



CYCLING CAMPAIGN ENGAGEMENT REPORT

PREPARED FOR THE CITY OF SASKATOON

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1. PROJECT OVERVIEW

In spring 2019, the City of Saskatoon launched the development process for a new education and awareness campaign to support and promote active transportation, especially cycling. One of the goals of this campaign is to make travelling on Saskatoon streets safer and more comfortable for everyone by clarifying roles and responsibilities and encouraging safe behaviours and interactions between cyclists, motorists, and pedestrians.

To develop the campaign, we asked a cross-section of Saskatoon residents representing different groups and perspectives about their perceptions and knowledge around cycling for recreation and transportation. The outcomes of this community engagement will play a critical role in developing an education and awareness campaign unique to Saskatoon and responsive to the city's needs. The campaign is expected to launch in the summer of 2019.

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

Active transportation is any active mode used to get yourself, or others, from one place to another. This could be for trips to work or school, to run errands at the library or farmer's market, to enjoy the Meewasin Trail, or to visit with friends and family.

Active transportation can mean any form of human powered transportation, including walking, skateboarding, wheeling, pushing a stroller, accessing transit, using a mobility aid, etc. This education and awareness campaign focuses on cycling as active transportation.



2. METHODOLOGY

In order to create a cycling education and awareness campaign that reflects the needs of the community, we approached residents across the city over a three-day period to get a snapshot of their perceptions of cycling, their knowledge, and their barriers. Hundreds of people shared their excitement, pride, concerns, and fears about cycling, as well as what they love about Saskatoon itself.

We conducted four types of engagement to connect with Saskatonians:

Workshops with Saskatoon's Active Transportation Advisory Group and Saskatchewan Health Authority.

Pop-up engagements in which we went into the community—to leisure centres, shopping areas, and the Meewasin Trail—to meet and speak with people where they already were.

Focus groups in which we had targeted, in-depth conversations with groups that are traditionally underrepresented in municipal processes, including middle-school students, newcomers, and Indigenous youth.

An online survey specifically to connect with university students who were hard to reach in-person because they were in the midst of exams.



WORKSHOPS

We held workshops with the City of Saskatoon's Active Transportation Advisory Group and Saskatchewan Health Authority to identify overarching campaign goals and approaches. The Advisory Group was formed in fall 2017, and its members represent a cross-spectrum of interests and expertise around active transportation. The Saskatchewan Health Authority approaches active transportation from a public health perspective.

POP UP ENGAGEMENTS

Pop-up engagements were held in eight busy locations across the city at different times of day: the Meewasin Trail at River Landing, Lawson Civic Centre, Cliff Wright Library, Bridge City Bike Co-op, Market Mall, Drift Cafe, Bruce's Cycle Works, and on Broadway Avenue. This style of engagement reduces barriers for people who might not typically give their opinions at a consultation event, and allowed us to receive input from a broad spectrum of Saskatoon residents. The locations were chosen in consultation with the Active Transportation Advisory Group.

FOCUS GROUPS

Six targeted focus groups were held over the three-day engagement period. These sessions focused on engaging with groups whose voices aren't always heard in traditional consultation processes, including youth, newcomers to Canada, and Indigenous people. We worked with Saskatoon Public Schools, EcoQuest, Saskatoon Open Door Society, and Core Neighbourhood Youth Co-op to set up in-depth conversations and ideation and mapping activities to learn about participants' perceptions and barriers around cycling, as well as campaign goals and approaches.

ONLINE SURVEY

University students were identified as a key target group for engagement, but the three-day engagement period took place during exams, making it harder to meet this group in person. Instead, a two-week online survey was used to specifically capture the perspectives of the university student community. The survey asked questions about cycling as well as about campaign approaches.

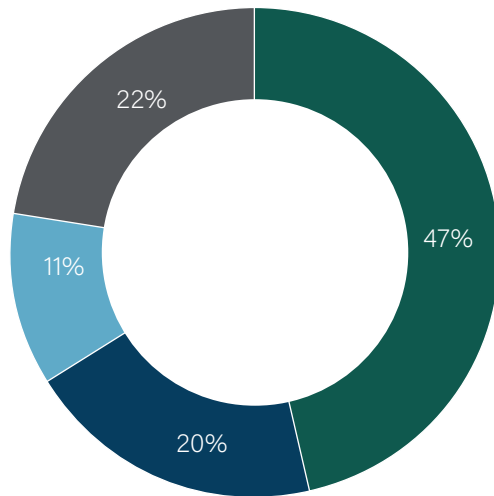


3. RESULTS AT A GLANCE

74% have positive associations with people who cycle, saying that they are admirable, happy, healthy, helping the environment, or doing the right thing for themselves and the city.

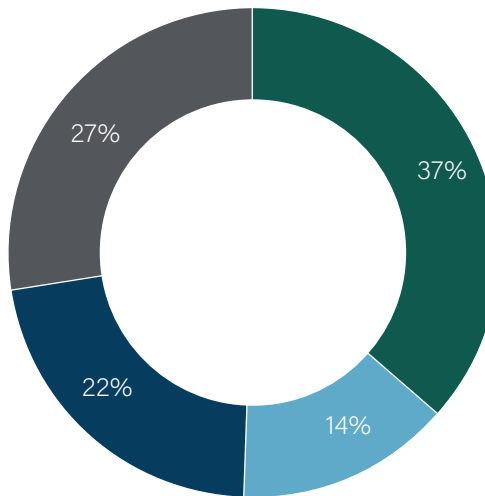
10% just see cyclists as regular people—friends, families, parents, and children.
13% pointed to a need for more education on respect and the rules of the road.

What excites you about Saskatoon?



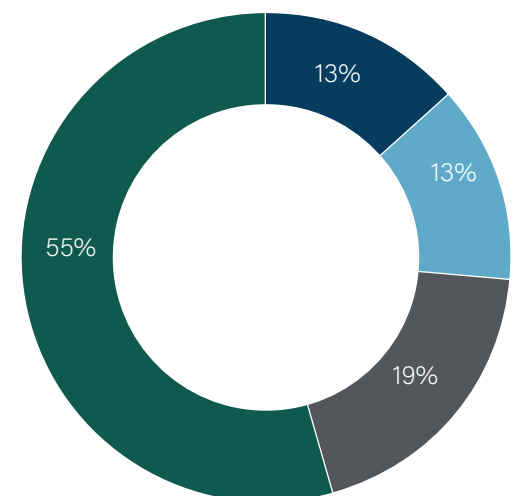
- The river and natural beauty
- Art & culture
- The city's potential
- The people and community

Why do you ride a bike?



- It's fun
- It's good for my health
- It's good for the environment
- It's convenient

What would make you more likely to ride?



- If I felt safe on the road
- If I knew where to ride
- If I knew more people who bike
- If I understood the rules of the road

515 people engaged

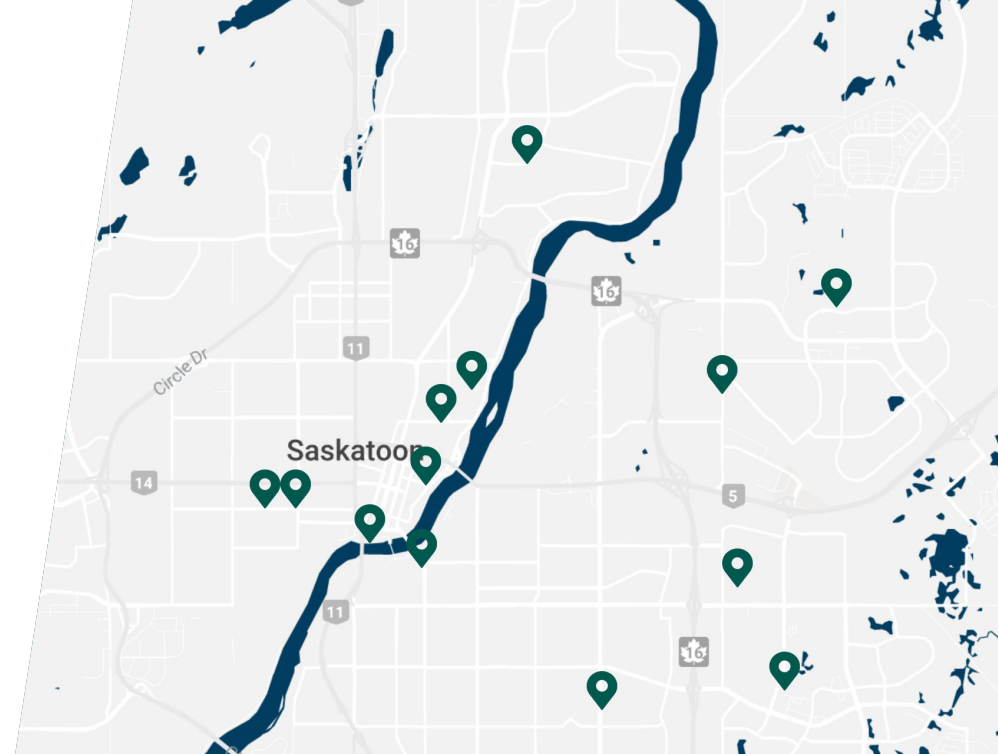


215 online survey responses

8 pop-up engagements

6 focus groups

2 workshops



WHERE WE ENGAGED

We visited neighbourhoods and communities across Saskatoon to capture a range of opinions and experiences around cycling, working with the following organizations:

Bridge City Bike Co-op
Broadway Business Improvement District
Bruce's Cycle Works
Drift Cafe
Cliff Wright Library
Core Neighbourhood Youth Co-op
EcoQuest
Lawson Civic Centre
Market Mall
Meewasin Trail
Open Door Society
Saskatoon Public Schools



4. KEY THEMES

SASKATONIANS HAVE DEEP CIVIC PRIDE

Saskatoon residents are overwhelmingly proud to live in such a friendly and beautiful city. To appeal to the broad community, the education and awareness campaign needs to be visibly and unabashedly Saskatoonian in themes and references.

People frequently mentioned how Saskatoon's countless events, festivals, and amenities make it a fun place to be. Residents also like the sense of community and small town feel of Saskatoon, while at the same time appreciating the increasing diversity of the city and the potential and opportunities that come with growth: "The city is on the cusp of something great."

Above all, whether they grew up in the city or arrived from elsewhere, Saskatonians share a universal affection for the South Saskatchewan River and the Meewasin trails, which together are a key part of civic identity, as well as a favourite place for both residents and visitors to bike.

PEOPLE WHO BIKE ARE DIVERSE

People who bike in Saskatoon are as diverse in age, cultural background, and socioeconomic status as the city itself. The education and awareness campaign should be representative of the diversity of Saskatoon.

The vast majority of people we spoke with ride a bike at least once in a while, but don't necessarily see themselves as "cyclists." Newcomer parents shared stories of teaching their children to ride in a local park, older adults talked about the joys of group rides, and middle school students spoke about the independence they found on two wheels: "I wish people would have told me that there was so much places to bike."





CYCLING IS AN ISSUE OF EQUITY

We heard from public health officials and from individual Saskatonians about the need to ensure that the campaign is rooted in an understanding of the importance and benefits of equitable access to cycling.

For many people, including but not limited to children, university students, and lower-income individuals, cycling is an affordable form of recreation and transportation, and offers independence and connection to schools, jobs, errands, the river, and the wider city.

From a public health standpoint, cycling can also offer low-impact, everyday aerobic exercise, as well as opportunities for social and community connection. Physical and mental health emerged among the top reasons that people choose to ride their bikes.

These two facts together make it important for the campaign to be appealing, welcoming, and respectful to all, and to avoid onus, blame, or negativity.

THERE IS A DESIRE TO RIDE, HELD BACK BY BARRIERS AND ASSUMPTIONS

Many Saskatonians would like to ride more often, for both recreation and transportation. Whether to fully experience the beauty of the city, enjoy time with family, or get to more destinations, there is a latent interest in cycling that the campaign can easily tap into.

By a large margin, the number one barrier keeping Saskatonians from riding their bikes more often is a fear of unsafe streets. Many also associate bikes with recreation rather than transportation, and assume that cycling around the city would be both dangerous and inconvenient. There is a perception that those who choose to ride are special in some way; only a minority see people who bike as “just regular people.”

The campaign can appeal to potential cyclists by normalizing cycling through its messaging and imagery.





THERE IS A NEED FOR EDUCATION

One of the campaign's goals is to help make traveling on Saskatoon streets safer and more comfortable for everyone by clarifying roles and responsibilities and encouraging safe behaviours and interactions between cyclists, motorists, and pedestrians. Community members shared stories of the need for this kind of education: people riding their bikes in a disrespectful or illegal manner, and people driving their cars too quickly and aggressively.

Common concerns we heard related to cyclists riding on the sidewalk, swerving through traffic, and putting pedestrians at risk by riding too fast on the trails; and motorists speeding, passing too closely, and getting angry on the roads. In spite of Saskatoon's reputation for friendliness, the lack of both knowledge and empathy between cyclists, motorists, and pedestrians has escalated the risks of conflict on sidewalks, trails, and roads.

The campaign can help address these issues by increasing awareness about best practices and rules of the road.



5. CONCLUSION

We heard from a broad cross-section of Saskatonians about what their perceptions, knowledge, and barriers are around cycling. We heard that Saskatonians have deep civic pride; people who bike are diverse; cycling is an issue of equity; there is a desire to ride, held back by barriers and assumptions; and there is a need for education.

Based on what we heard, Saskatoon's new campaign should use the following as guidelines in order to promote education and awareness to support and promote active transportation, especially cycling:

The campaign should be visibly and unabashedly Saskatoonian in themes and references

It should be representative of the diversity of Saskatoon.

It should be appealing, welcoming, and respectful to all, and avoid onus, blame, or negativity.

It should normalize cycling through its messaging and imagery.

It should increase awareness about best practices and rules of the road and encourage friendlier behaviours between cyclists, motorists, and pedestrians.

