



Town of Souris **Active** **Transportation Plan**



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Executive Summary

The Town of Souris in Prince Edward Island is a vibrant seaside community that is the heart of the eastern Kings County region of PEI. For a small town, it has a large impact on industry, innovation, tourism, and residential services for the region as a key harbour for PEI and a central place for the area to gather, work, socialize, and access essential services.

In keeping with their goals set out in the *Town of Souris Official Plan (2024)*, Town Council and staff have commissioned this Active Transportation Plan with funding support from the Province of Prince Edward Island's Active Transportation Fund. The Town seeks to encourage residents to live healthier lifestyles and intends to invest in recreational and transportation infrastructure to create a more comprehensive active transportation network benefiting Town residents, regional residents, and visitors.

To guide the planning process, the Town identified the following five guiding principles:

1. **Safety:** Enhance safety and accessibility for all ages and abilities through infrastructure and initiatives.
2. **Connectivity:** Link key community destinations and existing pathways for safe and practical routes for residents' needs and visitors' experiences.
3. **Environmental benefits:** Encourage active commuting to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
4. **Health and recreation:** Support participation in human-powered transportation for its benefits to the health and well-being of community members.
5. **Regional alignment:** Consider the plan in the context of the region and consider how it benefits the community beyond Town boundaries.

With these pillars in mind, consultants engaged the community to identify their priorities for expanded active transportation in Souris. The Town already benefits from previous investments into the Souris Boardwalk, the MacPhee Ave separate multi-use pathway, and Souris' sidewalk network. The planning work for this project sought to build on the benefits of these key infrastructure pieces to provide greater connectivity by filling in gaps and recommending extensions that would benefit resident recreation and destination access, as well as visitor exploration of the Town.

Taking into account all existing public pathways and recreational infrastructure in Souris, and guided by community input, consultants identified priority areas and existing gaps to create a cohesive network. The result is a core figure-eight tourism- and recreation-oriented route, along with various residential extensions, recommended for implementation.



The proposed active transportation network is divided into four zones for implementation consideration, but is designed to provide a cohesive network once all work is completed. The four zones are (1) Eastern Kings Sportsplex Area, (2) Harbour Area, (3) School Area, and (4) Beach Ave Area. In zone one (1), the intent is to enhance recreational access to the Eastern Kings Sportsplex (EKSP) and the current green space (former horse track) used as a walking track by area residents. In zone two (2), the priority is widening shoulders to accommodate active transportation on the southern end of MacPhee Ave, on Green St, on Knights Ave, and on the eastern end of Breakwater St. In zone three (3), expanding the sidewalk network for students and staff of Souris Regional School is the focus. In zone (4), the priority is to create a widened paved shoulder on Beach Ave and Souris River Rd for western network expansion, in an area with scenic waterfront views for visitors and residents to enjoy.

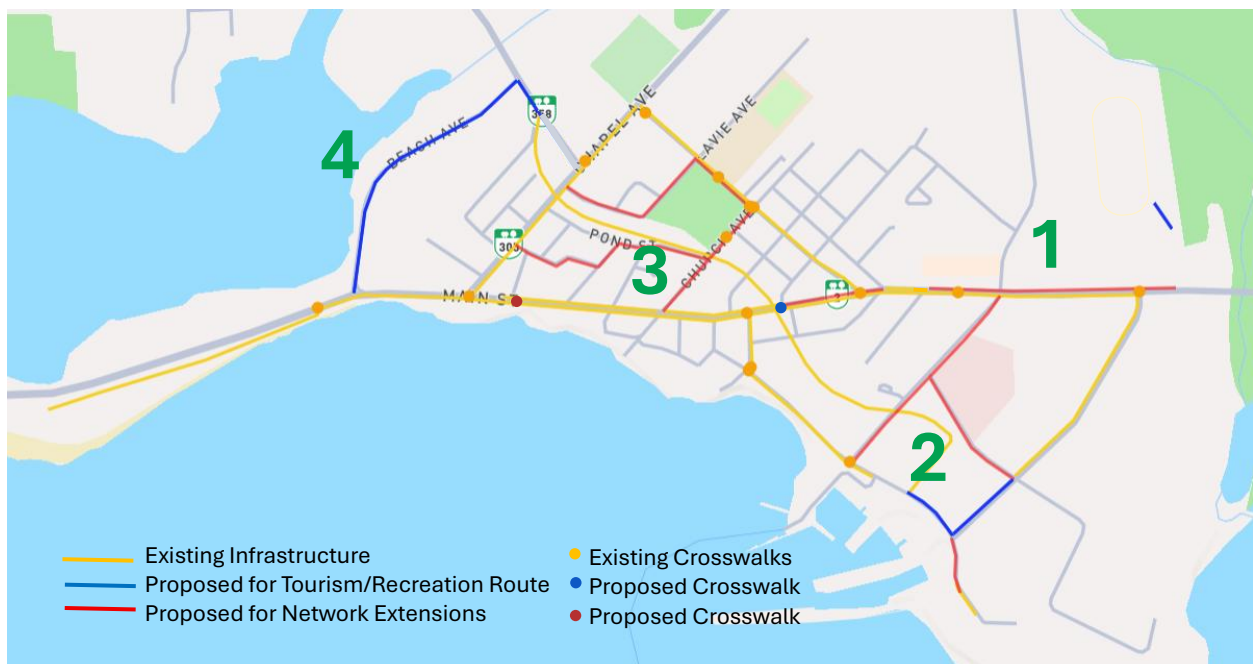


Figure 1. Proposed map of Souris Active Transportation Network with four zones marked.

The suggestions in this plan utilize a mix of sidewalks and widened paved shoulders and specify areas where crosswalks have been requested by community members and recommended by the consultants. For implementation purposes, the proposed extensions to Souris' existing network have been categorized as blue and red. The blue route has been designed for recreational and tourism purposes; the red extensions are primarily residential enhancements to provide access to key destinations in the community, including the school, hospital, Access PEI, and the Eastern Kings Sportsplex.

The enhanced network created by the blue and red route proposals will improve day-to-day active transportation in Souris while also providing a defined route that can serve as a

tourism asset for visitor exploration throughout the Town. The intent behind this plan is to provide convenient, safe routes to the Town's key destinations, encouraging residents and visitors to choose active transportation to engage with the Souris community in ways that bring environmental, health, recreation, economic, and even social benefits to this beautiful community.



1. About Active Transportation

1.1. Active Transportation and Its Benefits for Souris

Before exploring the benefits of active transportation in Souris, we must define *what* active transportation is. According to the Government of Prince Edward Island’s definition, “**Active transportation is any self-propelled human form of transportation such as walking, running and cycling.**”¹ Active transportation (AT) can look different from person to person, with some walking, some using a wheelchair, and some using an e-bike, scooter, or skateboard; active transportation is, at its simplest, about getting from here to there by one’s own power.

Now, answering *why* active transportation development matters for small communities like Souris is more nuanced. Numerous considerations come into play. There are health and wellness benefits to people incorporating physical activity into their daily lives; there are major environmental advantages from reducing vehicle-related emissions; and there are social benefits from increased opportunities for community interactions. These are all incredibly valuable reasons to choose active transportation, but there are also socio-economic factors to consider. Many people across Canada are privileged with a choice of transportation options. They can drive, walk, bike, or take a bus because they have convenient access to all these forms of transportation where they live and can afford them. This is not the case for everyone. Some Canadian residents, including Souris residents, may choose active transportation for its many benefits, while others may have no choice but to use it to get around Town. Active transportation planning matters for all communities because—no matter a community’s size or why residents engage in active transportation—it is important to provide community members with safe corridors to reach the destinations they need in their day-to-day lives.



Giving community members the infrastructure to safely partake in active transportation helps improve community access and cohesion, resident health and wellbeing, local environmental sustainability, and sense of community.

Well-thought-out active transportation corridors can improve community cohesion, affordability, resident health and well-being, environmental sustainability, and contribute to fostering an overall sense of community. Routes can also become tourism assets, offering visitors scenic exploration while purposefully guiding them to specific areas within

¹ Government of Prince Edward Island. (2024, December 2). *Active Transportation*.
<https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/information/environment-energy-and-climate-action/active-transportation>



communities. Prioritizing these investments should be guided by the specific needs and context of the community they are intended to serve.

1.2. The Souris Context

The Town of Souris is a small but key town located in the eastern Kings County region of PEI. According to the most recent census data, Souris has a population of 1,079,² and its municipal boundaries include 3.61 square kilometres of land. It is a port community, surrounded by other rural communities, some incorporated and some not. The Town is a centre point for the entire eastern Kings region of PEI, providing access to essential services, grocery stores, recreation infrastructure, places of worship, and other community needs. Over 2,800 people live in neighbouring communities to Souris, and key informants report that residents of these communities rely on Souris as the centre of regional activity.



Figure 2 Town of Souris (Google Earth)

The area's reliance on Souris becomes even clearer when considering the closest options for key services. Souris is home to a hospital, a Service Canada location, and an Access PEI branch; the next closest option for these services is 46 km away in Montague, PEI. To access a full supermarket outside of Souris, area residents would either have to travel about 40 km to Morell or 45 km to Montague.

Beyond day-to-day resident needs, Souris is also the centre for regular municipal government-related services for other communities. Some of the nearby municipalities rely on Souris' office space for administrative needs and on room rentals to hold municipal council meetings. Knowing how much the region as a whole relies on Souris, any active

² Statistics Canada. (2021). Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population: Souris (Town), Prince Edward Island. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&SearchText=Souris&DGUIDlist=2021A00051101035&GENDERlist=1,2,3&STATISTIClist=1,4&HEADERlist=0>



transportation planning needs to consider more than just the 1,079 residents of Souris, but also the additional thousands of people living outside of Souris who travel into the Town on a daily basis and the influx of seasonal residents to the area who rely on Souris during their summer residence.

In addition to Town and regional residents, Souris is also a popular destination for tourists due to its beach and port. Visitors come specifically to Souris to enjoy the area's scenic attractions, and tens of thousands of people also come to Souris as a stopover on their way to or from Basin Head Provincial Park and the Magdalen Islands. Located at Souris Harbour, the Magdalen Islands ferry service offers regular crossings between Souris and Grindstone (Cap-aux-Meules), Quebec, and is a major source of traffic for the Town throughout the year.

Souris' harbour is also home to an active marina for recreational vessels and a wharf for fishing vessels. The marina sees visitors docking in Souris regularly, especially through the summer months, and the wharf and its corresponding businesses see much traffic from fishermen and other seafood industry members.

1.3. Key Components of Souris Active Transportation Planning

Souris Pillars for Active Transportation Planning

The Town of Souris directed that the Souris Active Transportation Plan account for the following outcomes: safety, connectivity, environmental benefits, health and recreation, and regional alignment. The consultants used the following guiding principles in the plan development:

1. **Safety:** Enhance safety and accessibility for all ages and abilities through infrastructure and initiatives.
2. **Connectivity:** Link key community destinations and existing pathways for safe and practical routes for residents' needs and visitors' experiences.
3. **Environmental benefits:** Encourage active commuting to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
4. **Health and recreation:** Support participation in human-powered transportation for its benefits to the health and well-being of community members.
5. **Regional alignment:** Consider the plan in the context of the region and consider how it benefits the community beyond Town boundaries.

These principles were the pillars upon which the planning process was based and guided community engagement and decision-making.



Core Components of Active Transportation Planning

Active transportation (AT) planning is about creating and/or strengthening a community's network of pathways for human-powered modes of transportation by planning routes and pathway types, suggesting implementation approaches, and acknowledging the role of supportive infrastructure and related policies and initiatives.

Routes

Route planning considers key destinations in a community and the natural traffic patterns and behaviours of current users. Effective AT routes are based on clear start and end points to ensure connectivity. Routes should make sense and align with resident needs and current behaviours to provide efficient access to key community destinations.

Pathway Types

An AT network uses a combination of different path types within its development, such as:

- Paved shoulders
- Sidewalks (pedestrians only)
- Separate multi-use paths
- Dedicated bike lanes
- Existing trails

Path types are determined by the available land and the area's active transportation needs. Not every path type will be an option for an area depending on available land, environmental impact considerations, realistic use, and cost burden. For instance, separate multi-use paths are desirable for their raised-from-the-road surface and road barrier, which increase pedestrians' and cyclists' sense of safety, but they are not always practical or feasible in an area because this path type requires a minimum land width of approximately 15 ft. for construction. This is not always available, and altering land to accommodate this requirement is not always environmentally or economically responsible.

Figure 3. Examples of pathway types (Images from Google Maps)



Supporting Infrastructure

Complementary infrastructure, such as lighting, rest areas, signage, and bike racks, is a valuable component of AT networks and should be acknowledged as such in planning.

Types of AT supporting infrastructure include:

- Crosswalks
- Lighting
- Bike racks
- Benches
- Wayfinding (signage and maps)
- Storage
- Public washrooms

Other: Policy, Initiatives, and Phases of Development

AT planning also addresses the policies and initiatives related to AT in a community. Recommendations for amendments or development of policies and initiatives are offered to support the creation of an active transportation network and/or to promote greater participation in active transportation by residents. AT plans also provide recommendations for phases of development, triaging network expansion or improvements based on priority routes and easy wins.

2. Current Active Transportation in Souris

2.1 Existing Infrastructure and Routes

The Town of Souris' current AT infrastructure includes sidewalks, paved shoulders, a boardwalk, a multi-use pathway, and trails.

Figure 4 shows the approximate placement of current paths in Souris. The Town is responsible for maintaining the sidewalks, crosswalks, and the Gateway Park boardwalk. The Souris Harbour Authority owns the short boardwalk leading to the Souris Lighthouse, and the Government of PEI's Department of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy is ultimately responsible for maintaining the Confederation Trail running through Souris.

The Confederation Trail and the Gateway Park boardwalk are popular pathways for residents to walk, but it should be emphasized that neither is fully accessible for walkers during winter months. The Confederation Trail is completely closed to pedestrians and reserved for snowmobile use from December to March, and the boardwalk is not cleared of snow during winter. Environmental considerations make winter maintenance of the boardwalk challenging.



Figure 4. Map identifying current pathways and crosswalks in Souris (MapBox, created by MRSB)



The Town of Souris’ existing infrastructure also includes supportive components including street lighting, flags at certain crosswalks, pedestrian-activated crosswalks on Main St and Longworth St, and e-bike rentals at the Eastern Kings Sportsplex.

The existing routes prioritize the Souris beach area at the western end of the Town, the Souris business area along Main St, the school and St. Mary’s Church area, the ferry port area, and the seniors’ care home on MacPhee Ave.

2.2 Existing Users

Town of Souris and Neighbouring Community Residents

According to the most recent Statistics Canada census data (2021), Souris is home to approximately 1,079 residents³ and serves a catchment area of approximately 2,800 additional regional residents.⁴ These neighbouring community residents have their data included in the Souris Fire District, Souris West, and Eastern Kings census subdivisions. Statistics Canada data suggest that—based on a 10% sample—the majority of residents of Souris, Souris Fire District, Souris West, and Eastern Kings commute within the Souris area.

³ Statistics Canada. (2021). Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population: Souris (Town), Prince Edward Island. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&SearchText=Souris&DGUIDlist=2021A00051101035&GENDERlist=1,2,3&STATISTIClist=1,4&HEADERlist=0>

⁴ Based on Census Profiles, 2021 for Souris Fire District, Souris West, and Eastern Kings

In Souris, 76% of residents are commuting to work within the census area. 64% of residents have a commute of less than 15 minutes, and 15% of working residents walk to work.⁵

Key informant reports suggest that a large number of residents choose to walk around Souris for recreation, and the survey for public feedback on this plan (see section 3.2 for further survey data) saw 77% of Souris resident respondents report choosing to walk to move around Souris at some frequency level throughout the year and 29% reporting doing so several times a week.

Public transportation company T3 Transit operates a daily bus service between Souris and Charlottetown. Based on records and driver input, T3 representatives estimate that approximately 450 individuals used the service in Souris in 2025.⁶ The current route schedule offers three Souris-Charlottetown runs and three Charlottetown-Souris runs daily.⁷ T3 provides pick-up/drop-off service at three locations within Souris boundaries: Breakwater St by the ferry entrance, the Eastern Kings Sportsplex, and the Souris Petro-Can. In 2025, the most-used spot in Souris for pick-ups and drop-offs was the Souris Petro-Can, which saw approximately 1,100-1,300 pick-ups/drop-offs. The ferry bus stop saw about 250-350 pick-ups/drop-offs, and the Eastern Kings Sportsplex had about 750-850 pick-up/drop-offs.⁸ It is assumed that a percentage of these trips involved some level of active transportation for passengers to access the bus service from their home and/or their desired destination.

As previously mentioned, Souris is the centre of activity in its region of Kings County. Census data reveals neighbouring community residents (living in the Rural Municipality of Souris West, the Rural Municipality of Eastern Kings, and in unincorporated communities in the Souris Fire District) likely rely on employment in the Town of Souris, with 55% of working Souris West residents, 49% of Eastern Kings residents, and 47% of Souris Fire District community residents reporting a less than 15-minute commute.⁹ It is important to note how many Souris region residents work in the area because it suggests that if they work in Souris, they are likely also accessing services and running regular errands there and are therefore regular users of Souris' infrastructure.

⁵ Statistics Canada. (2021). Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population: Souris (Town), Prince Edward Island. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&SearchText=Souris&DGUIDlist=2021A00051101035&GENDERlist=1,2,3&STATISTIClist=1,4&HEADERlist=0>

⁶ Data provided by T3 to the consultants based on internal records and driver feedback.

⁷ T3 Transit. (n.d.). Route schedule (Souris-Charlottetown) [PDF]. https://www.t3transit.ca/_files/ugd/12806a_a497e69b4df74dbba7125ada71578749.pdf

⁸ Internal data provided by T3 to the consultants for the purpose of this report.

⁹ Statistics Canada. (2021). Census Profiles, 2021 for Souris Fire District, Souris West, and Eastern Kings, Prince Edward Island.

Unsurprisingly, given the rural context of these communities, census data show that residents overwhelmingly rely on motorized vehicles to commute.¹⁰ However, opportunities may exist to encourage these demographics to choose active transportation more often once they are within the Town of Souris boundaries.

Key informant and survey data suggest that residents of the surrounding area do use the infrastructure in Souris for recreation and social purposes. 67% of neighbouring community resident respondents in the survey reported choosing active transportation in Souris at some frequency level in the last year.

Seasonal Residents and Visitors

In addition to regular residents, Souris welcomes seasonal residents each year. These residents may occupy a home in Town or reside in dedicated living spaces on watercraft docked at the Souris Marina. The number of seasonal residents in Souris is unknown, but based on the most recent census data for the Town of Souris, there are 53 private dwellings in Souris not occupied by usual residents.¹¹ Assuming these dwellings are seasonal homes and that each seasonal home has two to four individuals in residence when occupied, consultants estimate that an additional 100-200 individuals live in Souris as seasonal residents. This may be higher or lower than the actual population of seasonal residents, and it does not take into account the number of seasonal residents in neighbouring communities.

As a beautiful coastal community, the Town of Souris also welcomes thousands of visitors annually. According to data shared by Tourism PEI, Souris had a total of 2,651 overnight stays reported by accommodation providers in 2025,¹² and the Souris Visitor Information Centre (operational May-October) counselled 6,384 parties in 2025.¹³ Undoubtedly, far more visitors stopped in Souris than were captured in the visitor information centre's counselling numbers. In addition to tourists visiting Souris, the Town sees many visitors stopping in for quick visits, restaurant stops, and shopping as they wait for the Magdalene Islands ferry crossing or travel to other regional tourist attractions, such as the nationally renowned Basin Head Provincial Park.

To put into context the amount of through-traffic Souris sees annually, Basin Head Provincial Park, located about 13km east of Souris, is estimated to attract up to 75,000 visitors

¹⁰ Statistics Canada. (2021). Census Profiles, 2021 for Souris Fire District, Souris West, and Eastern Kings, Prince Edward Island.

¹¹ Statistics Canada. (2021). Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population: Souris (Town), Prince Edward Island.

¹² Tourism PEI. (2025). Occupancy Reporting Database, Tourism PEI. [Data provided by Tourism PEI to the consultants.]

¹³ Tourism PEI. (2025). Souris Visitor Information Centre: Total Parties Counsellled, Tourism PEI. [Data provided by Tourism PEI to consultants.]



annually.¹⁴ Most visitors from the west of Souris travel through Souris, as it is the primary route to access Basin Head. The Magdalen Islands Ferry Service had a total of 128,139 passengers travelling from Souris to Cap-aux-Meules in 2024.^{15,16} While the percentage of the over 200,000 people travelling through Souris annually who actually stop is unknown, it is assumed and was confirmed by key informants from the area that Souris welcomes many of these individuals to its attractions and businesses.

Visitors to Souris enjoy numerous attractions, including the Souris Boardwalk and Gateway Park shops, the Souris Lighthouse, and historical and scenic sights throughout the community. The only data confirming visitor use of trails in the area comes from Point East Coastal Drive, which encompasses the entire Kings County region. The most recent data from Visitor Exit Survey responses showed that 24% of total Point East Coastal Drive visitor respondents reported using the Confederation Trail or other trails during their visit. Of these respondents, 22.6% reported doing so in the peak summer season of July-August. 33.7% reported doing so in September-October, 25.0% in November-December, and 26.8% in May-June.¹⁷ (Note: the Confederation Trail is closed to pedestrians December-March.) Notably, trail use is higher outside the busy summer season. It can be assumed that some of these trail-using visitors included individuals enjoying walking or cycling in the Souris area. Indeed, key informants for this project noted that, with the rising popularity of the Island Walk, more pedestrians were accessing Town through the trail system.

All existing users of Souris' active transportation infrastructure, including the provincially managed Confederation Trail, must be considered in future active transportation development. Catering to the needs of existing users ensures that real needs are met through development and that planning is not based solely on hypotheticals but on actual use.

¹⁴ Fisheries and Oceans Canada. (2021). Basin Head Marine Protected Area management plan: 2021–2026. Government of Canada. <https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/oceans/publications/basinhead-management-gestion-2021-2026/index-eng.html>

¹⁵ Government of Prince Edward Island, Statistics Bureau. (2025). Prince Edward Island 51st annual statistical review 2024 (Table 100). https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/web_asr.pdf

¹⁶ Note: 2024 was the most recent year with data accessible to consultants. Data for pedestrians and cyclists was unavailable to consultants.

¹⁷ Prince Edward Island Department of Economic Development, Innovation and Trade. (2025). Visitor profile by season (Publication No. ES2023-11). Government of Prince Edward Island. https://www.tourismpei.com/sites/default/files/2025-05/ES2023-11_PECD%20Visitor%20Profile%20by%20Season_Final_2025.04.08.pdf



2.3 Existing Policies

The Town of Souris’ existing policies for Active Transportation were established in the *Town of Souris Official Plan 2024*.¹⁸ They include the following:

- *Policy PHY-5: Pedestrian Circulation*
 - “It shall be the policy of Council to develop and maintain a pedestrian circulation system in the Town which provides safe pedestrian linkages throughout the Town and between all major destinations.”
- *Policy PHY-6: Active Transportation*
 - “It shall be the policy of Council to integrate the principles of active transportation into Town actions and decision-making in order to develop a strong, inter-connected active transportation system over time.”

Plan actions for these policies include:

- Developing a plan for long-term development and maintenance of sidewalks and a related budget with priorities for “major traffic routes...major pedestrian destinations such as schools, places of worship, shopping areas and parks or playgrounds.”
- Working with community, including landowners and businesses, to expand and link the existing network.

Relevant bylaws legislated by Souris Town Council are the *Parking and Traffic Control Bylaw*,¹⁹ which outlines what is permitted relevant to motorized vehicles and cyclists in Town, and the *Land Use Bylaw*,²⁰ which regulates how land can be developed and used in the Town. Both these bylaws were referenced in the development of this plan, with particular attention to protected lands under the *Land Use Bylaw* and the allowance of children’s bicycles and tricycles on municipal sidewalks in the *Parking and Traffic Control Bylaw*.

Provincial legislation relevant to Souris’ active transportation plan includes the *Municipal Government Act* and *Roads Act*. The *Municipal Government Act* in section 211.1 reads:

¹⁸ Town of Souris. (2024). Souris Official Plan. <https://sourispei.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Souris-Official-Plan-Final-May2024.pdf>

¹⁹ Town of Souris. (n.d.). Parking and traffic control bylaw. <https://sourispei.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Parking-and-Traffic-Control.pdf>

²⁰ Town of Souris. (2024). Souris land use bylaw. <https://sourispei.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Souris-Land-Use-Bylaw-Final-May2024.pdf>



“Subject to the Roads Act, where a highway subject to the jurisdiction, management and control of the Minister responsible for that Act is situated in a municipality, the municipality is responsible for maintaining and repairing sidewalks, poles, sewers, waterworks or other similar municipal works constructed by or under the authority of the municipality on, over or under the highway.”²¹

This declaration demonstrates the cooperation between provincial and municipal governments required to develop and maintain roadways and attached active transportation facilities. There is a mix of jurisdictions when considering anything to do with public roadways. The *Town of Souris Official Plan 2024* further recognizes this and states the Town is responsible for the ownership and maintenance of roads within the municipality except for designated provincial roads and highways.²²

The *Trails Act* provides legislation for active transportation pathways and legally recognizes “the contributions the Confederation Trail and other trails make to the health and well-being and quality of life of the citizens of the province.”²³ The *Trails Act* gives the authority to government, through the Lieutenant Governor by recommendation of the Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy to designate Crown land for trails, and the legislation’s general regulations outline the legal requirements for use of the trails by the public including requiring helmets for cyclists and prohibiting motorized vehicle use beyond use of a motorized mobility aid, a power-assisted bicycle/scooter, or an emergency vehicle. The *Roads Act* and the *Highway Traffic Act* outline the legal obligations regarding road size, public right-of-way, and certain behaviours and uses on Island roads. The requirements of these laws were considered in the development of this plan.

The Government of PEI’s *Sustainable Transportation Plan* and *Active Transportation Strategy* outline the government’s priorities for active transportation on the Island. The *Sustainable Transportation Plan* (2019) identified the importance of active transportation for helping advance PEI’s wellness, sustainability, and environmental goals. Then the *Active Transportation Strategy* specified priorities which apply to Souris’ own Active Transportation Plan:

- Establish a provincial AT network built on community AT plans with a map showing current and proposed AT routes.

²¹ Prince Edward Island. (n.d.). Municipal Government Act (s. 211.1).

https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/sites/default/files/legislation/m-12.1-municipal_government_act.pdf

²² Town of Souris. (2024). Souris Official Plan. <https://sourispei.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Souris-Official-Plan-Final-May2024.pdf>

²³ Government of Prince Edward Island. (2022.) *Trails Act* 2.0.1.f.

https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/sites/default/files/legislation/t-04-1-trails_act.pdf



- Manage a Provincial Active Transportation Fund.
- Publish a standard shoulder-width policy for public roads specific to roads' original designs, traffic levels, and speed limits.²⁴

Some of these priorities have already been achieved or are being achieved by the Government of Prince Edward Island. For instance, the PEI Active Transportation Fund was accessed by Souris to fund this active transportation planning process.

²⁴ Government of Prince Edward Island. (2021). *Active Transportation Strategy*.
https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/active_transportation_strategy.pdf



3. Community Feedback

3.1. Key Informants

As part of the project, consultants engaged five key informants to discuss active transportation, community experiences, and pathway networks in the area. These key informant interviews helped shape further research and engagement for the plan.

Key informants included representatives from a community organization, a community business, the harbour area, and the local school, as well as a community member who is an avid user of trails and other existing AT infrastructure in the area. These different perspectives provided a range of feedback, each with a slightly different focus area, while always grounded in care for and knowledge of the Souris community.

Active Transportation for Recreation

Through these interviews, consultants learned that Souris residents enjoy participating in active transportation for recreation. The Souris Boardwalk (Gateway Park) is well-used and is considered a great addition to the Town. The Confederation Trail running through the Town is also used regularly by residents, and nearby community residents are often observed driving into Souris to take advantage of Souris' Boardwalk, Confederation Trail, and sidewalks for exercise. The sidewalks are especially useful in the winter months when the Confederation Trail is closed to pedestrians and the boardwalk is not cleared of snow.

Active Transportation for Commuting or Errands

Key informants reported that active transportation for commuting or errands is something you often see newcomers to the community choose, but that residents who have been living in Souris for a long time often default to motorized vehicles to get around Town for commuting or errands.

Active Transportation for Visitors

Key informants noted that Souris sees many visitors, especially in the summer months, and heavy stopover traffic due to the ferry. Informants observed that visitors often stop at Gateway Park at the western entrance to the Town, then either drive to the Souris Lighthouse or continue to their next destination outside of Souris. Informants identified a need for something to encourage visitors to explore more of the Town of Souris and to be guided to the centre of the Town to explore Souris' businesses and restaurants. Some key informants suggested that additional signage on the Confederation Trail and elsewhere, indicating where to go for shopping and food, could help encourage visitors to explore more of Souris. They also recommended that the Town consider moving the e-bike rentals to the harbour



area or the central Town area to encourage greater use. Currently, people need to be intentional about going to the Eastern Kings Sportsplex to rent them.

Active Transportation for Cycling

Some key informants noted that cycling infrastructure is lacking in the Town. People parking on the side of the roads make it difficult to cycle on Main St. Key informants also noted that area residents would benefit from cycling education and awareness, so there is greater understanding of how to share the road.

Active Transportation for Students

Key informants also shared that Souris residents do not have bus service for Souris Regional School. Children need to walk, bike, or be driven to school. Town representatives, a school representative, and other key informants noted that improvements could be made for safer active transportation access to the school. The Town has applied for funding to add more sidewalks in the school area, and the school has engaged the UPEI School of Sustainable Engineering to design solutions to make the school area safer for students. UPEI students observed the need to enhance the crosswalk between the school and the parking lot on the opposite side of Longworth St. The project team is working on an innovative design that will be submitted to Souris Regional School at the end of UPEI's spring 2026 semester.

Active Transportation Promotion

Overall, key informants felt that active transportation will need to be promoted in the area if the Town wants to see increased use. The common feeling amongst key informants is that people in the area rely on cars to get around Town and that even with an improved active transportation network, residents will need encouragement to choose active transportation over motorized vehicles.

3.2. Public Survey

To collect feedback from a greater number of community members, MRSB administered a public survey, which gained a total of 178 responses, which, after quality control, removing empty or spam responses, accounted for anonymous input from 176 individuals. Souris and area residents were the overwhelming majority of respondents, accounting for 94% of responses. The other 6% came from seasonal residents (2 responses), visitors (3 responses), and other responses (6 responses). Respondents who selected "other" were individuals who used to live in Souris or have family in the area. The "other" group of respondents were included in Souris resident/neighbouring resident feedback due to their valuable knowledge and experience in the local area. Seasonal resident and visitor



responses were too low to be considered representative, so no takeaways specific to these groups will be included in the summary below.

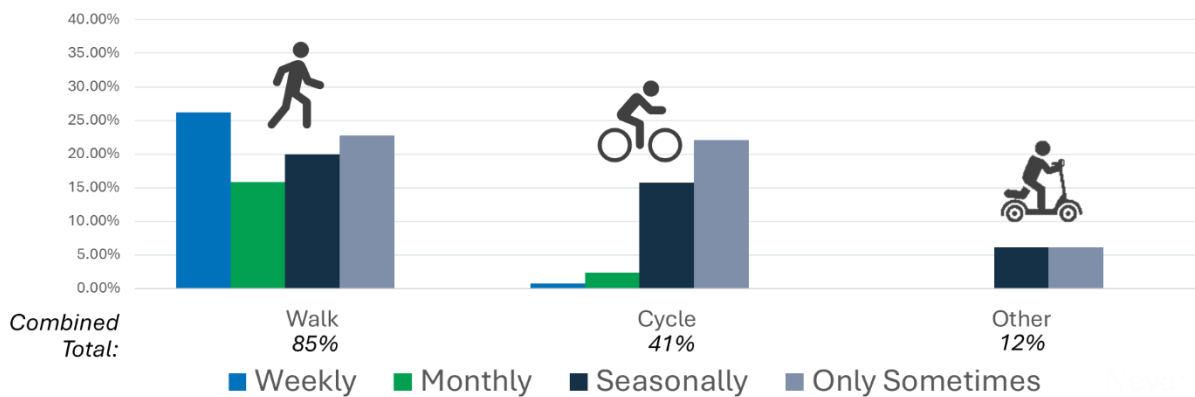
Respondent Current Transportation Habits

95% of respondents reported using a car to move around Souris, with 89% saying they do so several times a week. 85% of respondents reported walking to move around Town. Notably, this 85% includes varying frequencies: 26% report doing so weekly, 16% monthly, 20% seasonally, and 22% only sometimes. When looking only at Souris resident respondents, 29% reported doing so several times a week.

Reports of cycling were far fewer, with most of the respondents saying they cycle to move around Souris, doing so seasonally or only sometimes. Other forms of active transportation (like scooters, skateboards, etc.) were incredibly low in frequency and limited to seasonal or only sometimes.

Figure 5. How Souris and neighbouring community residents move around Souris

Question: How often do you currently do any of the following activities to move around Souris: walk, cycle, other self-propelled forms of transportation, drive a motorized vehicle?



Respondent Current Active Transportation Usage

To understand the motivation and general destinations accessed when partaking in active transportation in Souris currently, respondents were asked for the frequency level of using active transportation (walking, cycling, or other forms) for the following reasons:

- Recreation/Exercise
- Personal errands (going to the post office, grocery store, farmers' market, etc.)
- Commuting to work or school (select also if you walk to a town bus stop as part of your commute)

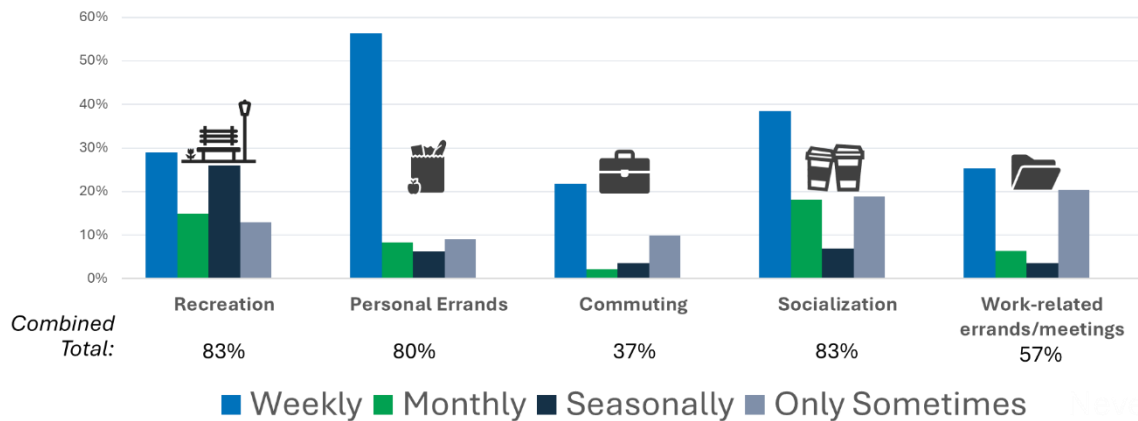


- *Socialization (travelling to a friend's or family member's home, to a restaurant, or a social activity)*
- *Work-related errands/meetings*

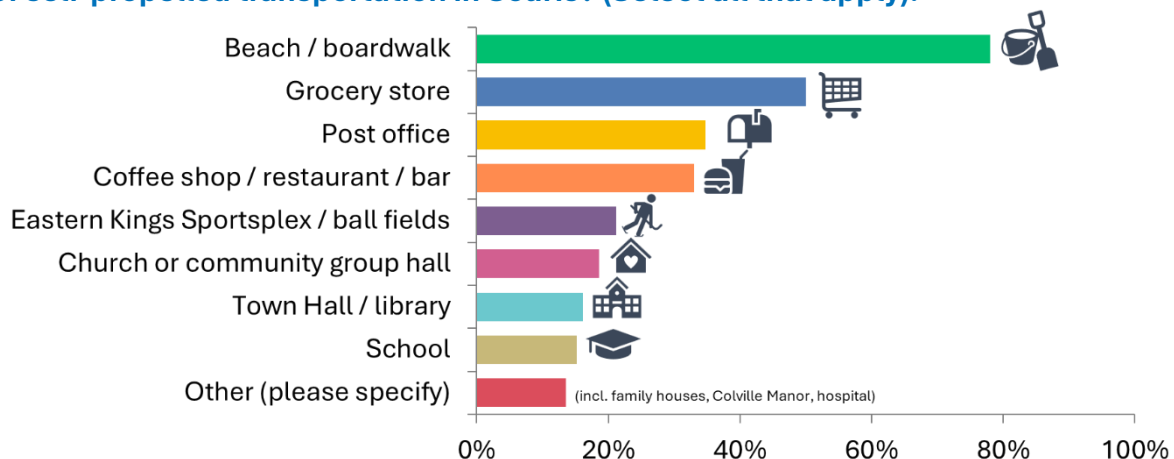
Overlap for some of these reasons certainly exists. For instance, a respondent could consider walking with a friend as both socialization and recreation, and they may have duplicated responses due to this overlap. Even with that disclaimer, the results show clear priorities in respondents' active transportation habits. Across all reported frequency levels, 83% of respondents used active transportation for recreation/exercise, 83% for socialization, and 80% for personal errands. 56% of respondents reported using active transportation for personal errands weekly, compared to 39% using it for socialization and 29% for recreation weekly.

Figure 6. How Souris and neighbouring community residents use active transportation

Question: How frequently do you walk, bike, or use other forms of self-propelled transportation in Souris for each of the following purposes?



Question: What locations do you most often get to by walking, cycling, or other forms of self-propelled transportation in Souris? (Select all that apply).



The destinations respondents noted accessing most by active transportation included the Souris Beach/Gateway Park Boardwalk, the grocery store (Souris has two in the community), the post office, and coffee shops/restaurants/bars. These destinations reflect the survey analysis showing that recreation, personal errands, and socialization are the top reasons individuals choose active transportation in Souris.

Active Transportation Safety

Respondents were asked to indicate any areas of concern regarding accessibility and/or safety in Souris. By far, the most common answer was Main St's downtown core area (51%), and commenters further identified the Souris Petro-Can and the Main St/Belle Ave intersection as areas of concern.

When asked whether they had experienced recurring safety concerns in Souris in the past year, 43% of respondents said they had, and 57% said they had not. Of those who had experienced recurring safety concerns, the most commonly reported issues were speeding traffic and failure to obey signage (68%) and unlit areas (45%).

Numerous survey comments relating to safety/accessibility were summarized as follows:

- Top areas of safety concerns were repeatedly the Petro-Can crosswalk, Gateway Park speeding traffic, Belle Ave turning traffic and parking, and the Legion area crossing.
- Winter maintenance of the boardwalk would be welcome for safe year-round access.
- Mobility and low-vision accessibility needs to be considered in active transportation infrastructure. Comments suggested auditory crosswalk features and more sidewalk accessibility for wheelchair, walker, and cane users.

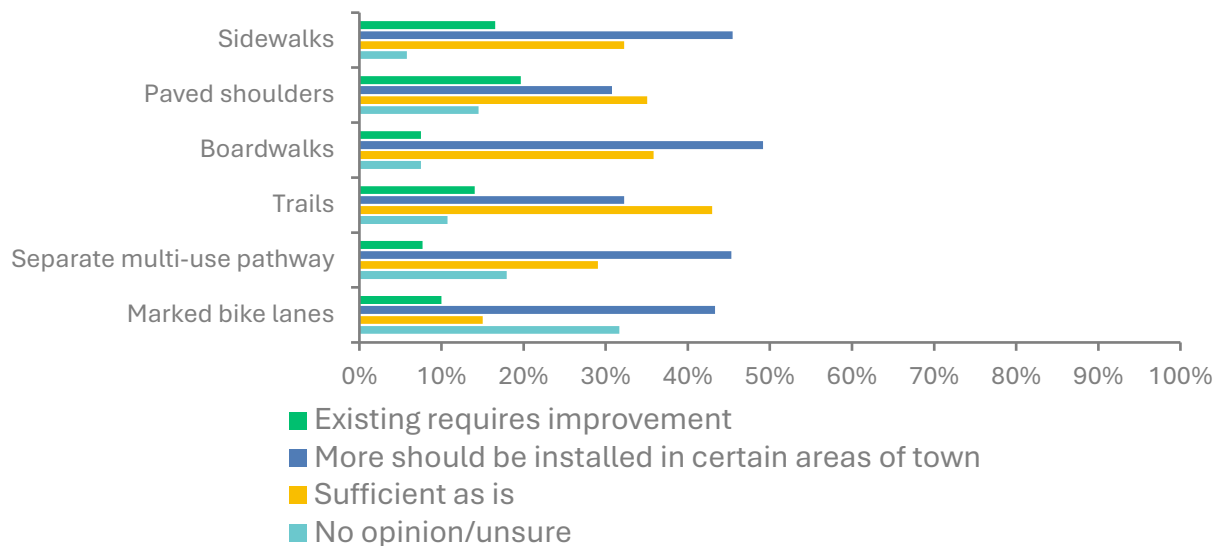
Developing Active Transportation in Souris

Survey respondents were asked about the sufficiency of current active transportation infrastructure, local safety concerns, and additions that would encourage them to partake in active transportation activities more often. Respondents suggested more sidewalks, boardwalks, multi-use pathways, and marked bike lanes could be installed in the Town. Paved shoulders were marked as a mix of "sufficient as is" and "more should be installed."

For supportive infrastructure, the top five components respondents reported needing were designated public washrooms (72%), more benches (71%), flashing crosswalks (69%), lights (67%), and parking (63%).

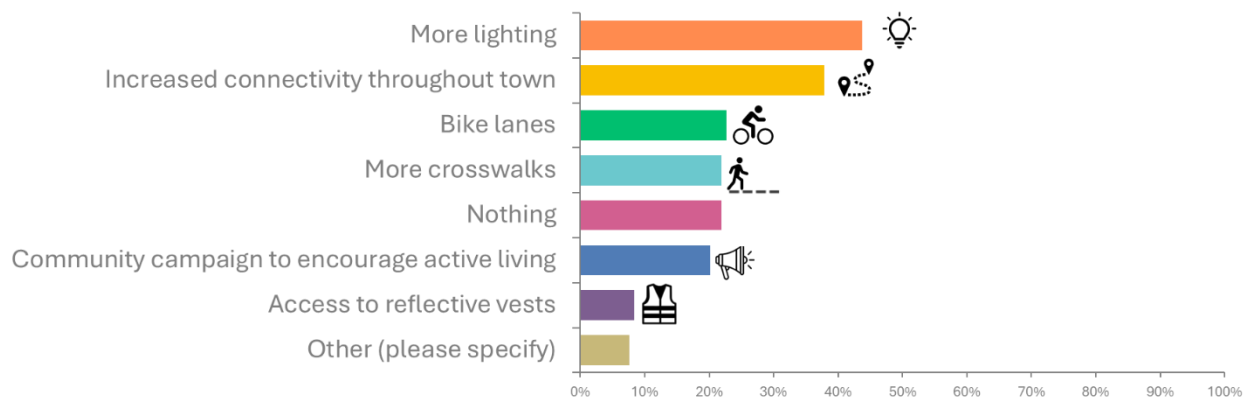


Question: In your opinion, does the Town of Souris need to improve or install any more of the following types of active transportation paths?



When asked directly whether they would choose active transportation more than they currently do if the Town added more crosswalks, sidewalks, or multi-use pathways, 56% said they would, 11% said no, and 33% were unsure. When asked what else would motivate them to choose active transportation more, respondents identified more lighting and increased connectivity throughout Town as the top influencers.

Residents reported more lighting and increased connectivity throughout Town would influence them choosing active transportation more.



Survey comments regarding the development of active transportation included feedback that the plan should consider how to direct visitors at Gateway Park into Souris and that cyclists would benefit from a separate path from the boardwalk into Town. Some comments

also noted that the Town should promote active transportation and educate residents about active transportation rules of the road and best practices.

3.3. Public Meeting

The Town of Souris and the consultants led a public meeting at Souris Regional School on the evening of Thursday, March 12, 2026. 17 community members attended, including the Mayor and other representatives from Town Council, the Chief Administrative Officer, and the local Member of the Legislative Assembly of PEI. Feedback from that meeting included highlighting the crosswalk slated to be built at the intersection of MacPhee Ave and the Eastern Kings Sportsplex, discussion about when the Confederation Trail/snowmobile agreement is to be renewed, and the need for crossing and connection between MacPhee Ave and Breakwater St's existing infrastructure. The issue of adding infrastructure for areas of Town that have more kids living there was raised as something to be prioritized in phase planning, and a brief discussion about how great the boardwalk has been for the Town occurred with a resident pointing out how nice it is to have a place separate from vehicles to walk and another raising that, as presented in the survey findings, it would be great to have winter maintenance of the boardwalk. Town representatives spoke to the barriers of that, including environmental concerns and liability burden.

We heard that people welcome the idea of widened paved shoulders in certain areas of the Town to provide safer ways to walk and bike on the Town roads. Paved shoulders for Beach Ave and Route 358 were specifically identified as positive additions to the area. As was the case in the survey responses, crosswalks in Town were a major area of interest, with attendees pointing out locations in Town that need crossing treatments. It was also noted that residents and visitors need to be better at using the crosswalk enhancements currently in place, such as activating the flashing light at crosswalks with that feature. Promotion and education play a role in ensuring safe use and the full realization of the benefits provided by investment in active transportation infrastructure in Souris.

3.4. Community Feedback Key Takeaways for Route Selection:

Based on community feedback, the following takeaways stood out to the consultants for priority incorporation into route selection criteria.

1. *Build on existing recreation values for active transportation while providing infrastructure improvements to enhance use of active transportation for errands, socialization, and commuting.*

As indicated by current-use feedback from key informants and survey respondents, walking is the main mode of active transportation, and recreation is one of the main reasons for engaging in active transportation in Souris. The survey respondents identified personal

errands and socialization as other activities where individuals regularly choose active transportation in Souris. There is value in basing active transportation development on current use. Based on community feedback, the active transportation development should prioritize recreation while also addressing transportation needs for errands and socialization.

2. *Ensure connectivity of locations already being accessed for or by active transportation: Souris Boardwalk, grocery stores, the post office, food/drink establishments, Eastern Kings Sportsplex recreation area, Souris Regional School, Colville Manor, the ferry/marina, and lighthouse.*

Key informants, survey respondents, and public meeting attendees identified key areas in Town being accessed by Souris and neighbouring community residents and visitors walking or biking. Ensuring that Souris' infrastructure adequately and safely connects these areas is key, and filling gaps is a priority to the town and the community. This focus aligns completely with the Town's active transportation guiding principle of connectivity.

3. *Acknowledge that traffic, crosswalks, and lighting impact active transportation. These transportation components are major areas of concern for active transportation safety for Souris active transportation users.*

Key informants and survey respondents shared their preference for active transportation corridors separate from traffic, including sidewalks, boardwalks, and multi-use pathways, due to safety concerns. Community members communicated existing safety issues related to traffic not obeying signage and speed limits, especially on Main St. Choosing routes that allow for residents and visitors to safely use active transportation away from busy traffic areas is a component to consider in route selection. Community members also identified additional lighting for active transportation infrastructure as a key safety component that would encourage greater use of it. Another top concern raised throughout community feedback was crosswalk safety, with community members pointing out gaps and safety issues within the existing network. Network development must consider these gaps as part of connectivity for moving forward.



4. Future of Active Transportation in Souris

This Plan's goal is to present a coherent network that supports both residents and visitors in a way that increases safety and accessibility, connectivity, health and wellness benefits, and regional alignment. Improvements should not be looked at as isolated projects that in turn have isolated benefits, but as pieces of a collective system that will bring collective benefits.

An intentionally designed tourism-oriented active transportation route can encourage greater circulation and exploration of the Town of Souris, bringing visitors from the saturated areas of Gateway Park and the harbour into other areas of the Town. This can lead to more visitor dollars being spent in the community, uplifting the local economy.

Filling gaps and extending infrastructure in areas that serve locals in their daily activities bring health and wellness, safety, and accessibility benefits for residents, increasing resident satisfaction and enabling safe, efficient access to locations that are core to the community.

4.1. Early Observations and Concept Overview

Consultants' review of existing active transportation infrastructure in Souris focused on understanding how people realistically move through the community and where the natural paths already exist. Several observations emerged from that review. First, there is a strong relationship between the harbour area, Main St businesses, and the Souris Beach Gateway Park area. These locations collectively form the core tourism area of the Town.

A second observation concerns the land of the former horse track. The site now functions as open parkland used informally as a walking track. This area also contains the municipal wellfield. As community feedback identified that using active transportation pathways for recreation and exercise was a priority, direct connection to this recreational area should be incorporated into the broader network.

Finally, consultants observed that the active transportation best practice for utilizing loop routes for smaller communities would work well for Souris. A simple, recognizable loop route is extremely effective in smaller communities. Loops facilitate intuitive wayfinding and allow visitors to explore a community without needing detailed maps or directions. This observation ultimately led to the development of the figure-eight loop concept for Souris' Active Transportation Network.



Why Loop-Based Active Transportation Systems Work Well in Smaller Communities

Loop-based active transportation networks are used in smaller communities because they provide a simple, intuitive structure for pedestrian and cycling movement. Unlike linear routes that require users to retrace their steps, loops allow continuous travel through a community while returning users to their starting point. This characteristic makes loop systems particularly attractive for recreational walking, cycling, and tourism-oriented exploration.

In communities such as Souris, where key destinations are concentrated within a relatively compact area, loop networks help connect waterfront attractions, commercial districts, parks, and neighbourhoods in a way that feels natural and legible to users. Visitors unfamiliar with the community can easily follow a loop route without complex wayfinding. This simplicity often increases usage because people feel confident that they will not become lost or stranded along the route.

Loop systems also distribute pedestrian and cycling activity across multiple streets rather than concentrating it along a single corridor. This dispersal can reduce localized congestion and create a broader sense of activity throughout the Town. For waterfront communities in particular, loops that incorporate scenic shoreline segments, harbour views, and community landmarks enhance the overall visitor experience while simultaneously supporting local businesses along the route.

The proposed figure-eight loop concept for Souris builds on these advantages. By intersecting the two loops near the downtown core, the system provides both shorter neighbourhood routes and longer tourism-oriented circuits. Residents can use individual segments for everyday mobility, while visitors can experience the full loop as a recreational route that highlights the Town's waterfront and community destinations.

Development of the Figure-Eight Loop Concept

The figure-eight concept emerged to connect several important destinations into a continuous route. The idea was to establish a loop that utilizes the strengths of existing infrastructure and begins near the harbour and ferry terminal area, travels through the downtown commercial district, extends toward eastern community facilities and the hospital area, and then returns toward the waterfront.

The northern portion of the loop links the downtown area to Souris Beach Gateway Park and the shoreline trail areas. These connections reinforce the relationship between tourism destinations and provide visitors with a scenic walking or cycling experience.



Because the two loops intersect near the downtown core, the system effectively functions as a figure-eight. This configuration provides flexibility for users: residents can walk shorter neighbourhood segments while visitors can travel the entire route as a continuous tourism loop. Below is a graphic showing an early draft of proposed routes.



Figure 1 – First draft for the figure-eight active transportation loop (figure-eight loop marked by blue lines; green lines denote new construction) and resident extension routes (marked in red). Note: Yellow dots signify crossing areas that key informants identified as needing enhanced treatments.

In the figure above, the blue route shows the figure-eight loop that works as a complete network. It relies primarily on existing infrastructure, including the Confederation Trail (also known locally as “Rails to Trails”) running diagonally through Souris, sidewalks on Main St running east to west, and the separate multi-use pathway on MacPhee Ave. Widened paved shoulders can be used to fill in gaps in the network. Areas requiring this work are marked in green and numbered on the map above and include parts of Route 358 (Souris River Rd), Beach Ave, the southern end of MacPhee Ave, and the northern side of Breakwater St. Enhanced crossing treatments should be considered at various points in the network to support connectivity.

The map below shows the existing and proposed infrastructure for the two main routes (blue route: additions create a figure-eight loop for tourism/recreation goals; red route: extension paths for resident-focused enhancements). While this report will make preliminary recommendations about the order of development, development will ultimately be guided by the Town of Souris based on community priorities.





Figure 7. Showing existing infrastructure and the proposed construction. Blue tourism/recreation route and red resident extension routes marked.

Infrastructure Strategy and Roadway Shoulder Expansion

In many locations, the proposed AT route can be accommodated by widening existing roadway shoulders rather than constructing completely separated trails. This approach reduces construction complexity while still creating a safe and clearly defined multi-use path for pedestrians and cyclists.

For planning purposes, a surface width of approximately four metres is assumed for these shared-use facilities. A four-metre width comfortably accommodates two-way bicycle and pedestrian traffic and aligns with commonly accepted design guidance for multi-use paths.

4.2. Route Selection

The routes proposed in this plan have been selected based on the following criteria:

- Alignment with the five guiding principles as set by the Town of Souris: safety, connectivity, environmental benefits, health and recreation, and regional alignment.
- Alignment with existing policies as expressed in the *Town of Souris Official Plan (2024)* to advance recreation and active transportation goals for a healthier community.
- Realistic fulfillment of community direction as gathered through community engagement (key informant interviews, public survey, and public meeting).
- Fiscal responsibility and environmental protection.



The routes proposed have been selected to meet the needs of the community in a realistic manner: taking into account the context of the Town of Souris, including the land available for active transportation facilities and the current and anticipated cost of developing infrastructure.

The two routes proposed in this report—the tourism/recreation centric loop (referred to as the “blue route” in this Plan) and the resident/commuting centric extensions (referred to as the “red route” in this Plan)—consist of components that both fill gaps and extend the existing AT network to serve more areas of Town. The components of the routes cohesively embody the criteria set by the Town of Souris and meet many of the needs that community members identified during their participation in the planning process.

Loops and Extensions: Comparison of Tourism/Recreation Loops and Resident/Commuting Extensions

The proposed active transportation concept includes two complementary types of infrastructure: a primary tourism/recreation-oriented loop (shown in blue) and a series of residential neighbourhood extensions (shown in red). Each serves a different purpose within the overall mobility network and carries its own advantages and limitations.

Tourism/Recreation-Oriented Loop System

The tourism/recreation-oriented loop can function as the backbone of the active transportation system. It is designed to connect key visitor and community recreation destinations, including the harbour area, the ferry terminal district, the downtown commercial core, Souris Beach Gateway Park, and surrounding scenic areas.

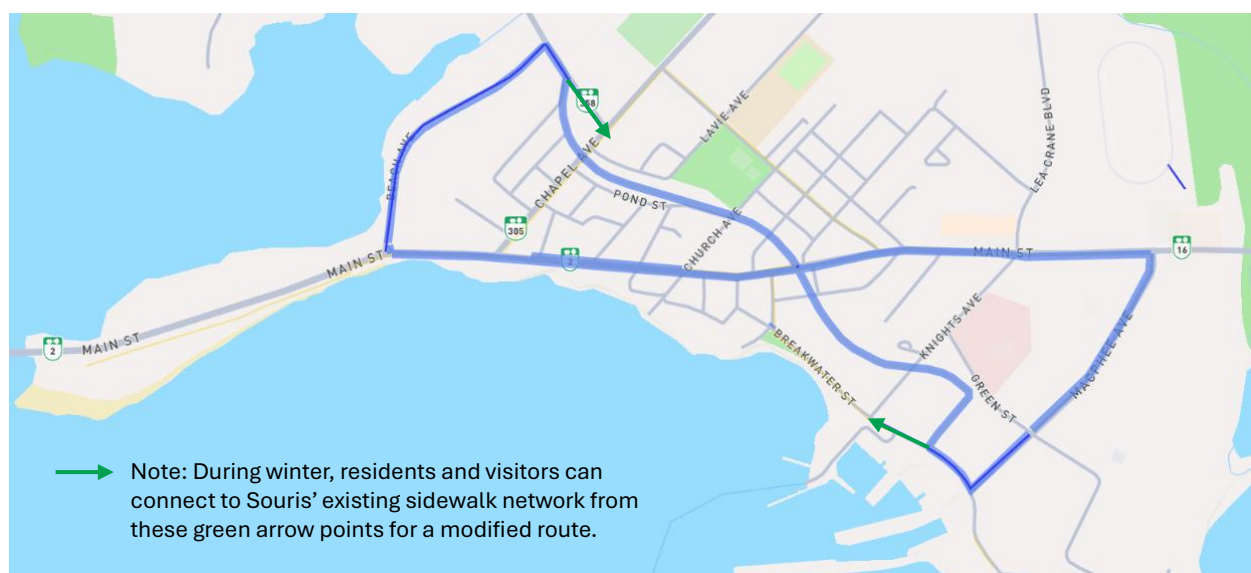


Figure 8. Blue route proposal: utilizes proposed new and existing infrastructure, green arrows show direction to connect to existing sidewalk network while the Confederation Trail is closed to pedestrians in winter.

This route selection reflects the Town of Souris’ guiding principles for this plan of safety, connectivity, environmental benefits, health and recreation, and regional alignment. The route leverages existing car-free AT infrastructure in Souris (ex. the boardwalk, Confederation Trail, and MacPhee Ave multi-use pathway) and adds paved/widened shoulders to increase safety for pedestrians and cyclists travelling throughout Town. The figure-eight loop provides clear routes for users travelling from east to west to key tourism and recreation destinations while converging in the downtown core to increase connectivity.

The route is designed for convenience and connectivity to encourage carless exploration for the benefit of the environment and engagement with Town businesses and community members. The suggested expansion on Beach Ave enhances the scenic exploration of Souris and encourages engagement with and enjoyment of nature. There are numerous public parking spots along the route, including lots at the Matthew and McLean Heritage Building (Visitor Information Centre location), the Eastern Kings Sportsplex, and Gateway Park, to encourage parking and walking. Visitors can park at the Eastern Kings Sportsplex and explore the Town via the e-bikes stationed there if they prefer that to walking.

This route also provides enhancements to recreation in Souris with intentional connections to the Eastern Kings Sportsplex area where the community currently accesses the Town’s fitness centre, ball fields, ice rink, and informal outdoor walking track (known as the old horse track). In addition to all this, the tourism and recreation route aligns with broader active transportation recreational goals and tourism goals in the region. The Confederation Trail, in itself, is a key regional connection and building a network with this asset further supports regional alignment.

Overall, there are numerous benefits for the tourism/recreation loop route, including that it:

- Provides a clear and intuitive route for visitors and recreational users.
- Highlights major tourism assets and scenic areas.
- Encourages walking and cycling circulation between businesses and attractions.
- Can often be implemented using widened road shoulders or shared-use paths, which can reduce construction complexity.
- Establishes an identifiable community feature that can be marketed as part of the Town’s tourism experience.

Limitations of this route include its seasonality and its primary focus on tourism and recreation. It must be acknowledged that this route’s reliance on the Confederation Trail, which is closed to pedestrians December-March, means that the route must be modified for users to rely fully on Souris’ existing sidewalk network during the winter. The fact that this route is built more for supporting tourism and recreation activities than for enhancing day-to-day connections for residential activities must also be acknowledged. However,



addressing residential needs by filling in gaps and extending the existing network is a goal of the next proposed route: the resident-focused neighbourhood extensions.

Resident-Focused Neighbourhood Extensions

The residential extensions shown in red represent potential future connections deeper into neighbourhood areas. These routes function more like traditional sidewalks and are intended to improve everyday pedestrian mobility for residents, including travel to schools, parks, community services, and downtown.



Figure 9. Red route (residential extensions) proposal: new construction to fill in network gaps and enhance safety in the school area.

These extensions bring benefits to the connectivity, safety, and health and recreation of community members, including that they:

- Improve walkability within neighbourhoods.
- Provide safer pedestrian access to community facilities and services.
- Allow residents to easily connect to the main loop network.
- Support year-round local mobility rather than primarily recreational use.

This route is assumed to be a mix of paved shoulders and sidewalks. Sidewalks entail greater expense and construction complexity than widened and paved shoulders, particularly when installed on already developed residential streets. Installing new sidewalks may require more curb adjustments, drainage modifications, driveway crossings, and potential utility relocations than a paved shoulder would. This can come at a high price tag, and because of these factors, neighbourhood extensions are often implemented incrementally as funding becomes available.



Proposed Route Development Components

Tourism/Recreation Oriented Route Development

The following table outlines the new construction required to form the suggested tourism/recreation (also referenced as the blue route in this report):

Tourism/Recreation Route – Development Components		
Area	Description	Length (m)
Harbour	Paved shoulders from MacPhee Ave/Green St to Breakwater St Confederation Trail Crossing	300
Main St	Confederation Trail / Main St flashing crosswalk	NA
Beach Ave	One-sided paved shoulder (Beach Ave/Route 358)	1200
Eastern Kings Sportsplex	Gravel path to horse track (EKSP)	200

MacPhee Avenue and Breakwater Street Segment

One of the key infrastructure segments suggested in the proposed figure-eight AT development occurs along MacPhee Ave and Breakwater St (photo 1). In this location the preferred approach is to widen the shoulder on the western side of MacPhee Ave and the northern side of Breakwater St. This segment measures approximately 370 metres in length.

This improvement would create a continuous connection between the eastern entrance to the Town and the downtown core while maintaining a relatively straightforward construction approach.



Photo 1 – Harbour district transition area within the loop network.

Confederation Trail/Main St Crossing

For safe crossing of the Confederation Trail on the municipality's busiest street, the consultants recommend adding a pedestrian-activated flashing-light crosswalk. Photo 2 shows where it may be appropriate to install the crossing for trail users' convenience.

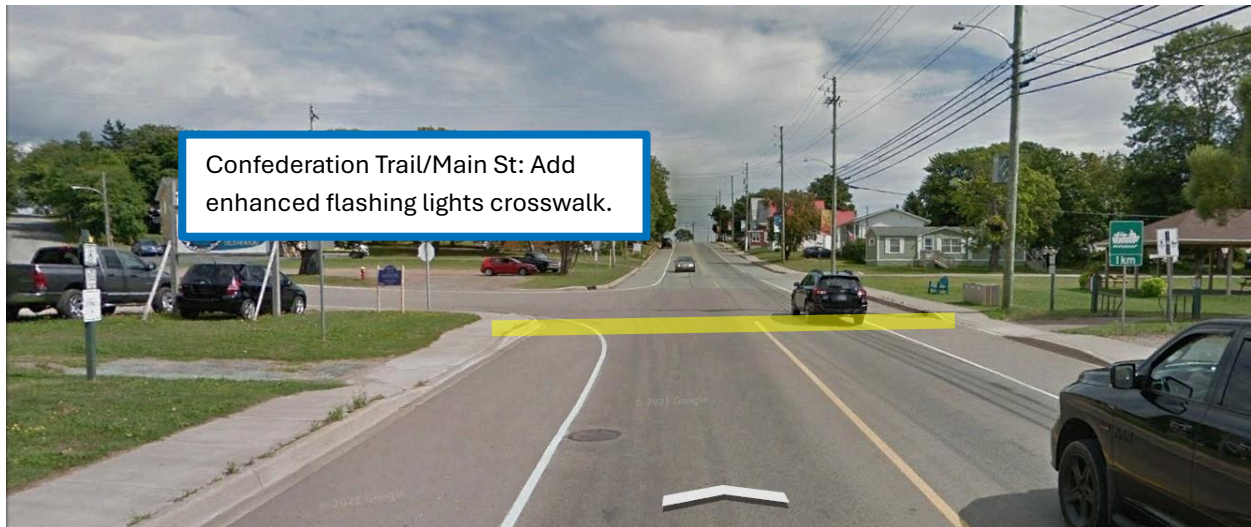


Photo 2 – Downtown crossing location where enhanced flashing pedestrian signals may be appropriate.

Route 358 (Souris River Road) and Beach Avenue Segment

A second infrastructure segment occurs along Route 358 and Beach Ave. In this location, the active transportation facility would be located on the south side of Route 358 and the east side of Beach Ave (photo 3). The alignment along this route benefits from open shoulders and relatively direct connections toward the harbour and waterfront areas.

Combined, these sections represent approximately 1,200 meters of pathway.



Photo 3 – Beach Ave/Route 358 shoulder widening



Supporting Trail Connections

In addition to roadway improvements, several opportunities exist to connect the AT network to existing trails and public open spaces. Short connector paths, curb cuts, and landing pads can significantly improve accessibility between the roadway network and off-road recreation areas (Photo 5).

The old horse track behind the Eastern Kings Sportsplex is an informal trail used by community members for walking and is maintained by the Town of Souris. Building a connector path from the EKSP parking lot to the track is a relatively small addition, but it effectively makes the existing walking area an intentional part of Souris' recreation infrastructure.



Photo 5 – Potential connection from pavement to the former track surface.

Residential Network Extensions

The following table outlines the new construction required for the suggested residential network extensions (also referenced as the red route in this report):

Tourism/Recreation Route – Development Components		
Area	Description	Length (m)
Eastern Kings Sportsplex	Main St sidewalk connections on the north side of the street to connect to the Eastern Kings Sportsplex	900
Harbour	Paved shoulders on Green St, Knights Ave, and on Breakwater St from MacPhee Ave to the lighthouse boardwalk	1,100
School area	Sidewalk network on the south side of Longworth St by the school, Lavie Ave, Colville St, west side of Church Ave, and on King St-Spring St-Pond St to connect to Church Ave	1,600
Legion	Crosswalk and landing zone at Sterns Ave/Main St near Legion; additional street lighting	NA



These residential routes are intended primarily to serve neighbourhood mobility and residents' day-to-day life rather than tourist exploration of the Town. The proposed extensions focus on the school area (which includes Lavie Ave, Colville St, and Church Ave) and on the community service provider area (which includes Knights Ave, where the hospital is located and Green St, where Access PEI sits).

Considerations Regarding Crosswalks on Main Street

Crosswalks have been a focus in all community feedback. With improved or additional crossings noted as necessary and/or desired in a few locations throughout Town. Main St crossings in particular were regularly raised in feedback. While improving pedestrian crossing opportunities along Main St is an important objective, introducing numerous closely spaced crosswalks can pose operational and safety challenges if not carefully planned. When crosswalks occur too frequently along a corridor, drivers may become uncertain about where pedestrians are most likely to cross, which can reduce the effectiveness of the crossings themselves. Excessive crossing locations can also disrupt traffic flow and lead to inconsistent driver yielding behaviour, particularly in areas where traffic volumes fluctuate throughout the day.

This condition is particularly relevant in Souris due to the ferry service operating from the harbour. During the tourism season, ferry arrivals and departures occur up to twice daily, generating periods of concentrated vehicle traffic entering and exiting the downtown area. At these times, a large number of vehicles may move along Main St within a relatively brief window as ferry passengers disperse from the terminal. If multiple crosswalks are located within close proximity along this corridor, repeated stopping and starting of traffic during these peak periods could contribute to congestion, driver frustration, and reduced predictability for both motorists and pedestrians.

Best practice in many communities is therefore to concentrate enhanced pedestrian crossings at key desire lines—such as intersections, connections to parks, trails, or major destinations—where pedestrian activity is naturally higher and where additional visibility treatments, signage, or flashing beacons can reinforce driver awareness. By strategically locating a smaller number of well-designed crossings rather than dispersing many across the corridor, the Town can create safer, more predictable crossing points while maintaining efficient traffic movement along Main St, particularly during periods of increased seasonal activity associated with ferry operations.

The site visit conducted by the consultants identified a need for a crossing at the Main St Confederation Trail crossing. Community feedback shared the priority of enhancing existing or constructing new crosswalks in the following areas:

- Souris Legion (new)
- Topsy Farmer (new)
- Petro-Canada (enhancements)
- Gateway Park (enhancements)

These crossings are all located on Main St which makes sense since many key locations are on this main thoroughfare. Unfortunately, Main St is also an arterial highway, complicating any new developments.

PEI's crosswalk development guidelines are still evolving. Currently, the Department of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy (DTIE) consults a decision tree as outlined in the Transportation Association of Canada's *Pedestrian Crossing Control Guide*. The tree gives loose parameters for the selection of crosswalk locations, and based on its best practices, DTIE may consider the following factors in its decision-making:

- Traffic volume.
- Hourly pedestrian volume (weighted by age/ability).
- Distance from other crossing (ex. 100-200m).
- Landing zones; destination-focused purpose (connection to trail or sidewalk system is preferred; midblock crossings are discouraged).
- Class of road (crosswalks on highways are typically discouraged).
- Vehicle stopping distance and lines of sight (both ends of crosswalks must be clearly visible).
- 10-15m away from parked cars (note: bump cuts are often used when street parking is present).²⁵

Currently—though more policies may be published—DTIE relies on site visits to make case-by-case decisions surrounding crosswalk installation. The Town of Souris would need to work closely with the Province to establish additional crosswalks, if desired.

Some factors to consider with the areas where new crosswalks have been suggested:

Souris Legion: Town Council and staff have suggested that Sterns Ave would be a good location for a Legion area crosswalk. Since many Legion visitors park along the street and at the nearby pharmacy, a crosswalk at Sterns Ave, the street in between the pharmacy and the Legion, may make sense for the Town. Adding a streetlight in conjunction with the new crosswalk would improve lighting in the area. The community has repeatedly noted how dark this area is, so additional lighting would be a benefit. A crosswalk there would require

²⁵ This information was shared by the PEI Department of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy with the consultants for the purpose of this planning project.



removing some existing street parking to accommodate a crosswalk. The nearest crosswalks to this location are 250m at the Petro-Canada (Chapel Ave/Main St) and 290m east at the post office.

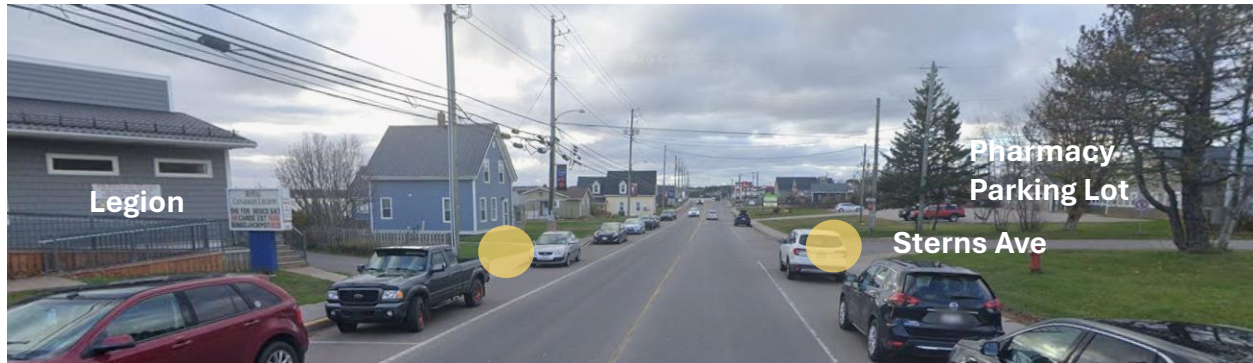


Figure 10. Legion with the key locations noted and approximate crosswalk landing placement marked based on the proposal Sterns Ave crosswalk proposal.

Tipsy Farmer: Tipsy Farmer is located on the corner of Belle Ave and Main St Crossing. Parking, turning traffic, and pedestrian safety for restaurant patrons were repeated issues raised in community engagement. Community members shared concerns about sightlines from the turning Belle Ave traffic and expressed their desire for Belle Ave to become a one-way road. Since the commencement of this project, the Town has held a public meeting to discuss changes to the traffic patterns on Belle Ave to make the area safer. As for potential crosswalk placement in relation to other crosswalks, Tipsy Farmer is positioned approximately 87m east of the post office crosswalk and 90m west of the Souris Credit Union crosswalk to its east.

Confederation Trail crossing (Union Ave/Main St): As the Confederation Trail is a key asset to the Town of Souris and the backbone of the tourism/recreation loop system proposed in this report, a crosswalk for Confederation Trail users across Main St is important for safe movement across the Town's busiest street. A crosswalk in this area would be about 82m west and 210m east of the nearest crosswalks.

Jurisdictional Considerations

For active transportation development, the Town of Souris will have to work closely with the Province of PEI's Department of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy. The route selections proposed in this plan intentionally exclude construction on private land and focus instead on developments along public roadsides or on provincial/municipal lands. Partnership between the Town and the provincial government will be key to active transportation development in Souris.



4.3. Implementation

Criteria for Prioritization and Implementation Considerations

The difference in cost and construction complexity between the components of the tourism/recreation loop and the residential extensions naturally supports a phased implementation approach. The criteria for prioritizing active transportation development align with the route selection criteria and the plan's guiding principles set by the Town of Souris: safety, connectivity, environmental benefits, health and recreation, and regional alignment. Each of the routes included in the proposed network satisfies these criteria.

As feedback from municipal representatives and community members suggested a shared priority of using active transportation to enhance residents' lives and support tourist experiences for the Town's economic benefit, the following implementation recommendations categorize the route components proposed in section 4.2 into four phases.

Implementation Recommendations

The proposed active transportation improvements for the Town of Souris have been organized into four quadrants that reflect geography, user demand, and constructability. The plan prioritizes connections between key community assets, including the Eastern Kings Sportsplex, the harbour and waterfront, school and residential areas, and the Confederation Trail. From gathering community feedback, it became clear to consultants that a hybrid approach between the “blue” tourism/recreation route and the “red” resident extensions route is preferred.

Ultimately, phasing will be determined by the Town Council with continued input from community members, but to provide a starting point, the consulting engineering team suggests using the quadrants for potential development. Each phase includes a combination of blue routes (generally lower-cost or rural-style improvements such as gravel paths or paved shoulders) and red routes (more formal pedestrian infrastructure such as sidewalks), with recent refinements shifting some areas toward more cost-effective paved shoulder solutions.

Zone 1 (Eastern Kings Sportsplex Area) focuses on improving access to a major recreational hub and nearby commercial uses. This includes a short gravel pathway connection to the horse track and new sidewalk segments along Main St to safely link residential areas and the Independent Grocer area shops to the Sportsplex.

Zone 2 (Harbour Area) has been simplified to rely entirely on paved shoulder treatments, significantly reducing costs while still providing connectivity between the ferry terminal,



marina, lighthouse, and surrounding streets, including Knights Ave, Green St, and the southern end of MacPhee Ave. This phase remains important from a tourism and waterfront access perspective but is now more aligned with a rural PEI context.

Zone 3 (Main St / School Area) is primarily safety-driven, targeting improved pedestrian infrastructure near the school and surrounding neighbourhoods. It includes new sidewalk segments on key streets and a controlled crossing at the Confederation Trail and Main St intersection. This phase proposes installing new sidewalks on Lavie Ave, Colville St, King St, and sections of Sterns Ave and Pond St (note: the King St-Sterns Ave-Pond St route provides an alternate residential connection to Church Ave than the Confederation Trail, which is closed in winter). Adding a sidewalk on the eastern side of Church Ave will enhance safety in the area by providing additional sidewalks for students going to school and for individuals accessing the Harbourview Training Centre. Adding a sidewalk on the south side of Longworth St within the school zone will allow pedestrians to walk in the area without having to walk onto the school’s quad.

Zone 4 (Beach Ave) is a straightforward rural connector, consisting of a single-sided paved shoulder linking the Confederation Trail to Route 358, providing a continuous active transportation route to the west end of Town.

Cost Estimates

The Class D cost estimate (2026 Canadian dollars) for the full program is approximately \$2.43 million. These estimates are intended for early planning purposes only ($\pm 30\text{--}50\%$ accuracy) and are based on typical unit rates for similar work in Atlantic Canada. Importantly, the estimate does **not** include soft costs such as design, engineering, survey, permitting, or legal fees. It also assumes that all improvements can be constructed within existing road rights-of-way, with no land acquisition required, and that the work can proceed with provincial cooperation where applicable. The following table outlines the costs for the various proposed phases. It also provides an indication of where collaboration with other entities may be required in order to implement the enhancements.



Table 1. Class D Cost Estimate for Proposed New AT Construction

Zone	Route	Description	Length (m)	Cost (2026 CAD)	Jurisdiction Considerations
Zone 1	Blue	Gravel path to horse track (EKSP)	200	45,000	Municipal
Zone 1	Red	Main St sidewalk connections	900	495,000	Provincial
Zone 2	Blue	Paved shoulders to Breakwater	370	166,500	Provincial and Municipal
Zone 2	Red	Harbour-area paved shoulder connections	1100	495,000	Provincial and Municipal
Zone 3	Blue	Confederation Trail / Main St crossing	NA	75,000	Provincial
Zone 3	Red	Sidewalk network (school area)	1600	880,000	Provincial and Municipal
Zone 4	Blue	One-sided paved shoulder (Beach Ave/Route 358)	1200	300,000	Municipal
Zone 4	Red	Crosswalk and landing zone at Sterns Ave/Main St near Legion.	NA	75,000	Provincial
Total				\$2,531,500	

Funding

Funding for active transportation improvements is constantly changing. The Province of Prince Edward Island's Active Transportation Fund has been a huge source of support for municipalities across the province and, of course, a funding source for this plan. The Town of Souris may apply for further support to complete the recommendations set in this plan.

Many federal programs supporting active transportation are currently closed to intake but may reopen in the future, including:

- Government of Canada's Active Transportation Fund²⁶
- Green Municipal Fund²⁷
- Build Communities Strong Fund (formerly Canada Community Building Fund)²⁸

Other funding sources may become available, and certain phases of development may be eligible for additional funding, such as the Province of PEI's Municipal Infrastructure Fund,

²⁶ Housing and Infrastructure Canada. (2025). Active Transportation Fund. <https://housing-infrastructure.canada.ca/trans/index-eng.html#overview>

²⁷ Federation of Canadian Municipalities. (n.d.). Green Municipal Fund: Safe and active school routes. <https://greenmunicipalfund.ca/funding/safe-and-active-school-routes>

²⁸ Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada. (n.d.). Build Communities Strong Fund Community stream. Government of Canada. <https://housing-infrastructure.canada.ca/bcsf-fbcf/community-communautaire/index-eng.html>



which supports extending existing public roads and sidewalks to accommodate new housing development.²⁹ A key informant noted a potential housing development that may be planned for Beach Ave; depending on how that unfolds, there may be housing-related funding to extend Souris' active transportation network in that area. Currently, consultants have proposed that the area be phase four in the implementation of the route recommendations in this plan.

Policy support and initiatives:

Dedicated policy and initiatives work in tandem with the development of new active transportation infrastructure to ensure the maximum benefits of active transportation investment are realized.

For short-term policy and initiative support, the consultants recommend the Town create a campaign to promote active transportation in the community through education and wellness initiatives. Examples could include promoting a community walking challenge, encouraging more social walking clubs, hosting bike education classes for students at Souris Regional School (note: a key informant shared that this type of program used to occur), and posting on Town social media about bike safety and the benefits of active transportation.

To encourage greater safety between motorists and active transportation users, it is recommended that the Town consider options within their jurisdictional control to promote traffic slowing, such as installing radar signage, and continue advocating with the Province for safety enhancements that fall under provincial jurisdiction. This is especially important on Main St, where community engagement identified recurring safety concerns due to speeding traffic. The Petro-Canada crosswalk and the Gateway Park crosswalks on Main St were repeatedly raised as areas where crossing improvements are needed due to traffic safety issues.

Consultants also recommend that the Town consider investing in lighting enhancements along active transportation routes, specifically improving lighting in the Souris Legion area where community members expressed continued safety concerns about crossing or walking in the area at night due to the street section's darkness and reliance on street parking on both sides of busy Main St. If a new crosswalk were successfully installed at Sterns Ave in this area, a streetlight on the crossing's north landing pad could help improve lighting in the area. Other community suggestions for implementation consideration include installing

²⁹ Federation of PEI Municipalities. (n.d.). Municipal Infrastructure Fund (MIF). <https://fpeim.ca/municipal-infrastructure-fund-mif/>



additional signage to encourage visitors to move into the town centre and having clearly designated public washroom facilities.

For long-term policy and initiatives support, consultants recommend that the Town consider creating a Tourism and Wayfinding Strategy to really focus on the tourism goals raised during this planning process. Many key informants and even some survey respondents noted the need to encourage tourists to enter the Town's centre and explore beyond Gateway Park. The figure-eight loop proposed in this Plan seeks to address this priority; however, a Tourism and Wayfinding Strategy could fully explore the marketing angle necessary to address this need and could build upon the infrastructure-focused planning completed in this project.

Also for long-term policy consideration, Town Council may want to carefully consider if it is in the community's interests to request that the Confederation Trail Souris leg be reserved for pedestrian use in the PEI Snowmobile Association's winter lease, as it is in parts of Charlottetown and Montague. As the snowmobiling seasonal lease with the Province of PEI just renewed this year, the next lease renewal will be at least ten years in the future. If requesting this change to the next lease is a priority for the community, it should be noted as a follow-up item for future Town Council and Staff.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Public engagement was an important component for informing the route development of this active transportation plan and should remain a vital component of active transportation policy and initiatives in Souris going forward. Periodic community surveys can help evaluate the growth of active transportation in Souris as the network develops. Surveys would gauge usage and continue to identify gaps and areas for improvement. This will allow the Town of Souris to stay current with the community's needs and pivot phasing to identify further development that best meets Souris' evolving community needs.



5. Network Maps

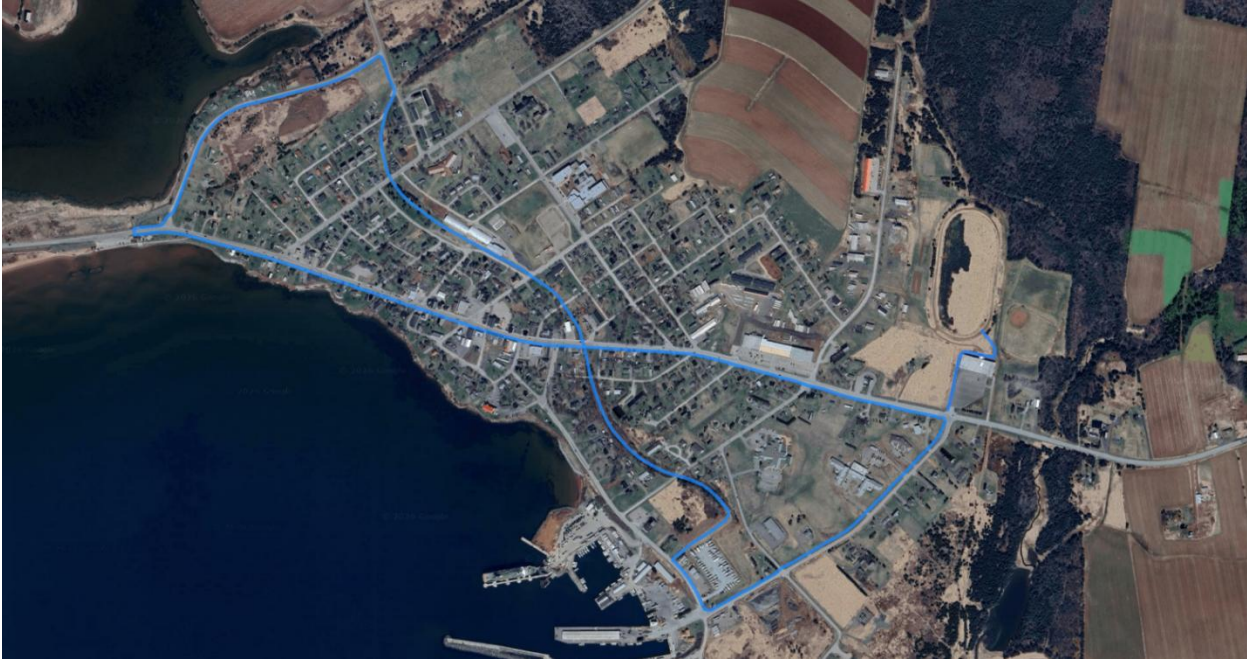
For reference, Coles Associates Ltd. has created these reference maps showing both the blue route of the tourism/recreation-oriented figure-eight route and the red residential network extensions. Proposed new crossings are marked in yellow.

Figure 11. Souris Active Transportation Composite Plan



The figure-eight loop of the tourism/recreation-oriented route is shown in blue below without the new construction areas specified.

Figure 13 Souris Active Transportation Blue Route



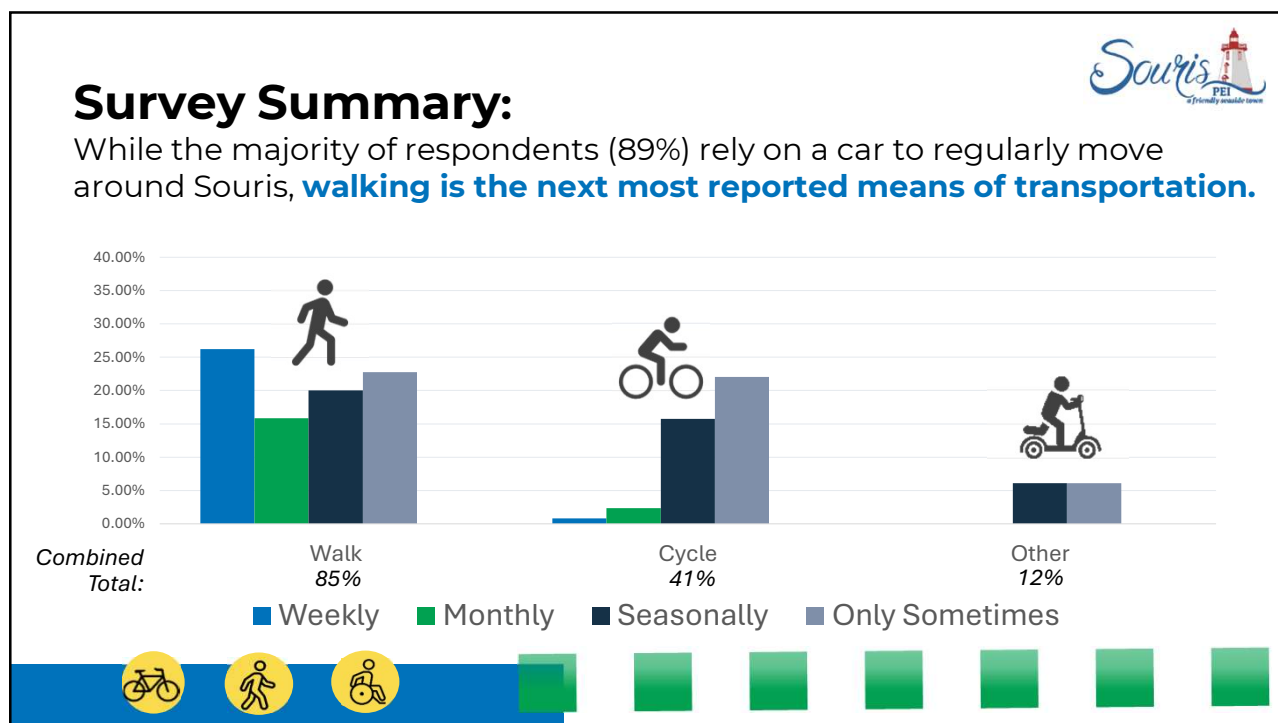
The resident network extensions, which are all new construction, are shown in red below.

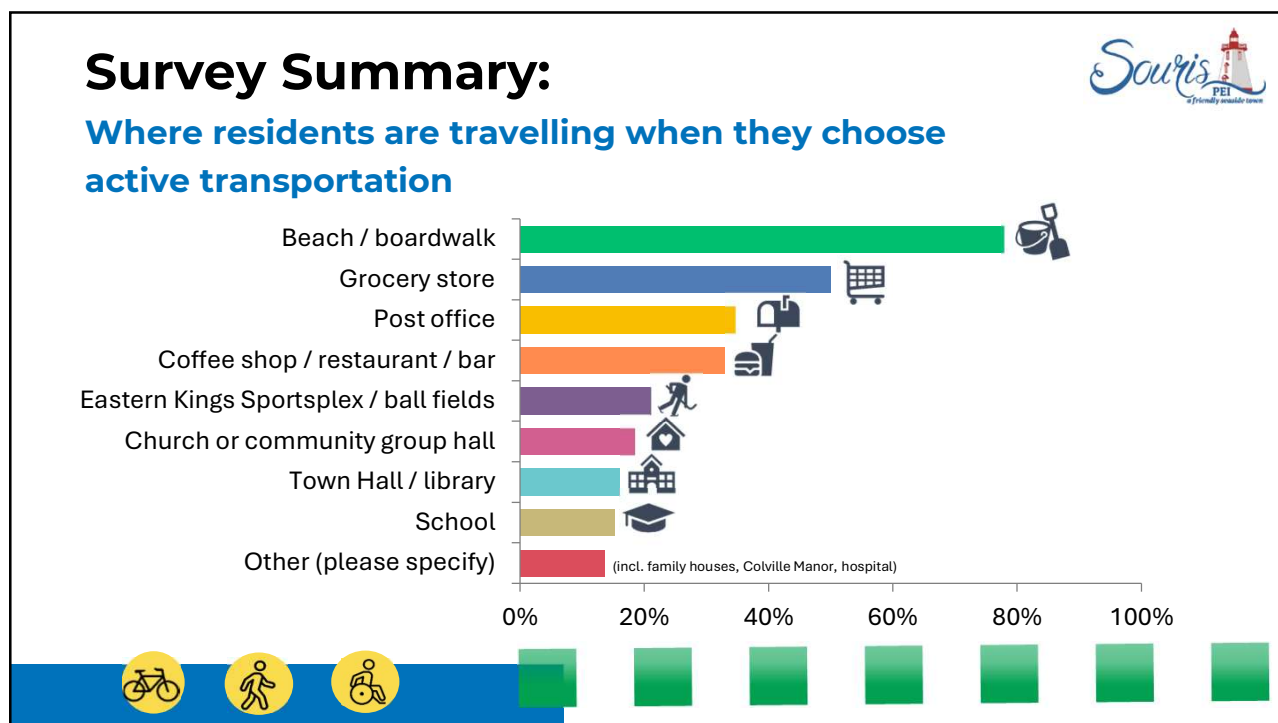
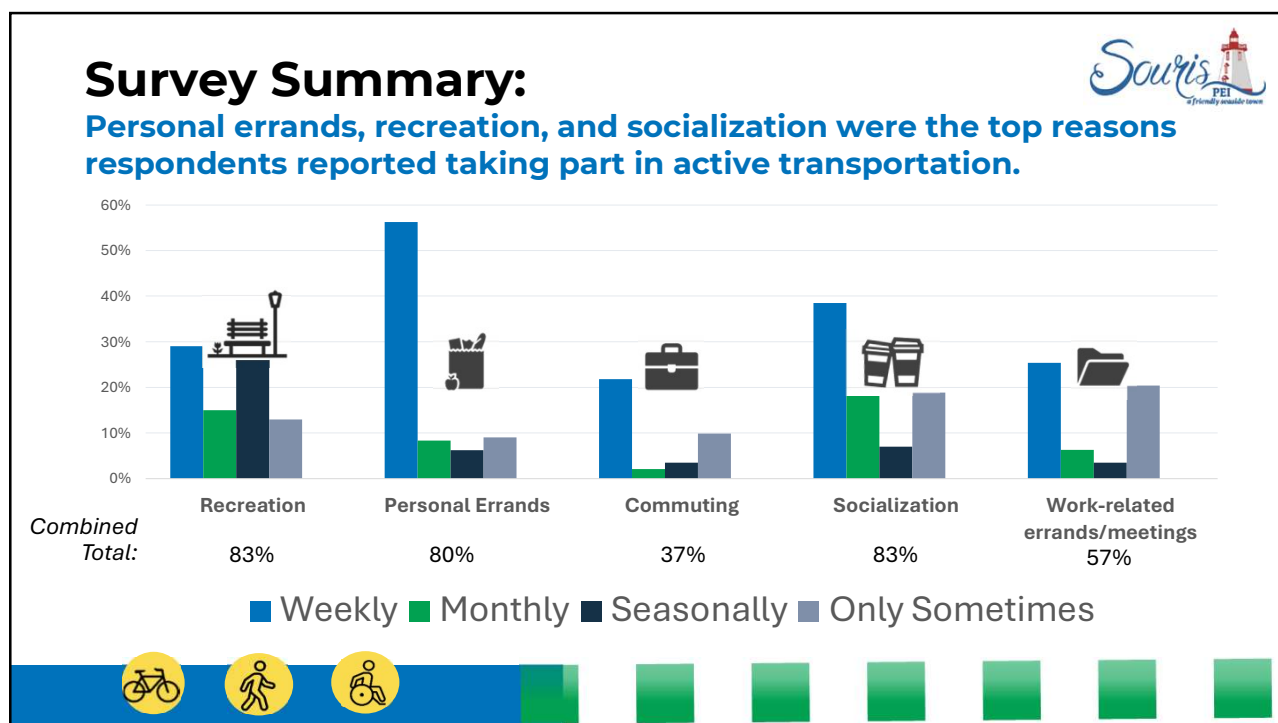
Figure 12. Souris Active Transportation Red Routes



Appendix A: Public Survey Summary







Survey Summary:

What residents would like to see more of



- Respondents shared their opinions that **more boardwalks** (49% of respondents), **sidewalks** (46%), and **multi-use pathways** (45% of respondents) should be installed in certain areas of town. Trails and paved shoulders were reportedly sufficient as is.
- **Designated public washrooms** (72%), **benches** (71%), **flashing crosswalks** (69%), and **lights** (67%) were the top supportive infrastructure respondents identified needing more of in certain areas of town.
- **Comments throughout the survey focused on the need for improved crosswalks and more lighting.**
- Respondents shared comments expressing the need for **increased connectivity** throughout town to encourage people to move from the beach/boardwalk into town, **bike lanes** for safe cycling, and **improved accessibility** for people with mobility issues (ex. yellow lines on sloped curves, handrails at boardwalk, winter maintenance at boardwalk) and sight challenges (ex. flashing crosswalks with auditory features).



Survey Summary:

Residents' main areas of safety/accessibility concerns



- **Respondents were split in reporting they experienced safety concerns.** 57% said no to experiencing a safety concern in the past year, and 43% said they had experienced safety concerns in the past year.
- **Traffic speeding/not obeying signage was the top safety issue**, followed by **unlit areas** for crossing the road.
- **Broken or uneven pathways, lack of crosswalks, and vehicles obstructing pathways** were the next three top concerns for active transportation safety. In the comment section, vehicles not stopping for crosswalks was raised as a major concern.



Survey Summary:

Residents' main areas of safety/accessibility concerns

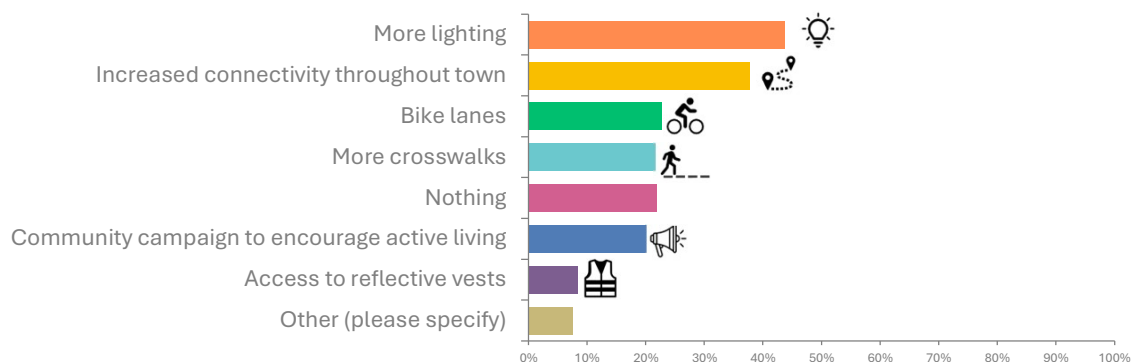


- **Main Street (downtown core)** was the top selected area of concern for accessibility and safety.
 - Comments regarding safety concerns specified the following areas:
 - **Petro-Can crosswalk** (Many respondents commented concerns. Suggestions included: moving the crosswalk and having a pedestrian activated flashing crosswalk)
 - **Tipsy Farmer/PharmaSave area** (Respondents had concerns for traffic, parking, and pedestrians. Respondents commented they would like Belle Ave. to become a one-way street to prohibit left turning onto Main St. for vehicle and pedestrian safety.)
 - **Legion area** (Respondents noted that it is a dark area that is hazardous to pedestrians.)
 - **Traffic passing Gateway Park** needs to slow down and obey signage. (Some comments included requests for more police enforcement and speed bumps.)



Survey Summary:

Residents reported more lighting and increased connectivity throughout town would influence them choosing active transportation more.



Survey Summary:

Recurring Respondent Comments



Safety/Accessibility:

- Top areas of safety concerns were repeatedly the **Petro-Can crosswalk, Gateway Park speeding traffic, Belle Ave. turning traffic and parking, and the Legion area crossing.**
- **Winter maintenance of boardwalk** would be welcome for safe year-round access.
- **Mobility and low vision accessibility** needs to be considered in active transportation infrastructure.

Interconnectivity:

- **Visitors at Gateway Park should be directed into Souris.**
- **Cyclists would benefit from a separate path** from the boardwalk into town.

Promotion:

- Respondents commented that **the Town should promote active transportation and educate residents about active transportation rules of the road and best practices.**

