



Connecting Our Region

Our first region-wide transportation plan



Let's Talk Transportation! Engagement Summary

July 2019



Introduction

Transportation across the region provides a vital connection to jobs, health care, education, recreation, shopping, emergency services, family and friends.

By 2040 the population in the Central Okanagan is expected to increase by 38% — almost 77,000 new residents. Future population growth provides both a challenge and an opportunity for us to find ways to move around the region that are better for people, the economy and the environment.

The issues facing all our communities — economic competitiveness, air quality, climate change, public health, quality of life — are directly impacted by the transportation choices we make today.

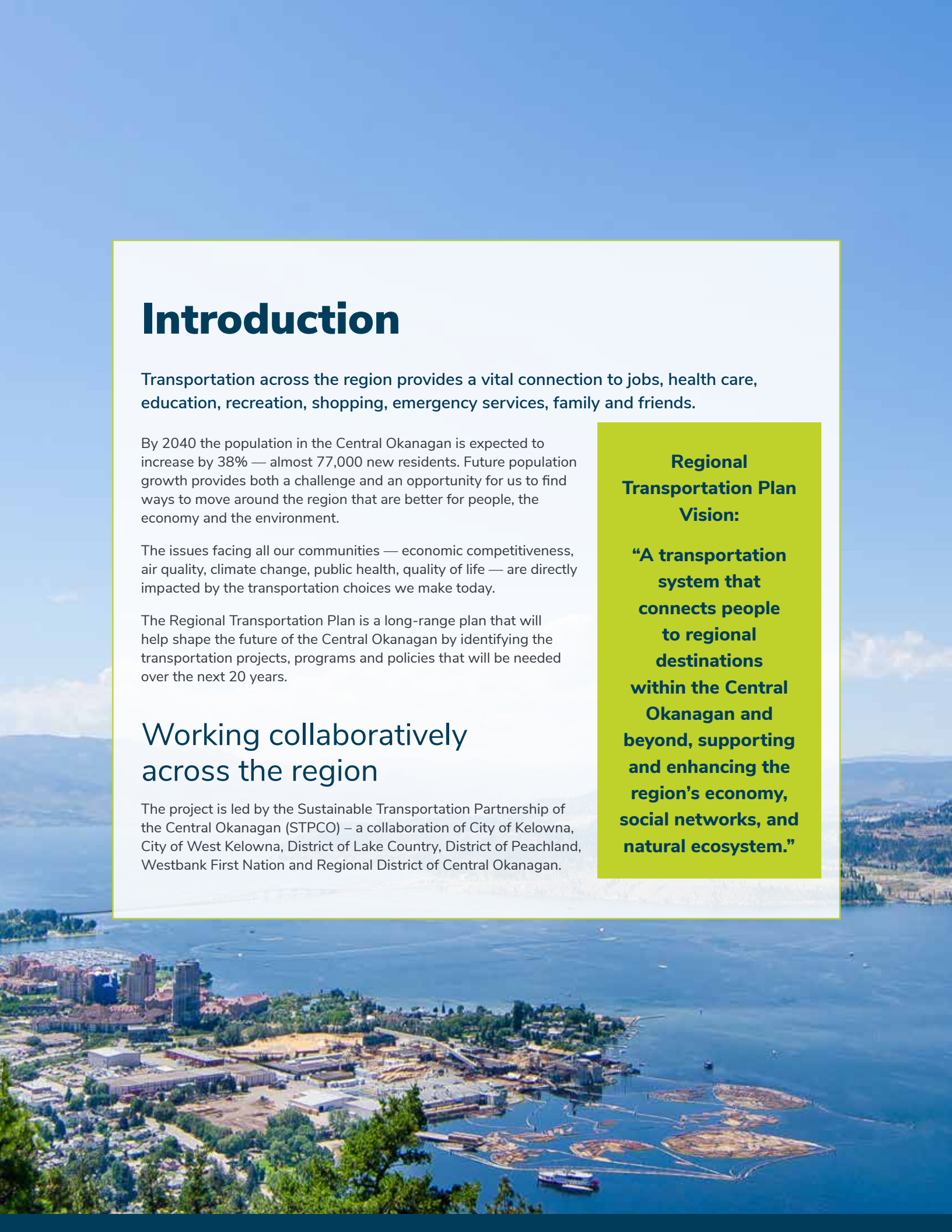
The Regional Transportation Plan is a long-range plan that will help shape the future of the Central Okanagan by identifying the transportation projects, programs and policies that will be needed over the next 20 years.

Working collaboratively across the region

The project is led by the Sustainable Transportation Partnership of the Central Okanagan (STPCO) — a collaboration of City of Kelowna, City of West Kelowna, District of Lake Country, District of Peachland, Westbank First Nation and Regional District of Central Okanagan.

Regional Transportation Plan Vision:

“A transportation system that connects people to regional destinations within the Central Okanagan and beyond, supporting and enhancing the region’s economy, social networks, and natural ecosystem.”



Engaging with people across the region

To understand the values and interests of Central Okanagan residents, the Regional Transportation Planning Team has been seeking input from the public and key stakeholders since 2018.

In the spring of 2019, the project team launched Let's Talk Transportation — a regional conversation that took place at the University of British Columbia Okanagan and an online questionnaire. This engagement summary provides the highlights of what we heard during this phase of engagement.

This information will be used to help shape the Central Okanagan's first regional transportation plan.



577
people
completed
questionnaires



90
people engaged
in in-depth
conversations



1600
comments received
through the
questionnaire

Let's Talk Transportation: The Conversation



How can we make transportation work for people, the economy and the environment?

On April 24, 2019, 90 people from across the region gathered at the University of British Columbia Okanagan (UBCO) to take part in an in-depth conversation about the future of transportation in the region.

Working in small groups, participants discussed ways to make getting around the region more accessible, more convenient and more enjoyable. They explored regional and community-specific transportation challenges and answered the question: "What do you dream about for the future of transportation?" They also took part in a series of small group discussions where they commented on potential transportation solutions for seven geographic areas of the region and added their own ideas about projects, programs and policies that would make travel through the region more accessible, convenient and enjoyable.

Let's Talk Transportation: The Questionnaire



To broaden the engagement, the project team sought input from the general public through a multipart, in-depth questionnaire posted to the smartTRIPS website. In total, 577 people shared their thoughts and opinions.

Questionnaire respondents were asked to comment on the same potential transportation solutions for seven geographic areas of the region and to indicate their level of support for 31 potential transportation solutions that were clustered into the following five categories:



Transit



Active transportation



Vehicle efficiency



Land use and development



Trip reduction and elimination

Outreach and promotion

The public was invited to participate in both the conversation and the questionnaire. Invitations and notices were circulated through social media networks, the smartTRIPS website, posters and news releases.

Special effort was made to reach all communities in the project's geographic area including Peachland, West Kelowna, Westbank First Nation, Kelowna, Lake Country and the Central Okanagan East and West Electoral Areas. Effort was also made to engage diverse audiences and people with varied interests and perspectives through posters and social media posts.

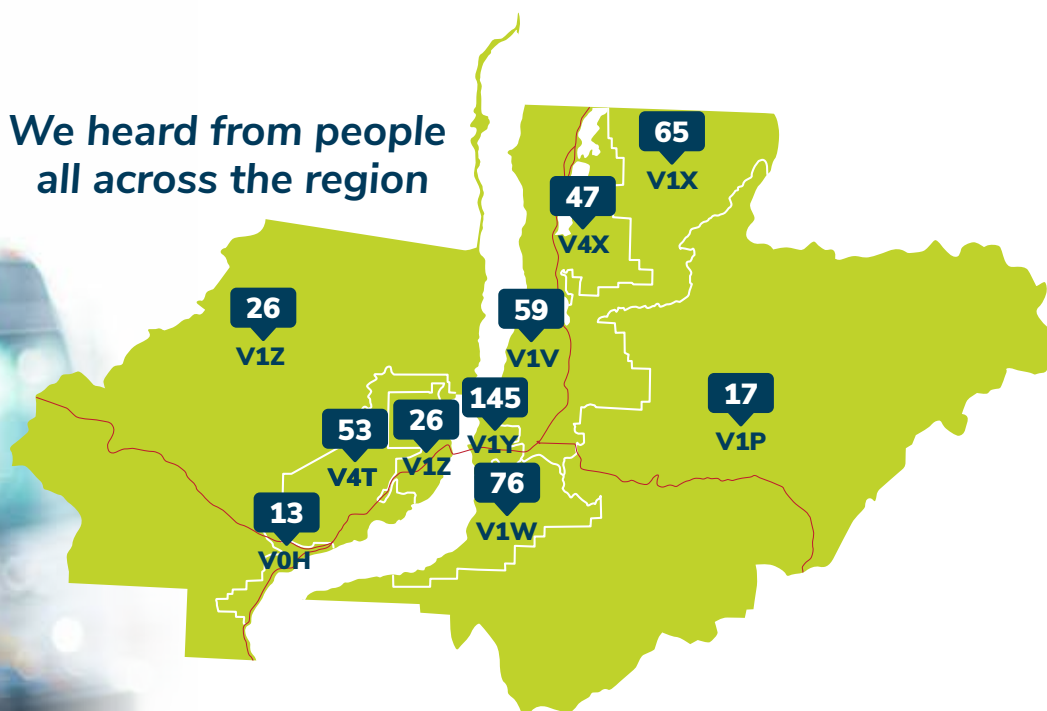
A shuttle bus was offered to residents of Peachland, West Kelowna and Westbank First Nation to facilitate their participation in the conversation held at UBCO. The bus was promoted to registered participants through the on-line event registration page and through each community's social media channels.



Participation

People from communities across the Central Okanagan region participated in the Let's Talk Transportation conversation held at UBCO and responded to the online questionnaire. Participants in the conversation included representatives from a wide variety of local organizations, geographic areas, students, seniors, people with diverse abilities, and elected officials. The geographic distribution of questionnaire respondents mirrored the distribution of population by region.

**We heard from people
all across the region**



"The traffic lights, and timing of them, need to be looked at. I am finding the lights are impeding traffic flow."

What we learned: At-a-glance

Through the conversation and questionnaire, residents of Peachland, West Kelowna, Westbank First Nation, Kelowna, Lake Country and the Central Okanagan East and West Electoral Areas told us what they think would make travel around the region more accessible, convenient and enjoyable. Here's what we learned:

People want to see:

- More transit and active transportation (biking and walking) options
- Increased efficiency in the existing road network (this includes optimizing bridge capacity)
- An increase in transit frequency and hours of service
- An active transportation network separated from vehicle traffic
- Safe walking and biking routes to school
- Ride hailing (e.g. Uber) and carshare (e.g. Modo)
- New housing near transit and employment centres
- Medical and other services located closer to home
- Policies that encourage working from home or shifting hours of work (to reduce vehicles on the road)
- Affordable and accessible transportation choices for people of all income and with diverse abilities
- Consideration of the climate impacts of transportation choices

The results indicated lower support for:

- Pricing strategies such as congestion pricing

"Glenmore's connection to Highway 97 in Lake Country desperately needs an upgrade."

"Accessibility means more than wheelchair friendly. I can't walk very far and I can't stand very long so if a bus doesn't get close to where I need to go, I can't use it."

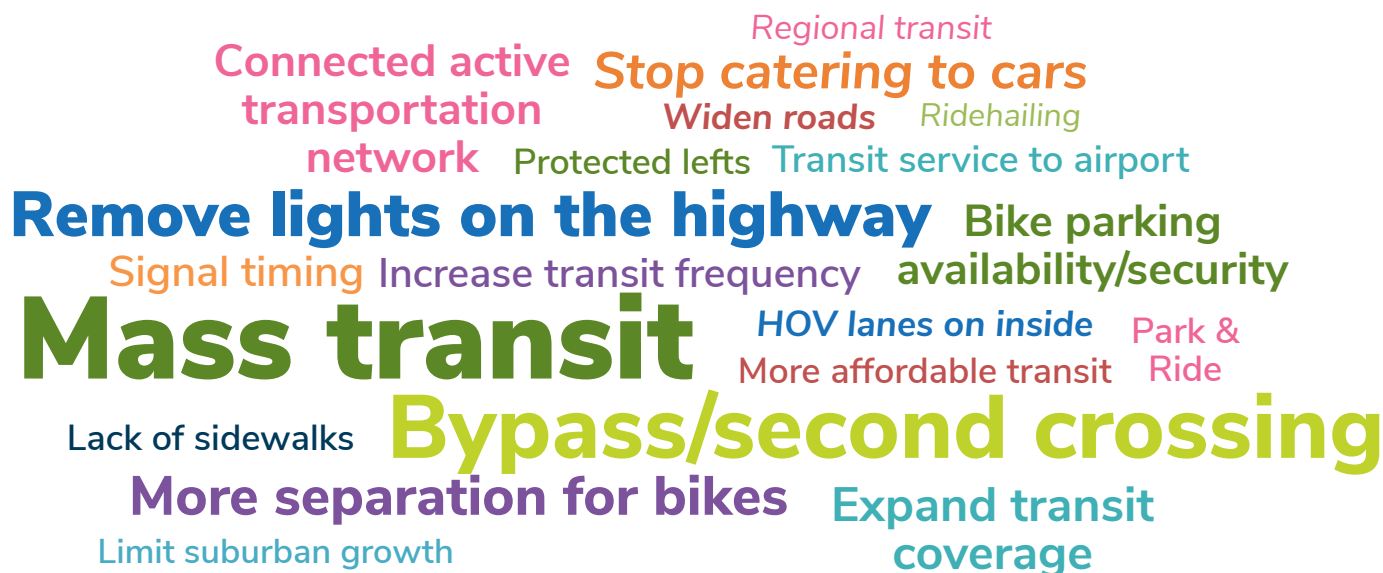
What do you dream about?

Each community in the region has unique transportation challenges that affect people's ability to connect to jobs, health care, education, and other services across the region.

Through short, visual stories, we introduced conversation participants to some of these challenges — and then we asked them to create coloured banners showing the transportation solutions that would make their lives easier. Here are some of the things conversation participants dream about:



Questionnaire respondents provided more than 1600 open-ended comments. Here are some of the priorities we heard:*



We also heard about the importance of providing affordable and accessible transportation choices for people with diverse abilities. Comments from participants to the Let's Talk Transportation conversation include:

- Improve handyDART
- Ensure bicycle lanes are wide enough for mobility aids such as recumbent bikes and scooters

* Responses were grouped into categories and tallied. Font size roughly corresponds with frequency of mention.

What we learned:

Potential transportation solutions by category

Questionnaire respondents indicated a high level of support for more frequent transit, safe walking and biking routes to school, separated bikeways, ride hailing and car sharing programs, and reducing cars by telecommuting or working from home.

RESULTS KEY: ■ Very supportive ■ Somewhat supportive ■ Not sure ■ Not supportive



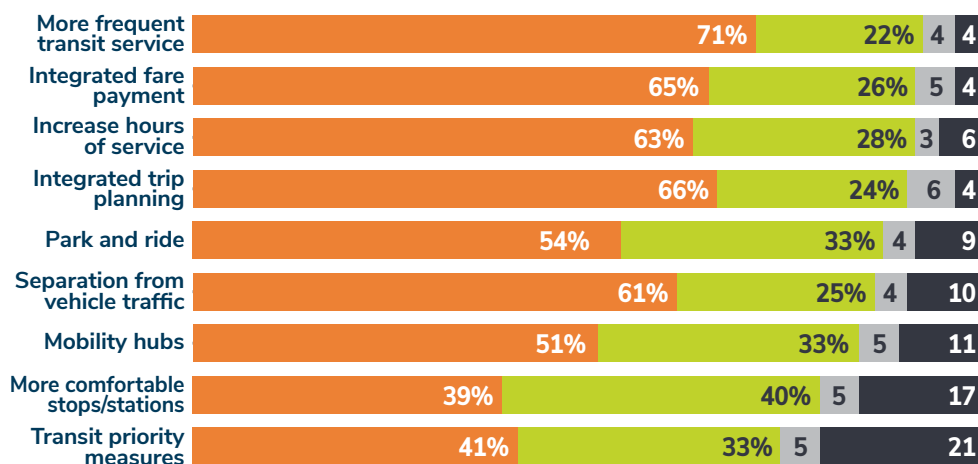
Transit

Respondents were asked, "How supportive are you of the potential transportation solutions listed below that aim to improve regional travel by transit?"

93% support* more frequent transit service

91% support integrated fare payment and increasing hours of service

90% support integrated trip planning (one app for multiple modes)



* respondents indicated 'very supportive' or 'somewhat supportive'



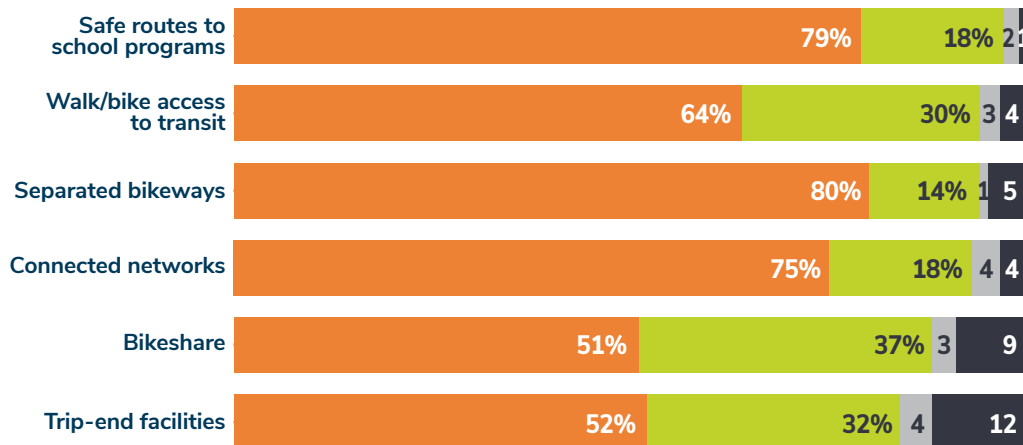
Active transportation

Respondents were asked “How supportive are you of the following potential solutions that aim to improve regional travel by walking or biking?”

97% support safe routes to school programs

94% support walk/bike access to transit

94% support separated bikeways



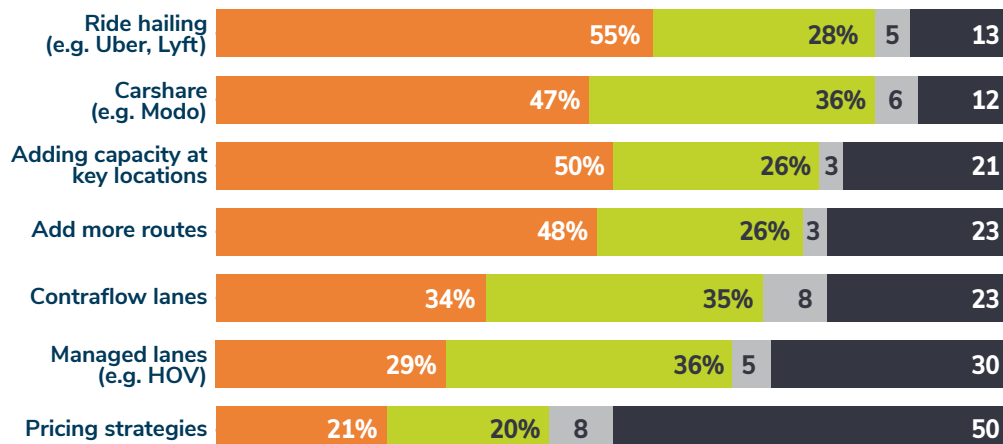
Vehicles

While providing convenient regional connections by transit, biking and walking are important, many regional trips will still need to be made by vehicle, whether for goods movement, emergency/evacuation purposes or private travel. Respondents were asked “How supportive are you of the following potential solutions that aim to improve the efficiency of regional travel by vehicle?”

83% support ride hailing

83% support carshare

76% support adding capacity at key locations





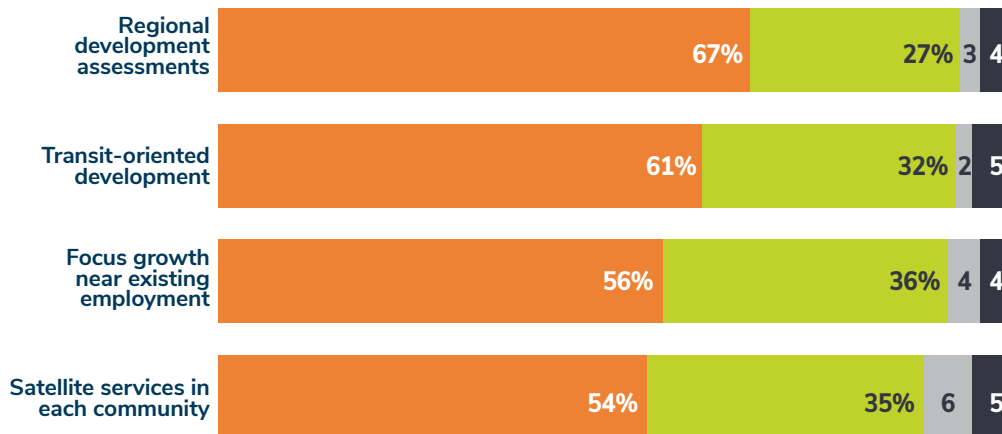
Land use and development

Land use and development patterns can determine how far we need to travel and the convenience of various travel modes for reaching destinations. Respondents were asked “How supportive are you of the following potential solutions that aim to improve regional travel using land use and development strategies?”

94% support regional development assessments (to assess the travel impacts of proposed developments)

93% support transit-oriented development (higher density around transit nodes)

92% support focused growth near existing employment



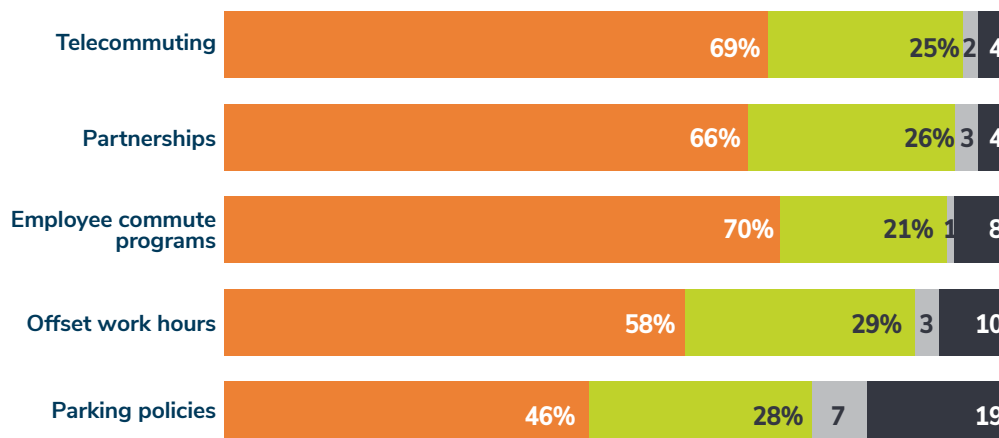
Trip reduction and elimination

Travel Demand Management refers to programs or policies that reduce the need to travel by single-occupancy vehicle during congested times of day. Respondents were asked “How supportive are you of the following Travel Demand Management strategies?”

94% support telecommuting

91% support employee commute programs

87% support offset work hours



What we learned:

Potential transportation solutions by geographic area

To facilitate more specific and detailed input, the Central Okanagan was divided into geographic areas and people were asked to indicate their level of support for potential transportation solutions in each area. They were also asked to share their own ideas about ways to make transportation around the region more accessible, convenient and enjoyable.



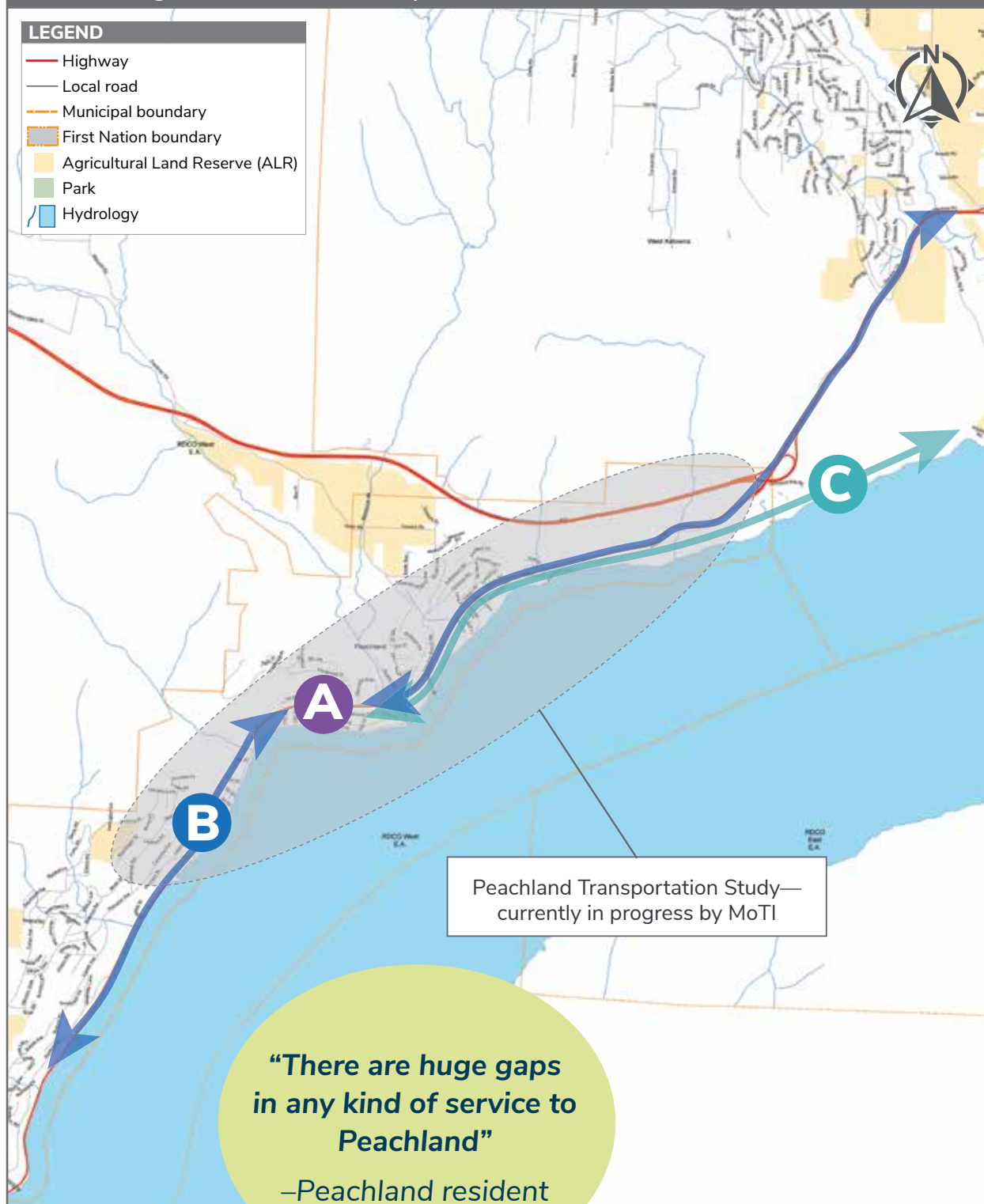
▲ During the conversation at the Let's Talk Transportation event, participants added comments and ideas to large maps

*How supportive
are you of
these ideas to
improve regional
transportation?*

Using geographic area maps and descriptions, conversation participants and questionnaire respondents provided comments and indicated their level of support for potential transportation solutions.

Results from each of these geographic areas are presented in the pages that follow.

Connecting Peachland and beyond



Connecting Peachland and beyond

A. Transit / Mobility Hub (location TBD)

- Centralized transit station with connections north and south, and potentially to other modes of transportation (car/bikeshare, local transit, park and ride, etc.)
- Creates a centralized point to connect to longer distance transit trips

Very Supportive: **63%**
Somewhat Supportive: **27%**
Not supportive: **5%**
Not sure: **5%**

B. Transit Connections North and South

- Enhanced transit routes connecting to the north and south through Peachland, including potential extension of RapidBus
- Provides a direct transit connection from Peachland to the rest of the region

Very Supportive: **61%**
Somewhat Supportive: **28%**
Not supportive: **5%**
Not sure: **6%**

C. Westside Trail

- Multi-use walking and bicycling trail along the lake that would connect Peachland to the W.R. Bennett Bridge (alignment TBD), ultimately forming part of the Trail of the Okanagans
- Provides a safe and comfortable regional pedestrian and bicycling route for all ages and abilities

Very Supportive: **70%**
Somewhat Supportive: **21%**
Not supportive: **6%**
Not sure: **3%**

What other ideas do you have?

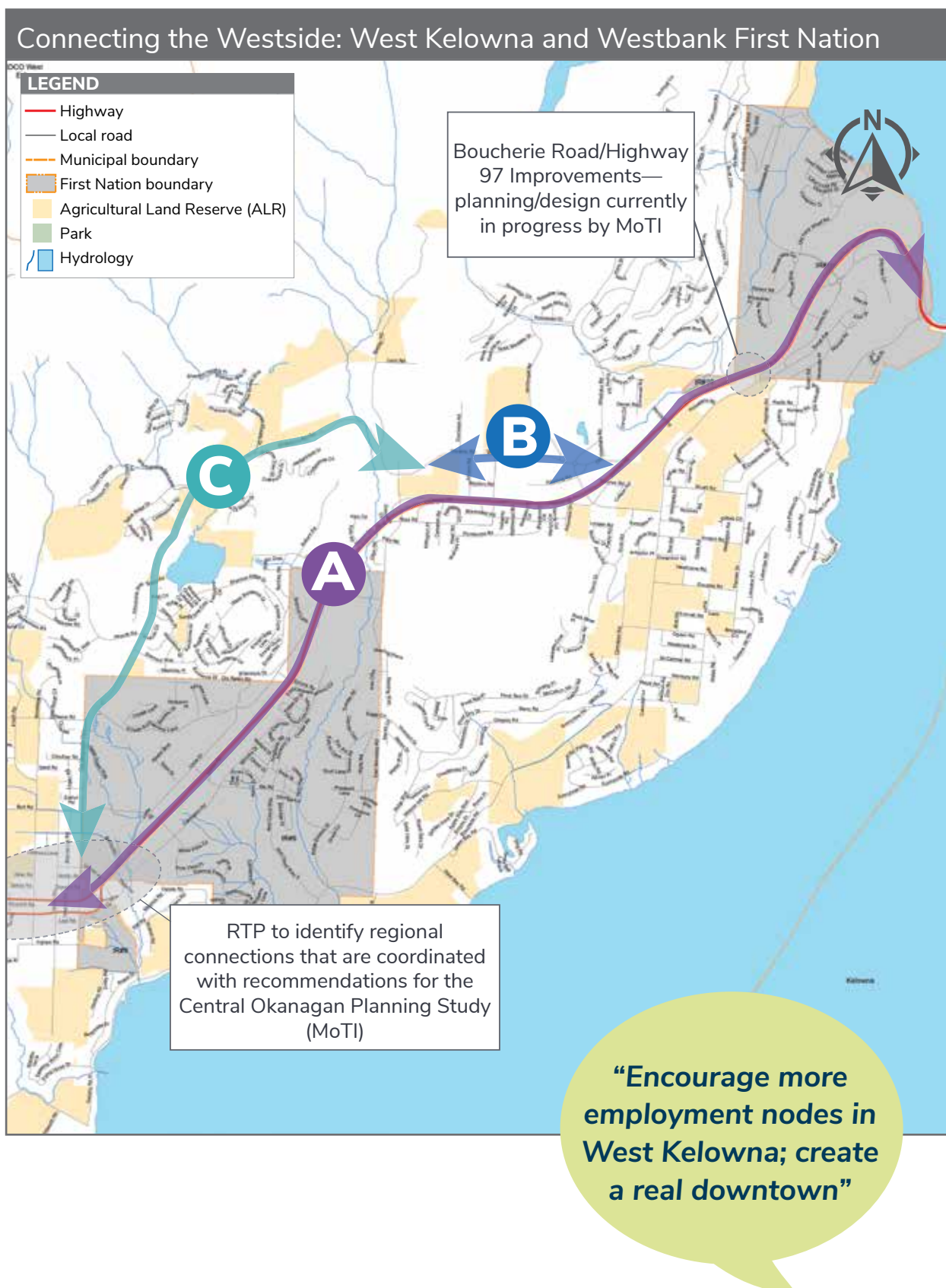
Other ideas from conversation participants and questionnaire respondents include:

Projects

- Pedestrian over or underpass into the town centre
- A park and ride (possibly at Antlers Beach)
- Improved handyDART service
- Light Rail – Peachland to UBCO
- A seabus/water taxi or float plane that connects to a transit hub
- An hourly connection to Kelowna with a rapid bus/train
- A Highway 97 bypass around Peachland
- Move proposed transit hub in Option A to downtown Peachland

Programs and policies

- Bikeshare
- A community health nurse or doctor in the community — to reduce the number of trips to Kelowna General Hospital
- Education and encouragement to use sustainable modes of travel
- Increase the frequency and reliability of transit service



Connecting the Westside: West Kelowna and Westbank First Nation

A. Highway 97 Dedicated Transit Lanes

- Transit running on the shoulder or in dedicated transit lanes in the median, supported by park and ride and/or other mobility options that make it easier to get to/from transit
- Allows transit to bypass congestion on the highway providing travel-time advantage and increased reliability for transit

Very Supportive: **55%**
Somewhat Supportive: **25%**
Not supportive: **17%**
Not sure: **3%**

B. Stevens Road Capacity Expansion

- Additional lanes and access management measures on Stevens Road
- Provides additional east-west capacity in the area

Very Supportive: **41%**
Somewhat Supportive: **34%**
Not supportive: **14%**
Not sure: **11%**

C. Shannon Lake Road Transit Enhancements

- Transit priority intersection treatments
- Allows buses to pass queued vehicles and provides better transit travel times and reliability as traffic volumes grown in this corridor

Very Supportive: **46%**
Somewhat Supportive: **32%**
Not supportive: **11%**
Not sure: **10%**

D. Westside Trail

- Multi-use walking and bicycling trail along the lake that would connect Peachland to the W.R. Bennett Bridge (alignment TBD), ultimately forming part of the Trail of the Okanagans
- Provides a safe and comfortable regional pedestrian and bicycling route for all ages

Very Supportive: **69%**
Somewhat Supportive: **21%**
Not supportive: **7%**
Not sure: **3%**

What other ideas do you have?

Other ideas from conversation participants and questionnaire respondents include:

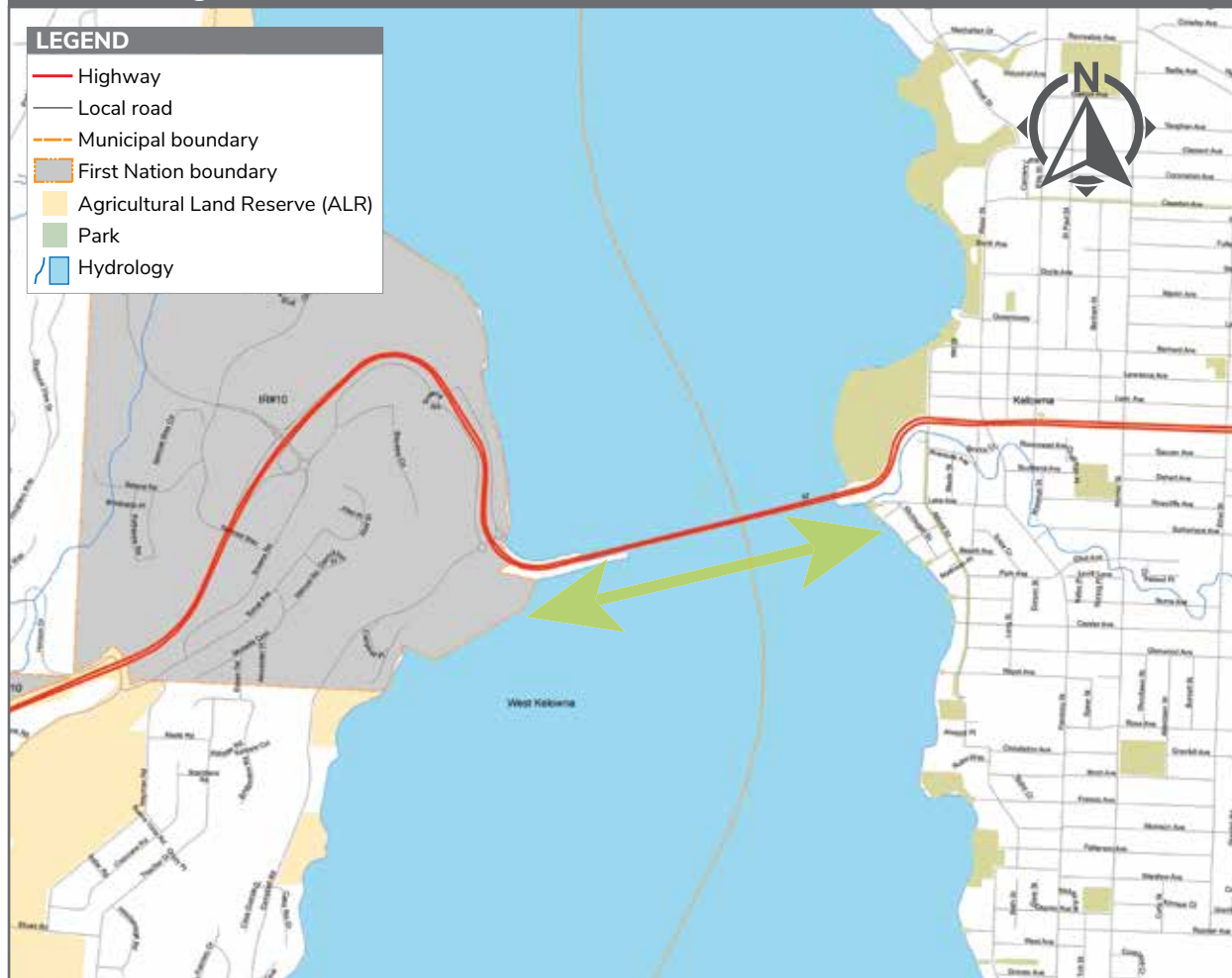
Projects

- Replace traffic lights on highway with interchanges
- A separated east-west bike route running either along Highway 97 or to the north
- Light rail transit along Highway 97
- Add more sidewalks and lighting (e.g. Elliott Road, Shannon Lake Road, Hudson Road)

Programs and policies

- Agricultural routes for farm equipment
- Add more services and employment on the Westside
- Land use decisions that limit sprawl
- Improve transit hours of service, frequency, reliability, and security at bus stops

Connecting across the lake



What other ideas do you have?

Other ideas from conversation participants and questionnaire respondents include:

Projects

- Park and ride / park and bike
- Gondola (with park and ride)
- Light rail on Highway 97 and bridge
- Real-time trip information/ electronic signs
- Bridge toll or mobility pricing
- Dynamic lane assignment on the bridge
- A second crossing
- Remove the lights on approaches to the bridge

Programs and policies

- Westside health centre, to reduce trips to Kelowna
- More employment on the Westside
- Shift employees' hours of work

Connecting across the lake

A. Reversible contra-flow lane

- The middle lane would become reversible (allowing 3 lanes of eastbound travel in the morning and 3 lanes of westbound travel in the afternoon). This is similar to the operation of the old bridge, but could be achieved with a movable barrier

Very Supportive: **46%**
Somewhat Supportive: **33%**
Not supportive: **20%**
Not sure: **2%**

B. Reversible contra-flow lane dedicated to transit

- Same as above, however the third lane in each direction would be a transit-only lane, providing travel-time advantage for transit

Very Supportive: **33%**
Somewhat Supportive: **24%**
Not supportive: **39%**
Not sure: **4%**

C. New dedicated shoulder transit lane

- This option would either convert an existing shoulder lane to be a dedicated contra-flow transit lane, or convert the existing active transportation pathway to a transit lane and redevelop the pathway in another manner

Very Supportive: **38%**
Somewhat Supportive: **26%**
Not supportive: **30%**
Not sure: **6%**

**“Park and ride option
at bridge lake ends is
a great idea!
It’ll allow folks to
park and bike too.”**

D. High frequency bus

- Very high frequency bus across the lake combined with first/last mile options
- A shuttle-bus service with park and ride and shared mobility options at either end of the lake

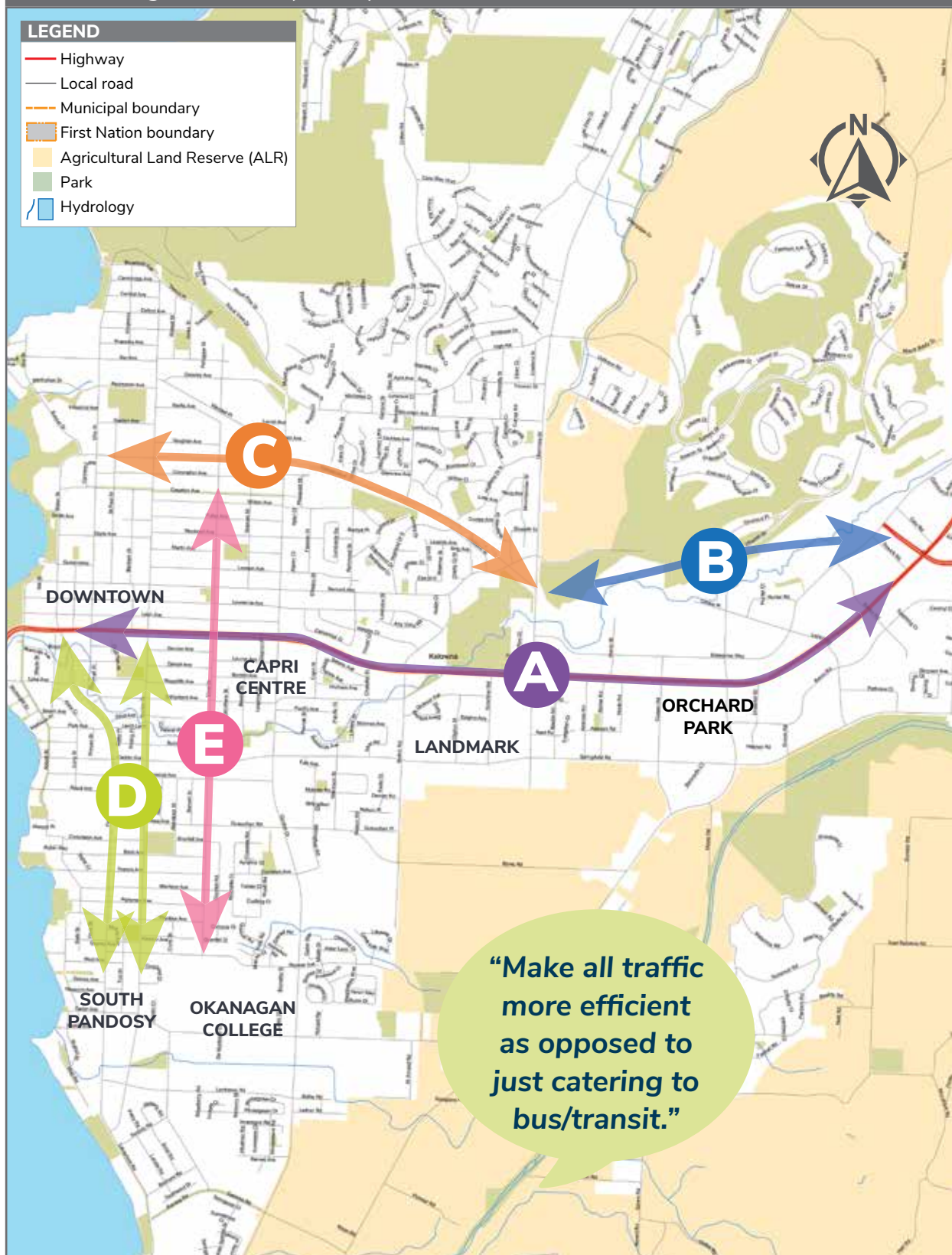
Very Supportive: **42%**
Somewhat Supportive: **35%**
Not supportive: **17%**
Not sure: **7%**

E. Water taxi / ferry

- This option would include a ferry boat or water-taxi across the lake with park and ride and shared mobility options at either end

Very Supportive: **37%**
Somewhat Supportive: **27%**
Not supportive: **30%**
Not sure: **7%**

Connecting Kelowna (West)



Connecting Kelowna (West)

A. Highway 97 Dedicated Transit Lanes

- Dedicated lanes for transit – could be either in the median or curb lane
- Provides travel time advantage and reliability for transit

Very Supportive: **42%**
Somewhat Supportive: **29%**
Not supportive: **26%**
Not sure: **2%**

B. Central Okanagan Multi-Modal Corridor (COMC)

- Extension of Clement Avenue to Highway 33, which could potentially include RapidBus and transit priority infrastructure
- Provides a multimodal alternative corridor to Highway 97

Very Supportive: **64%**
Somewhat Supportive: **24%**
Not supportive: **9%**
Not sure: **3%**

C. Clement Avenue Transit Priority or Dedicated Transitway

- Transit priority infrastructure or dedicated transit-only lane (that could potentially be converted to light rail in the longer-term)
- Provides travel time advantage and reliability for transit

Very Supportive: **45%**
Somewhat Supportive: **32%**
Not supportive: **16%**
Not sure: **7%**

D. Richter and/or Pandosy Transit Enhancement

- Transit priority treatments at intersections (e.g. transit queue jumps signal priority)
- Allows buses to pass queued vehicles, providing transit travel time advantage and reliability

Very Supportive: **48%**
Somewhat Supportive: **34%**
Not supportive: **13%**
Not sure: **5%**

E. Ethel Street Active Transportation Corridor Extension

- Extension of the Ethel Street active transportation corridor south of Highway 97 to Okanagan College
- Creates a continuous north-south pedestrian and bicycling corridor and connections to other regional pathways

Very Supportive: **63%**
Somewhat Supportive: **24%**
Not supportive: **8%**
Not sure: **4%**

What other ideas do you have?

Other ideas from conversation participants and questionnaire respondents include:

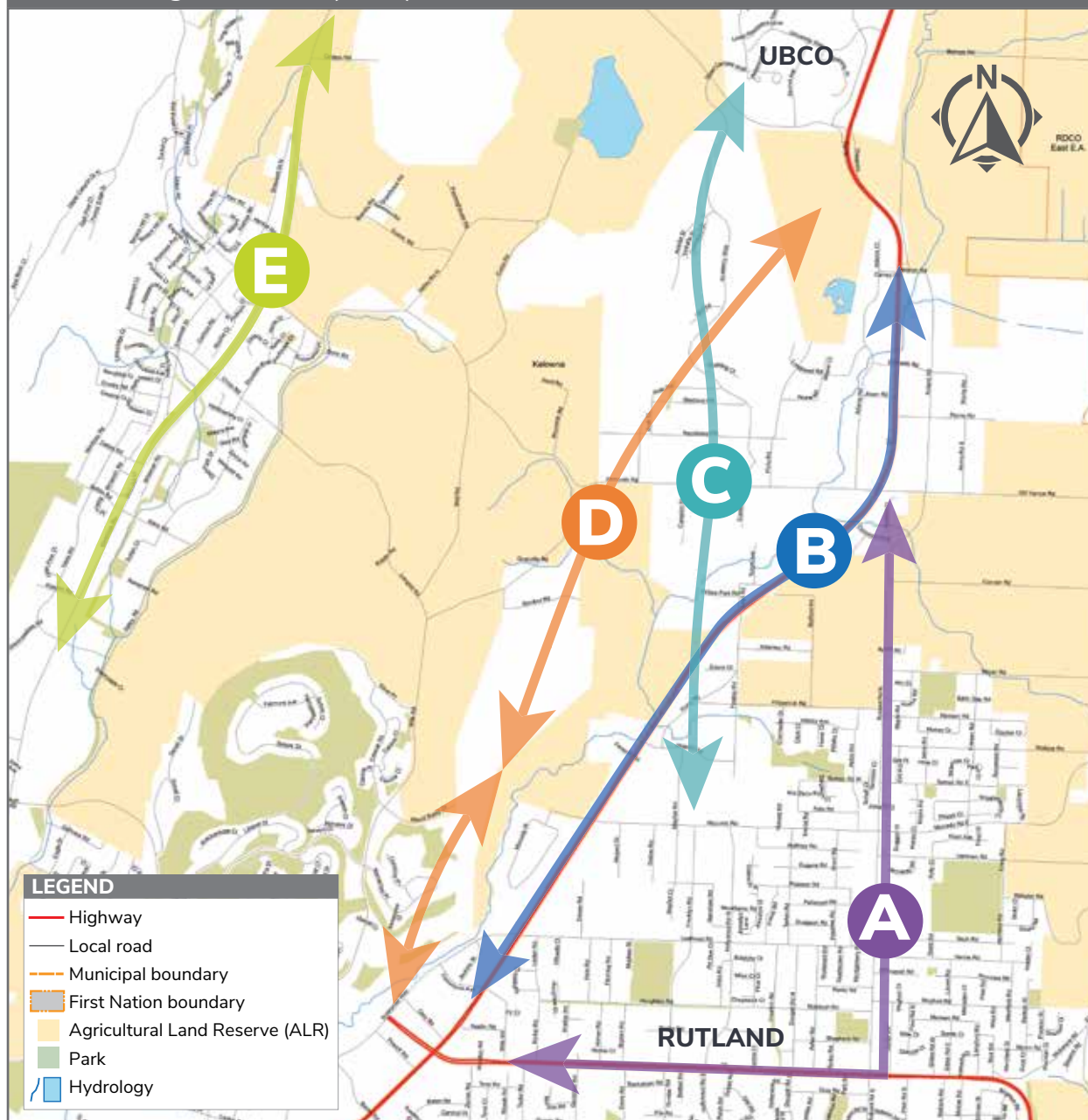
Projects

- Move or remove HOV lanes on Highway 97
- More pedestrian overpasses on Highway 97

Programs and policies

- Protected left turns at more places on Highway 97
- Education/awareness campaign focused on sharing the road
- Improved sweeping and plowing of bike routes

Connecting Kelowna (East)

**Other ideas from conversation participants and questionnaire respondents include:****Projects**

- Add more access points and better lighting to Okanagan Rail Trail
- Improve transit connections to UBCO
- Grade separated transit along highway i.e. Skytrain
- Fill gaps in local bike network

Programs and policies

- Add more options for people to walk, bike and take transit rather than build new roads
- Allow commercial vehicles or HOVs to use Highway 97 dedicated transit lanes
- Expand transit coverage to outlying areas (e.g. Black Mountain, Southeast Kelowna and Sexsmith Industrial Area)

What other ideas do you have?

Connecting Kelowna (East)

A. Highway 33 / Rutland Road Transit Priority

- Transit enhancements such as transit queue jumps and transit priority at signals to improve transit on Highway 33 and Rutland Road
- Reduces delays and improves reliability of transit along these routes

Very Supportive: **50%**
Somewhat Supportive: **31%**
Not supportive: **14%**
Not sure: **6%**

“An alternate route through town is badly needed.”

B. Highway 97 Dedicated Transit Lanes

- Transit-running on the shoulder or in dedicated transit lanes in the median
- Creates dedicated space and time advantage for transit

Very Supportive: **47%**
Somewhat Supportive: **21%**
Not supportive: **28%**
Not sure: **4%**

C. Hollywood Road Extension and Transit Priority

- New network road connecting Hollywood Road to UBCO, including infrastructure to improve transit operations
- Enables access to new development and a more direct connection to UBCO for all modes, including transit

Very Supportive: **49%**
Somewhat Supportive: **29%**
Not supportive: **12%**
Not sure: **10%**

D. Central Okanagan Multi-Modal Corridor (COMC)

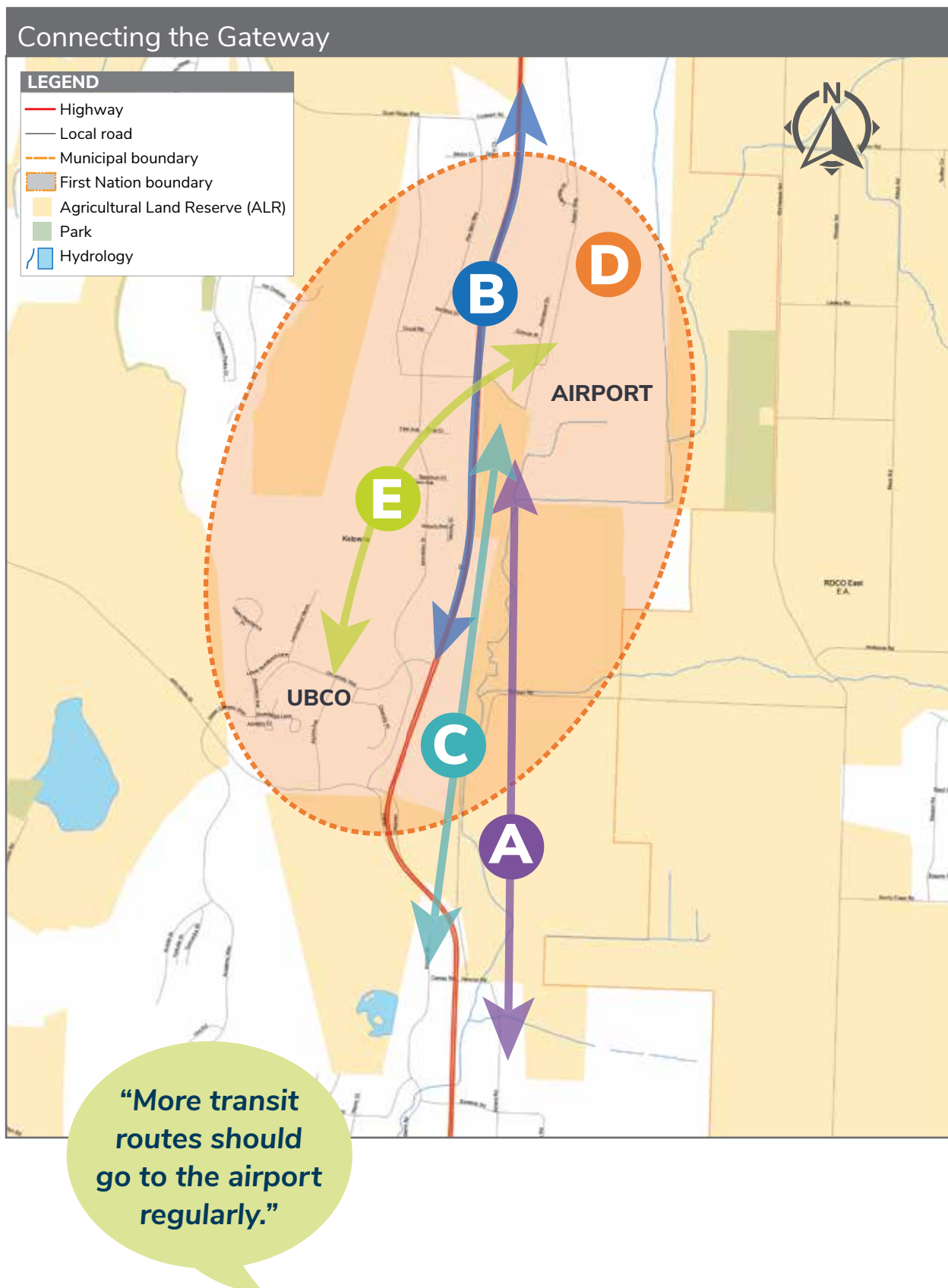
- New roadway parallel to Highway 97 that could be a highway or major local street
- Could connect from McCurdy to Highway 33 (shorter arrow) or from the UBCO area to Highway 33 (long arrow)
- Provides an alternate corridor that diverts traffic from Highway 97; could be a priority transit route

Very Supportive: **68%**
Somewhat Supportive: **18%**
Not supportive: **11%**
Not sure: **4%**

E. Glenmore Road Improvements for all Modes

- Extension of four-laning to John Hindle Drive, separated pathway for full length and transit priority infrastructure (e.g. queue jump lanes)
- Provides a comfortable corridor for walking and biking while addressing increased travel demand for vehicles and transit

Very Supportive: **77%**
Somewhat Supportive: **16%**
Not supportive: **4%**
Not sure: **3%**



Connecting the Gateway

A. Acland-Bulman Connection

- Connection between the north end of Acland Road and the airport
- Creates a new, direct road connection between Rutland Road and the Airport, as an alternative to Highway 97

Very Supportive: **53%**
Somewhat Supportive: **30%**
Not supportive: **13%**
Not sure: **4%**

B. Improved Highway 97/Airport Access

- New or upgraded access from Highway 97 to and from the Airport (e.g. an interchange or series of connections)
- Addresses intersection safety issues and limited capacity of the current traffic signals to accommodate future traffic growth

Very Supportive: **67%**
Somewhat Supportive: **25%**
Not supportive: **5%**
Not sure: **2%**

C. Shared-use of the Former Rail Corridor

- Shared use of the Okanagan Rail Corridor by active transportation and other specialized modes such as transit or shuttles
- Opportunity for 'creative' use of space that provides a multi-modal alternative to Highway 97

Very Supportive: **53%**
Somewhat Supportive: **21%**
Not supportive: **22%**
Not sure: **4%**

D. RapidBus Extension to the Airport

- High quality transit, such as RapidBus service extension to the airport
- Makes transit a more viable option for Airport employees and passengers

Very Supportive: **69%**
Somewhat Supportive: **22%**
Not supportive: **7%**
Not sure: **3%**

E. Internal Gateway Connectivity

- Increased travel options between UBCO, the Airport and within the Okanagan Gateway through options such as micro-transit, shuttles and shared mobility options (car share, bikeshare, scooter share, etc)

Very Supportive: **53%**
Somewhat Supportive: **30%**
Not supportive: **11%**
Not sure: **6%**

What other ideas do you have?

Other ideas from conversation participants and questionnaire respondents include:

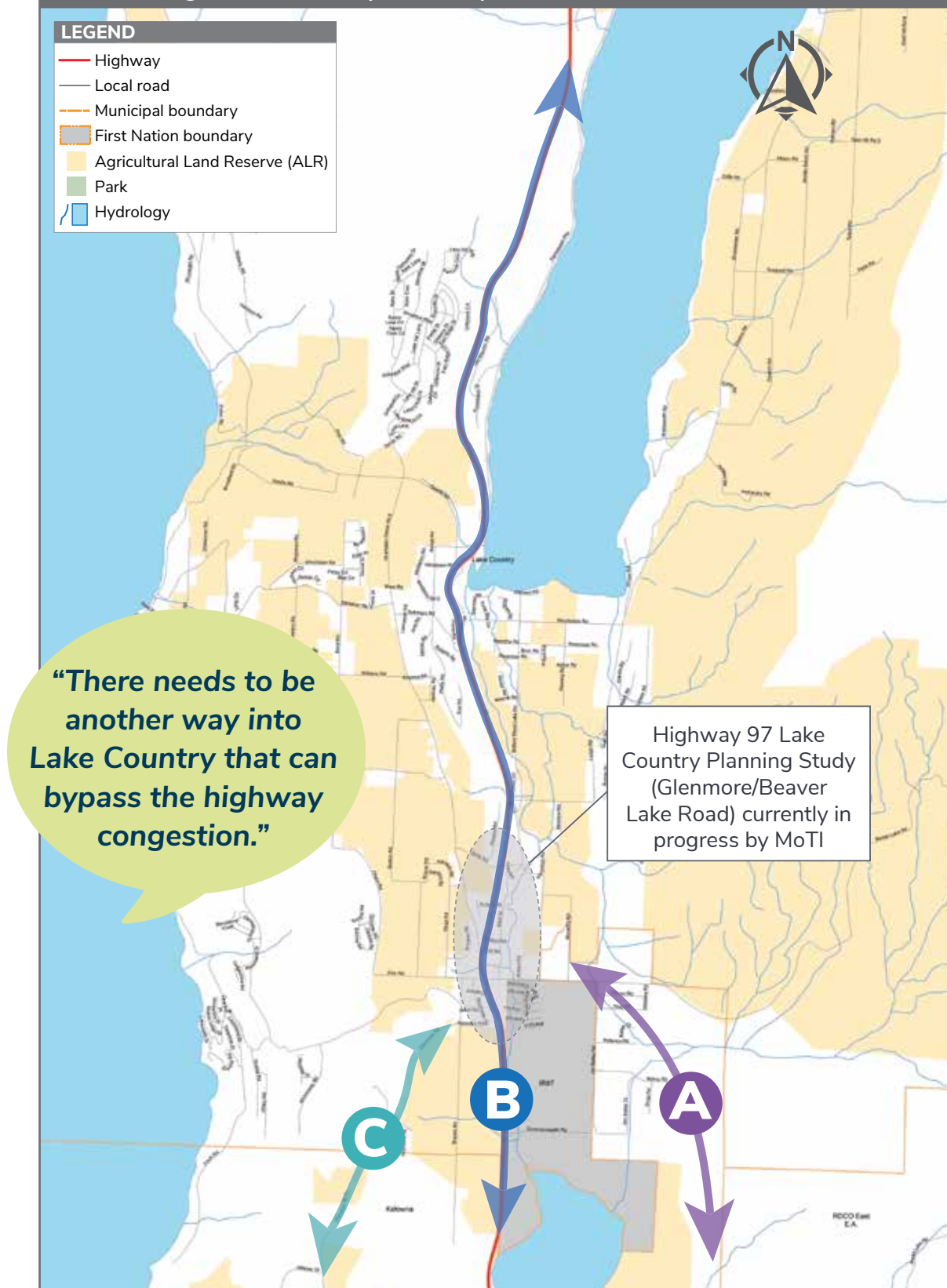
Projects

- Better connection for walking from nearby hotels and services to the airport
- Extend 3-laning of Highway
- Should be an eastern route to/from Lake Country (i.e. extension of the Jim Bailey Industrial Park Connection further south)
- Dedicated right-of-way for transit – make it more attractive, reliable, faster
- Elevated rail system along the rail trail corridor
- Transit service for seasonal agricultural workers

Programs and policies

- Rail Trail should be protected for walking, biking or potentially small electric vehicles
- Move stops for intercity buses closer to UBCO
- Congestion pricing
- E-bikes/bikeshare/scooter share
- Shift work hours to reduce peak period travel
- Incentives to leave car at home

Connecting Lake Country and beyond



Connecting Lake Country and beyond

A. Jim Bailey Industrial Park Connection

- Industrial road connection between Jim Bailey Industrial Park and the Airport
- Provides a more direct connection for industrial traffic and is an alternative to Highway 97

Very Supportive: **57%**
 Somewhat Supportive: **22%**
 Not supportive: **11%**
 Not sure: **10%**

B. Expanded Service to Lake Country and Beyond

- Extension of the RapidBus or other similar service to Lake Country (e.g. along Highway 97 or Glenmore Road), as well as expanded transit service north to Vernon
- Improves transportation options for Lake Country residents

Very Supportive: **65%**
 Somewhat Supportive: **24%**
 Not supportive: **8%**
 Not sure: **3%**

C. Glenmore Road Upgrades and Active Transportation

- “Spot” improvements to straighten curves and improve intersections, as well as better bicycling and pedestrian facilities
- Maintains Glenmore Road as a multi-modal alternative to Highway 97

Very Supportive: **77%**
 Somewhat Supportive: **17%**
 Not supportive: **4%**
 Not sure: **2%**

What other ideas do you have?

Other ideas from conversation participants and questionnaire respondents include:

Projects

- Better road connection between Glenmore and Okanagan Centre Road East
- Expand vehicle capacity at Highway 97 and Beaver Lake Road
- Widen Highway 97 in Winfield
- Complete the Rail Trail connection to Kelowna, consider paving in future
- Transit hubs and/or park and rides
- Light rail connection north and south
- Improved active transportation and rail trail connections
- Elevated corridor from Westbank First Nation to Lake Country (no lights)

Programs and policies

- Consider removing Oyama stops to Route 90 – Vernon Connector
- Carpool programs, app for ride share
- Bikeshare at key transit stops
- Congestion tolls
- E-bus stop in Lake Country
- Intercity bus stops

Shaping the future of the Central Okanagan

Thanks to all the people who have taken the time to support the engagement process for the Central Okanagan's first region-wide transportation plan. The community input to the Let's Talk Transportation conversation and questionnaire, along with technical and financial evaluations, will help identify the priority projects, programs and policies that will shape the future of the Central Okanagan Region.

Here's what the community said about the engagement process:

96% of respondents said the information was clear and understandable

74% said they understood how public input will be used in the process

92% said that participating was a valuable experience

80% said they learned something new

Next steps

Since 2018, people from across the region have added their priorities and perspectives to the regional transportation planning process through questionnaires and in-person events including region-wide pop-up open houses and interactive small-group conversations and discussions. Early public and stakeholder input helped confirm the vision and goals for the project, and the Let's Talk Transportation conversation and questionnaire, along with technical and financial considerations, will help inform the evaluation of potential regional transportation solutions.



