What We Heard

Canada Drive Active Transportation & Road Safety Improvements



June 2022

ST. JOHN'S

Disclaimer

This document provides a summary of what was heard from participants during this engagement process. It is not meant to reflect the specific details of each submission word-for-word, although attempts have been made to do so when possible.

The City produces a What we Heard document for every city-led public engagement project. This collected commentary is shared with the community to ensure we heard you correctly.

The City protects the privacy of those who provide feedback as per Access to Information and Privacy Legislation.

The full scope of commentary is used by city staff and Council to help inform recommendations and decisions.

Context & Background

Over the years the City has received a lot of feedback from the public regarding cycling lanes and safety for active transportation. In 2016 a cycling task force was created, launching a long process of public and stakeholder engagement to create a plan for cycling in the city. This included direct consultation with residents of Cowan Heights in 2019.

In 2019, the Bike St John's Master Plan was adopted by council. The vision of the plan is to build

> “a safe, inclusive, and convenient cycling network that is well-connected, attractive and reflective of the City’s unique topography and climate. As part of an integrated mobility network, this is supported by policies and programs that promote a cycling friendly culture.”

The Canada Drive project will connect Columbus Dr. to the end of the Team Gushue extension – and ultimately connect with Kelly’s Brook trail via Columbus Drive to create an east-west route as part of the cycling backbone network.

Financing & Phasing

- For the Canada Drive streetscape improvements, the City is piggy-backing on roads rehabilitation to reduce overall cost and avoid future tear up (cost avoidance).
- Construction for this project will be phased over several years, starting in 2023.
- The first project identified in the Bike St John's Master Plan, Kelly's Brook Shared-Use-Path, is still in design phase and there has been significant public discussion about it. Currently, the cost to construct exceeds budget available and the City is working with partners to secure required funding. Construction has been delayed.

Public Engagement Plan

Purpose

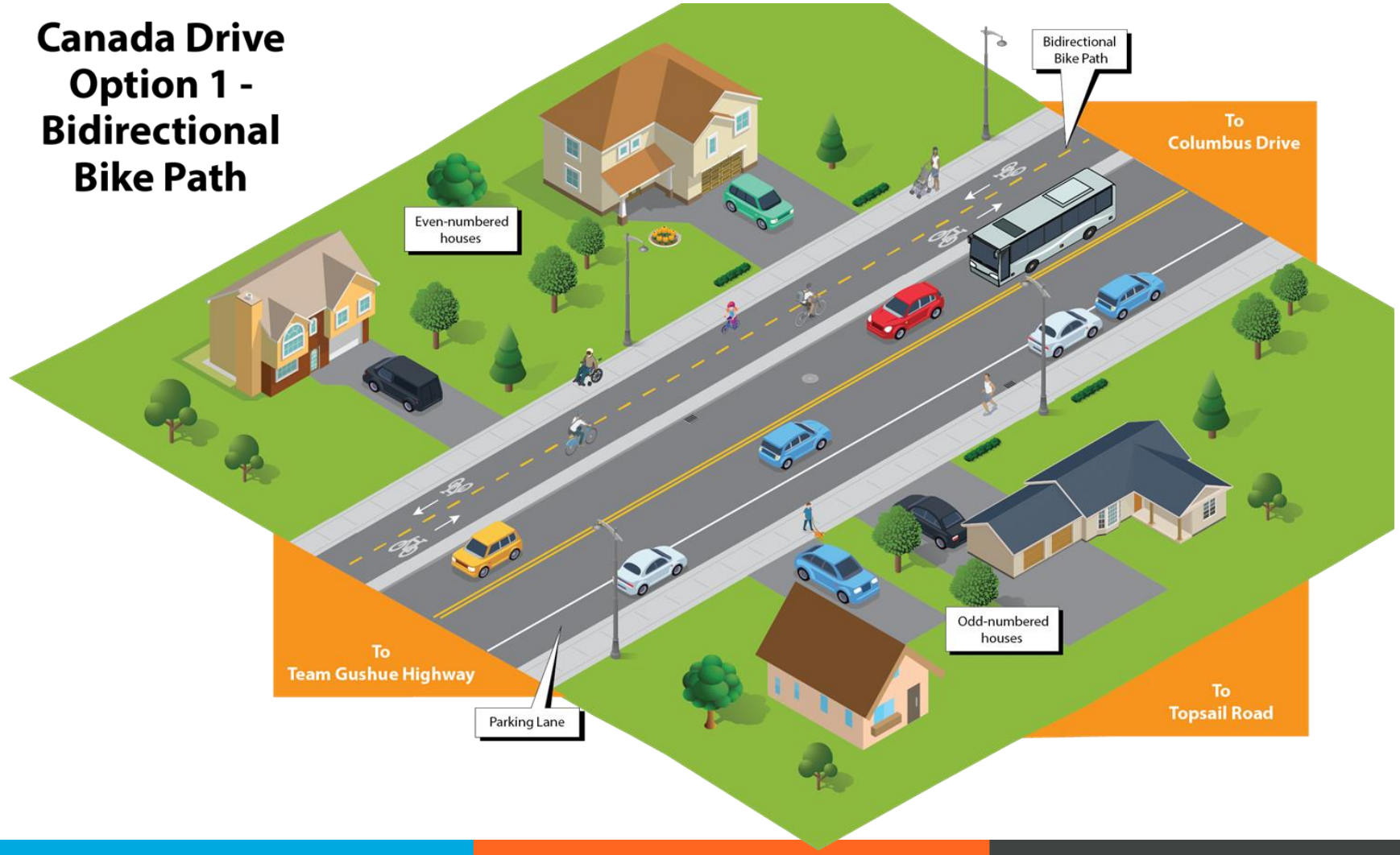
Share two draft concept plans and collect public and stakeholder feedback on the options.

- ❑ Option 1: Bidirectional Bike Path with parking along one side of the street
- ❑ Option 2: Shared-Use Path with parking along both sides of the street

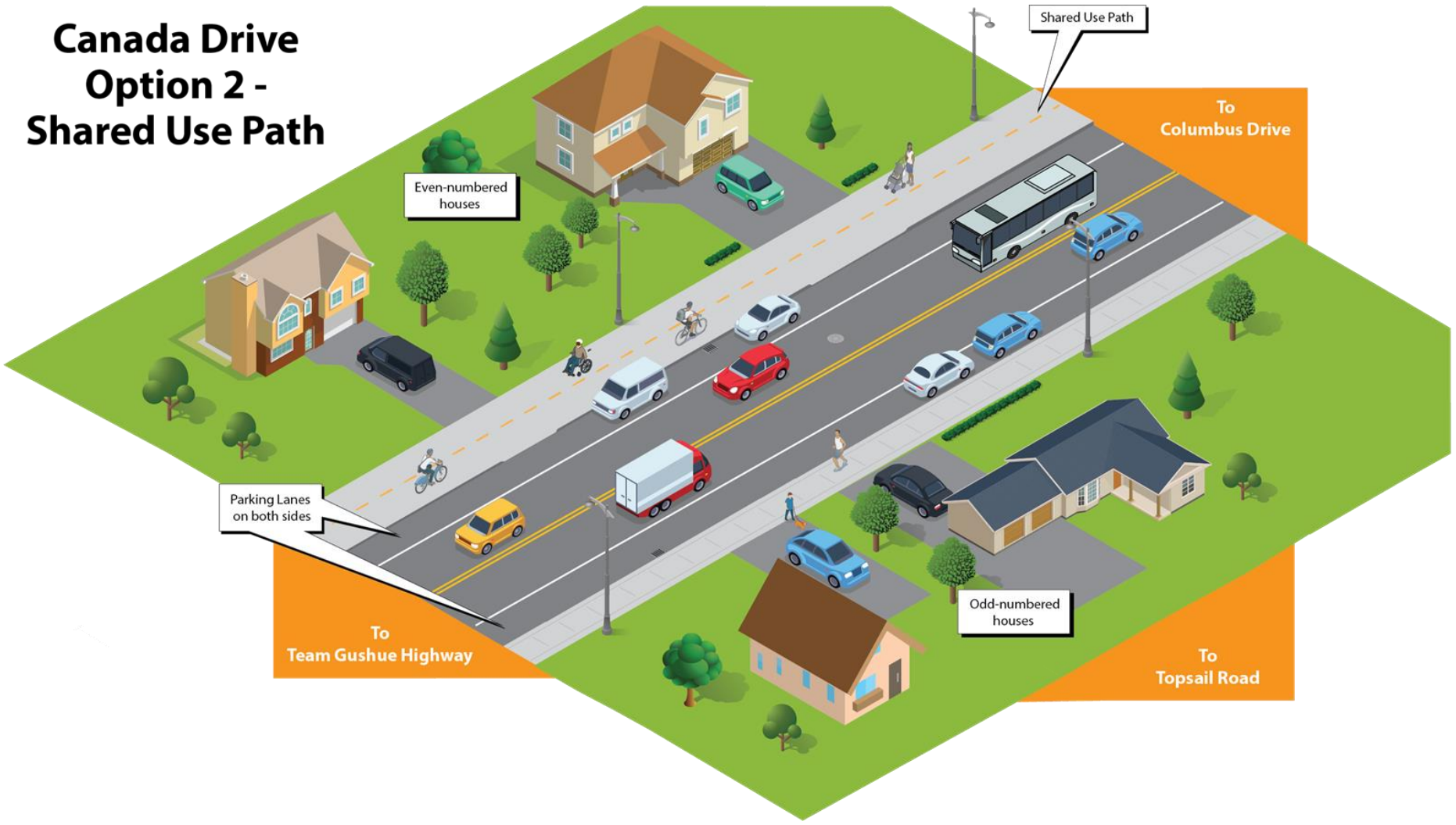
Approach

Multiple options for feedback from people who live on Canada Drive, schools in the Cowan Heights area, and citywide potential users in St. John’s

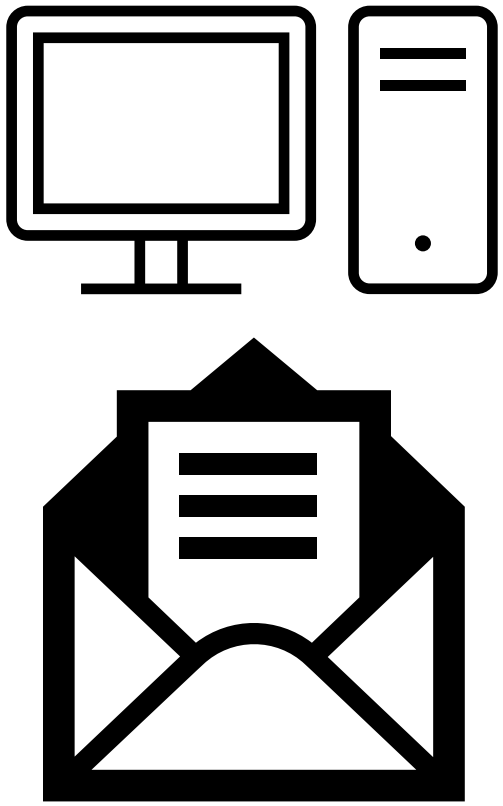
Option 1


Canada Drive
Option 1 -
Bidirectional
Bike Path
Bidirectional
Bike Path
To
Columbus Drive
Even-numbered
houses
Odd-numbered
houses
To
Team Gushue Highway
Parking Lane
To
Topsail Road

Option 2


Canada Drive
Option 2 -
Shared Use Path
Shared Use Path
To
Columbus Drive
Even-numbered
houses
Parking Lanes
on both sides
Odd-numbered
houses
To
Team Gushue Highway
To
Topsail Road

Communication



Public communication began April 26 and concluded May 15:

- Direct Mail was sent to all property owners on Canada Drive
- Postcards were sent to all households in Cowan Heights
- A news release was issued
- A newsletter was issued to 3515 registered users and followers on EngageStJohns.ca
- Social media: 5 Facebook posts, 6 Tweets, 2 Instagram posts and 1 Instagram Story during the campaign period
  - Total impressions for all social posts: 53, 271
  - Total reach for all social posts: 31, 764 (this number is much lower than impressions as twitter does not provide this statistic)
  - Total engagement for all social posts: 1148
  - Total link clicks for all social posts: 337

Following the virtual meeting held on May 19, a second meeting was held with residents of Canada Drive and a notification about that meeting was dropped off to all mailboxes in the affected area.

Who Engaged



On EngageStJohns.ca

- Total Visits: 793
- New Registrations: 108
- Engaged Visitors (People who posted questions/comments or voted in the poll): 268 (86 live in ward 3)
- Informed Visitors: 449
- Aware Visitors (Unique visitors): 688

Phone calls:

- 4 (3 people live on Canada Drive)

Email:

- 33 (12 people live on Canada Drive)

Public Meeting:

- 23 people attended a virtual meeting (about half live on Canada Drive; 5 live in Cowan Heights but not on Canada Drive)

Stakeholder Meetings:

- 19 people who live on Canada Drive attended an in-person meeting
- School administrators from both schools provided feedback over the phone and on site

What We Heard Highlights

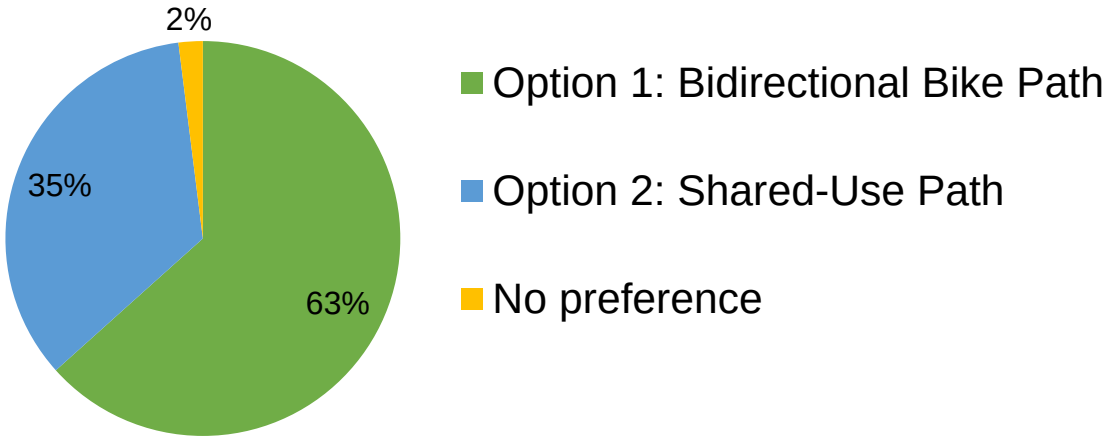
- There is no definitive agreement on which option is preferred. Those who live on the street mostly prefer a shared use path (option 2), if they must choose an option. Those who are active transportation users or do not live on the street generally prefer the dedicated bike lanes (option 1).
- There are concerns about sightlines on the north side of the street and overall concerns about safety throughout the street.
- Sidewalk snow clearing is a major concern. Among people living on Canada Drive, the extra width of SUP/sidewalk/bike lanes in front of their homes puts an additional strain on those clearing their driveways.
- Active transportation is important to the schools. Many students walk or bike to school. Most students live close enough to school that they do not qualify for busing.
- Most people are generally happy to hear about streetscape changes to improve active transportation. Some suggest the city is not going far enough to implement safe and comfortable active transportation infrastructure and some suggest bike lanes are not needed and are not a good use of taxpayer money.

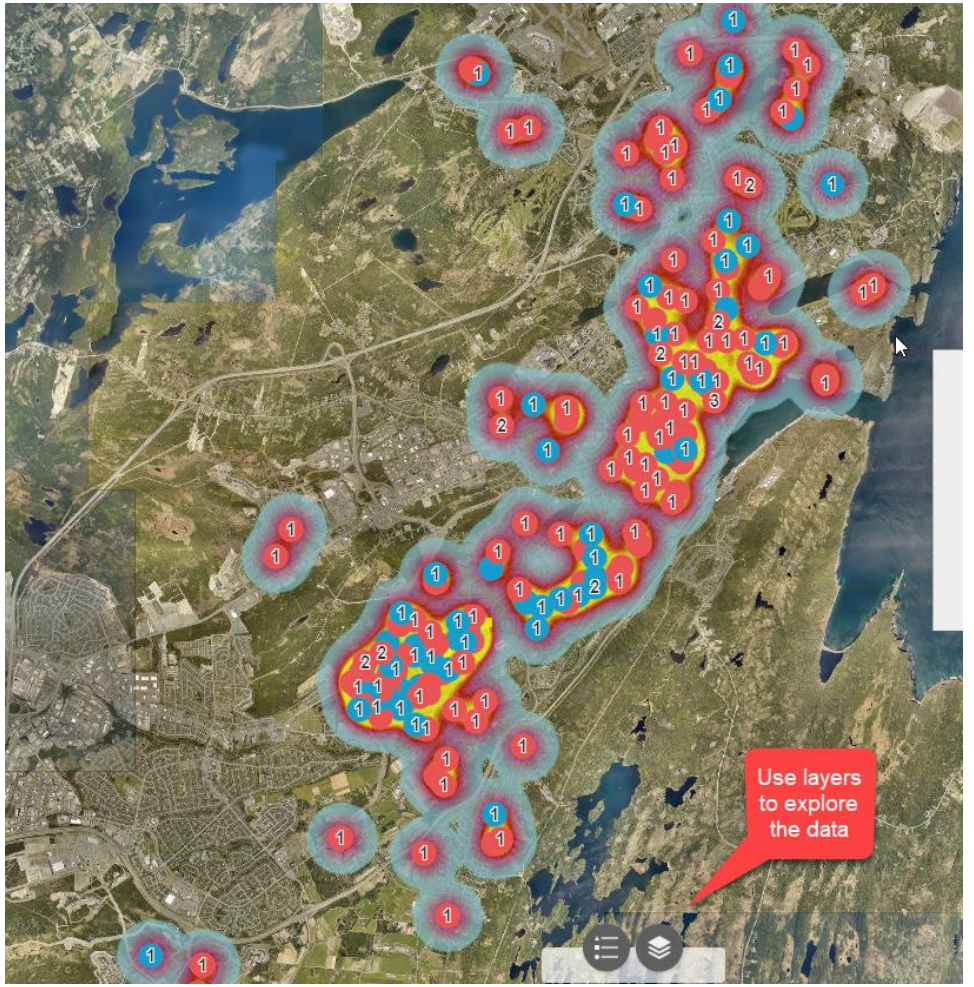
What We Heard from EngageStJohns.ca

266 people voted on EngageStJohns.ca

Voters were distributed throughout the city as seen in the heat map to the right, with only 11% of votes from residents on Canada Drive

Which option do you prefer for Canada Drive?

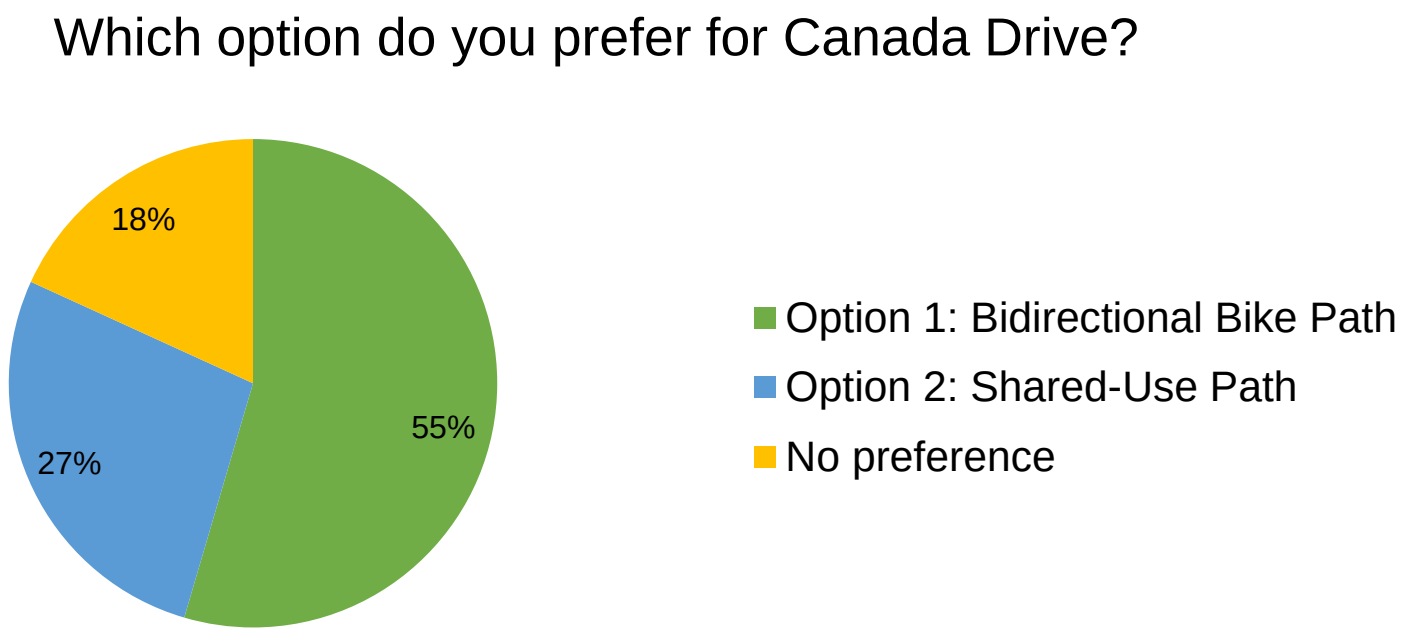




What We Heard: virtual public meeting

- About half of the people attending live on Canada Dr. and noted concerns about snow clearing, curb cuts, left turning lanes, easements and loss of land, demographics, who will use the lanes, and traffic calming
- There were comments about the north side vs. south side and concerns about sightlines and safety
- Some noted they support SUP because it was better than dedicated bike lane as it allowed parking on both sides and would help with slowing speeds
- Snow clearing was a major concern
- Active transportation users were concerned about connectivity and how to leave Canada Drive without a connected route.
- Some were concerned that people driving are being given too much priority for both road space and snow clearing; people cycling and walking should be equally prioritized
- Some active transportation users suggested they did not like either option and thought a separated bike lane on each side would be better
- Common concerns were safety and missed opportunities to add active transportation infrastructure in other locations such as Kenmount Rd.

What We Heard: virtual public meeting



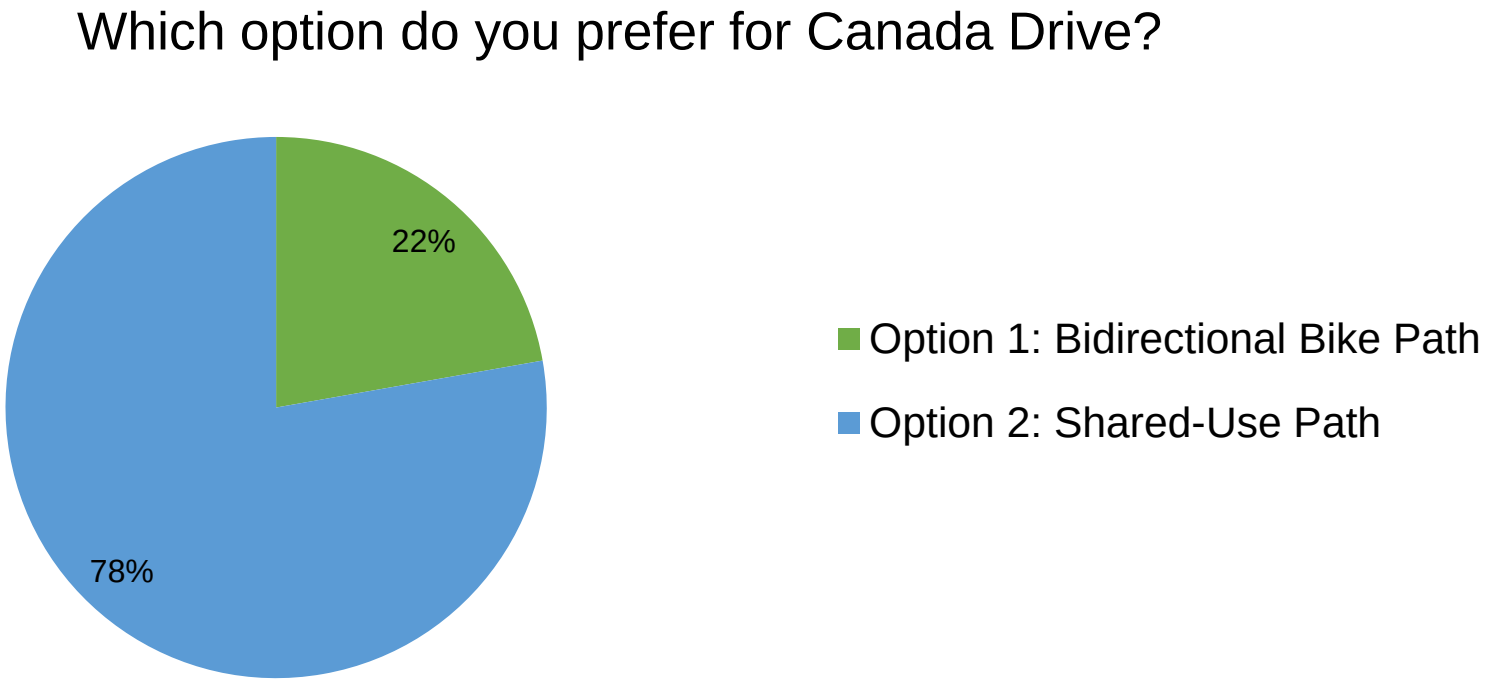
Attendance

- 20 people participated in the virtual meeting
- Half of the participants live on Canada Drive and half are citywide residents of St John’s
- Some preferred not to vote in this poll at all

What We Heard: in-person from Canada Dr. residents

- Parking, they need it and have had it for 40-plus years
- Safety for drivers, pedestrians, and cyclists
- Garbage bins, where will they be placed?
- Sightlines, especially on north side with high lawns
- Demographics of the street (many seniors and not many active transportation users)
- Traffic congestion at and around school
- Most said narrowing street is good; very few said it is bad and will create unsafe conditions
- Some would prefer to maintain status quo
- In a typical day, half of the attendees would use one on-street parking space; half would use none
- 78% of those in attendance chose SUP; however, 56% thought the SUP was more attractive for walking or biking
- Generally, attendees appreciated the opportunity to talk to staff and the ward councillor about their concerns

What We Heard: in-person from Canada Dr residents



19 residents of Canada Drive attended the in-person drop-in session

What We Heard from schools

Cowan Heights School

- Turning left onto Canada Drive to leave school parking lot is problematic.
- Preference for a shared-use-path, for a wider space for kids to travel on.
- Only one regular bus, vast majority of kids live within 1.6 kms of the school and therefore don't qualify for busing.
- There's a Metrobus stop on Canada Drive in front of the school. Students don't take metrobus to school but some Grade 7 students take it after school.

St. Matthews School

- Vast majority of students live within 1.6 kms of the school and therefore don't qualify for busing. There are very few, if any, buses for students commuting.
- Snow clearing is important because families rely on pathways to walk & bike to school.
- Some staff interested in bike lanes
- There are safety concerns with left turning lanes in to school
- There are a lot more vehicles during drop-off on bad weather days which indicates that a lot of students are walking or biking to school.
- Active transportation and neighbourhood connectivity is very important to staff.

What We Heard from email/311

- 11 votes for Option 2: shared-use-path (all but one live on Canada Dr.)
- 3 votes for Option 1: bi-directional bike lanes and sidewalk
- Some people had already voted online so are not counted here again or did not provide an option.
- Some people wrote to provide support for active transportation in general
- Some people expressed concerns about existing painted lanes and signage and impact on safety
- Concerns raised were similar to what was heard throughout the other engagement tools; sightlines, safety, some simply do not support bike lanes, snow clearing

Next Steps



Release What We Heard



Council to review information note



Staff to design new streetscape for Canada Drive

To Stay Informed

Follow the project page or sign up to receive notifications at EngageStJohns.ca

