

# 4

## ENGAGING THE PUBLIC & STAKEHOLDERS



A summary of who was engaged, the activities that were undertaken and input received during the study.

4.1	Who was Consulted	page 53
4.2	The Activities	page 54
4.3	Summary and Synthesis of Input	page 57

## CHAPTER 4 | ENGAGING THE PUBLIC & STAKEHOLDERS

An important component of the study process for updating the CWATS Master Plan was consulting with County staff and Council, members of the public as well as the CWATS Committee and local stakeholders. A robust and diverse engagement strategy was essential in creating an interest throughout the County, building momentum for the plan, and increasing awareness of the benefits of implementing active transportation related facilities, routing and programming. The following sections provide a summary of the various groups that were consulted throughout the study process, the activities / initiatives undertaken and the feedback received.

### 4.1.1 Who was Consulted

Consultation played a significant role in the process of updating the CWATS Master Plan. Four target audiences; the CWATS Committee, County and Municipal Council, local stakeholders, and members of the public, were identified early in the study process and specific consultation and engagement tools and tactics were selected for each. A description of the four audiences that were engaged as part of the study process are described below.

**CWATS Committee:** the committee includes representatives from Essex County, each of the seven local municipalities, Windsor, Chatham-Kent, the Essex Region Conservation Authority and the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit. The Committee is lead by the County's AT Coordinator and meets six times per year to provide input and guidance on the planning, designing and implementation of active transportation infrastructure and programming.

**Council:** members of Council are responsible for municipal buy-in and the master plan adoption. They represent the various geographic areas of the County and have an understanding of the wants and need of the people within their jurisdiction.

**Stakeholders:** includes representatives of technical agencies, local interest groups and local organizations. They have varying levels of technical understanding but typically are interested in aspects of civic growth and have specific issues that they are passionate about.

**Public:** the people who live, work and play within the County of Essex. They have strong vested interest in the outcomes of planning initiatives as they relate to their quality of life, property values and municipal investment and are unique based on their lifestyle and geography.

## 4.2 The Activities

The following information outlines all engagement and consultation activities that were undertaken during the study process to inform the update to the CWATS Master Plan.

### Online Survey

Held:	November 2018 – February 2019
Number of Participants:	145
Format:	17 survey questions
Purpose:	To gather public input on existing active transportation supportive policies and programs and how they can be improved through the updated CWATS Master Plan.

### Bike Tour and Open House

Held:	May 22, 2019
Number of Participants:	20-30
Format:	A 3.0 to 7.0 km tour of Colchester followed by an informal drop-in Open House session
Purpose:	To showcase existing CWATS infrastructure and inform the public of the study process and to provide an overview of proposed policy and outreach initiative.

### Bike Tour and Open House

Held:	June 14, 2019
Number of Participants:	Approximately 450 people
Format:	Promotional pop-up booths
Purpose:	To provide information on the study process and provide people with multiple opportunities to share their feedback in an interactive and fun manner.

**Kingsville Kilt Run (Kingsville Highland Games)**

<b>Held:</b>	June 22, 2019
<b>Number of Participants:</b>	Approximately 300 people
<b>Format:</b>	County staff set up a promotional pop-up booth
<b>Purpose:</b>	To share information on the CWATS Master Plan Update and provide additional opportunities for the public to share their feedback through interactive boards and maps.

**Essex Region Conservation Bike Tour**

<b>Held:</b>	September 28, 2019
<b>Number of Participants:</b>	Approximately 260 people
<b>Format:</b>	County staff set up a promotional pop-up booth
<b>Purpose:</b>	To share information on the CWATS Master Plan Update and provide additional opportunities for the public to share their feedback through interactive boards and maps.

**Public Open House (Council Chambers)**

<b>Held:</b>	December 10, 2019
<b>Number of Participants:</b>	Approximately 30 people
<b>Format:</b>	Informal drop-in session
<b>Purpose:</b>	Provide an overview of the successes of CWATS, indicate what has changed since the original 2012 CWATS Master Plan, present proposed changes to the County's AT network.

### Virtual Public Open House

<b>Held:</b>	December 15, 2020
<b>Number of Participants:</b>	Approximately 55 people
<b>Format:</b>	Informal drop-in session
<b>Purpose:</b>	To provide an update on: completed / implemented 2020 CWATS projects; planned CWATS projects for implementation in 2021; the Master Plan update process, key findings to date and next steps; and proposed draft changes and modifications to the current CWATS network.

In late 2021 and early 2022, a series of presentations were made to the local municipal Councils as well as the County Council. The intent was to understand local contexts by presenting local and County Council the proposed CWATS network, preliminary phasing and high-level costing. The presentations were presented at the following Council meetings:

- Town of Kingsville: November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2021
- Municipality of Leamington: November 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2021
- Town of Essex: December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021
- Town of Amherstburg: December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2021
- Town of Tecumseh: December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021
- Town of LaSalle: January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2022
- Municipality of Lakeshore: January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2021
- County of Essex: January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2022 (includes Annual CWATS update to County Council)

In addition to public engagement events and initiatives, the study presented to and consulted with the CWATS Committee at the following meetings:

- May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2018
- July 18<sup>th</sup>, 2018
- October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2018
- January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2019
- May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2019
- November 27<sup>th</sup>, 2019
- May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020
- July 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020
- September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2020
- October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020
- November 25<sup>th</sup>, 2020
- March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Additional 152 survey responses were gathered online between February 7<sup>th</sup> to March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022 from Hackforge.

### 4.3 Summary and Synthesis of Input

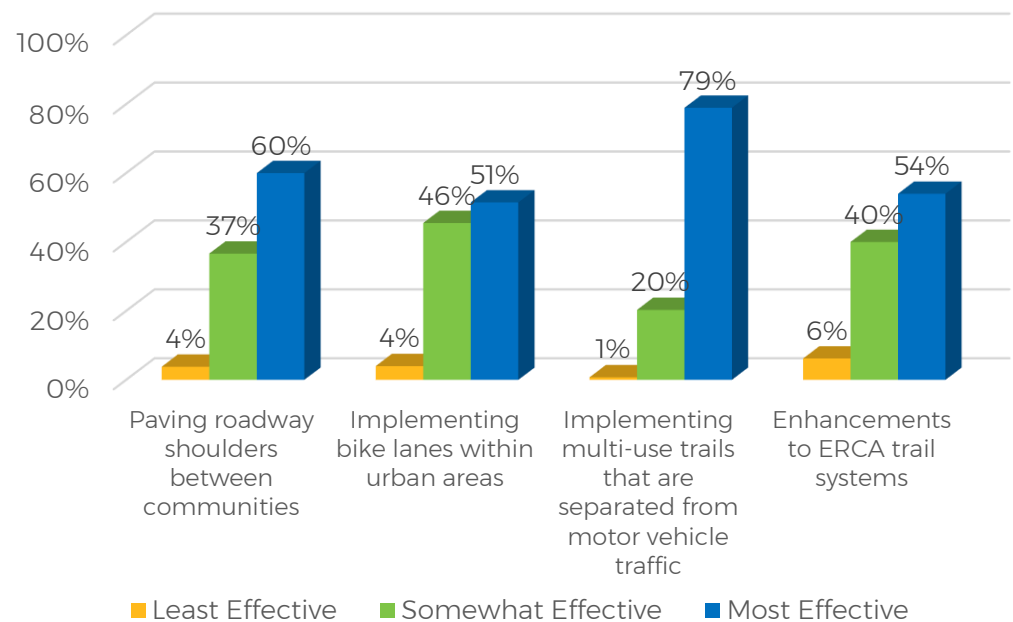
This section provides a summary of the input received at the various engagement activities / events.

#### Online Survey

145 participants provided their feedback on various policies and programs related to CWATS and active transportation in the County. The survey responses provide useful insight to help shape the future of active transportation in Essex County.

- The majority of respondents identified as **pedestrians** or **cyclists**.
- On an everyday basis, the majority of respondents commute via car, **22%** of respondents **walk** every day and less than **10%** of respondents **cycle** every day.
- **75%** of respondents noted that **integrating multiple modes of transportation** (e.g. walking, cycling, and public transit) is an important policy topic. This was followed closely behind by **connecting rural areas to urban centres and new development areas**, which was ranked as very important by **71%** of respondents.

Figure 43: Top identified Effective Policies and Initiatives by the Public



**91%** of respondents strongly agree that the County should keep investing in active transportation enhancements.

*What has been the most effective change towards creating a more AT friendly County?*

- **79%** of respondents felt that implementing **multi-use trails** that are **separated from motor vehicle traffic** has been the most effective change.

## Bike Tour & Open House

Three interactive boards and two map boards helped inform the public input received during the open house. The following input was received.

- Provide hard-copy CWATs maps, including zoomed-in maps of local neighbourhoods, throughout the County.
- Several specific routes were flagged in the process:
- High priority routes were identified including connections between [County Road 3 \(Malden Road\)](#) and [County Road 7 \(Huron Church Line Road\)](#).
- Support for better connections along [County Road 3 \(Malden Road\)](#) north of [County Road 8 \(Townline Road\)](#).
- Support for enhanced active transportation connections along [County Road 20 \(Front Road in LaSalle\)](#).



Figure 44: CWATS Open House (2019)  
Source: WSP Canada

## 6th Annual CWATS Celebration

The 6<sup>th</sup> Annual CWATS celebration, gathering input through three interactive boards and two map boards, received the following input:

- Prioritize the proposed extension of the [CASO rail trail](#)
- Prioritize the implementation of an AT facility along [Riverside Drive](#)
- Enhance [Chrysler Greenway connection at County Road 8 \(North Talbot Road\)](#)
- Prioritize the proposed off-road trail connection [between Essex and Oldcastle](#)



Figure 45: Three images of the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual CWATS Celebration Event (2019)

Source: WSP Canada



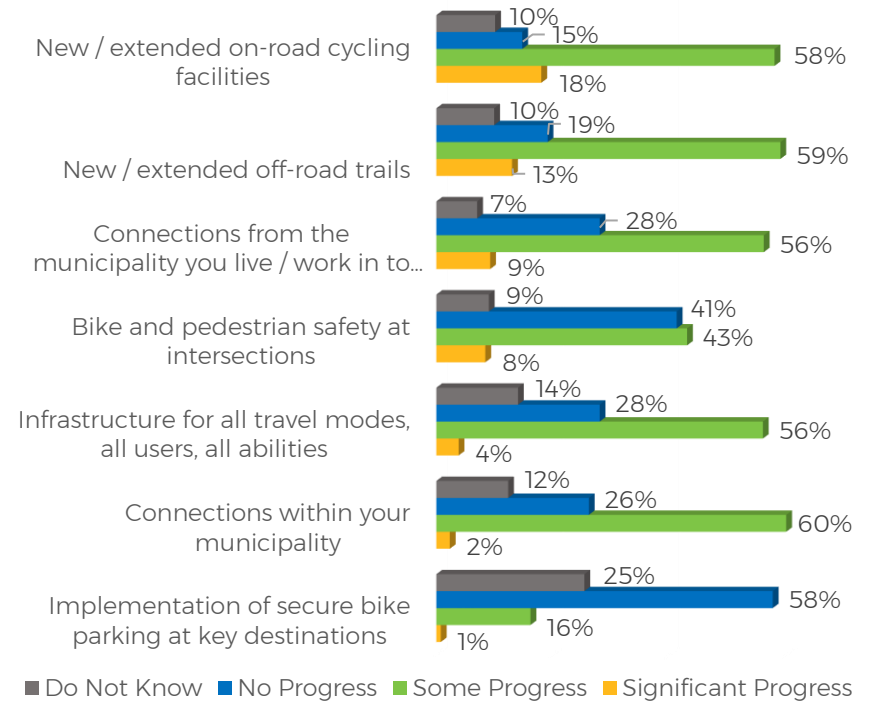
When evaluating the success and effectiveness of various programs, respondents noted that many of the listed programs were somewhat successful. Specifically, 12% of respondents noted that the MyCWATS interactive Map was very successful, and 38% noted it was somewhat successful.

**122** Respondents noted several key themes when asked about the major barriers to improving active transportation in the county for people of varying ages and abilities. The highlighted themes include;

- Connectivity
- Accessibility
- Signage and wayfinding
- Attitudes/ education
- End-of-trip facilities
- Funding/cost
- Design of AT and trail infrastructure
- Lack of AT and trail infrastructure
- Distance
- Safety

*How would you rate the progress on the following in your local municipality?*

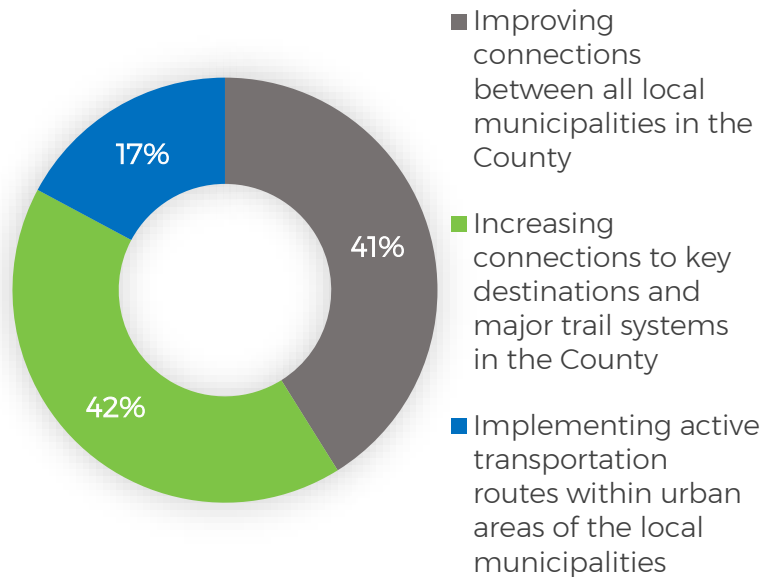
Figure 46: Progress of CWATS Initiatives, Programs, and Implementation Rated by the Public



Respondents noted that many AT areas were experiencing some progress. 18% of respondents noted that the implementation of new on-road cycling facilities/ the extension of on-road cycling facilities showed significant progress. One area that requires more focus is the implementation of secure bike parking at key destinations.

Where should the County and its partners prioritize AT investments in the next 5 years?

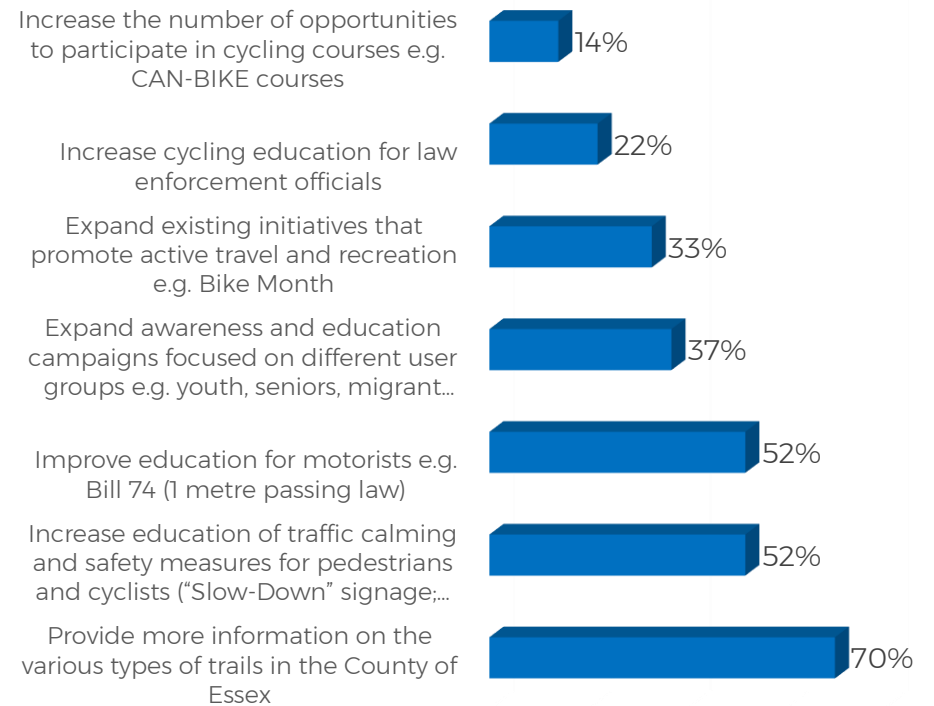
Figure 47: Top CWATS Investments Identified by the County



The majority of respondents noted that they would like the county to prioritize active transportation investments to **improve connections between all local municipalities in the County** and **increase connections to key destinations and major trail systems in the County**.

What do you think are the most important activities and topics the County and its partners should address?

Figure 48: Important Activities and Topics to be Addressed



70% of respondents indicated that **providing more information on the types of trails in the County of Essex** would be one of the **most important activities and/or topics that the County should address**.

### Essex Region Conservation Bike Tour

Using interactive boards and maps, the attendees provided the following input:

- Create more **paved shoulders** throughout the County
- Improve the **network** as a whole
- Include **re-paved shoulders** when conducting the maintenance of roads
- Connect the Kingsville Area **along Kratz Road to the Greenway**
- Implement more **end-of-trip facilities** such as benches, rest stations, washrooms, and repair stations
- Finish the **County Road 50 Connection to Kingsville**
- Complete work along **County Road 2 from County Road 29 (Division Street) to Hazel Crescent**
- Continue to **maintain the Greenway**. Keep it trimmed and regularly fill the potholes
- Prioritize the **CASO** corridor



Figure 49: CWATS Annual Celebration Event  
Source: WSP Canada

### Kingsville Kilt Run (Kingsville Highland Games)

The pop-up booth operating at the Kingsville Kilt Run provided interactive boards which allowed the community to share their feedback. The following is a list of the input received:

- Encourage the **development of trails and separated facilities** from motor vehicles
- Create addition **supportive amenities along trails**, such as bike repair stations and washrooms
- Members of the public enjoy walking and cycling along the **Chrysler Greenway, County Road 20 (Seacliff Drive), and County Road 50 (Heritage Road)**



Figure 50: CWATS Annual Celebration Event  
Source: WSP Canada

## Public Open House

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County staff and the CWATS committee gathered public input on priority items to improve the overall active transportation network. The following input was collected:

- Continue to support [paved shoulders](#) along the network
- Create stronger [cycling connections](#) between municipalities
- Support [facilities](#) that are inclusive for people of all ages and abilities
- Enhance [maintenance practices](#); regularly clear debris and garbage, remove snow, and trim low hanging branches along cycling routes
- Increase [engagement](#) with people with disabilities to help ensure the network can be used by people of [all ages and abilities](#)
- Support the creation of more [pedestrian facilities](#) and walking paths within and between municipalities
- Develop additional [north/ south connections](#)
- Enhance [safe crossings at highway](#)

## Virtual Public Open House

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The following input was collected:

- Strong support for [more paved shoulders](#) along the CWATS network to increase a user's sense of safety and comfort.
- Concern for [signed routes along busy roads](#).
- Interest for [winter maintenance](#) to allow users to walk and bike year-round.
- Consideration for [more multi-use pathways](#) to support people walking and biking in the County.
- Consideration for the [design of intersections](#) to accommodate all road users

Additional details on public engagement feedback and results are contained in **Technical Appendix C**. In understanding the public's and stakeholders' inputs, policies in the CWATS Master Plan are updated and refined to address emerging trends and concerns, which are further discussed in **Chapter 5**.