



**WHAT
WE
HEARD.**



**PUBLIC
PARTICIPATION**

CityPlan Update – Youth Engagement

Project Overview:

As part of the process to update the Airdrie City Plan, City Administration undertook in-person youth engagement in the Fall of 2024. The City coordinated through our Youth Engagement Liaison to attend classes at three of the city's schools, meeting with students in grades 6 through 12. The project team also met with the Airdrie Board of Youth Affairs to review and comment on some of the key emergent themes heard from youth participants. Approximately 150 youth participated. This report provides a summary of their feedback.

Date: April 23, 2025

Prepared by the City of Airdrie

Executive Summary

Airdrie is on pace to be the third largest city in Alberta. The City Plan is a long-term planning document that will identify how development can support sustainable growth into our future.

For the purposes of public engagement, the project has organized the discussion into four policy category areas.

By creating a comprehensive plan that balances social, environmental, cultural and economic perspectives, we aim to accommodate our growing population while preserving the unique character of our city.

The project team attended classes at three of the city's schools, meeting with students in grades 6 through 12. The project team also met with the Airdrie Board of Youth Affairs (ABYA) to review some concepts and ideas heard from youth participants. Engagement sought to identify youth priorities, values and aspirations about growth in Airdrie. Participants were asked:

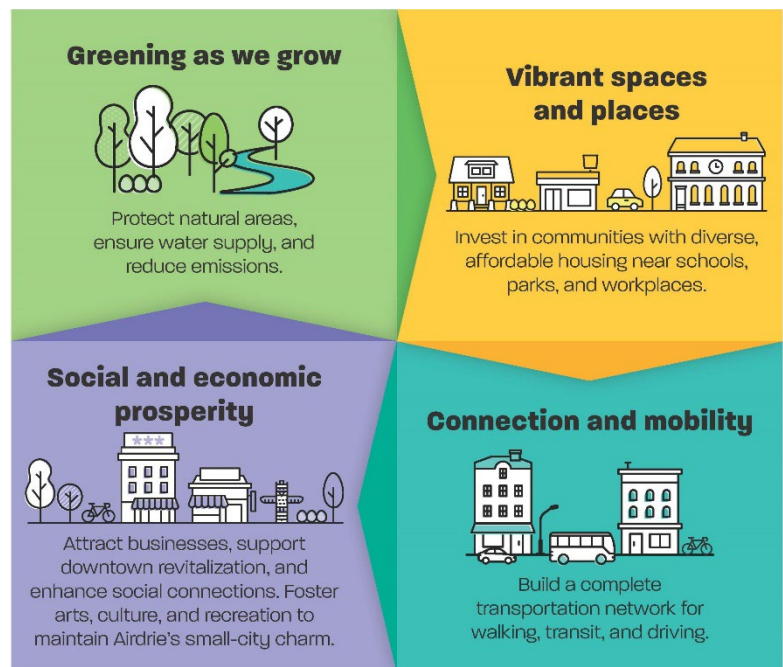
- **Keepsakes (values):** What do you love about Airdrie? What must we keep as we grow?
- **Our Focus (priorities/challenges):** Ideas or suggestions. Do you have a least favourite place or route in Airdrie? What could be changed to make it better?
- **Future Stories (aspirations):** Imagine Airdrie in 30 years, with 180,000 people. What will make Airdrie so great. What will we have achieved?

Some of the key topics and priorities for youth included:

Greening as We Grow. Youth indicated they value the parks, greenspaces and natural areas in Airdrie and want to see this be a continued area of focus as the city grows.

Vibrant Spaces and Places. Youth identified that they love their neighbourhoods and homes. That a challenge they have is difficulty getting to friend's houses, retail, recreation and entertainment places as many are not driving – and pathways don't always get them to their destinations. For the future, youth identified improved affordability, opportunities for culture and heritage, and the possibility of post-secondary education within Airdrie as desirable.

Social and economic prosperity. Youth very much focused on spaces and ways they can socialize and spend time with friends as a current and future priority. Indoor and outdoor recreation (sport focus) as well as indoor and outdoor entertainment (arcades, movie theatres, paintball, etc.) were mentioned often as both favourite places and desired as expanded options for the future.



Connection and mobility. As many youth are not yet driving, or do not have regular access to a vehicle, they mentioned how important Airdrie's pathways and transit are to their ability to get around the city. Participants mentioned a desire for more paths, or paths that got them all the way to their destination, expanded options for e-scooters, rentable e-bikes and hoverboards, as well as increased bus stops and more frequent service as important aspirations for the future of Airdrie.

Project Information

Airdrie is on pace to be the third largest city in Alberta. The City Plan is a long-term planning document that will identify how development can support sustainable growth into our future. The last City Plan was approved in 2014. A lot has changed in Airdrie since then.

For the purposes of public engagement, the project has organized policy category areas as follows:



By creating a comprehensive plan that balances social, environmental, cultural and economic perspectives, we aim to accommodate our growing population while preserving the unique character of our city.

Public Participation Approach

Engagement sought to identify youth priorities, values and aspirations about growth in Airdrie. Participants were asked:

- **Keepsakes (values):** What do you love about Airdrie? What must we keep as we grow?
- **Our Focus (priorities/challenges):** Ideas or suggestions. Do you have a least favourite place or route in Airdrie? What could be changed to make it better?
- **Future Stories (aspirations):** Imagine Airdrie in 30 years, with 180,000 people. What will make Airdrie so great. What will we have achieved?

The City coordinated through our Youth Engagement Liaison to attend classes at three of the city's schools, meeting with students in grades 6 through 12 who participated in activities to answer the above questions. The project team also met with the Airdrie Board of Youth Affairs (ABYA) to review some of the key emergent concepts and ideas heard from youth participants.

- Northcott Prairie School, Grades 6-8, November 13, 2024
- Bert Church High School, Grades 10-12, November 13 and 19, 2024
- Murial Clayton Middle School, Grade 6, November 21, 2024
- Airdrie Board of Youth Affairs, December 2, 2024

Summary of Public Participation Input

A key area of focus for youth participants was on spaces and places where they can socialize and engage in activities with their friends such as places for recreation, both indoor spaces (147 mentions) and outdoor spaces (102 mentions). Likewise indoor entertainment options (131 mentions), outdoor entertainment options (44 mentions) and shopping (144 mentions) were top priorities for youth. Other areas included parks and greenspaces (78 mentions) and ways of getting around town including by vehicle, bike and walking (65 mentions).

These priority areas were often mentioned as both favourite places and wanting more of them, or more variety of them, in the future. Some challenges mentioned by youth included difficulty getting to these spaces and places because they are too far away to walk to, or they are not able to use paths to get there and feel unsafe biking on roadways. A lack of youth-oriented spaces was mentioned as a challenge, as was affordability of accessing places to hang out with friends.

What we heard

The following sections provide summaries of the responses to the three engagement questions, organized by policy category.

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YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Greening as we grow

Keepsakes (values)

Participants identified walking or biking on the paths near parks (10 mentions) and spending time in natural areas (8 mentions) near water features such as ponds or canals in their neighbourhoods as a favourite thing about Airdrie.

Our Focus (priorities, challenges)

Some participants mentioned a desire for more parks, dog parks, larger parks, and parks or greenspace closer to their homes (18 mentions). And some participants mentioned care and maintenance of greenspaces and the environment with a desire for cleaner parks, ponds and reduced air pollution (5 mentions) as areas that need attention.

Future stories (aspirations)

Several participants envision a future Airdrie with more natural areas (9 mentions), wildlife (1 mention), trees (7 mentions) and dog parks (3 mentions). There were some ideas around expanded alternative energy generation such as solar panels and nuclear power (2 mentions) and a note about a more secure water supply for Airdrie not reliant on Calgary (1 mention).



Vibrant spaces and places

Keepsakes (values)

Participants identified their homes, friends' homes, backyards and their communities as favourite places (42 mentions). They described having good neighbours, feeling safe and having a space to spend time with friends as some of the reasons why.

Our Focus (priorities, challenges)

A challenge identified by youth included a desire to have a variety of types of places closer to home – or easier to walk to (18 mentions). This included a desire for more proximity to retail options, indoor recreation, their schools, parks and playgrounds, dining options, and bus routes. Other priorities included increased public safety around popular hangouts like McDonald's, 7-11 and schools (9 mentions) A desire for more shelters, for both animals and people (3 mentions) and affordable housing or more types of housing (2 mentions).

Future stories (aspirations)

Affordability was a common aspiration for the future, with participants mentioning lower costs for restaurants, transportation and housing as key areas (13 mentions). Participants also hope to see a



future Airdrie with more opportunities for culture and heritage including museums and unique architecture, as well as more festivals and events (8 mentions). Another area of interest was the possibility of post-secondary options located in Airdrie whether college, university or trade schools (6 mentions).

Social and economic prosperity

Keepsakes (values)

Favourite youth spaces and places in Airdrie had a strong focus on those places that facilitated ways to socialize and spend time with friends. This included indoor recreation spaces such as Genesis Place and Ron Ebbesen Arena (85 mentions), retail shopping such as Cross Iron, Walmart and dollar stores (57 mentions), quick-service restaurants such as McDonald's, Tim Hortons, Dairy Queen and Crumbl Cookies (48 mentions), outdoor recreation such as basketball courts, the skatepark, sports fields and parks (67 mentions).

Participants also identified indoor entertainment spaces such as bowling alleys, gaming lounges and arcades (18 mentions) and the library (14 mentions) as favourite aspects of Airdrie.

Our Focus (priorities, challenges)

Youth mentioned the lack of a movie theatre (18 mentions) and arcades (7 mentions) in Airdrie as a priority for them. A lack of indoor recreation spaces, especially for volleyball and swimming, (26 mentions) was noted. Desired outdoor recreation and entertainment facilities (23 mentions) included pools or water parks, outdoor movie theatres/drive-ins, sports fields and skateparks. Participants also mentioned a lack of youth-oriented spaces, activities or clubs in general (16 mentions) as well as a lack of affordable youth-oriented spaces to hang out (9 mentions) as challenges.

Future stories (aspirations)

Expanded options for indoor entertainment (52 mentions) included a wide variety of options including trampoline parks, roller rinks, gaming centres/arcades, movie theatres, airsoft arenas, rage rooms and concert halls. Suggestions for outdoor entertainment (24 mentions) included paintball arenas, racetracks, a theme park, a zoo and more festivals and events. Recreation was also a key area of interest for youth and in the future, they hope to see more indoor spaces for gymnastics, basketball, swimming and skating (36 mentions). Outdoors, youth hope the future for Airdrie includes more ball courts and fields, outdoor rinks, outdoor pools, golf courses and dirt bike parks (38 mentions). More dining out options both quick-service (31 mentions) and full-service (14 mentions) were identified as desirable by youth, with specific chains such as Chick-fil-A and Raising Cane's being identified often.



Connection and mobility

Keepsakes (values)

Participants identified electric scooters as a favourite thing about Airdrie as they are considered easy transportation (6 mentions). Pathways to walk and ride on, especially where they are near parks, natural areas, ponds or canals are also valued (9 mentions). A couple of participants mentioned the new overpass at 40 Ave as improving traffic flow (2 mentions).

Our Focus (priorities, challenges)

For older youth who are driving, traffic congestion, and short traffic light cycles, especially on Yankee Valley and Veterans Boulevards were identified as challenges (11 mentions).

For those youth not yet driving, some mentioned feeling unsafe crossing roads, or railways near their schools (3 mentions) others identified that when paths are not cleared of snow it makes it harder to get to their destinations (2 mentions). Not being able to use pathways to bike all the way to their destinations was seen as a challenge due to having to switch to riding on the road with vehicles which felt less safe (2 mentions). For those youth using transit, challenges included long walking distances to a stop, and fear of missing the bus due to infrequent service (4 mentions).

Future stories (aspirations)

Aspirations for the future of connection and mobility in Airdrie included ideas to improve transit, including more routes and stop locations within Airdrie (13 mentions), trains connecting to Calgary (2 mentions), more types of transit e.g. shuttles or streetcars (2 mentions) and more accessible transit (1 mention). Youth also expressed interest in more bike and walking paths (11 mentions). Some youth mentioned a desire for more electric or water powered cars (2 mentions) while others wanted fewer electric cars (3 mentions) and there were suggestions for flying cars (2 mentions). Some identified a desire for an airport (3 mentions). And some identified a desire for expanded personal transportation options such as rentable e-bikes and hoverboards (2 mentions).

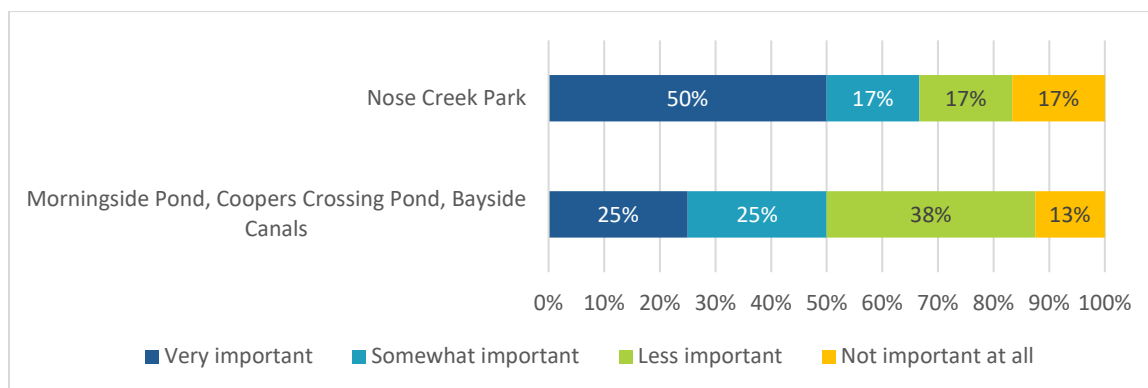


AIRDRIE BOARD OF YOUTH AFFAIRS ENGAGEMENT

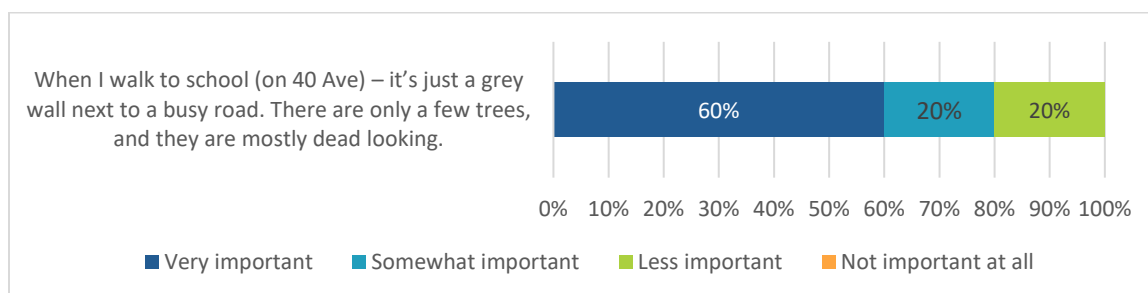
For each policy category, board members were asked to review some of the ideas/concepts raised by youth participants and indicate how important each idea was to them. They were also asked: “More comments? Thoughts about the ideas? Is there anything missing?”

Greening as we grow

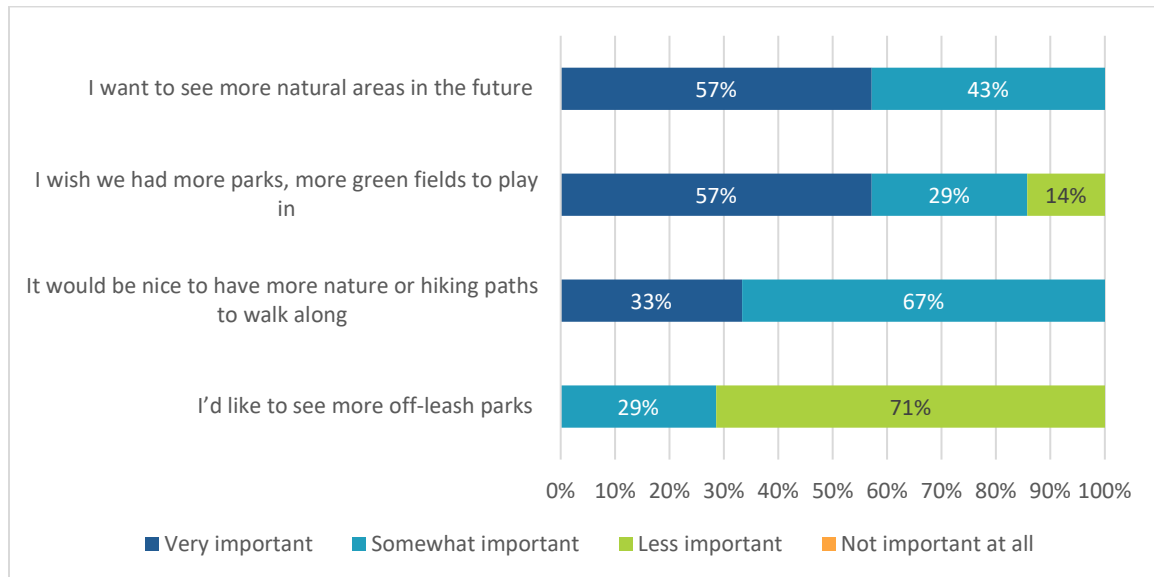
Keepsakes (values)



Our Focus (priorities, challenges)



Future stories (aspirations)

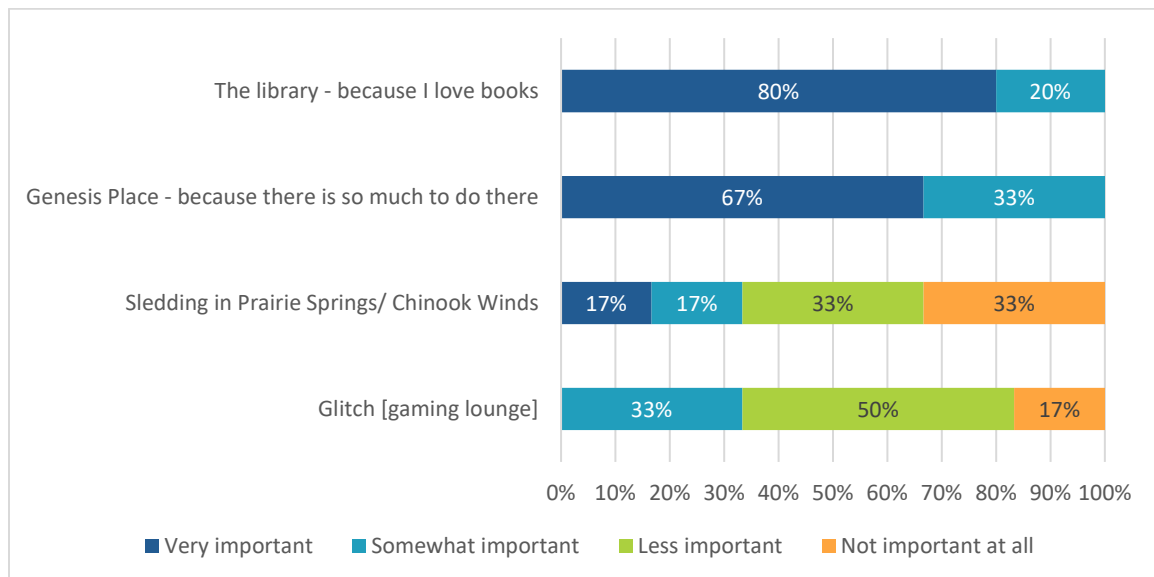


Additional Comments

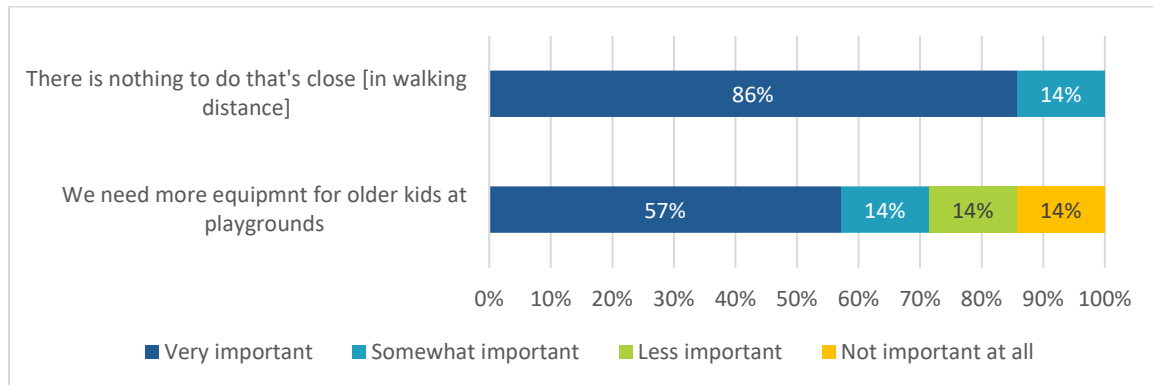
- We need more hikes in Airdrie
- Tiny forests in communities with picnic benches/ seating areas or firepits

Vibrant spaces and places

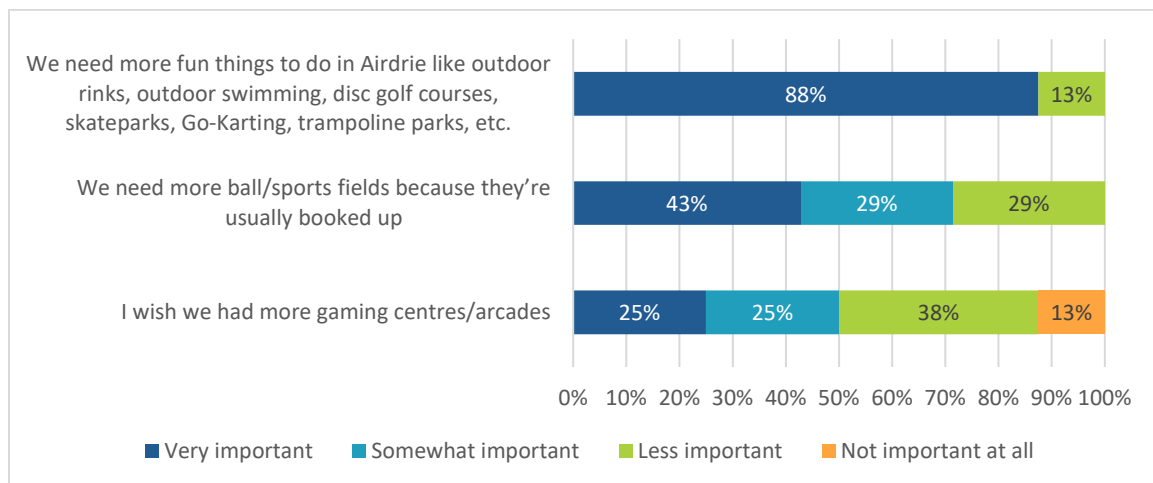
Keepsakes (values)



Our Focus (priorities, challenges)



Future stories (aspirations)

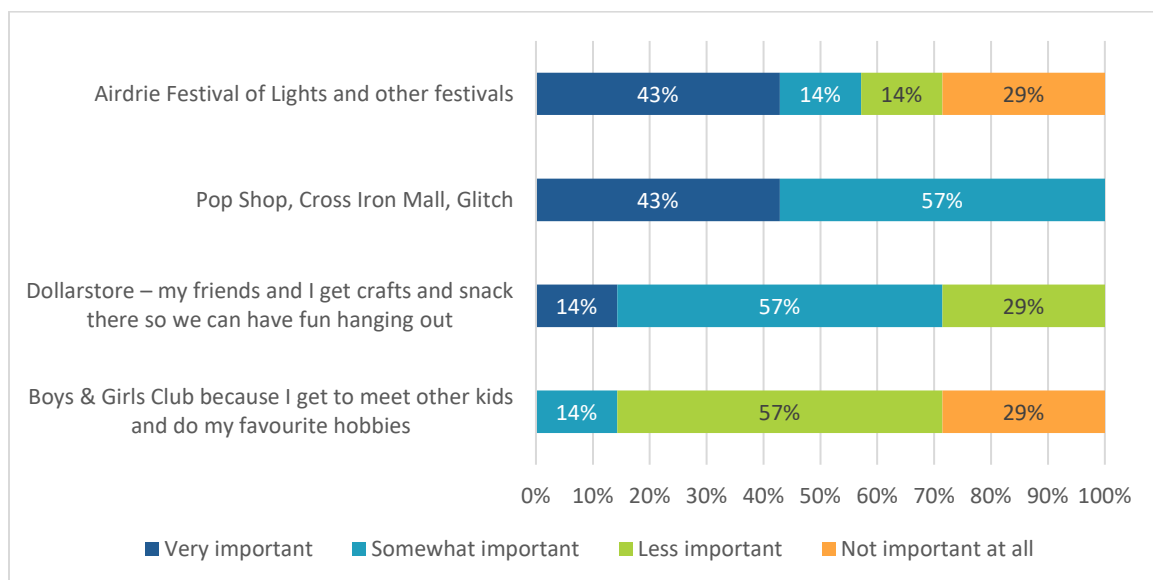


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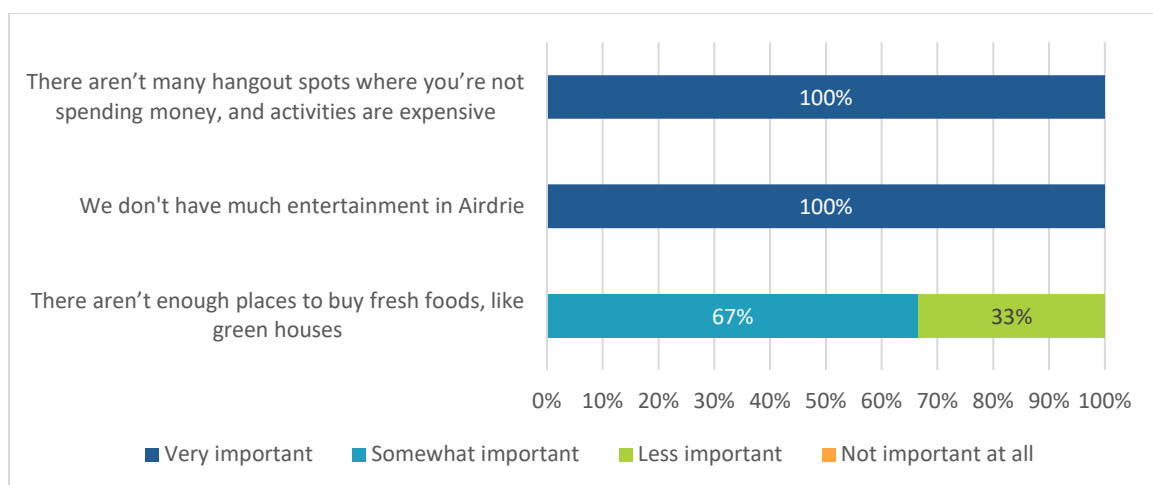
- Provide sufficient rec facilities and balance competitive and recreation activities (ex. 50 m pool and slides)
- Pool
- Model after the YMCA to ensure transport isn't an issue and that it isn't constantly at capacity

Social and economic prosperity

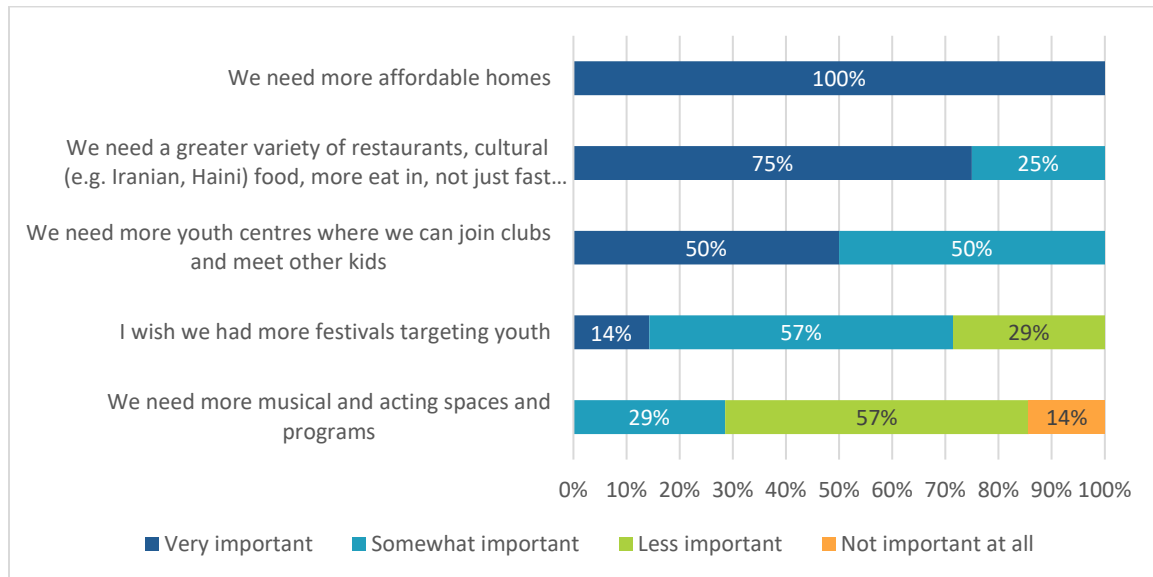
Keepsakes (values)



Our Focus (priorities, challenges)



Future stories (aspirations)

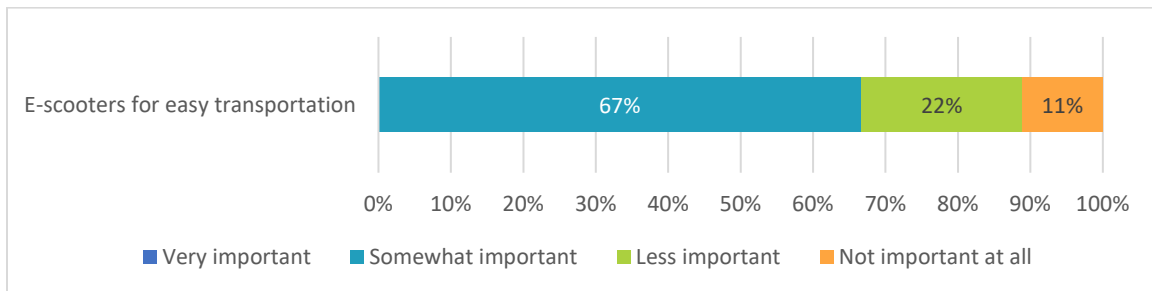


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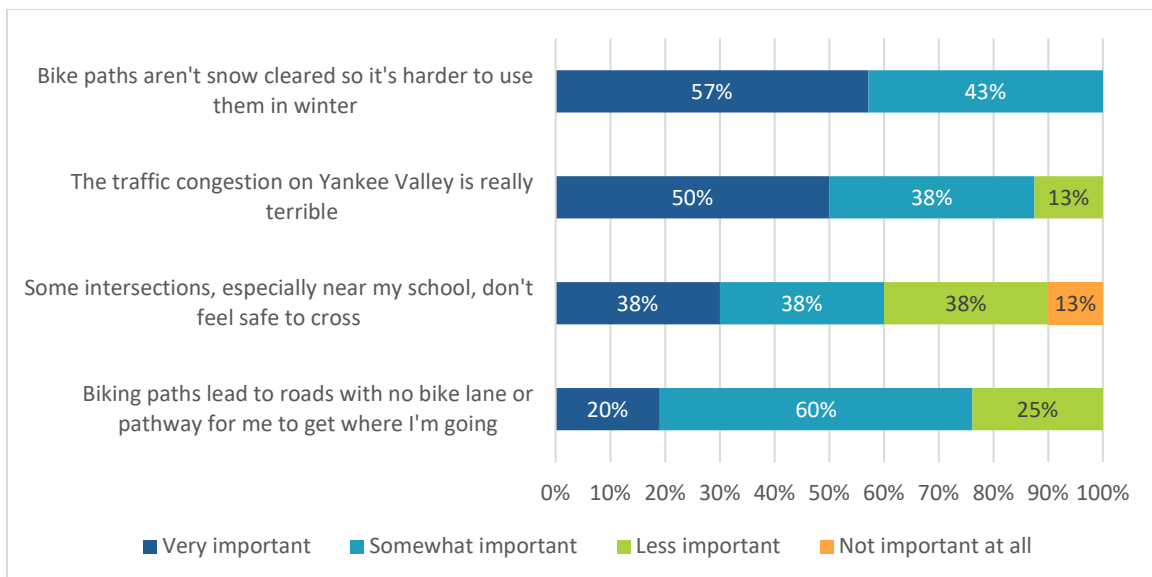
- Airdrie's future Arts and Multi-cultural Centre (where Nose Creek is..). (Museum and arts performing theatre).
- Boutique shopping
- Having Airdrie's history present through "artifacts" on pathways and parks.
- Places to explore science/ technology like Telus Spark
- We need another (movie) theatre
- It seems as if one has to go to Calgary to have a good time, so changing that would be great
- More opportunities to engage in arts and culture, e.g. Movie theatre, museum, concert revenue
- A mall like Cross Iron in Airdrie
- A lot of institutions, Airdrie may have/are overshadowed by Calgary due to their close proximity

Connection and mobility

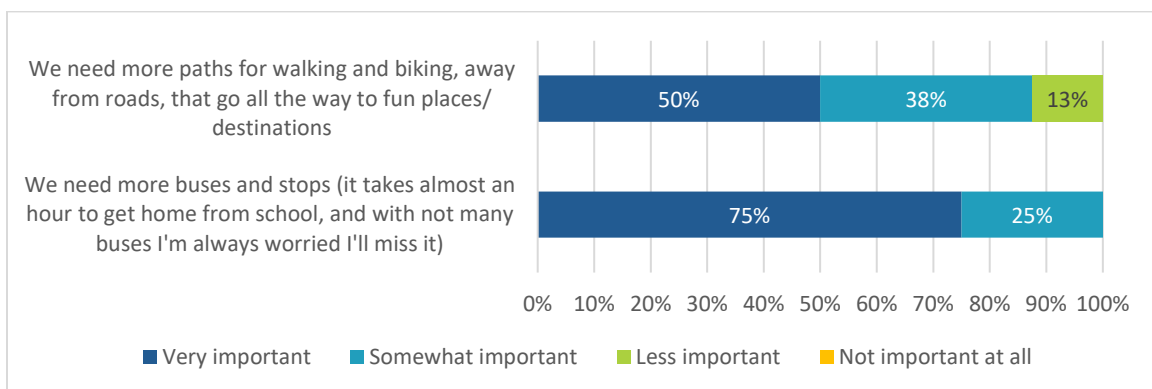
Keepsakes (values)



Our Focus (priorities, challenges)



Future stories (aspirations)



Additional Comments:

- Slower timers on the crosswalks
- Integrating efficiently with Calgary Transit to ease the transportation barrier for Airdrie's three- to four-thousand post-secondary students
- Bus routes between [Bert Church High School] and downtown
- Making pathways more accessible for people with disabilities, like having sound come out of the pedestrian button, also having brail on the button
- Having more frequent buses, or making bus capacity bigger

What's Next & Timelines

Along with consideration of our comparative research and internal discussions – the feedback here will be used to help us refine our update to the City Plan.

Contact Information

For more information regarding the City Plan update project, contact:

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City of Airdrie
Email: planning@airdrie.ca

MY FAVOURITE PLACE IN AIRDRIE



DRAW, WRITE A STORY, OR
A POEM ABOUT YOUR FAVORITE PLACE IN AIRDRIE.

- WHY DO YOU LIKE IT SO MUCH?
- HOW DO YOU GET THERE?
- DO YOU GO WITH FRIENDS? FAMILY?

MY FAVOURITE PLACE IN AIRDRIE

I like the BGC the most!



I like the BGC because I get to meet other kids and do my fav hobbies but I hope you could add more youth centers please!

DRAW, WRITE A STORY, OR
A POEM ABOUT YOUR FAVORITE PLACE IN AIRDRIE.

- WHY DO YOU LIKE IT SO MUCH?
- HOW DO YOU GET THERE?
- DO YOU GO WITH FRIENDS? FAMILY?

MY FAVOURITE PLACE IN AIRDRIE



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MY FAVOURITE PLACE IN AIRDRIE



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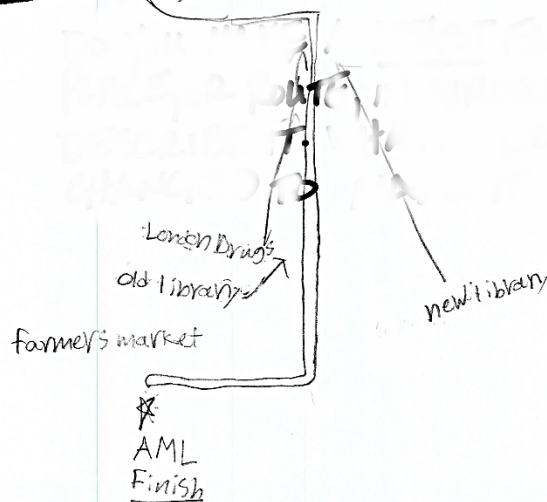
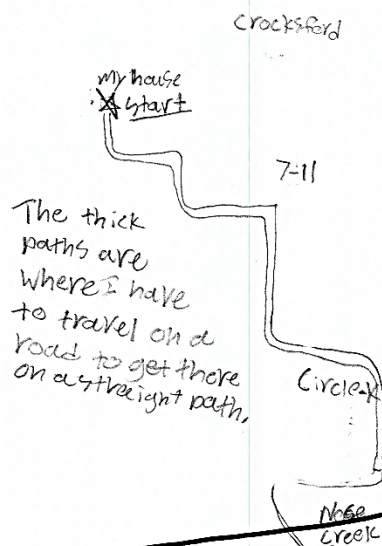
IDEAS + SUGGESTIONS

**DRAW
WRITE A
SHORT
STORY OR
POEM**

**DESCRIBE
YOUR PLACE,
ROUTE +
IDEAS.**

More biking paths on the road to Nose
Creek and Main Street.

easier ways to get around on buses.
(I don't usually take the buses though.)



IDEAS + SUGGESTIONS

**DRAW
WRITE A
SHORT
STORY OR
POEM**

**DESCRIBE
YOUR PLACE,
ROUTE &
IDEAS.**

When I walk to school I don't like that on 40th ave it is just a grey wall next to a busy road and it isn't nice to walk/bike there. There are a few trees but they are mostly dead-looking.

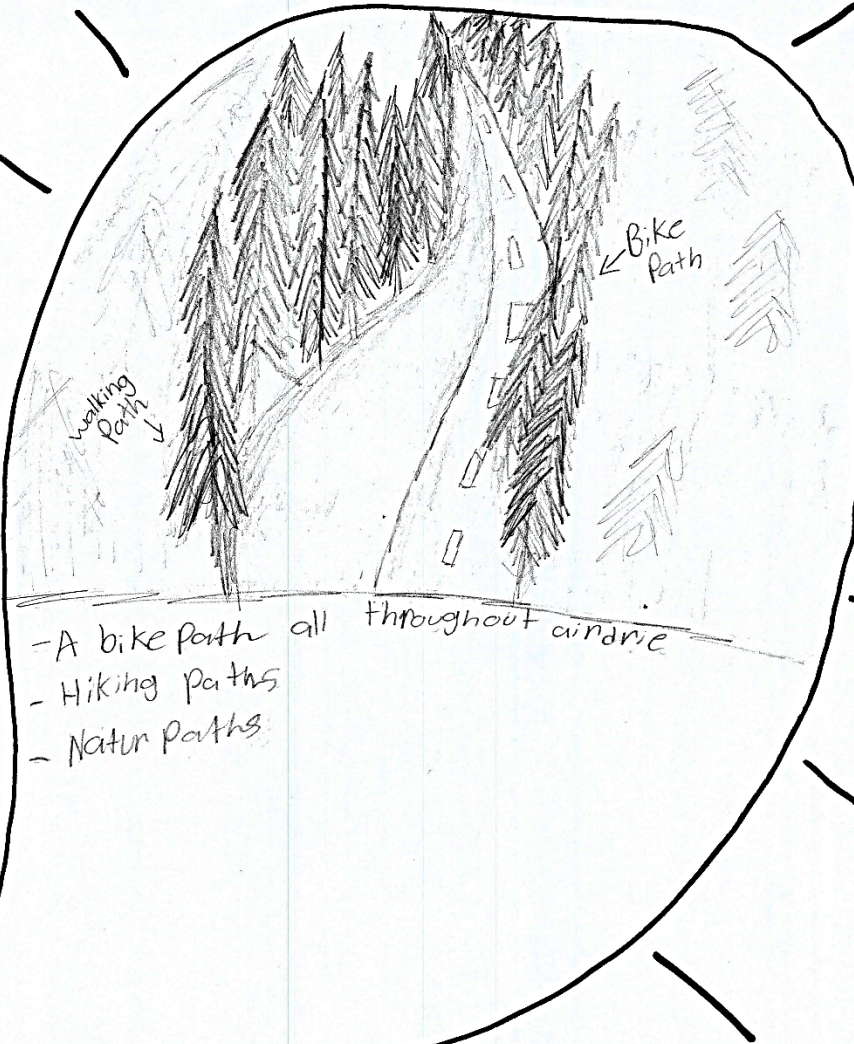


**DO YOU HAVE A LEAST FAVOURITE
PLACE, OR ROUTE, IN AIRDRIE?
DESCRIBE IT. WHAT COULD BE
CHANGED TO MAKE IT BETTER?**

IDEAS + SUGGESTIONS

DRAW
WRITE A
SHORT
STORY OR
POEM

DESCRIBE
YOUR PLACE,
ROUTE +
IDEAS.



- A bike path all throughout airdrie
- Hiking paths
- Natur paths

DO YOU HAVE A LEAST FAVOURITE
PLACE, OR ROUTE, IN AIRDRIE?
DESCRIBE IT. WHAT COULD BE
CHANGED TO MAKE IT BETTER?

IDEAS + SUGGESTIONS

DRAW
WRITE A
SHORT
STORY OR
POEM

DESCRIBE
YOUR PLACE,
ROUTE +
IDEAS.

Some parks are boring. Need more slides, fun things. We also need more open areas for sports.



More  pathways,
also a bike
lane.

More Water fountains,
public bathrooms.



DO YOU HAVE A LEAST FAVOURITE
PLACE, OR ROUTE, IN AIRDRIE?
DESCRIBE IT. WHAT COULD BE
CHANGED TO MAKE IT BETTER?