



Abbott ATC Quick-Build Evaluation Engagement Summary Report 2023



Project overview

Abbott Street is one of Kelowna's busiest bicycling and pedestrian routes, and upgrades made over the past couple years have created a safer and more comfortable bicycling route for people of all ages and abilities.

To extend the Abbott Active Transportation Corridor (ATC) sooner than 2030, until the permanent facility can be built, the City piloted the use of quick-build infrastructure. Quick-build strategies combine interim materials within existing street space, with limited new construction, to deliver projects faster and at a lower cost.

The quick-build portion of the ATC between Christleton and Cedar Avenue has been operational for a year and the City wanted to understand how it's performing, and how to implement more quick-builds around Kelowna in the future.

What is a quick-build project?

This quick-build pilot project used semi-permanent materials on the roadway to create protected space for biking and walking. Some materials can include concrete barriers, planters, flexible posts and/or reallocating existing road width/pavement for protected bike lanes. The approach on Abbott allowed the City to fill this gap in the active transportation network faster and more cost-effectively than conventional methods.



Engagement Overview

The goal of engagement was to gather input to identify the success of the ATC and future implementation of quick-builds across Kelowna. A variety of tactics were implemented to reach both general Kelowna residents, and fronting properties along the quick-build portion of the ATC.

City of Kelowna's Get Involved Page

Engagement activities were conducted online on the City of Kelowna's Get Involved Page. The initial webpage was created during the first round of engagement in 2021 and houses all the current and previous information about the project. Residents were invited to complete an online survey or drop a pin on the map highlighting opportunities and challenges along the route.

Promotion

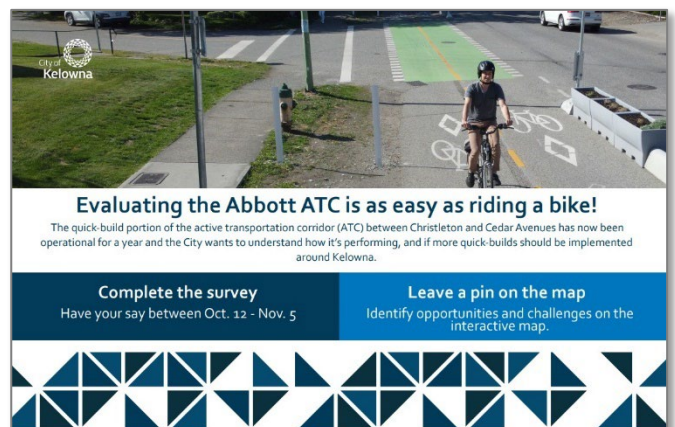
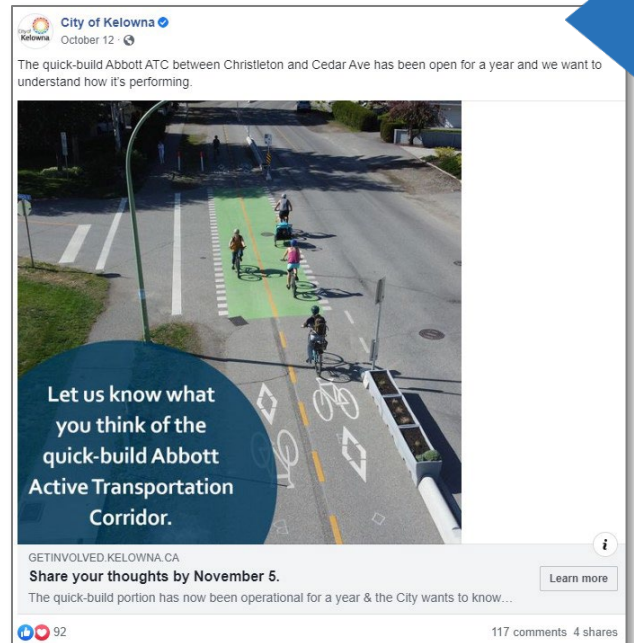
From October 12 until November 5 residents were invited to take part in the engagement on Get Involved. To encourage participation in this opportunity, digital and traditional methods were used to ensure a comprehensive audience were aware of the chance to participate. Ensuring more than cyclists who use this ATC were reached, residents of the area who were a part of the construction were also engaged to determine the impacts to them and their properties after a year of the ATC being operational.

A news release was sent to the media as well as to the online subscriber lists "Transportation, Walking and Biking" and "News Release" consisting of over 7,000 people.

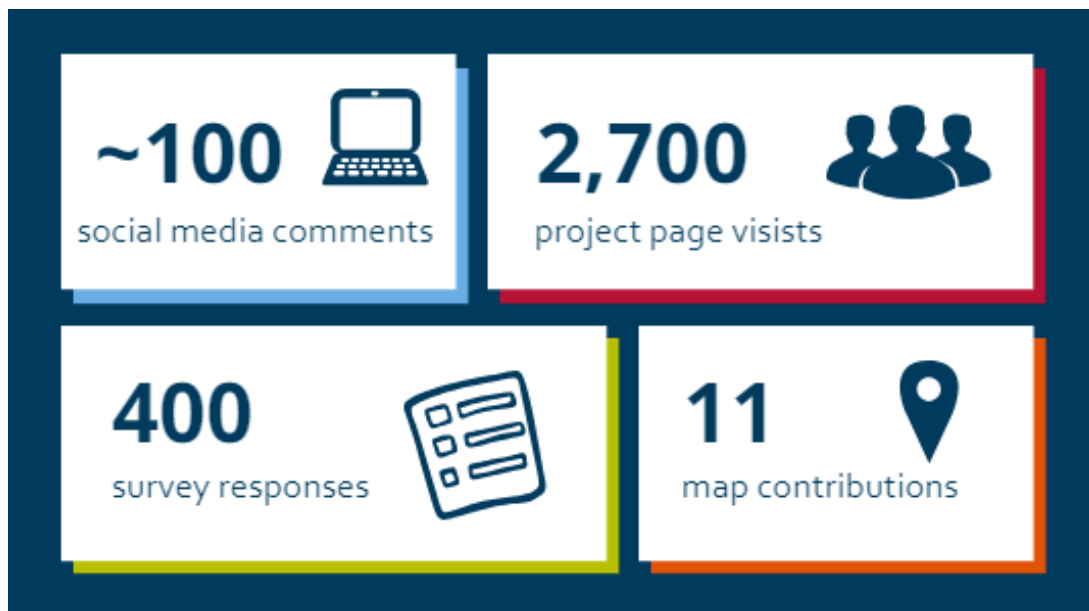
Approximately 760 fronting properties along the quick-build portion between Cedar and Christleton Avenue received a postcard in the mail to ensure those directly impacted by the project were reached. More direct reach out included a newsletter from Get Involved to over 9,000 users highlighting engagements currently open for feedback. The project manager also emailed five interested parties in the area, including neighbourhood associations and business to ensure their members know of the opportunity to participate.

To reach residents digitally, ads were placed on Facebook and Instagram during the engagement period and targeted all of Kelowna; these ads were seen over 26,000 times and resulted in over 900 clicks to the Get Involved page. Google ads were used to reach those who may not have social media and resulted in reaching over 150,000 people with over 1,200 clicks to the page. There were also ads hosted on Castanet.

To ensure we are also reaching potential participants through means other than online, a City in Action ad through Daily Courier City was booked. These methods don't lead to direct conversion, but they are good in drawing project awareness for those who may not get all their information from the internet.

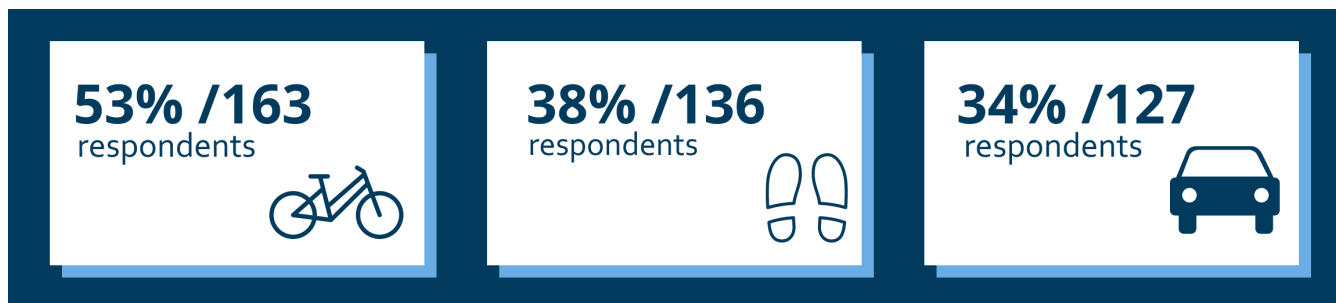


Participation



Results from open surveys such as this are a collection of opinions and perceptions from interested or potentially affected residents, and not a statistically random sample of all Kelowna residents. This report contains results from the open survey. Due to the opt-in and open method, results are qualitative in nature and cannot be said to represent views of all Kelowna citizens.

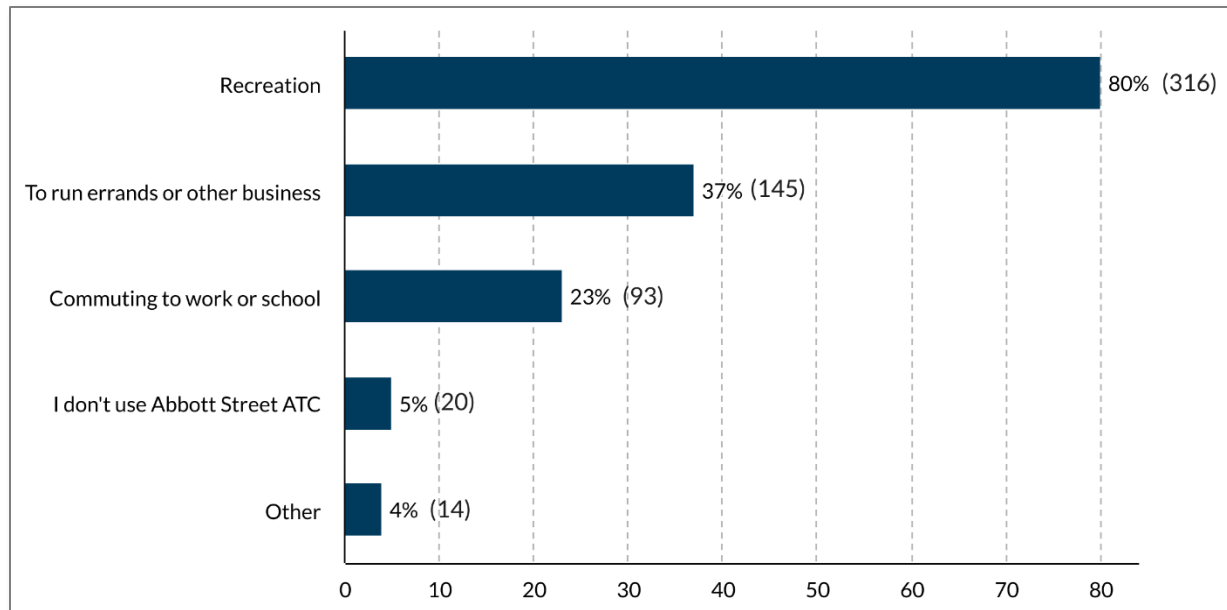
Frequency of travel along the quick-build portion of ATC



Participants were asked how often they biked, walked and/or drove along the quick-build section of the Abbott ATC in the past year. These were presented as three separate questions in case respondents used more than one mode of transportation.

Biking along the ATC was the most popular method of travel being used “daily” or “once or twice a week” at 53 per cent. 38 per cent walked “daily” or “once or twice a week” while 34 per cent drove “daily” or “once or twice a week.”

Reason for travelling along Abbott ATC (select all that apply)



Over 300 respondents, or 80 per cent, use the Abbott ATC for recreation purposes. Running errands was second at only 37 per cent. 4 per cent marked down “other” as well and this included those who live on Abbott or use the ATC to visit friends and family.

Amount travelled after completion of quick-build portion

When asked if the completion of the quick-build section of the Abbott ATC changed the amount respondents travelled along the ATC, 66 per cent, or 250 people, biked more.

A majority of respondents walked and drove the same amount at 63 and 64 per cent respectively. It should be noted that over 30 per cent drive less between Christleton and Cedar Ave since the completion.

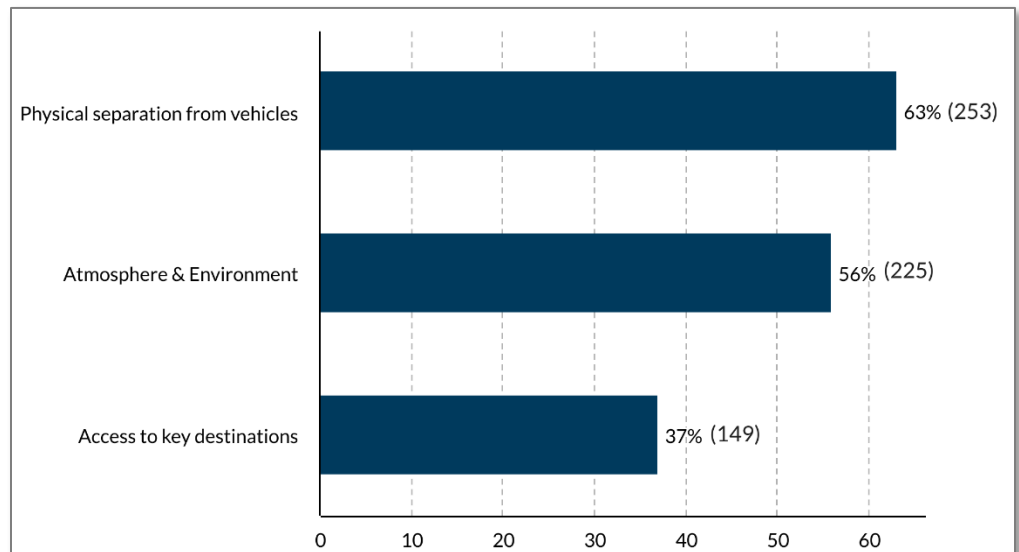


"I absolutely love the ATC! Having lived in this area for 19 years, I can say with confidence that it has been an extremely welcome addition to the neighbourhood and City as a whole." – Survey Respondent

Appealing aspects of Abbott ATC (select top 3)

When asked what aspects of the Abbott ATC appeal to participants the most, “physical separation from vehicles”, “atmosphere, environment and aesthetics” (trees, the neighbourhood etc.) and “access to key destinations” came out on top.

The least appealing aspects according to respondents were “smooth ride and transitions” (17 per cent) and “slow vehicle speeds” (23 per cent).



Thirteen per cent did not prefer the Abbott ATC over other corridors and seven per cent offered “other” aspects that highlights pain points including the ATC creating sight line challenges for cars and the bike lanes taking up too much space.

“The road lanes are too narrow with the addition of the ACT and make the corners and curves of the winding Abbott street unsafe and more difficult at times – Survey Respondent

Comfortability along quick-build section of Abbott ATC

85% /351
feel safe



To determine if cyclists feel safe along this section of the ATC, respondents were asked how comfortable they feel when biking/ rolling along between Christleton and Cedar Avenues.

Over 85 per cent stated feeling “safe” or “somewhat safe” with only 5 per cent feeling “very” or “somewhat unsafe”.

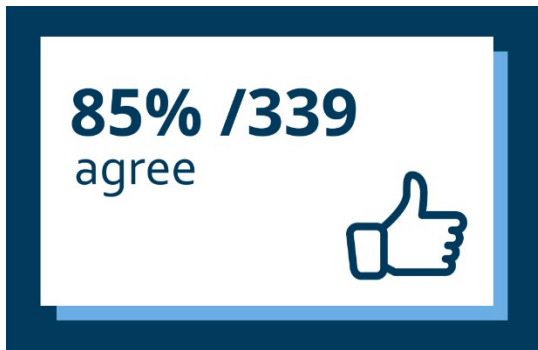
“I absolutely love the ATC! Having lived in this area for 19 years, I can say with confidence that it has been an extremely welcome addition to the neighbourhood and City as a whole!” – Survey Respondent

Improved conditions along quick-build portion of ATC

More than 75 per cent of participants (286 people) believe the conditions are “much better” for biking/ rolling due to the added features along the ATC. When asked if the upgrades improved conditions for walking, 44 per cent believe it is “much better” and over half, or 51 per cent, feel that separating bikes and vehicles created “much better” conditions. It should be noted that there were written comments that highlighted driving was worse along the corridor, even if over half marked conditions as “much better” on this question.



Support of quick-builds in other areas of Kelowna

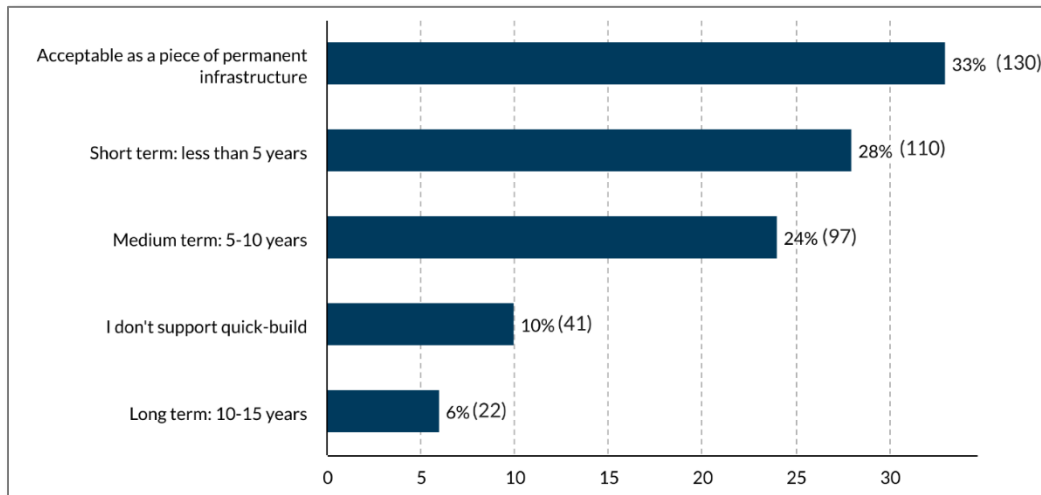


As this quick-build portion was a pilot project and the first of its kind in Kelowna, this engagement helped project managers determine if residents would accept this form of build in other areas of the city in the future.

When asked if these faster and more cost-effective bike lanes would be supported, 85 per cent, or 339 respondents, said “yes”.

"I very much support the increase in safe bike infrastructure. Increased bike usage will decrease vehicles in the core areas of Kelowna. Making it a safer, and more enjoyable area for all." – Survey Respondent

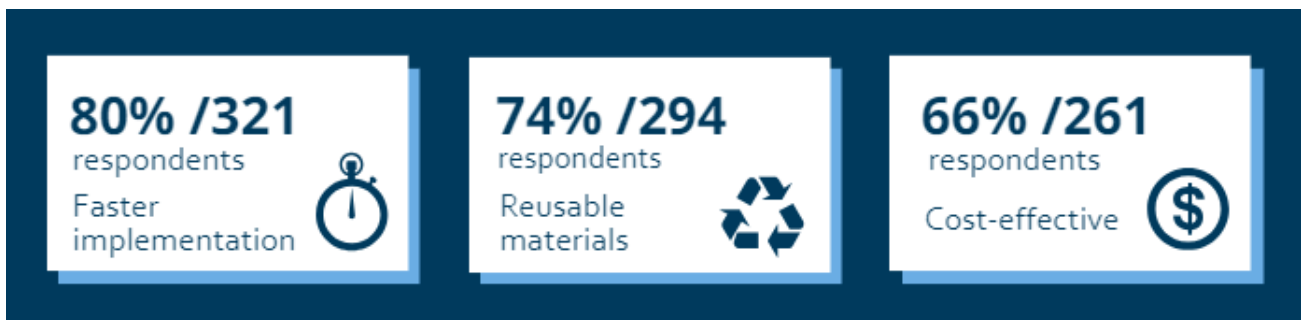
This engagement also worked to gain feedback on how best to accelerate the delivery of other active transportation projects around Kelowna.



Participants were asked how long they would be comfortable with quick-build measures being in place before they were replaced with ultimate (permanent) infrastructure. Most respondents saw these quick-build measures as acceptable as a piece of permanent infrastructure at 33 per cent. It is interesting to note that while a majority of respondents believe quick-builds can be used permanently, a close second at 28 per cent responded that they should only be used in the short term, or less than five years.

"I do not think cheap and cheerful designs are a good solution to a long term transportation corridor. Quick-build is in my opinion a short term solution to a long term plan." – Survey Respondent

Liked and disliked features of quick-build portion of ATC

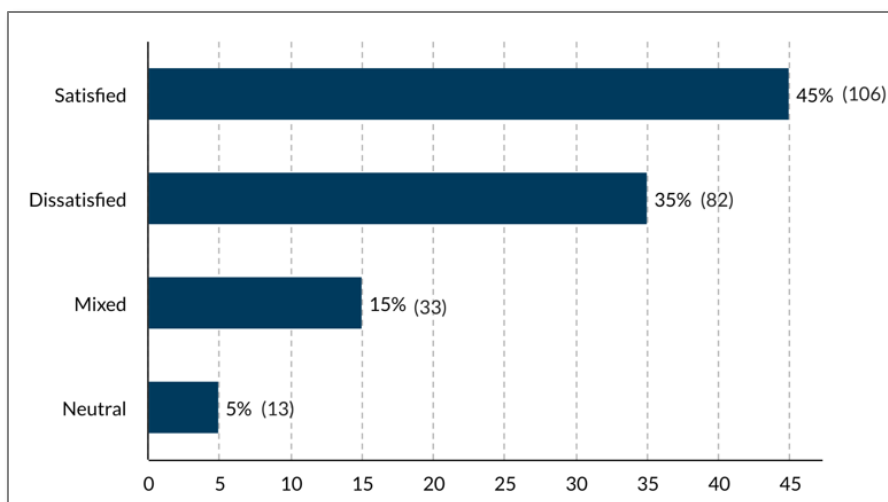


The top choice for liked features of the quick-build portion Abbott was that they are faster to implement, resulting in more infrastructure, in less time. At 74 per cent, respondents liked that the majority of materials can be reused, followed by them being cost effective. Reusability and cost-effectiveness were also highlighted as important to users during round one of the Abbott engagement in 2021.

Open ended comments

To allow for more input from users of the ATC, residents of the Abbott neighbourhood, and the public in general, an open-ended question was posed asking if there is anything else respondents want to share regarding the quick-build portion of the ATC.

Overall, the sentiment was positive at 45 per cent, but there were areas of concern outlined (35 per cent).



Of the over 230 comments left, three main themes were deciphered:

1. Respondents felt that additional guidance/ signage is needed
2. Respondents were concerned about conflicts with other users (pedestrians, bikes, vehicles)
3. Respondents felt that vehicles should be prioritized over bikes

Defining spaces more clearly with further education, signage, delineation and road markings should be investigated to help mitigate concerns for points one and two above. This could help reduce the number of pedestrians and vehicles travelling in the protected bike lanes, cyclists on the roadway and vehicles parked in incorrect spots.

More specifically, wayfinding and connections surrounding Kelowna's Newest Waterfront Park were commented on by respondents. Cyclists requested an access point to/from the park and the ATC at the park's north end and commented that the current condition without a curb letdown or warning is unsafe. Potential solutions to this will be looked into with the City Parks Department.

Other comments indicated the public is not yet aware of the next phase of the ATC project which will continue the protected bike lanes and pedestrian improvements south. More communication outlining next steps will help alleviate any further confusion.

For point three, the dissatisfied comments included concerns about the narrow travel lane and the delivery/ loading activity that occurred in the lanes. Further education on the traffic calming and safety benefits of narrower travel lanes in urban environments may be needed. Exploring opportunities for potential loading zones and encouraging delivery activity on side streets will also be investigated.

Parking was not identified as a concern in this round of engagement as compared to the 2021 engagement where 20-37 per cent of respondents felt it was important or very important to retain on-street parking (depending on the segment). Similarly, accessibility was a moderate theme in the previous engagement's open comments but did not solicit many responses this year.

Social media posts received over 100 comments, an overwhelming majority of which were positive and showed support for the project, with a few comments expressing concerns that align with the open-ended concerns from the survey (safety).

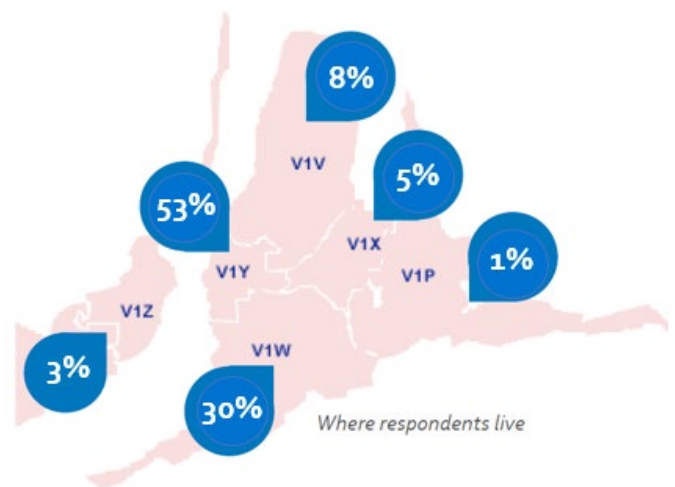


The interactive social map where respondents were asked to post about challenges and opportunities along the route received 11 comments from four users. The comments highlighted areas where the ATC could be improved, including a temporary asphalt sidewalk, better snow clearing, improving pavement and adding seating or a public garden to a vacant area of the ATC.

Demographics

This question was optional for survey respondents. The largest number of respondents came from the V1Y postal code - Central Kelowna from South Pandosy to the Landmark area. The Abbott ATC is in this neighbourhood meaning the most invested in the project participated.

V1W (southwest Kelowna) were the second highest represented in the survey as well as the second largest population in the city.



Over 80 per cent of those who responded to the survey stated that they had enough information on the project that was easy to understand in order to participate in the survey in a meaningful way. When asked if participants understood how their input would be used, 60 per cent said yes and 31 per cent said somewhat. The next steps section below can help explain how the results will be used.

Next steps

The goal of the Abbott St. evaluation project is to comprehensively review the corridor's performance, which piloted a quick-build strategy.

The results will be used to create a recommendations report to help inform how, where, when, and if the quick-build strategy will be used in the future. The evaluation process has multiple facets, including interested party feedback, data collection, and analysis.

The results of this phase will be used, along with other feedback and data, to inform any changes or improvements to the Abbott St ATC project. More broadly, feedback will be one of the inputs used to inform future ATC projects. We anticipate updating the project page with key public survey findings and final report findings.

