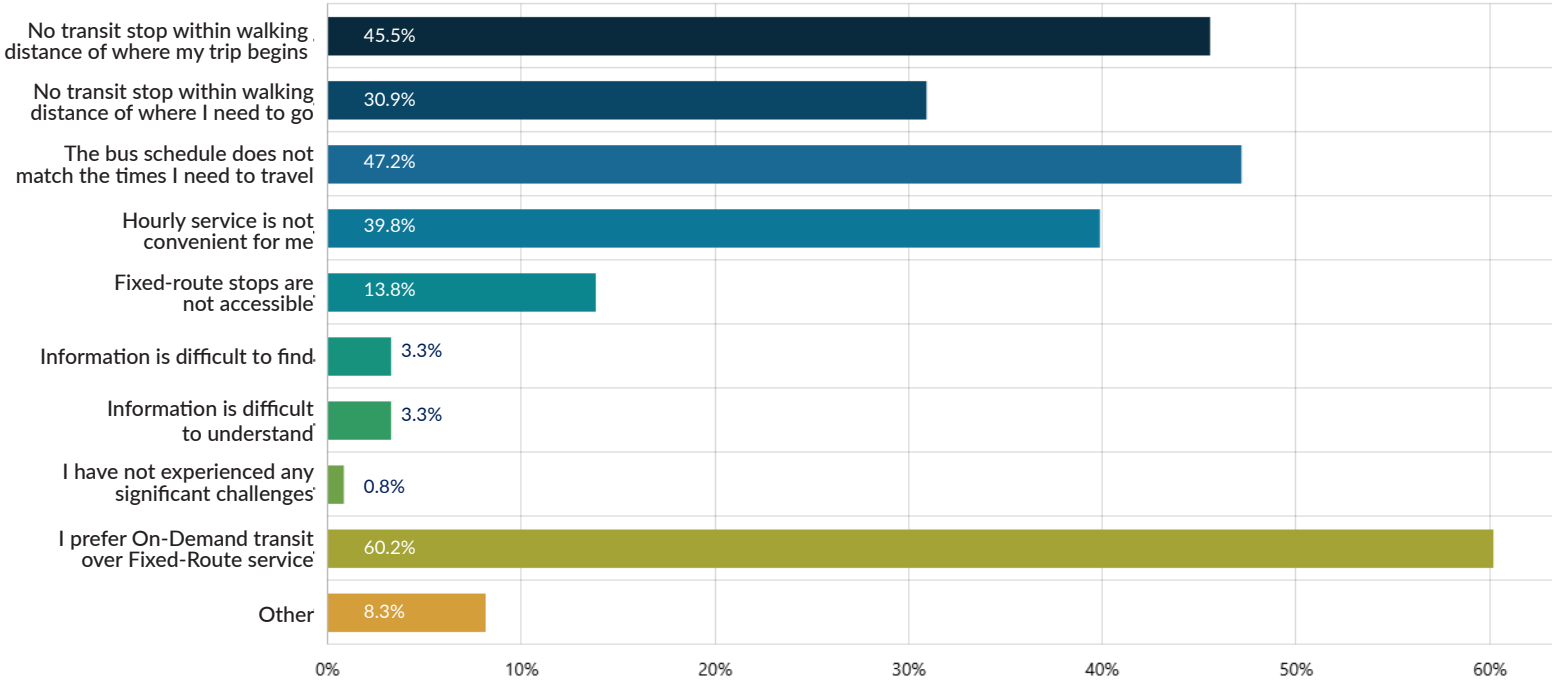
**Respondents were asked to select up to 3 challenges; therefore categories aren't mutually exclusive and aren't intended to total 100%.*

Values may not always sum to 100% due to rounding.

On-Demand User Experience

123 of 291 (42%) of survey respondents have only used On-Demand transit in the last 12 months

Thinking about the trips you most often take using On-Demand Transit, what challenges prevent you from using Fixed-Route service instead?*



Top 3 Challenges

Schedule Timing Doesn't Work

47%

Stops Too Far From Starting Point

46%

Hourly Schedule (Frequency)

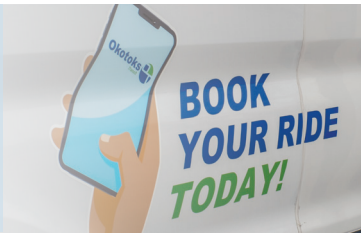
40%

**Respondents were asked to select up to 3 challenges; therefore categories aren't mutually exclusive and aren't intended to total 100%.*

Values may not always sum to 100% due to rounding.

60% prefer On-Demand

60% of On-Demand riders said they prefer On-Demand transit over Fixed-Route service.

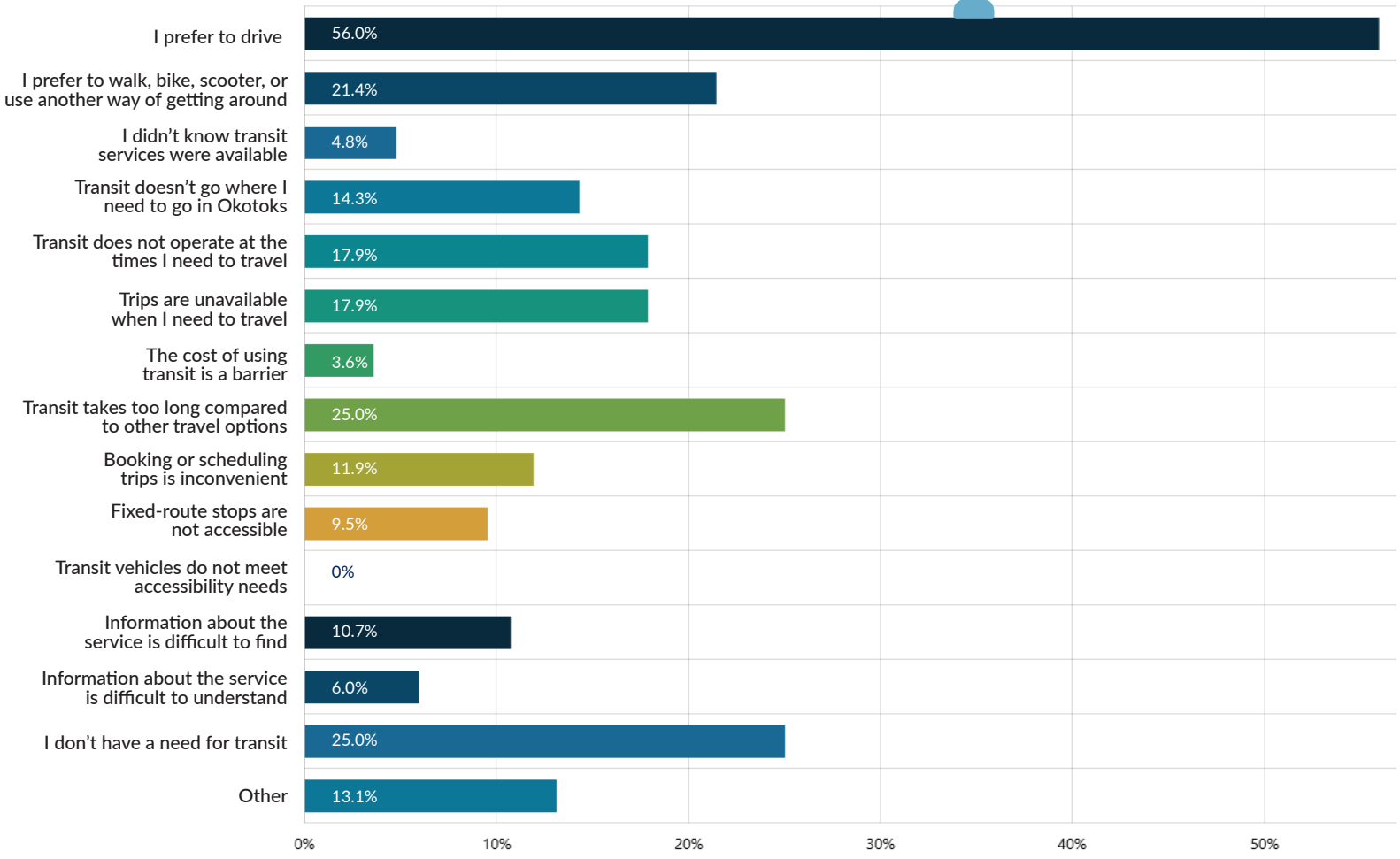


Non-Transit User **Feedback**

84 of 291 (29%) of survey respondents indicated they have not used transit in the last 12 months

What are the main reasons you do not currently use transit services?*

Most respondents simply said they prefer to drive, walk, bike or scoot. These were also the top reasons at in-person events.



TOP REASON

56% prefer to drive

Other Top Reasons

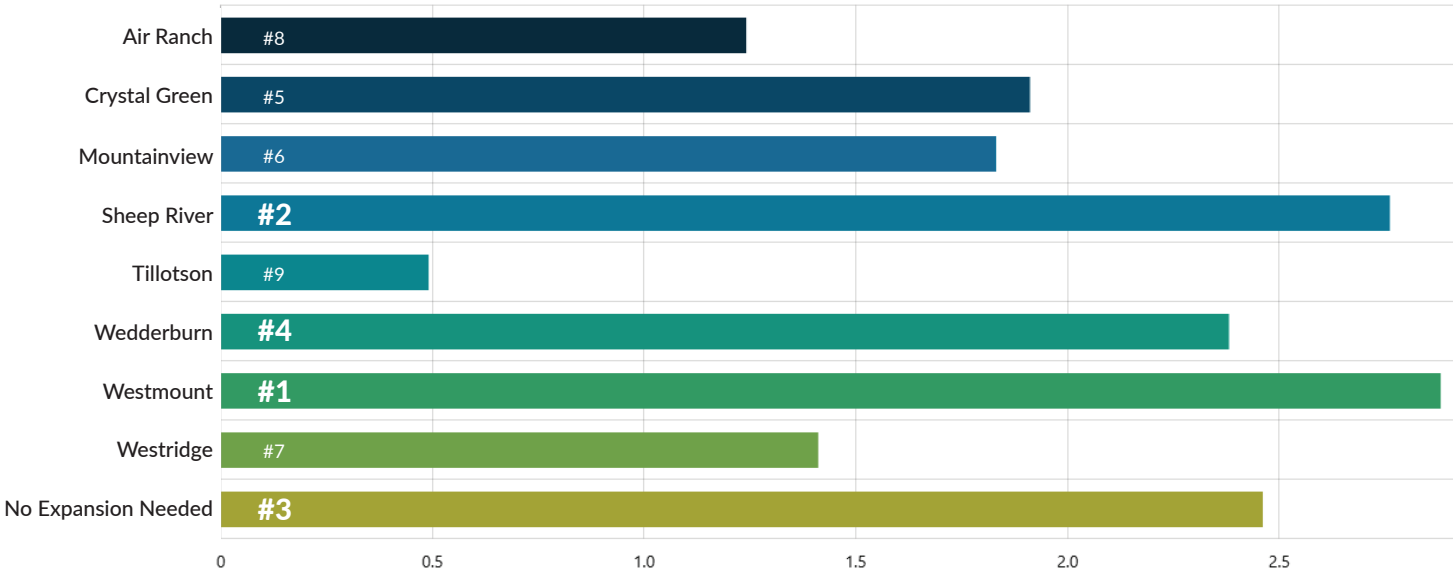
Transit Takes Too Long	Doesn't Run When Needed	No Trips Available When Needed
25%	**18%**	**18%**

**Respondents were asked to select all that apply; therefore categories aren't mutually exclusive and aren't intended to total 100%.*

Future Fixed-Route Planning: Neighbourhoods

Drake Landing was identified as the highest-priority area in the Town's Spring 2025 transit engagement and will be the first neighbourhood added if Fixed-Route service expands.

If service expands to other neighbourhoods after Drake Landing, which residential areas should be prioritized next?*



TOP 3 RANKED LOCATIONS

- Westmount
- Sheep River
- Wedderburn

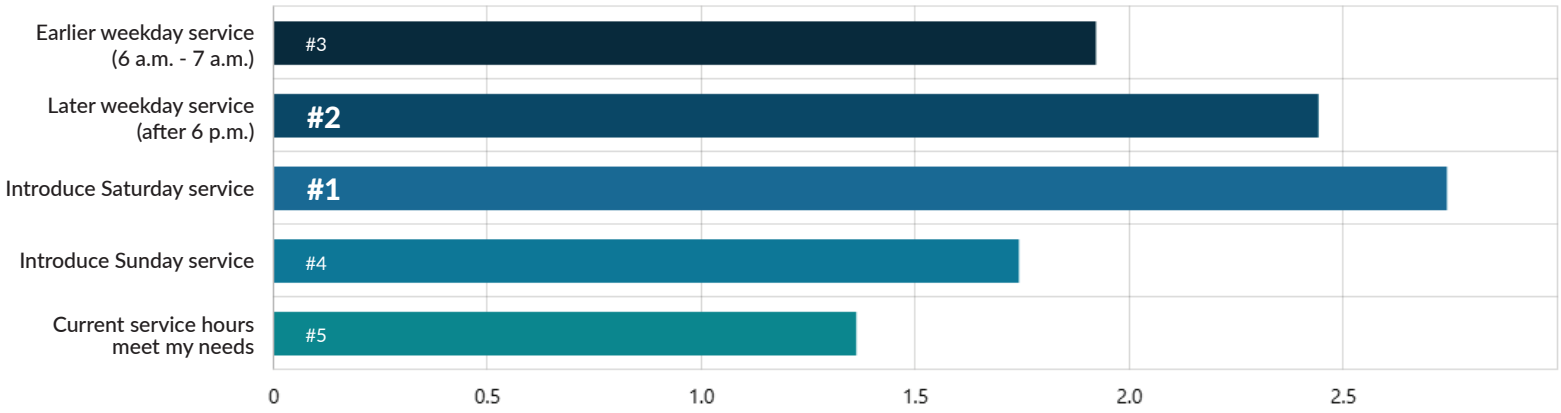
Priorities among On-Demand riders & non-users

Over 70% of respondents were non-users or On-Demand-only riders. This group shared the same top three expansion priorities as respondents overall.

**Respondents were asked to rank their top 3 priorities; therefore choices aren't mutually exclusive.*

Future Fixed-Route Planning: Hours

If additional Fixed-Route transit hours were added in the future, which option(s) would be most useful to you?*



Top Choices**

1. Introduce Saturday Service
2. Later Weekday Service
3. Earlier Weekday Service

Priorities among On-Demand riders & non-users

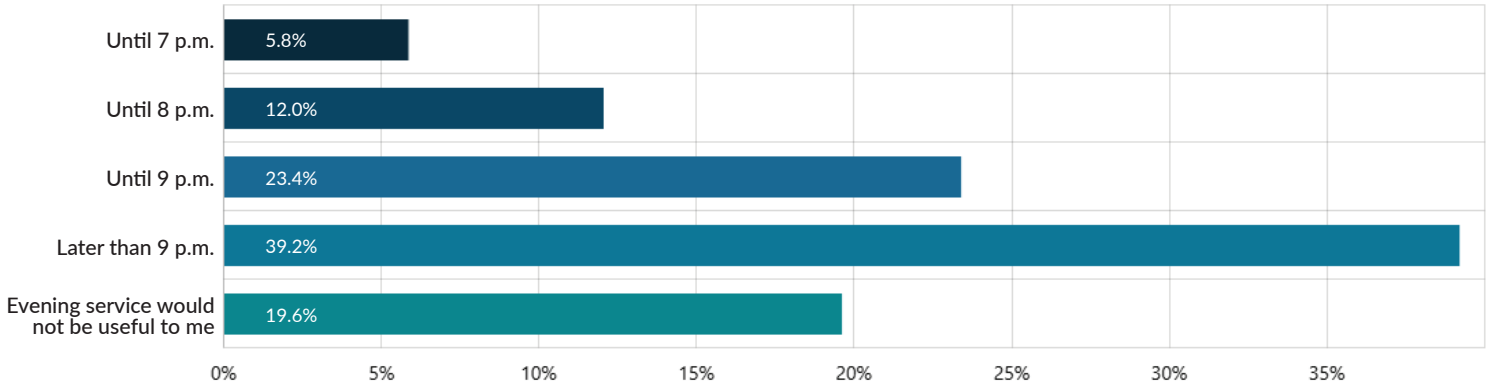
Among respondents who do not currently use Fixed-Route transit, introducing **SATURDAY SERVICE** was also identified as the most useful service enhancement.

*Respondents were asked to rank all options; therefore choices aren't mutually exclusive.

**While the number of written responses at in-person events was limited, the findings provided supporting context and reinforced survey results, including interest in Saturday service and later weekday service.

Future Fixed-Route Planning: Weekday Hours

If weekday Fixed-Route service were extended past 6 p.m., how late would service be most useful to you?*



TOP CHOICES

62.6% support weekday service until 9 p.m. or later

Evening service remains a priority

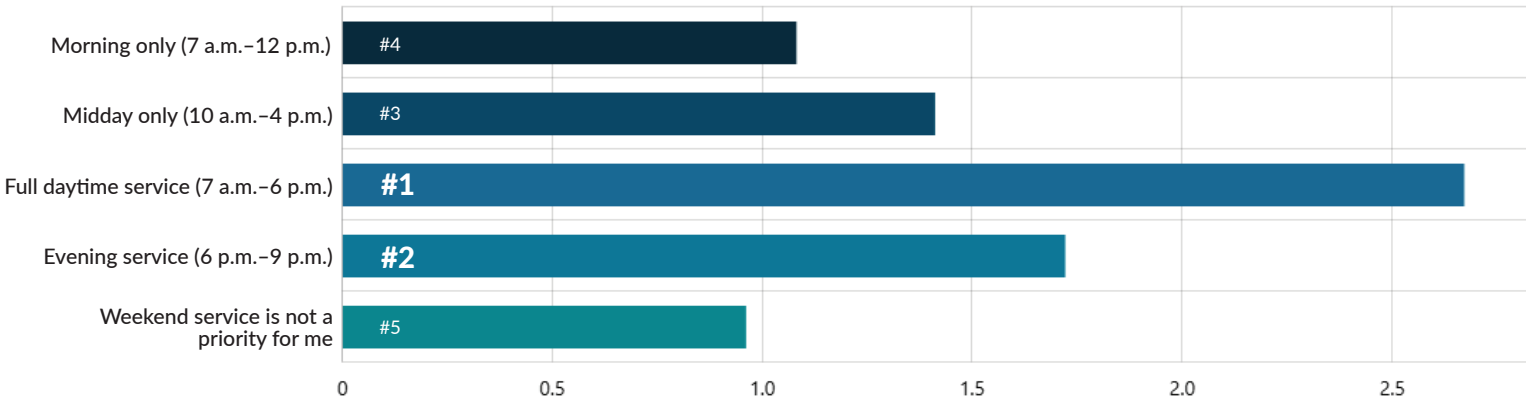
Before launch, 56%** of residents said they would likely use Fixed-Route transit in the evening. One year later, evening weekday service remains a top enhancement priority, with nearly two-thirds of respondents (62.6%) indicating service would be most useful until 9 p.m. or later.

**Values may not always sum to 100% due to rounding.*

***Results from 2025 Fixed-Route Transit Engagement Survey, asking 'How likely you would be to use a Fixed-Route service during these windows of time? (Weekdays only)'*

Future Fixed-Route Planning: Weekend Hours

If weekend service were offered for the Fixed-Route service, what hours would be most useful to you?*



Top Choices

1. Full Daytime Service
2. Evening Service
3. Midday Service

On-Demand only riders

When looking at On-Demand-only riders, **full-day WEEKEND SERVICE** was the top priority.

More than half (52.9%) identified **WEEKDAY SERVICE beyond 9 p.m.** as the most useful evening service extension.

On-Demand Only Riders

Weekend Hours

Evening Hours	Count	Rank*
Morning only (7 a.m.–12 p.m.)	40	#3
Midday only (10 a.m.–4 p.m.)	34	#4
Full daytime service (7 a.m.–6 p.m.)	76	#1
Evening service (6 p.m.–9 p.m.)	55	#2
Weekend service is not a priority for me	22	#5

Weekday Evening Hours

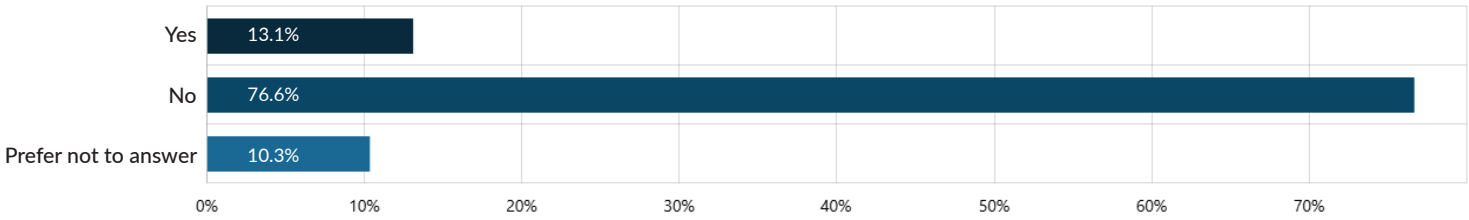
Evening Hours	Count	Percent**
Until 7 p.m.	8	6.5%
Until 8 p.m.	7	5.7%
Until 9 p.m.	20	16.3%
Later than 9 p.m.	65	52.9%
Evening service would not be useful to me	23	18.7%

**Respondents were asked to rank all options; therefore choices aren't mutually exclusive.*

***Values may not always sum to 100% due to rounding.*

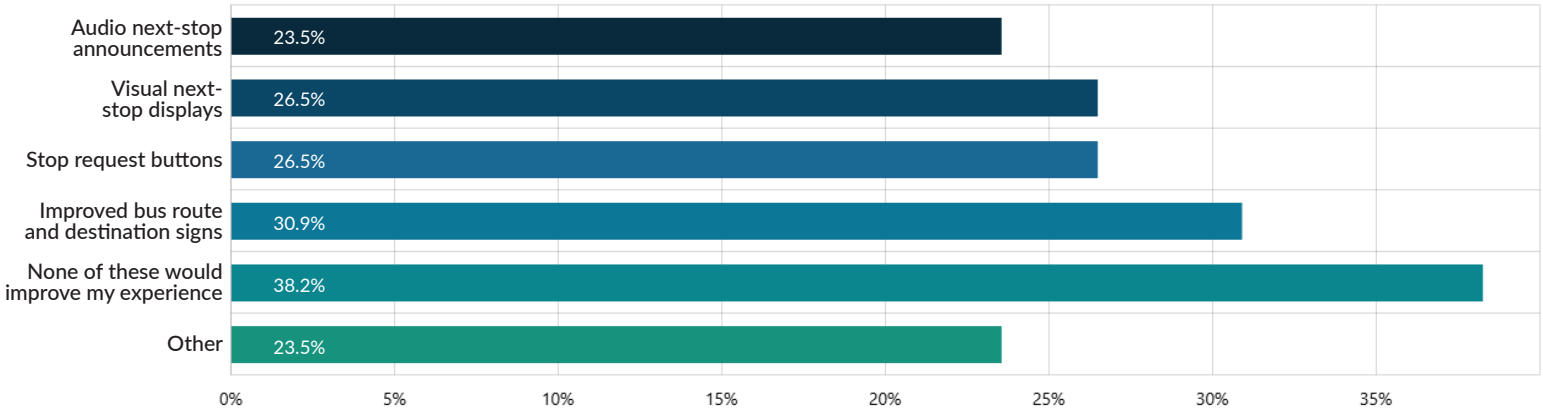
Fixed-Route Accessibility Needs

Do you have accessibility needs that affect how you use transit services?*



Nearly one-quarter of all respondents (23.4%) either identified as having accessibility needs or preferred not to answer and were invited to share feedback on transit accessibility improvements.

Which accessibility improvements would improve your experience on the bus?*



Over one-third of respondents (38.2%) indicated none of the options would improve their experience, the second most preferred option was improved bus route and destination signs (30.9%).

Values may not always sum to 100% due to rounding.

Accessibility-related questions were answered by 68 of 291 respondents (23.4%). This includes respondents who identified as having accessibility needs, as well as those who chose not to disclose whether they have accessibility needs.

Fixed-Route Accessibility Challenges

What challenges prevent the transit stops from being accessible?*

TOP THEME
across all groups

Bus Stop Locations



**Given the small number of responses for each of these questions, these findings should be interpreted with caution and are not sufficient to draw broader conclusions.*

Fixed-Route Riders

Challenge by Theme	Count	Percent
Bus stop locations	2	66.7%
Unable to access due to illegally parked vehicle	1	33.3%
Visibility	1	33.3%
Distance to bus stops	1	33.3%

Only 4 Fixed-Route users completed this open-ended question after indicating that the accessibility of transit stops was a barrier to using Fixed-Route service.

On-Demand Riders

Challenge by Theme	Count	Percent
Bus stop locations	7	46.7%
Accessibility	6	40.0%
Bus frequency	5	33.3%
Winter weather conditions	3	20.0%
On-Demand service	3	20.0%

Only 15 On-Demand users completed this open-ended question after indicating that the accessibility of transit stops was a barrier to using Fixed-Route service.

Non-Transit Users

Challenge by Theme	Count	Percent
Bus stop locations	6	100%
Accessibility	2	33.3%
Bus frequency	1	16.7%
Winter weather conditions	1	16.7%

Only 6 respondents who are not current transit users completed this open-ended question after indicating that the accessibility of transit stops was a barrier to using Fixed-Route service.

Fixed-Route Information Challenges

What information have you found difficult to understand related to the Fixed-Route service?*

**Given the small number of responses for each of these questions, these findings should be interpreted with caution and are not sufficient to draw broader conclusions.*

Fixed-Route Riders

Challenge by Theme	Count	Percent
Reading the Fixed-Route map	6	66.7%
Reading the schedule	4	44.4%
Knowing which bus to take	6	66.7%
Finding information on the website	3	33.3%
Using the HotSpot App to purchase digital tickets	4	44.4%
Understanding fares and how to pay	0	0%
Understanding where or how to purchase tickets or passes	1	11.1%
Understanding service updates, detours or schedule changes	3	33.3%
Other	1	11.1%

Only 9 respondents indicated that Fixed-Route information was difficult to understand and were then asked to complete this question.

On-Demand Riders

Challenge by Theme	Count	Percent
Reading the Fixed-Route map	2	50.0%
Reading the Fixed-Route schedule	1	25.0%
Knowing which bus to take	1	25.0%
Finding information on the website	1	25.0%
Using the HotSpot App to purchase digital tickets	1	25.0%
Understanding fares and how to pay	0	0%
Understanding where or how to purchase tickets or passes	1	25.0%
Understanding service updates, detours or schedule changes	2	50.0%
Other	1	25.0%

Only 4 respondents indicated that Fixed-Route information was difficult to understand and were then asked to complete this question.

Non-Transit Users

Challenge by Theme	Count	Percent
Reading the Fixed-Route map	2	40.0%
Reading the schedule	2	40.0%
Knowing which bus to take	3	60.0%
Finding information on the website	3	60.0%
Using the HotSpot App to purchase digital tickets	3	60.0%
Using the On-Demand Transit app	1	20.0%
Understanding fares and how to pay	4	80.0%
Understanding where or how to purchase tickets or passes	4	80.0%
Understanding service updates, detours or schedule changes	1	20.0%
Other	0	0%

Only 5 respondents indicated that Fixed-Route information was difficult to understand and were then asked to complete this question.

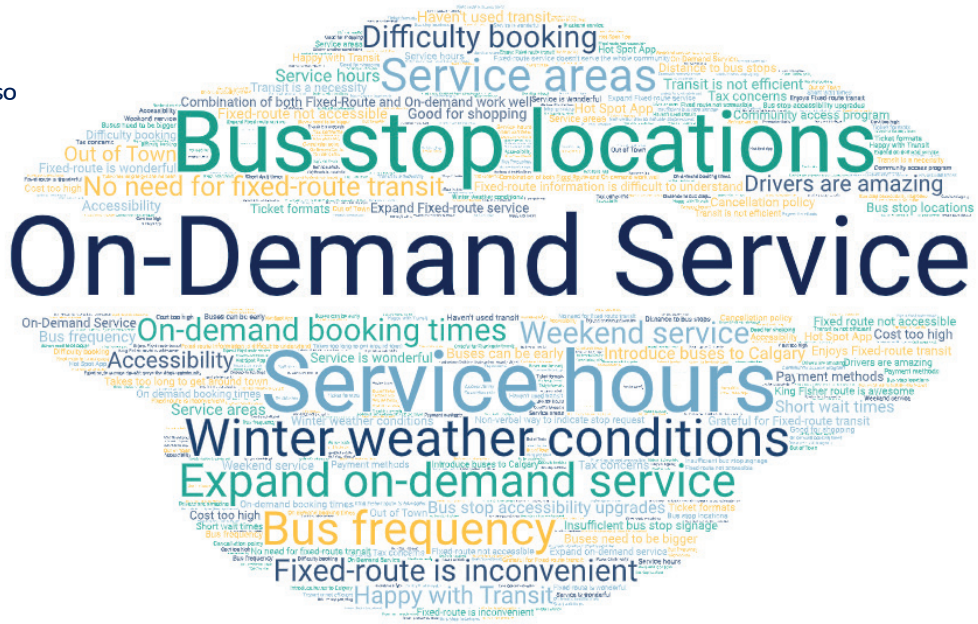
Final Comments

Do you have any other thoughts or comments that you'd like to share about transit?

Additional comments reinforced the importance of convenient and accessible transit options. Respondents most often shared feedback about On-Demand service, booking availability, operating hours, frequency, and stop locations, while many also highlighted the positive impact transit has on their ability to access work, appointments, shopping, community activities and other destinations.

Service frequency was one of the most common themes. Respondents frequently identified hourly service, long wait times between buses, and a desire for more frequent service as barriers to using fixed-route transit.

With respect to On-Demand service, many comments emphasized its convenience and accessibility, particularly for seniors, residents with mobility challenges, families with children, and those travelling during winter conditions.



About Sentiment Analysis

Sentiment analysis was used to assess the overall tone of open-ended survey responses and identify trends within the feedback. Responses were categorized as Positive, Negative, Neutral, or Mixed based on the language, words, phrases, and context used by respondents.

Initial sentiment analysis was performed using the Engagement Platform's built in Analysis Assistant, which uses automated text analysis to identify themes and classify sentiment. Staff then reviewed the results and adjusted sentiment classifications where necessary to ensure they accurately reflected the intent and context of individual comments.

Sentiment*

24.6% Positive
4.5% Negative
67.3% Neutral
3.5% Mixed

**Values may not always sum to 100% due to rounding.*

Positive: Indicates a generally constructive, supportive, optimistic, or complimentary tone toward transit services, potential improvements, or the overall experience.

Negative: Indicates dissatisfaction, concerns, criticism, disagreement, or frustration related to transit services or potential changes.

Neutral: Indicates a factual, informational, or descriptive response that does not express a clearly positive or negative tone.

Mixed: Indicates a response containing both positive and negative elements, such as appreciation for a service alongside suggestions for improvement or identified concerns.

Important Note: Sentiment analysis measures the tone of comments, not whether respondents support or oppose a specific idea or proposal. A comment may be classified as positive, negative, neutral, or mixed regardless of the topic being discussed.

Survey Demographics

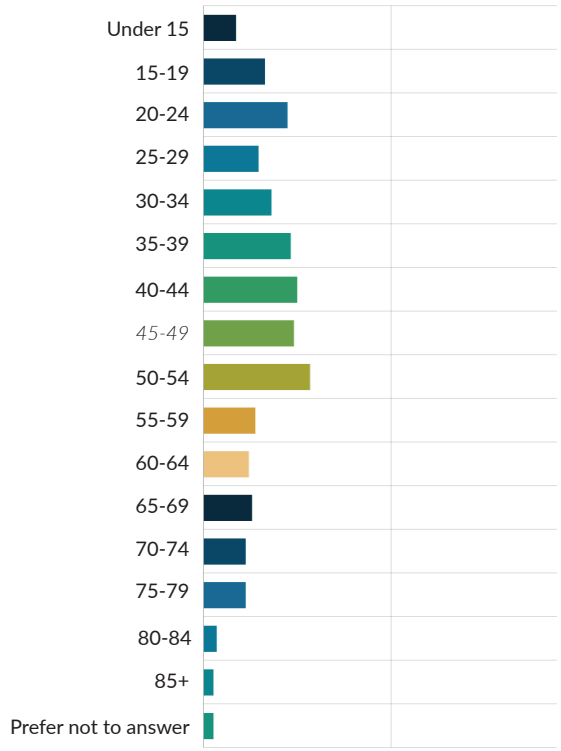
Survey Population and Data Collection

Survey respondents represented a broad cross-section of the community, with participation from individuals spanning age groups and nearly every neighbourhood within town.

For a population of approximately 32,000, the typical sample size required to achieve a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error is approximately 380 responses. This survey received 291 responses, providing a strong understanding of community perspectives. However, due to the sample size and self-selected nature of participation, the results should be interpreted as representative of survey respondents rather than statistically representative of all Okotoks residents.

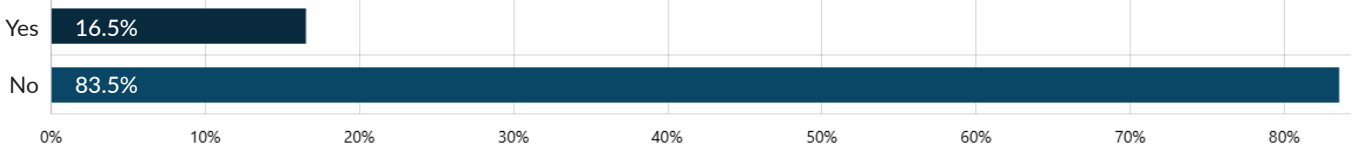
Engagement findings will be considered by Council alongside other sources of information, including ridership data, service performance, operating costs, financial analysis and other sources of information such as findings from the Fixed-Route Transit Feasibility Study.

Age Range* of Person Completing the Survey



Age	Count	Percent**
Under 15	10	3.4%
15-19	19	6.5%
20-24	26	8.9%
25-29	17	5.8%
30-34	21	7.2%
35-39	27	9.3%
40-44	29	10.0%
45-49	28	9.6%
50-54	33	11.3%
55-59	16	5.5%
60-64	14	4.8%
65-69	15	5.2%
70-74	13	4.5%
75-79	13	4.5%
80-84	4	1.4%
85+	3	1.0%
Prefer not to answer	3	1.0%

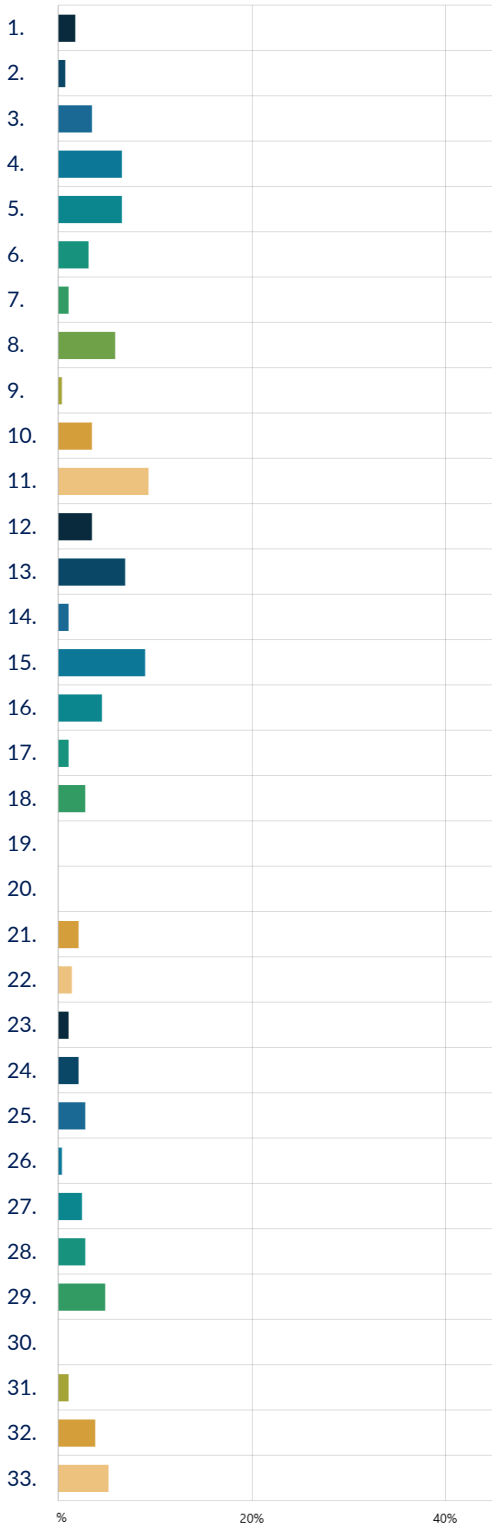
Community Access Program Users**



Population groupings align to Statistics Canada groupings.

**Values may not always sum to 100% due to rounding.*

Survey Demographics



1. Air Ranch, Rancher's Rise
2. Central Heights
3. Cimarron Estates
4. Cimarron Grove
5. Cimarron Meadows
6. Cimarron Park
7. Cimarron Springs
8. Cimarron Vista
9. Cornerstone
10. Crystal Green
11. Crystal Shores
12. Crystalridge
13. D'Arcy Ranch
14. Downey Ridge
15. Drake Landing
16. Heritage Okotoks (Downtown, Elizabeth St, Elma St, Lineham Ave, South Railway St.)
17. Hunters Glen
18. Mountainview
19. North Gateway
20. Ridgemont
21. Rosemont
22. Sandstone
23. Sheep River Cove
24. Sheep River Ridge
25. Suntree
26. Tillotson
27. Tower Hill
28. Wedderburn
29. Westmount
30. Westmount Estates
31. Westridge
32. Woodhaven
33. Other

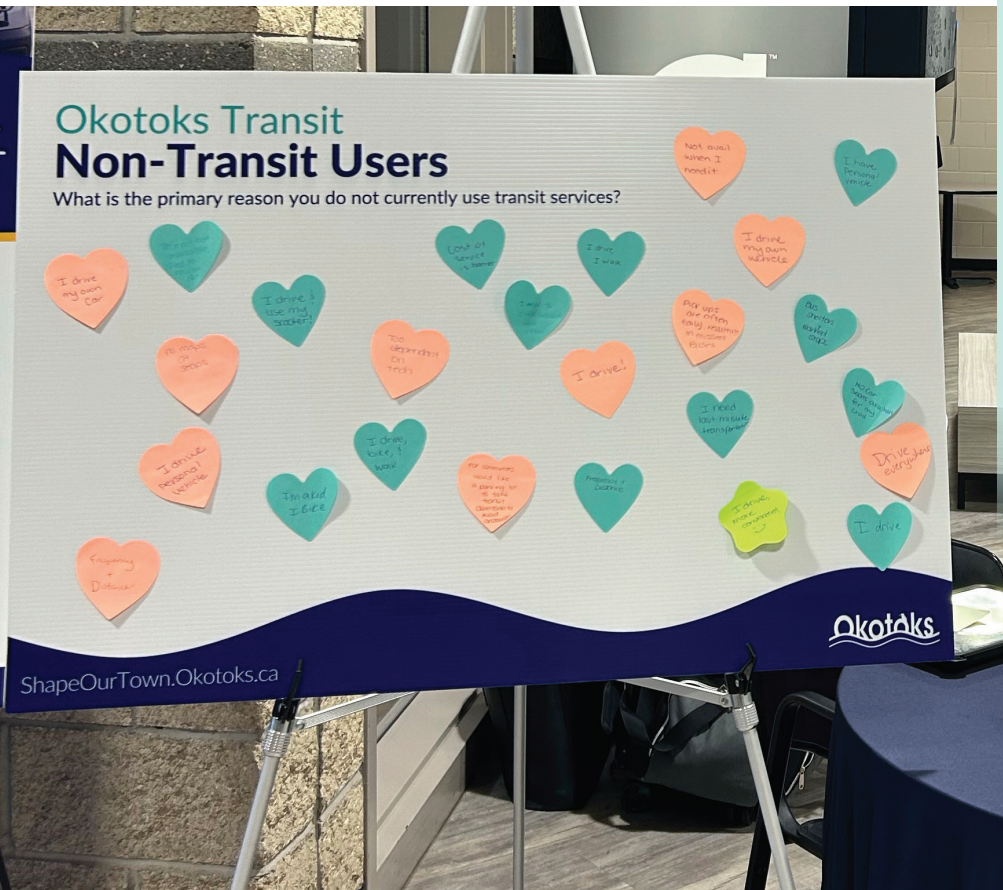
In-Person Engagement

MEETING PEOPLE WHERE THEY ARE
Community Conversations at Pop-Up Events

Transit staff connected with residents at four pop-up engagement events across the community to gather feedback on Fixed-Route transit. While relatively few participants provided written input on the display boards, transit staff engaged in conversations with many attendees and encouraged participation in the online survey.

Most participants at the pop-up events were not current Fixed-Route transit users. As a result, the strongest in-person feedback focused on barriers to transit use, particularly reasons residents do not currently use the service. Feedback on the existing route was very limited, as many participants indicated the current route either meets their needs or would not influence their travel behaviour.

Comments shared by residents on barriers to using transit.





In-Person Feedback

Feedback collected through conversations and display boards at pop-up events reinforced several of the same challenges and priorities identified through the broader survey. While the number of written responses to these questions was limited, the findings provide useful supporting context.

What are the main reasons you do not currently use transit services?

Issue	Count
I drive my own vehicle	12
I walk, bike, scoot	4
Not available when I need it/I need last minute transportation	3
Maps & Schedule (difficult to understand, no maps at stops)	3
Frequency & Distance	2
Cost (same price as On-Demand = no incentive to move to fixed; cost is a barrier)	2
Bus Shelters needed	2
Too dependent on tech (mobile app)	2
My family and friends drive me	1
No car seats available	1
Parking lot to leave car and take transit downtown	1
Signage not visible	1
Missed bus due to early bus arrival at stops	1

If Fixed-Route hours were added in future, which would be most useful to you?

Hours	Count	Rank*
Earlier weekday service (6 - 7 a.m.)	3	#3
Later weekday service (after 6 p.m.)	5	#2
Introduce Saturday service	6	#1
Introduce Sunday service	3	#3
Current hours meet my needs	3	#3

Getting the word out & Inviting Participation

Engagement Outreach

Over the course of the engagement, opportunities to participate were promoted through a variety of channels, including direct email invitations to Fixed-Route and On-Demand transit users, Shape Our Town subscriber groups, the Citizen Panel, social media, roadside electronic signage, newspaper advertising, and digital advertising. Information was also shared through transit operators, the call centre, on-board posters and postcards, and the Transit mobile app.

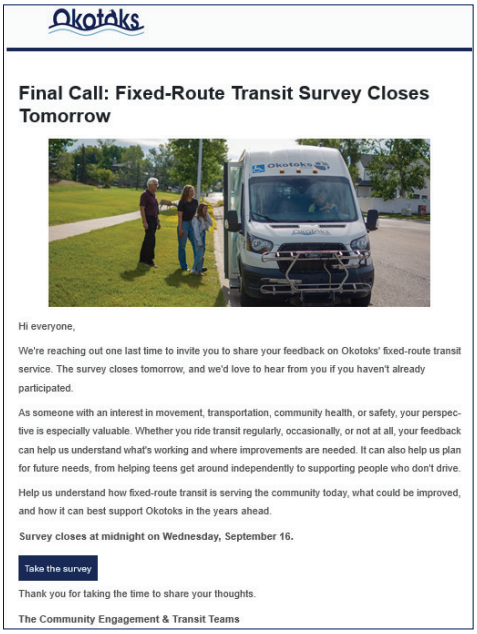
To support broad and accessible participation, the Town hosted four pop-up engagement events at community locations and provided multiple ways for residents to share feedback, including online, by phone, and in person. Outreach efforts also included engagement with seniors and transit users who may not regularly participate in online engagement opportunities.



Bus Poster & Flyer



Newspaper Ad



Shape Our Town Email Invites

Getting the word out & Inviting Participation

SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

23,424
Total reach on Facebook and Instagram

2887
Targeted emails

2150 On-Demand riders

278 Fixed-route riders subscribers

459 Citizen Panel Newsletter subscribers

PROJECT PAGE (SHAPE OUR TOWN)

15 New Followers

775 Page Views

695 Page Visits

291 Contributions

568 Emails

DIGITAL & PRINT MEDIA

2 Western Wheel Ads

1 Western Wheel Article

1 Cinema Ad x 30 days

2 Online Website Banners

SIGNAGE

2 LED Digital signboards
(32nd Street & Southridge Drive)

133 QR code scans from posters
(On-board transit buses, at Municipal Centre, Recreation Centre, Library, Seniors Centre, Seniors Housing)

Transit Timeline

2018 Local Transit Study completed, including community engagement.

2019 On-Demand Transit introduced.

2022 On-Demand Transit expanded to 7 days per week, due to demand.

2023 The Fixed-Route Transit Feasibility Study, informed by community engagement, recommended introducing Fixed-Route transit alongside the existing On-Demand service.

2025 Fixed-Route Transit expansion planned. Community Engagement conducted.

2026 Fixed-Route Transit 1-year review and Community Engagement conducted to support future planning.

