OKOTOKS 2015

Active Transportation Strategy

Okotoks

Historic Past, Sustainable Future

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Committee Statement

This plan was developed by the Okotoks Ad-Hoc Active Transportation Committee to improve active transportation in Okotoks.

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Introduction

Active transportation is a relatively new term that is becoming increasingly important to communities in North America.

The Public Health Agency of Canada defines active transportation as: *"any form of human-powered transportation – walking, cycling, using a wheelchair, in-line skating or skateboarding. There are many ways to engage in active transportation, whether it is walking to the bus stop, or cycling to school/work."*[1]

Active transportation may not be a term familiar to everyone, but many people in our community embrace active transportation as a way of life to get to and from school, work, shopping, or visiting friends. Numerous people use active transportation for recreation such as dog walking, bicycle riding or for overall health and wellness.

Statistics Canada (2006) noted that 72.3% of Canadians drove their vehicle to work, while only 9.0% used an active mode such as walking or cycling. Communities are now focusing on active transportation modes of transportation that relate to personal health, environment, safety, and economics to improve their community's quality of life and ability to pay for infrastructure.

Active transportation is being used by more people worldwide who choose an alternate lifestyle from one that is vehicle-orientated. It is about a healthier, cost effective choice of transportation to make short trips in the community. Active transportation is also about enjoying nature and making our community environmentally friendly and is often used with public transit to enhance the ability for people to travel further without the need for a vehicle.

Two main categories of active transportation include:

1. Functional
   - For active destination-oriented trips such as commuting to work or school and active workplace travel such as deliveries or attending meetings
   - For brief, short distance excursions
   - Used in combination with public and community transit
   - Typically located in urban communities with shorter distances between places
2. Leisure
   - For recreational pursuits such as bird watching or dog walking
   - For fitness and wellness
   - Available in urban areas, regional towns and rural areas with greater distances between places

[1] Public Health Agency of Canada, available at http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/hp-ps/hl-mvs/pa-ap/at-ta-eng.php

Why is Active Transportation important and how does it make our lives better?

Substantial research indicates that there are numerous reasons why active transportation is an important investment for a community; they can be categorized into four main areas: health, environmental, quality of life, and economics.

1. Health
   - Reduces major health risks and stress levels as inactivity is a major risk factor of chronic illnesses
   - Improves time management by incorporating exercise into commuting

2. Environmental
   - Reduces greenhouse gas emissions and associated climate change impacts
   - Reduces air, noise and light pollution
   - Increases green space with reduced vehicle parking/roadway requirements

3. Quality of life
   - Increases accessibility for children, youth, seniors, low income families and persons with disabilities who are often left out when a transportation system depends on personal vehicles only
   - Reduces road congestion
   - Increases social interaction
   - Reduces crime with increased activity and surveillance from active transportation users

4. Economics
   - Reduces personal costs for vehicle ownership/operations
   - Reduces infrastructure costs
   - Reduces health care costs
   - Increases tourism potential
   - Increases value of real estate
   - Increases productivity at work and in schools

Many studies support that active transportation is healthy, affordable and better for the environment, so why don't more people use it?
The way that people travel is highly individual, but the reasons people give for not using active transportation usually involve the weather, safety concerns, lack of facilities, or not having enough time.
Using or not using active transportation is often part of a "cultural norm" and a way of thinking. Physical barriers are easy to remove, but active transportation needs to be part of our lifestyle and the culture of a community.

Some of the ways to improve our lifestyle and community could include:

1. Treating active transportation as an essential service with community and health benefits, not simply a form of recreation or a luxury

2. Acknowledging that it is the fundamental right of citizens to safely move from place to place using active transportation

3. Measuring, promoting, and incorporating the economic benefits of active transportation into policy decisions, especially infrastructure and health

4. Funding, building, and maintaining active transportation capacity in balance with other transportation modes. Anticipating that citizens will choose active transportation when the choice is safe and practical

5. Including active transportation as part of our community and school education programs

Development of the Strategy

An Active Transportation Strategy provides a long-term vision which highlights the key benefits of improved active transportation opportunities and proposes strategies for implementation. The intent is not to restrict the use of motor vehicles but rather enhance choices and opportunities for multi-modal travel and recreation that promotes physical activity and healthy lifestyles for all ages.

The long-term goal of an Active Transportation Strategy is to transform a vehicle-reliant community into a place where all citizens – including walkers, motorists, cyclists and other users – share a common vision and goal for future transportation needs. It identifies suggested links and extensions of existing pathways and sidewalks, as well as construction of new pathways. It includes plans for prioritizing projects and determining appropriate levels of funding for operations and maintenance. It reviews current standards, by-laws, and promotes education programming for expanded use of active transportation.

The history of the development of an Active Transportation Strategy for Okotoks began in September 2008 when TransActive Solutions, in cooperation with the Town of Okotoks, conducted an active transportation workshop for staff, council members, and members of the public.

The session was intended to introduce the concept of active transportation to the community and to work with other groups such as the health community, non-profit groups, and businesses to determine if further action should be taken to bring the concepts of active transportation to Okotoks. The session was similar to a previous workshop held in November of 2007 hosted by the Healthy Okotoks Coalition (HOC) and the Town of Okotoks. Both workshops were aimed at identifying the current strengths and weaknesses of Okotoks as an active transportation community.

Some of the work undertaken through these workshops included:

1. A walking review of existing pedestrian and bicycling infrastructure;

2. A review of local initiatives in the community that currently promote active transportation as a community priority;

3. A review of active transportation best practices; and

4. Participant observations, including a discussion of next steps.

A recommendation from both of these workshops was the formation of a committee which would make recommendations to Council on matters related to active transportation.

In 2012, a two-year ad-hoc sub-committee of the Okotoks Culture, Parks, and Recreation Committee was formed to develop a Vision with objectives and an Active Transportation Strategy to present to Council in 2015.

This committee consisted of six members of the public, a Councillor, and liaison staff from Community Services & Planning business centres. A Vision was created to guide the development of an Active Transportation Strategy.

The Vision:

Creating a culture for a healthy and active community, Okotoks will plan and develop local capacity and support for multiple modes of sustainable, safe, accessible active choices connecting people to neighbourhoods, open spaces, recreation, schools, and businesses through:

- ***Developing an active transportation vision for the Okotoks community***
- ***Developing opportunities and partnerships to enhance active transportation infrastructure and facilities***
- ***Advising on the design, development, delivery and maintenance of active transportation policies, programs, and facilities***
- ***Promoting active transportation as a feasible mode of transportation in Okotoks and encourage citizens to use forms of active transportation through public outreach, education programs, and events***
- ***Educating the public on the benefits, necessities, and safety aspects of active transportation***
- ***Promoting and enhancing a continuous, integrated pedestrian and bicycle network (ex. Pathways, sidewalks, bicycle lanes) within Okotoks, including future network connections from outside the Town boundaries***
- ***Encouraging legislation and policy changes that support and strengthen active transportation for inclusion when various town plans need updating.***

Public Consultation

Public involvement in preparing the Active Transportation Strategy has been encouraged throughout the process. In addition, the members of the Committee have brought a wide range of knowledge and experience which are incorporated in the final plan.

Committee meetings included discussions on members' active transportation experiences. These discussion points were promptly communicated to the Town and improvements to the active transportation system were implemented, such as crosswalk lights on Milligan Drive, snow plowing, construction detours, and curb cuts.

In December 2012 the Committee partnered with Alberta Health Services to determine active transportation issues and the walkability of Okotoks. A copy of the final report, Walkable Alberta: Okotoks Community Report, can be found in Background Research Documents 1.

In February 2013 the committee and the Town developed a communications and public consultation plan (Background Research Documents 2) for the project. The purpose of the communication plan was two-fold. Firstly, to inform residents what active transportation was and that a plan was being developed. Secondly, to inform residents of opportunities on how to be involved. Measures included the Town of Okotoks website, social media, online/written surveys, brochures, and presentations to Town committees and focus group discussions.

The Town of Okotoks 2013 Community Household Survey included questions on the satisfaction of the current active transportation network including what would encourage people to walk or cycle more. The results of the Survey indicated the following:

With regards to traveling by physical movement (traveling by bicycle, walking, running), 91% of the respondents reported that they were either "satisfied" (47%) or "very satisfied" (44%) with the transportation network, while 5% were "dissatisfied" (4%) or "very dissatisfied" (1%)

Sixteen percent (16%) of the respondents mentioned that improving or expanding pathways and sidewalks would encourage them to walk outside more; while 13% indicated that improving or increasing the amount of lighting in the area would encourage them.

(Banister Research & Consulting Inc., 2013)

Additionally, an active transportation survey was developed by the Committee. The survey was conducted in person at various events and venues including the River Valley Cleanup, the Pason Centennial Arena walking track, the Okotoks Recreation Centre, and various facilities/businesses in Okotoks. The survey was also available on the Town website. The full results of the survey data can be found in Background Research Documents 3. In the spring of 2013 the committee placed four counters along various pathways to count the number of users and record information such as the day of the week and time. This project was very successful as it showed locations with high usage rates in areas that were previously thought to be of low usage. Results of these counters can be found in Background Research Documents 4. Given the success of the pathway counter data, the Committee recommends the Town purchase three additional counters and continue to monitor the usage and patterns of active transportation users.

A workshop in December 2013 gave the Committee an opportunity to partner with SHAPE (Safe, Healthy, Active, People,

Everywhere) and their coordinator, Ms. Raelene Steckly, to work with schools in the development of Active Transportation Strategies. These plans encourage more students to use active transportation to and from school rather than vehicles. Christ the Redeemer Catholic School Division No. 3 worked with both the Committee as well as SHAPE and, as a result, an Active Transportation Strategy was developed for St. Mary's School. It is aimed at becoming a model for all future school plans.

Meetings were also held with Town staff to discuss active transportation opportunities, issues, impacts, and solutions. Comments from these groups can be found in Background Research Documents 5.

In the spring of 2014 all comments from stakeholder groups, surveys, and the Committee were reviewed and major topics were outlined for future discussion. The major topics were discussed at a workshop in June 2014 which clarified issues and identified possible solutions to resolve them. An outline and the summary of the workshop are in Background Research Documents 6.

The Committee also researched active transportation through websites, articles, and presentations. Some of these sites are included in Background Research Documents 7.

Revised guidelines in several countries including Canada recommend that for health benefits, children and adolescents aged 5 to 17 years should accumulate 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity (MVPA) each day.

(http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/82-003-x/2011001/article/11397-eng.htm)

Planning and Policy Framework

The Active Transportation Strategy is a document to provide direction and guide future decision making. It is designed to work with existing and future regional and municipal planning policies, including:

- The statutory planning framework of Alberta under the Municipal Government Act (RSA 2000), as amended, and associated regulations
- The South Saskatchewan Regional Plan (SSRP), which provides long-term strategic direction for the South Saskatchewan Region including Okotoks and area
- The Calgary Metropolitan Plan
- The Town of Okotoks Municipal Development Plan, which provides municipal-wide, long range direction for planning and development
- The Town of Okotoks Land Use Bylaws which regulate development within the Town and implements the principles and policies of the Municipal Development Plan
- Existing and future area structure plans which provide more detailed direction for development of specific areas in Okotoks
- The River Valley Management Plan which provides guidance on development within the river valley
- Current and future master plans for open space and recreation
- The Town of Okotoks Social Wellness Framework
- Town of Okotoks Recreation Master Plan

Issues and Feedback

A number of key issues were identified through the plan development process.

Identified issues include the following:

1. Traffic/Parking around schools

- No plans are in place to encourage active transportation
- Access/crosswalks are poor in some school locations

2. Roads and Streets

- Poorly marked crosswalks (e.g. lighting and paint) in some locations
- Snow plowing in winter (number of pathways, timing (e.g. not on weekends)
- Four way stops in specific locations primarily adjacent to schools create congestion where high volumes of pedestrian traffic are crossing vehicle traffic lanes and there is no controlled intervals
- Lack of marked crosswalks in some locations
- Safety of intersections near the library
- Some of the areas with the least amount of active transportation opportunities were built between 1960 and 2000. For example, narrow sidewalks, no connections to main pathways, and no boulevards
- Lack of lit crosswalks in some high traffic areas

3. Pathways

- Bridge at library is too narrow
- Stairs located on main pathways due to steep escarpment are difficult for some residents are not barrier free
- Snow on small connecting pathways
- Lack of bridges in some areas of the town
- Lack of directional and informational signage on pathways

4. Enforcement

- Dogs off-leash on public pathways and adjacent areas
- Vehicle parking in crosswalks and on sidewalks

- Lack of snow clearing on some residential and commercial sidewalks
- Need for more visibility on main pathways

5. Furniture/facilities

- Lack of bicycle racks in primary locations
- Bicycle racks are not located in prominent or easily accessible places (i.e. hidden at side of building)
- Lack of storage for skateboards and scooters
- More directional and informational signage

6. Shopping areas

- Lack of active transportation storage facilities e.g. bicycle racks
- Access to and within shopping areas is poor for active transportation users
- Perceived attitude of not wanting active transportation users in their businesses
- Large vehicle parking lots are not friendly/safe for active transportation users

7. Downtown

- Access to downtown is not active transportation-friendly (a narrow bridge, stairs, railroad)
- Access to numerous retail stores and other businesses are not fully accessible for all active transportation users and difficult for wheelchairs, scooters, and strollers
- Many intersections are not active transportation friendly as vehicle use is the primary design consideration

8. Land Use Policy and Existing Communities

- New communities need to be more active transportation friendly

- Connections and improvements are required for active transportation users in older neighbourhoods (particularly neighbourhoods constructed before 2000)

9. Education

- Lack of programs to teach youth how to ride bicycles, scooters, and skateboards
- Lack of information on active transportation and how it relates to wellness
- Lack of information on the economic benefits of active transportation
- Lack of education for school administration and boards

In the development of this plan elements of good active transportation infrastructure and usage were identified in Okotoks, which includes the following:

- Crosswalk lights that light up the roads
- Snow clearing on regional pathways
- New communities built since 2000 have a great active transportation system with many pathway connections and road crossings
- The Southbank Business Park commercial area (i.e. Costco area) is well planned with sidewalks for active transportation use
- New pathways and connections were recently installed to provide more connectors to the Recreation Centre and schools.
- Maintenance of public pathways is very good
- An Active Transportation Strategy has been completed for St Mary's School; Ècole Good Shepherd School has researched the process
- Town staff is more aware of active transportation and has started to develop plans to encourage and incorporate more active transportation principles

Active Transportation Strategy Goals

Goal 1:
Establish Okotoks as a model for Active Transportation.
A comprehensive active transportation network is a critical component of building a more sustainable transportation system into the future.

Goal 2:
Identify, implement, and maintain a system of safe routes throughout Okotoks for all active transportation users.
Identifying specific routes where children can safely travel helps to encourage them to walk or ride a bicycle to school. Connecting major recreation and commercial areas will encourage more active transportation users.

Goal 3:
Increase the percentage of children using active transportation to get to school.
Increasing the number of children using active transportation travelling to school will reduce the traffic demands for school sites and promote a healthy lifestyle at a young age.

Goal 4:
Improve active transportation access to downtown Okotoks.
Improving active transportation access to downtown will help reduce parking needs and encourage more residents and visitors into the downtown.

Goal 5:
Improve maintenance of active transportation infrastructure in Okotoks.
Active transportation infrastructure is only beneficial if it is accessible and safe to use. Maintenance is an important component of the active transportation network.

Goal 6:
Ensure all new development supports active transportation.
Ensure community designs support comprehensive mobility.

Goal 7:
Improve active transportation in existing neighbourhoods and commercial areas.
Working with neighborhoods and commercial landowners will help to improve active transportation access and options.

Goal 8:
Increase educational awareness on the benefits of active transportation.
Work with businesses and schools to educate the importance of active transportation.

Goal 9:
Develop an implementation and monitoring system that measures the progress of the Active Transportation Policies adopted by the Town.
Providing a yearly report card to Council on the progress of the active transportation goals will establish accountability.

Goal 1: Establish Okotoks as a Model for Active Transportation

Since the adoption of the Legacy Plan in 1998, the Town of Okotoks has strived to be a more sustainable municipality through principles of environmental stewardship, social conscience, economic development, and fiscal responsibility. A comprehensive active transportation network is a critical component of building a more sustainable transportation system into the future.

Principles:

- Active transportation should be a key part of the Town's Mission Statement and actively promoted in Town literature
- The Town will implement and update plans, policies, and programs that encourage active transportation
- The Town will develop infrastructure that allows for convenient and safe active transportation for recreational purposes and movement between residential areas and facilities within the Town
- The Town will work with neighbouring jurisdictions to develop and construct a regional pathway to major facilities (e.g. to Legacy Field House and Holy Trinity Academy) transportation infrastructure
- The Town recommends working with various groups, such as Alberta Heath, SHAPE, health coalitions, and private industry, to promote and encourage active transportation as a healthy alternate to driving
- Prioritize improvements and expansion to the transportation system in Okotoks so that active transportation is as important as vehicles

Actions:

- Ensure community events and development planning support active transportation users
- Continue and expand the pathway counter program to determine the numbers and active transportation patterns
- Appoint key individuals in relevant Town departments, such as Municipal Enforcement and Planning Services, to champion active transportation planning and activities
- Promote adoption of the Active Transportation Strategy to external stakeholders, the public, and other governments
- Identify active transportation as a key budgeting item in transportation projects

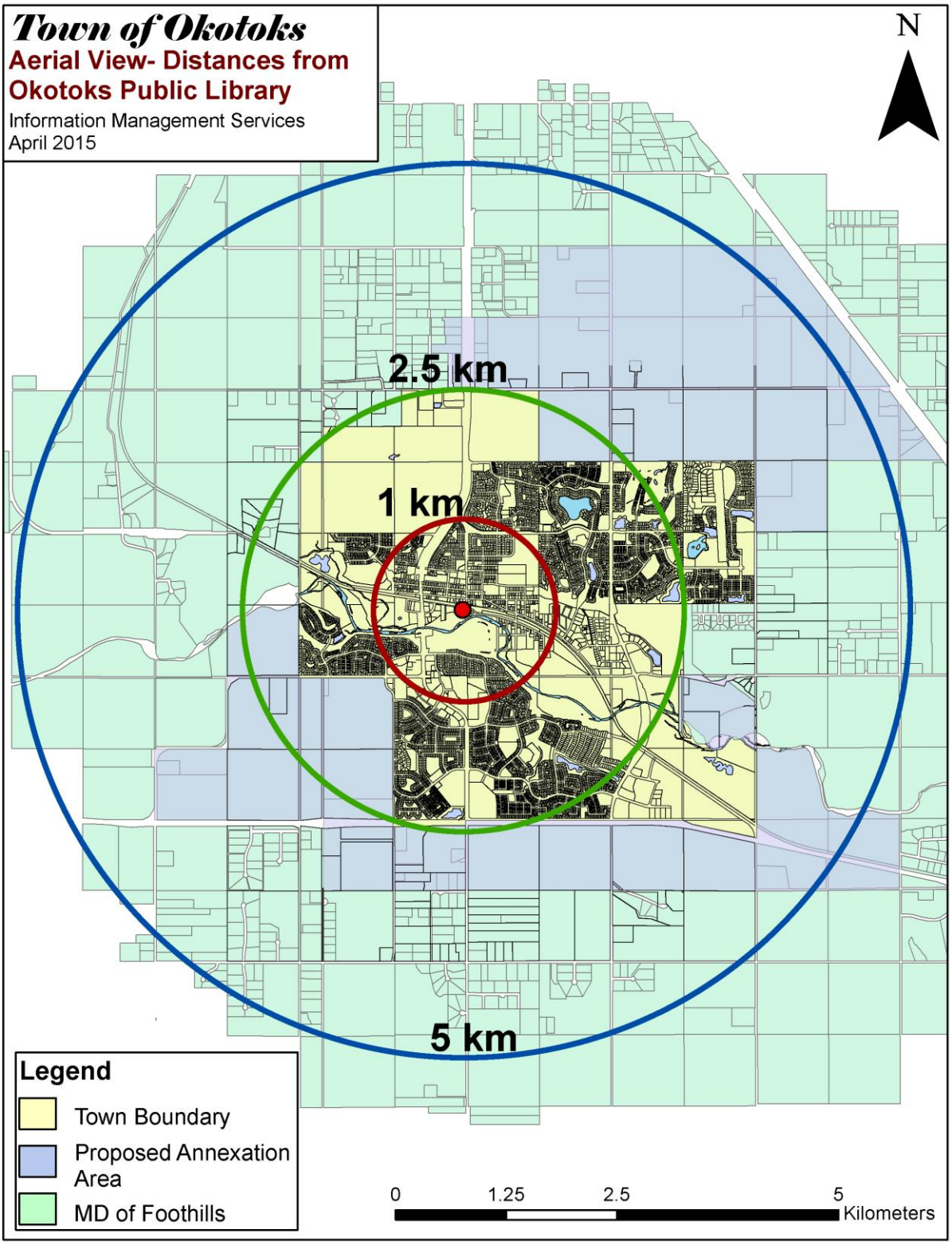


Figure 1: Aerial View - Distances from the Okotoks Library

Goal 2: Identify, Implement and Maintain a System of Safe Routes throughout Okotoks for all Active Transportation Users

The idea of safe routes in North America started in the late 1990s and focused on making our streets safer for children walking to school. This community level program works with the following objectives in mind:

- Increasing safe, convenient, physical activity for children
- Decreasing traffic congestion
- Improving air quality for communities

The safe route program looks at five factors in achieving the above objectives - evaluation, education, encouragement, engineering and enforcement.
While reviewing other safe route plans, engineering and encouragement from peers and parents have been the most successful factors in encouraging more children walking to schools, particularly, the implementation of safe crossings.
The safe route program, originally developed for children, is now being utilized by seniors. Barriers that children face by using active transportation are often the same for seniors, so well developed safe routes will apply to many of our citizens.
A safe route in Okotoks will meet the following criteria:

- The route must be useable for all active transportation users and equipment
- All road crossings will be geared to an active transportation user with the use of lights and signage
- The route will have the highest priority for maintenance including snow removal
- Signage will be installed to explain and locate safe routes
- Safe routes will have the highest priority for enforcement to ensure usability for everyone

Principles:

- A safe route is an established, defined route that is designed to allow children to safely use active transportation to get to major facilities and to get to and from school daily
- The Town will ensure that there are resources allowing for the required infrastructure and the proper policing of safe routes
- The Town will ensure safe routes are identified and designed as part of the new development areas and future transit system planning

Actions:

- Establish and formally identify safe routes
- Establish safe route guidelines
- Prioritize snow clearing of identified safe routes within 24 hours of a snowfall
- Actively enforce safe routes to minimize conflicts from off-leash dogs, uncleared snow, vehicles blocking sidewalks, and other bylaw infractions
- Install signage identifying safe routes, with corresponding location markers to assist first responders in the event of an emergency
- Prioritize the construction of a new wider bridge over the Sheep River near the library
- Address gaps in the safe route network
- Educate the community on the value of safe routes (e.g. benefits, usage, locations, connections)
- Prioritize funds for active transportation facilities including but not limited to benches and storage facilities and amenities (e.g. benches, bike racks, washrooms)
- Periodically review safe routes

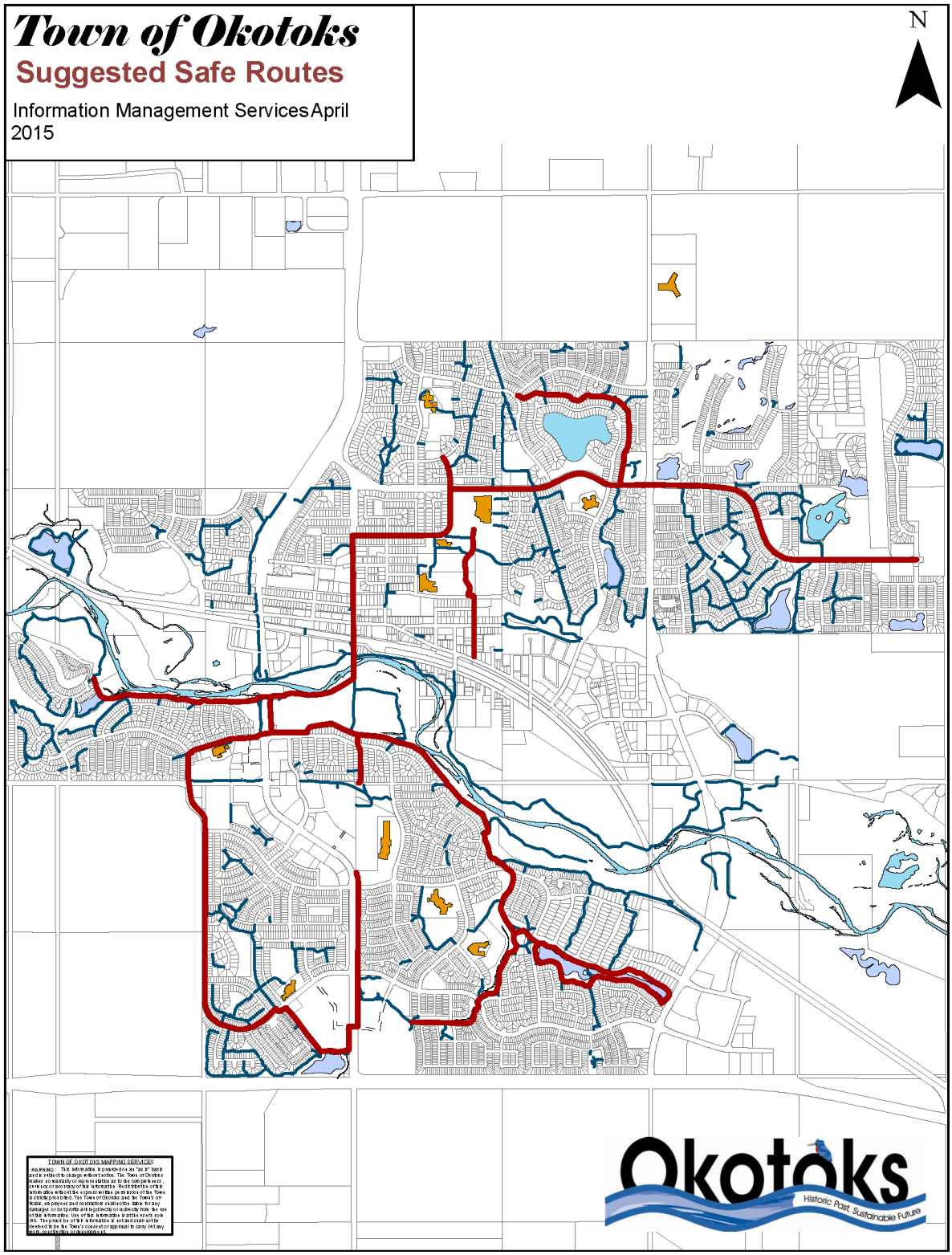


Figure 2: Suggested Safe Routes

Goal 3: Increase the Percentage of School Children using Active Transportation

Many school-aged children are driven to school which creates traffic safety challenges. Increasing the number of children using active transportation travelling to and from school will reduce traffic demands for school sites and promote a healthy lifestyle at a young age.

Following a review of literature on influences why children walk to school, the following applies:
Parents' attitudes and perceptions often determine how children get to school and are often concerned with safety, but most consider traffic safety a higher priority than personal safety.
Living within a 2 km distance of schools is associated with higher use of active transportation.

Principles:

- The Town will work with stakeholders to encourage more use of active transportation by school children
- The Town will ensure that there are safe routes accessing the schools from primary residential areas
- New school sites should be developed to encourage active transportation
- The Town will work with stakeholders to create incentives to use active transportation to and from schools

Actions:

- Encourage all schools to have an Active Transportation Strategy reducing school vehicle traffic
- Encourage school boards to take active transportation into consideration when reviewing school boundaries
- Require Active Transportation strategies for new schools and modifications/additions to existing schools
- The Town should partner with groups such as school divisions and Alberta Health Services to develop educational programs to encourage youth to use active transportation to and from schools
- Active Transportation strategies should be prepared by schools to support any funding assistance from the Town for improvements to site access
- No idle zones and time limited parking should be considered in areas by school sites through public consultation
- Encourage schools to improve bicycle parking facilities and develop storage options for skateboards and scooters
- Develop safe routes with the addition of each new residential development

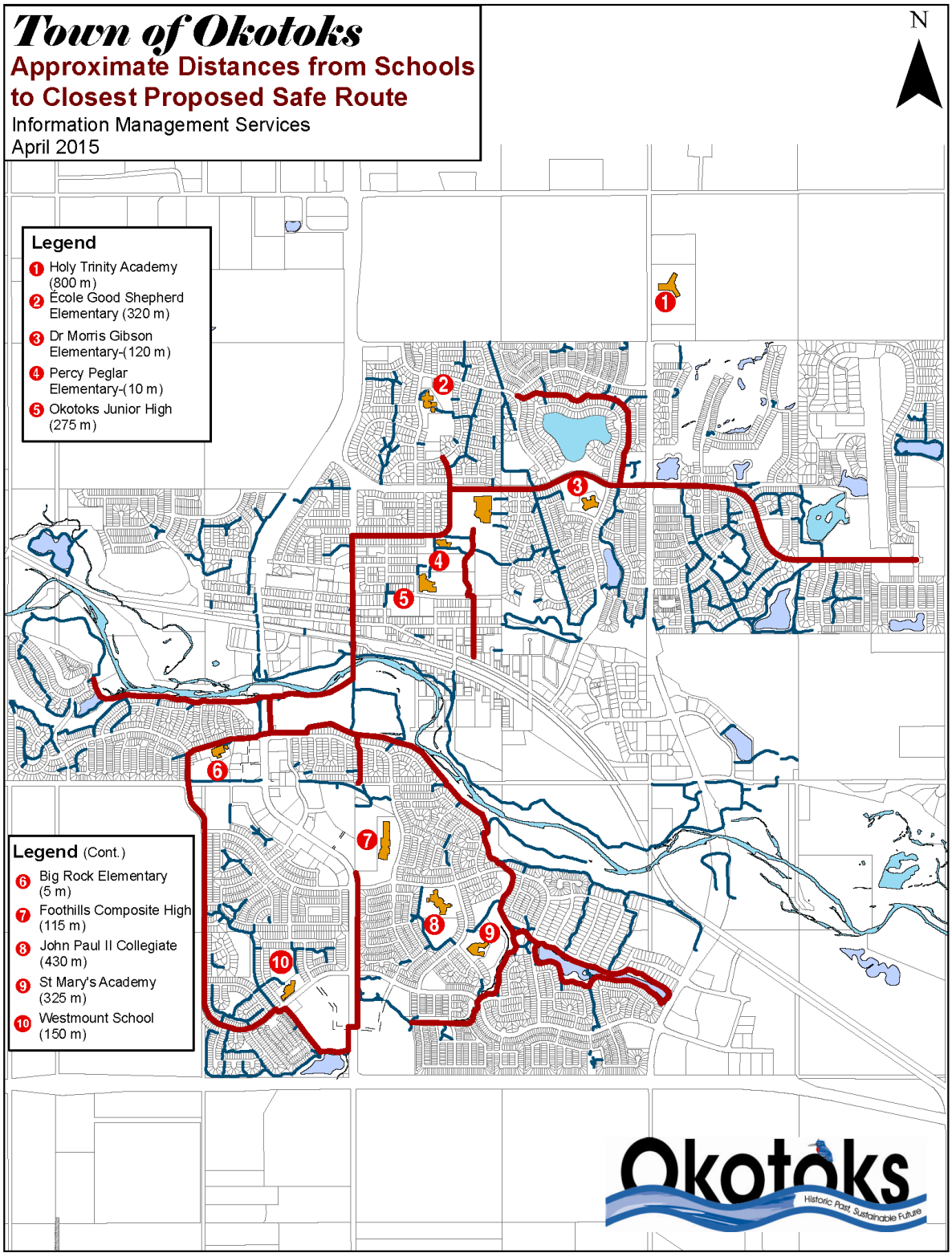


Figure 3: Map of Approximate Distances from Schools to Proposed Safe Routes

Goal 4: Improve Active Transportation Access to Downtown Okotoks

An advantage of downtown Okotoks is the walkability between stores, restaurants, and businesses. However, geographical constraints from the escarpment and Sheep River can create active transportation barriers into the downtown. Improving access for active transportation users will reduce parking needs and encourage more residents to use the downtown area.

Principles:

- Access should be available for all forms of active transportation for travel to, from, and throughout the downtown area
- The Town should continue to improve public active transportation infrastructure throughout downtown
- The Town will work with downtown merchants to encourage greater use of active transportation by downtown users
- New development should consider active transportation principles and parking requirements
- Downtown events should encourage active transportation use

Actions:

- Consider implementation of a downtown public parking fee
- Construct a bridge that meets regional pathway standards near the library for all active transportation users
- Implement surface improvements to Veterans Way to support active transportation users
- Create alternative routes to public stairways into downtown
- Improve downtown pedestrian crossings
- Construct more active transportation parking facilities
- Educate and encourage people to use active transportation to get to and from work; provide facilities to encourage this
- Design and program intersection lights and road crossings for the active transportation user by ensuring pedestrian crossing intersections are automatic (no buttons)
- Enforcement of snow clearing so sidewalks are useable

Figure 4: Aerial Photograph of Downtown Okotoks looking West (2014)

Goal 5: Improve Maintenance of Active Transportation Infrastructure in Okotoks

The presence of pathways, sidewalks, walkways, and other active transportation infrastructure is only beneficial if it is accessible and safe to use. As such, ongoing maintenance is an important component of the overall active transportation network.

Principles:

- The need for the maintenance of pathways and other active transportation infrastructure is equal to the need of the road system
- Snow clearing on the pathway system is carried out in a timely fashion
- Snow clearing at intersections and crosswalks should be to the same standard as the pathways that connect to them to ensure a continuous active transportation network in winter
- Surface repairs to pathways and sidewalks are undertaken as needed, specifically budgeted for, and prioritized for safety
- Icy conditions on pathways are minimized through winter treatments, such as sanding, and rebuilding pathway portions to improve drainage when needed
- The volumes of users on pathways or sidewalks is considered whenever rebuilding is required to determine the width and surface material

Actions:

- Research and improve crosswalk marking materials to increase visibility and longevity
- Implement a yellow dividing line or other means for separation on high usage pathways to minimize accidents
- Install bicycle racks and benches where a need is identified
- Ensure active transportation routes are considered and a communicated detour strategy is implemented for construction projects

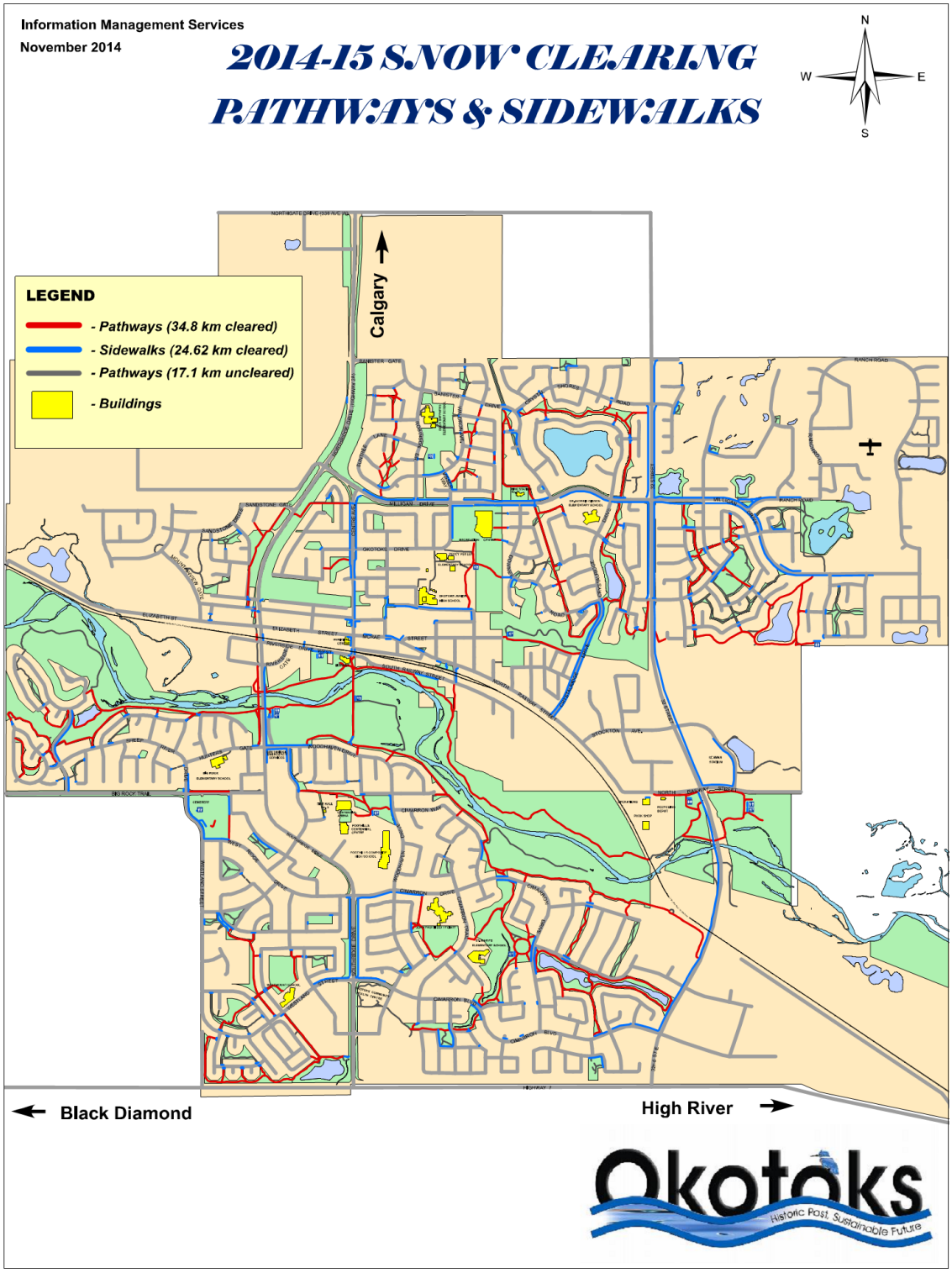


Figure 5: Map of Municipal Snow Clearing of Pathways and Sidewalks

Goal 6: Ensure All New Development Supports Active Transportation

Developers usually do not intend for a neighbourhood or development site to exclude pedestrian or bicycle accessibility, but often vehicle access is considered first and at the expense of active transportation users. In order to ensure a comprehensive active transportation network into the future and encourage other mobility options, the Town must ensure community designs support complete mobility. In addition, research shows that urban sprawl patterns of growth have led to a greater reliance on motor vehicles for transportation, which in turn leads to reduced active transportation. In more compact neighbourhoods, with smaller block sizes and a strong mix of residential, commercial and retail activities, people are more likely to use active modes of transportation to reach places. Studies indicate that urban design features most closely related to walking include block size, street connectivity, and population density and a mix of recreation, retail and employment destinations.

Principles:

- All new area planning will incorporate active transportation as a key and critical form of transportation
- Any future public transit systems in Okotoks will be designed to support active transportation
- New developments should have safe walkable areas, including sidewalks on both sides of streets, minimizing pedestrian/vehicle conflict points, and public road layouts that reduce travel distances and maximize connectivity
- The provision of parking facilities for bicycles, and other forms of active mobility, should have the same level of importance as automobile parking
- Parking facilities for active transportation users should have dedicated active transportation access routes in any new commercial development
- Road crossings for active transportation users should be safe and built before a new area is complete
- All schools, major public facilities and major commercial areas should have safe routes developed to them and be completed before they are opened

Actions:

- Build on existing community design guidelines/criteria for all new residential, commercial, and industrial areas. Ensure active transportation principles for neighborhood and site design such as sidewalks on both sides of residential streets. These guidelines should employ best practices for complete communities and transit-oriented design while maintaining a unique identity for Okotoks
- Integrate active transportation supportive policies into statutory plans and the Land Use Bylaw, including transit supportive policy and increased bicycle parking requirements
- Improve crosswalk light standards for new development areas (similar to the lights on Milligan Drive) and retrofits (e.g. increase the length of light cycles to allow for slower pedestrians to cross as well as automatic crossing lights at high pedestrian intersections and crossings)

Goal 7: Improve Active Transportation in Existing Neighbourhoods and Commercial Areas and principles for consideration in new areas

Previous studies, workshops, and resident experiences have shown numerous examples where active transportation options are less than ideal in existing residential neighbourhoods and large format shopping centres and business areas. The costs of retrofitting active transportation throughout the Town may seem substantial, but there are opportunities through cost sharing, grant programs, incentives, and maintenance replacement programs to upgrade areas of the Town over time.

Principles:

- Consultations between the Town and landowners on any new projects to improve active transportation in existing development areas
- Encourage major facilities, public buildings, and businesses to supply bicycle parking and other storage facilities for active transportation users
- Prioritize active transportation related projects based on mobility for all users
- Research and implement methods to manage a high volume of conflicting pedestrian and vehicle traffic intersections. For example, examine the possibility of allowing for alternating intervals for pedestrians and vehicles
- Painted crosswalks at high-volume pedestrian/roadway crossings and at major intersections
- Bridges should meet safe route/regional pathway standards. Bridges need to accommodate a minimum of two people using active transportation means to comfortably pass each other
- School areas adjacent to park areas should have pathway(s) through the park to connect the school to the roadway or sidewalk located on the other side of the park (fig. 12-14)
- In commercial areas, pedestrian/active transportation corridors should be established in the parking lot area and link adjacent pathways and sidewalks to the front door entrances of the businesses (fig.15)
- Examine methods to create active transportation corridors that are open and wide enough to meet safe route standards. (Not through narrow tunnels or buildings. For example, South Railway St. over the CP tracks to Dagget St. This requires discussions and approvals from CP Rail)

Actions:

- Install barrier-free pathways where practical and feasible meeting the needs of all active transportation users
- Identify and develop walkway and pathway connectors to allow users to access other pathways and facilities
- Increase snow clearing to include connectors between streets
- Upgrade existing narrow sidewalks if possible to a wider width to improve active transportation use

- Retrofit streets with sidewalks on both sides over time where practical and feasible
- Install bicycle racks, benches, and other street furniture in key locations to facilitate greater sidewalk and pathway usage
- Increase enforcement of municipal bylaws to improve accessibility, including snow clearing and vehicles blocking sidewalks
- Work with Canada Post to ensure community mailbox locations are safe and fully accessible and relocate as deemed required
- Develop a detailed implementation plan for continued year to year funding for active transportation upgrades and maintenance
- Review speed limits in existing residential neighborhoods with limited or narrow sidewalks in order to accommodate active transportation travel

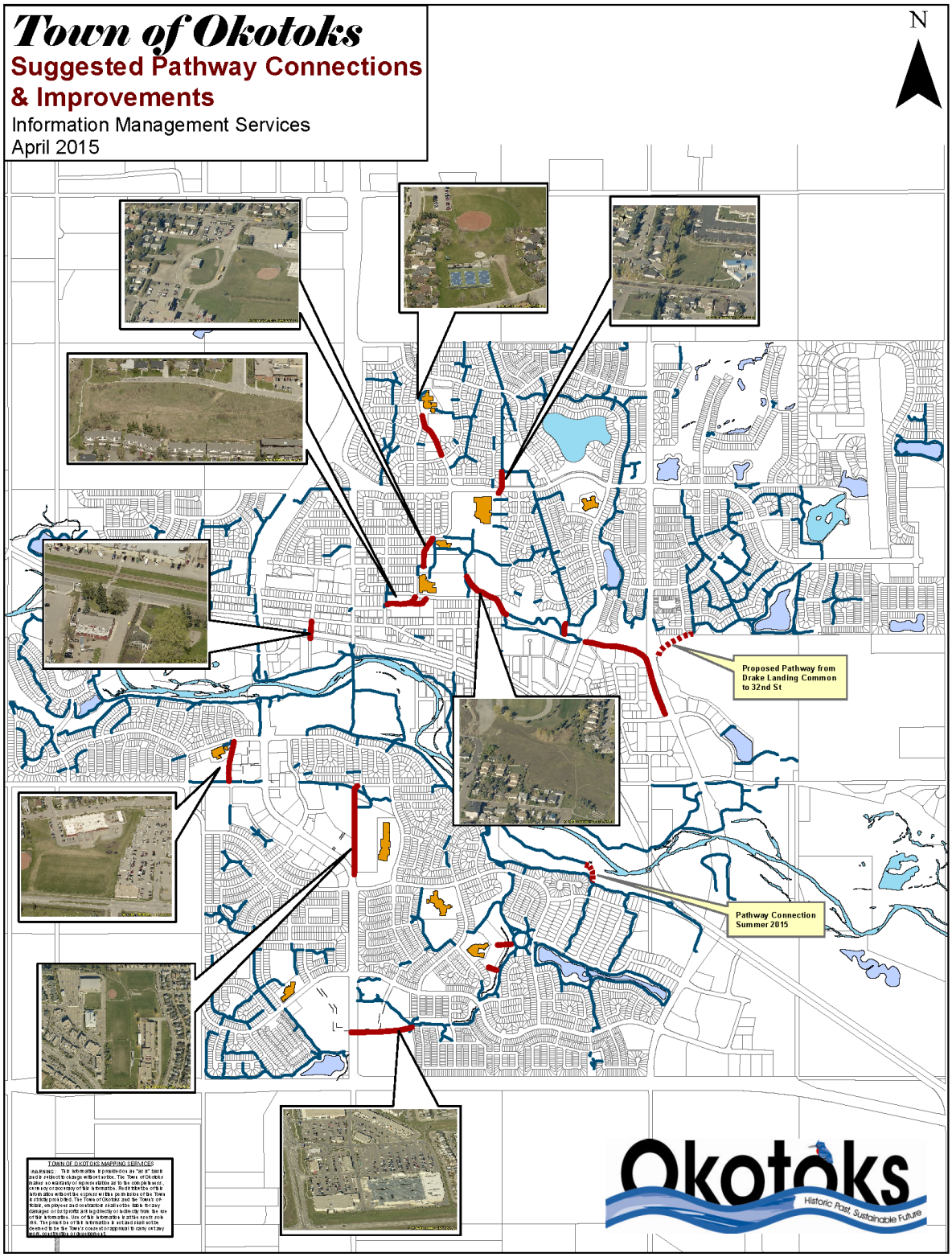


Figure 6: Suggested Pathway Connections & Improvements

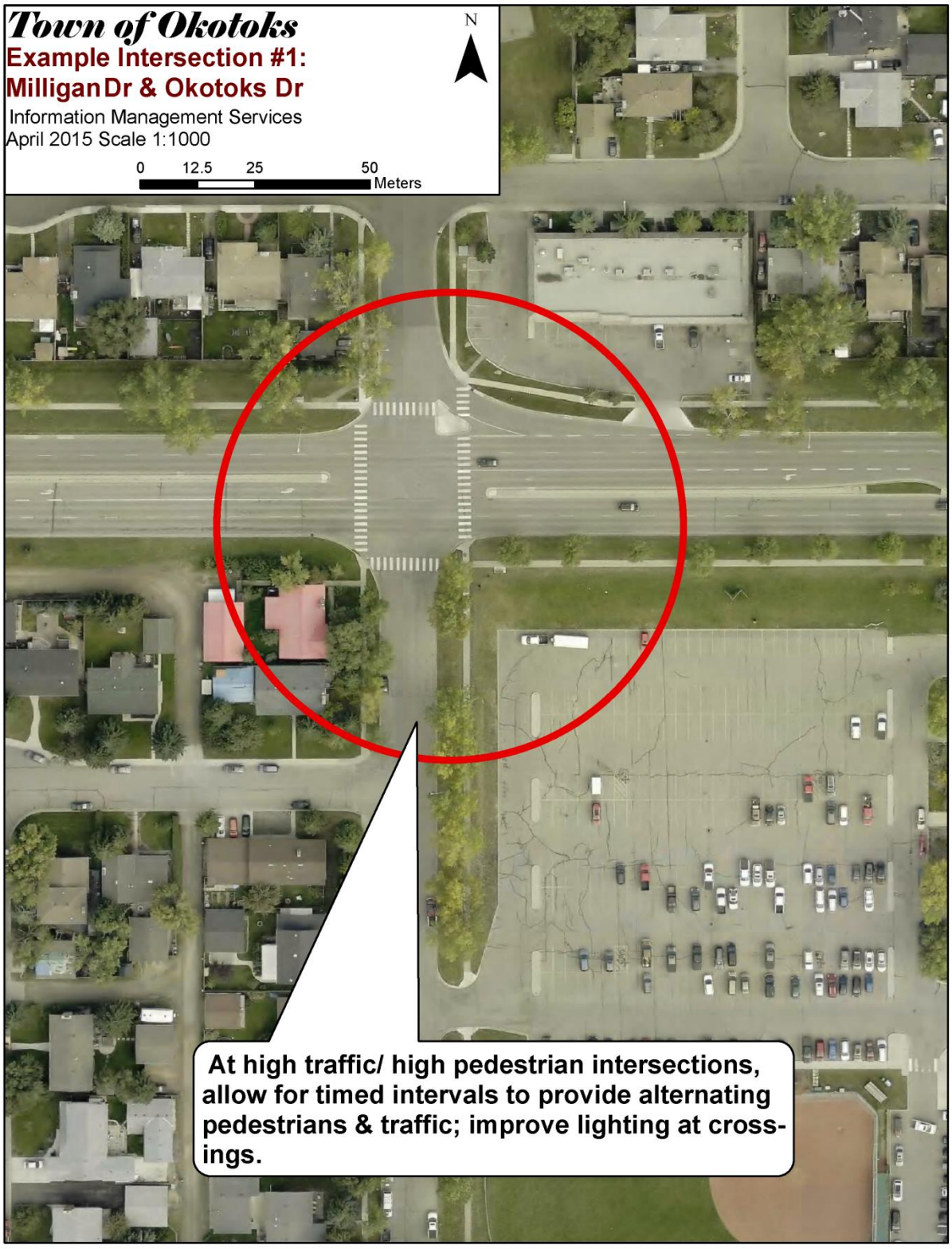


Figure 7: Example Intersection #1

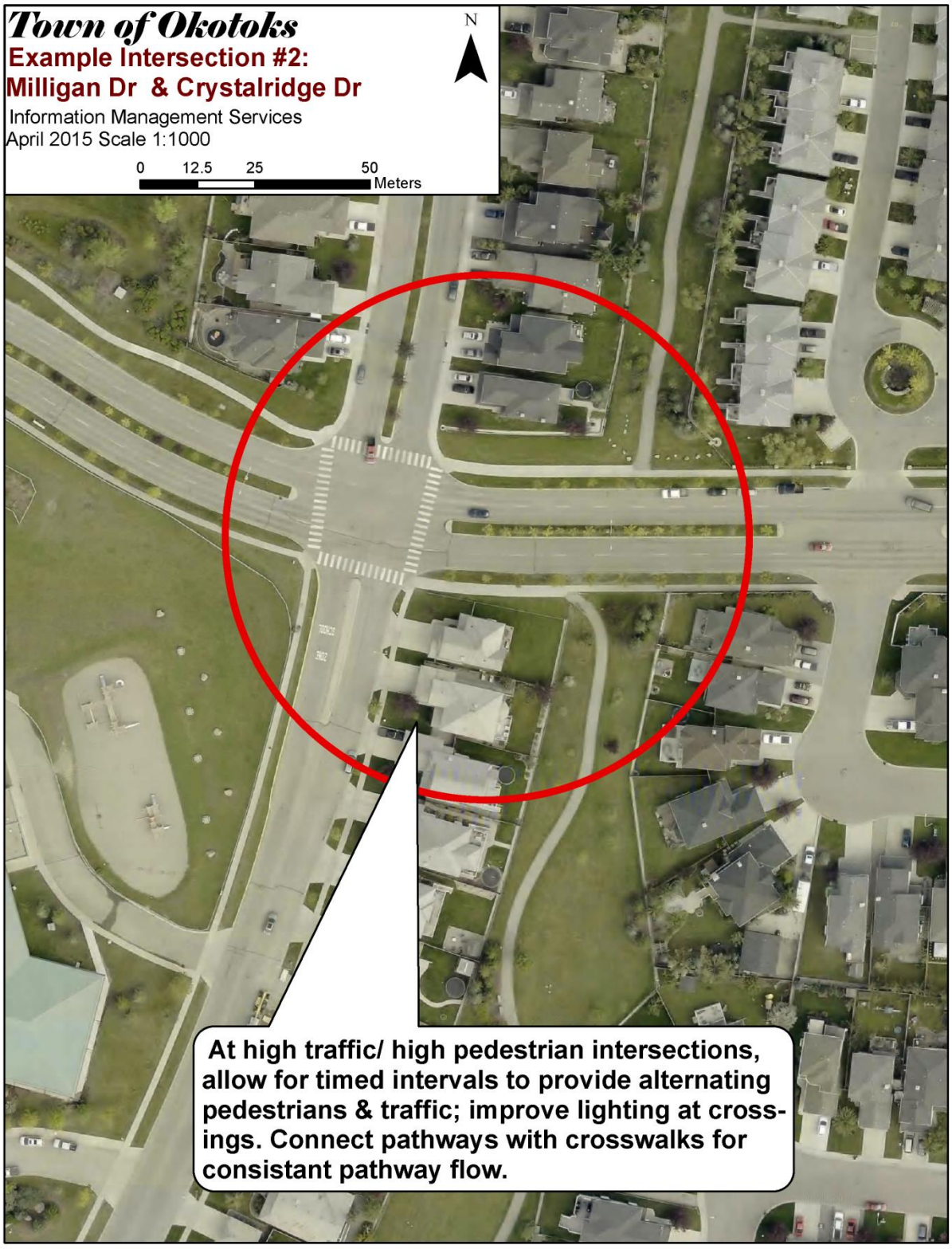


Figure 8: Example Intersection #2

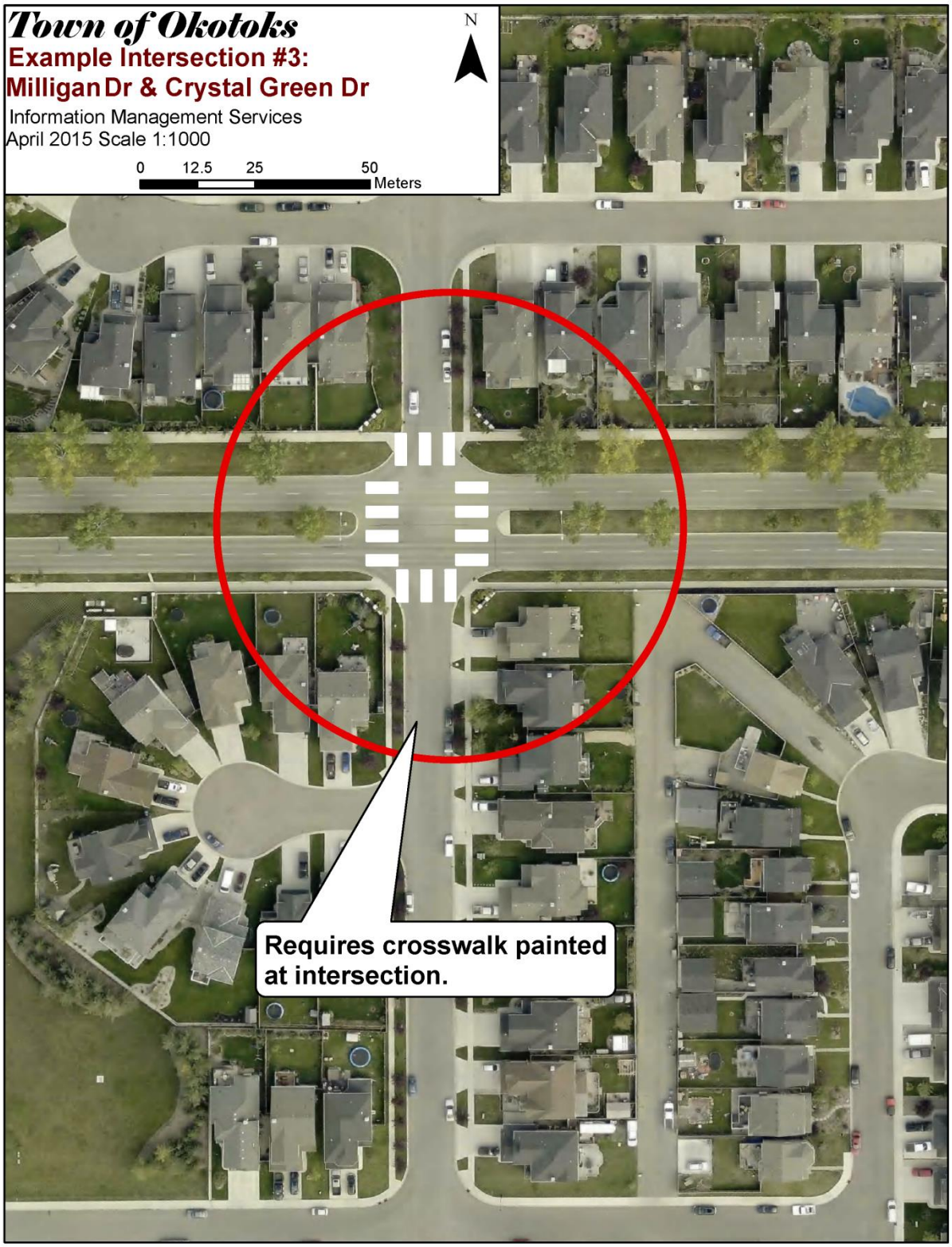


Figure 9: Example Intersection #3

Figure 10: Example Intersection #4

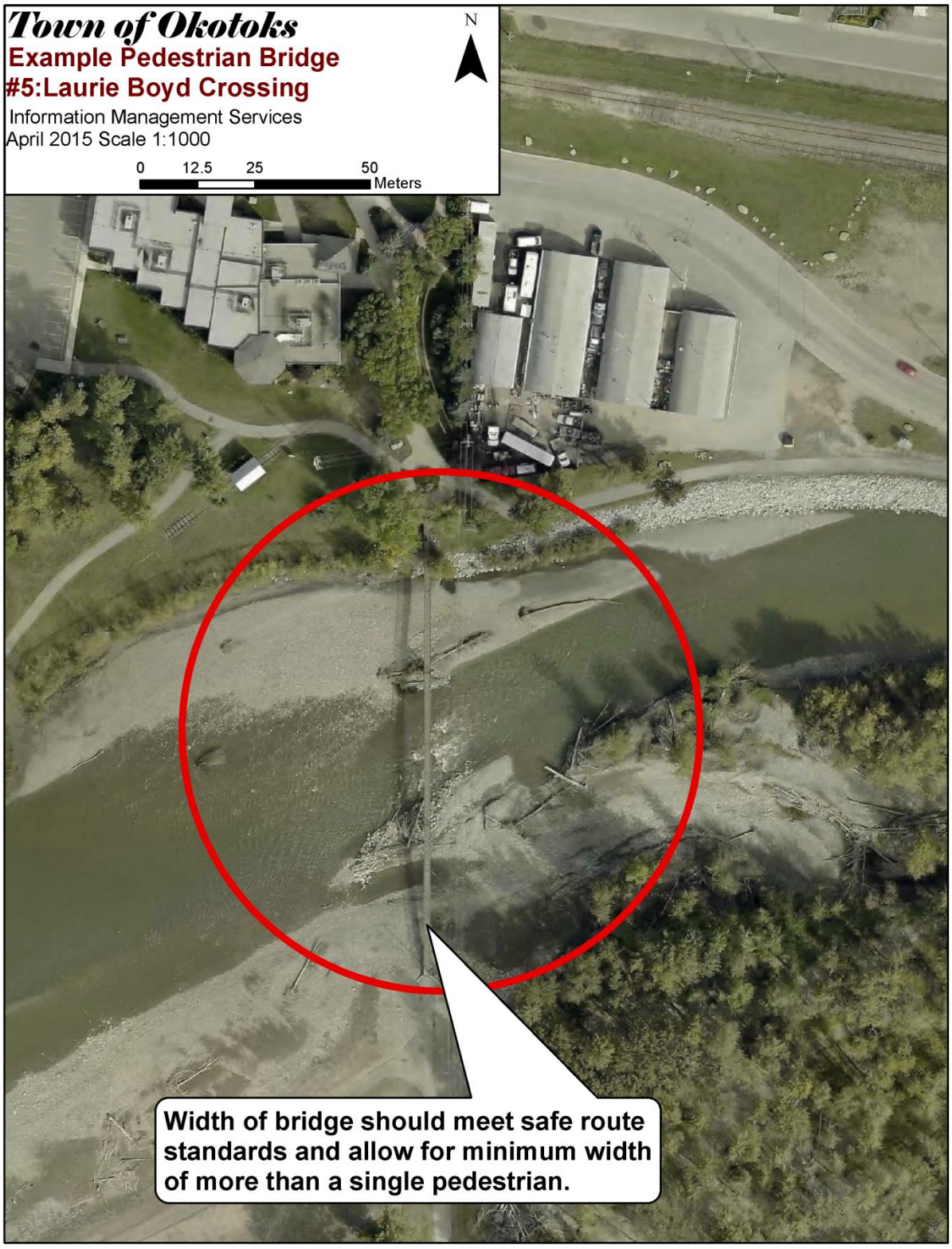


Figure 11: Example Pedestrian Bridge #5

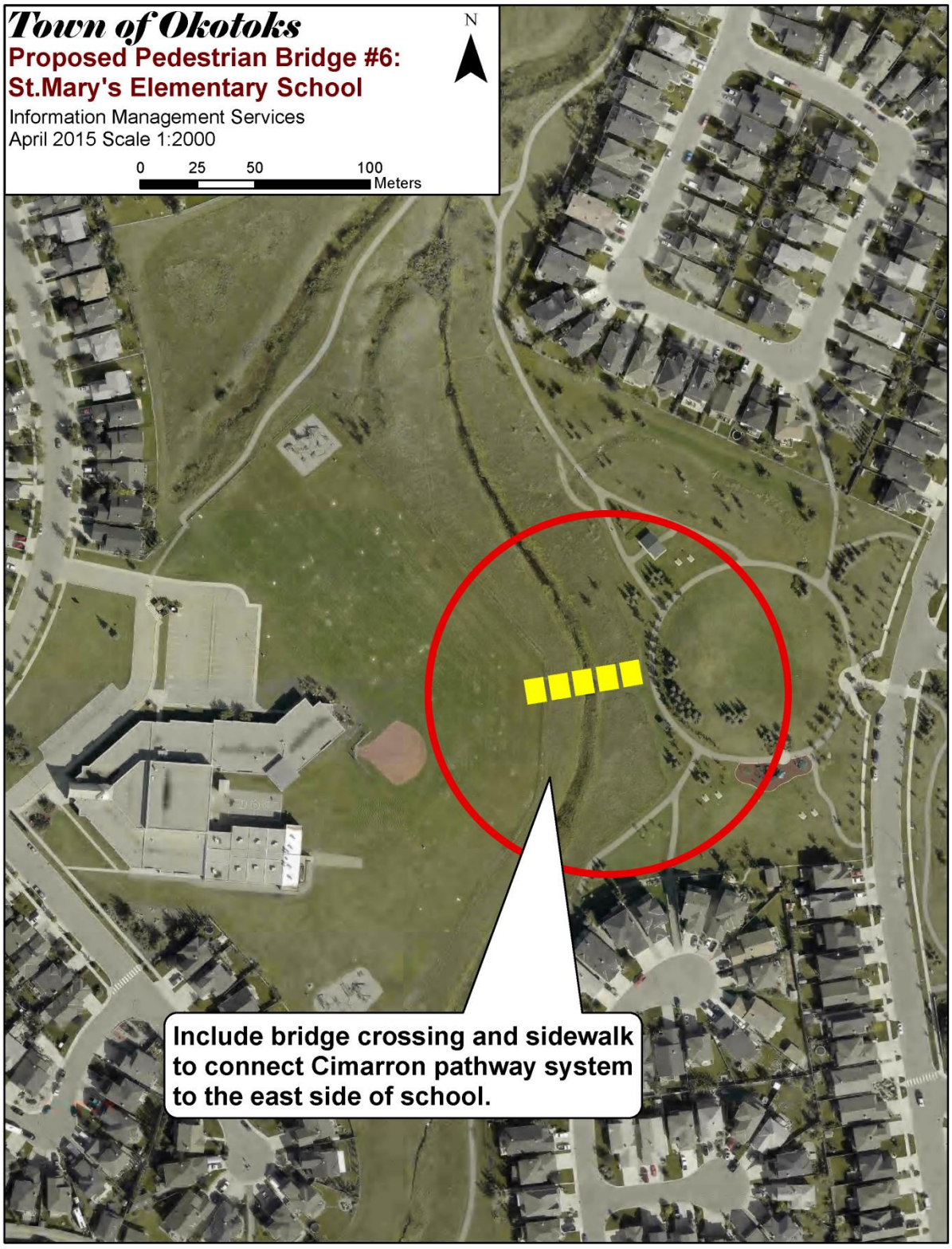


Figure 12: Proposed Pedestrian Bridge #6

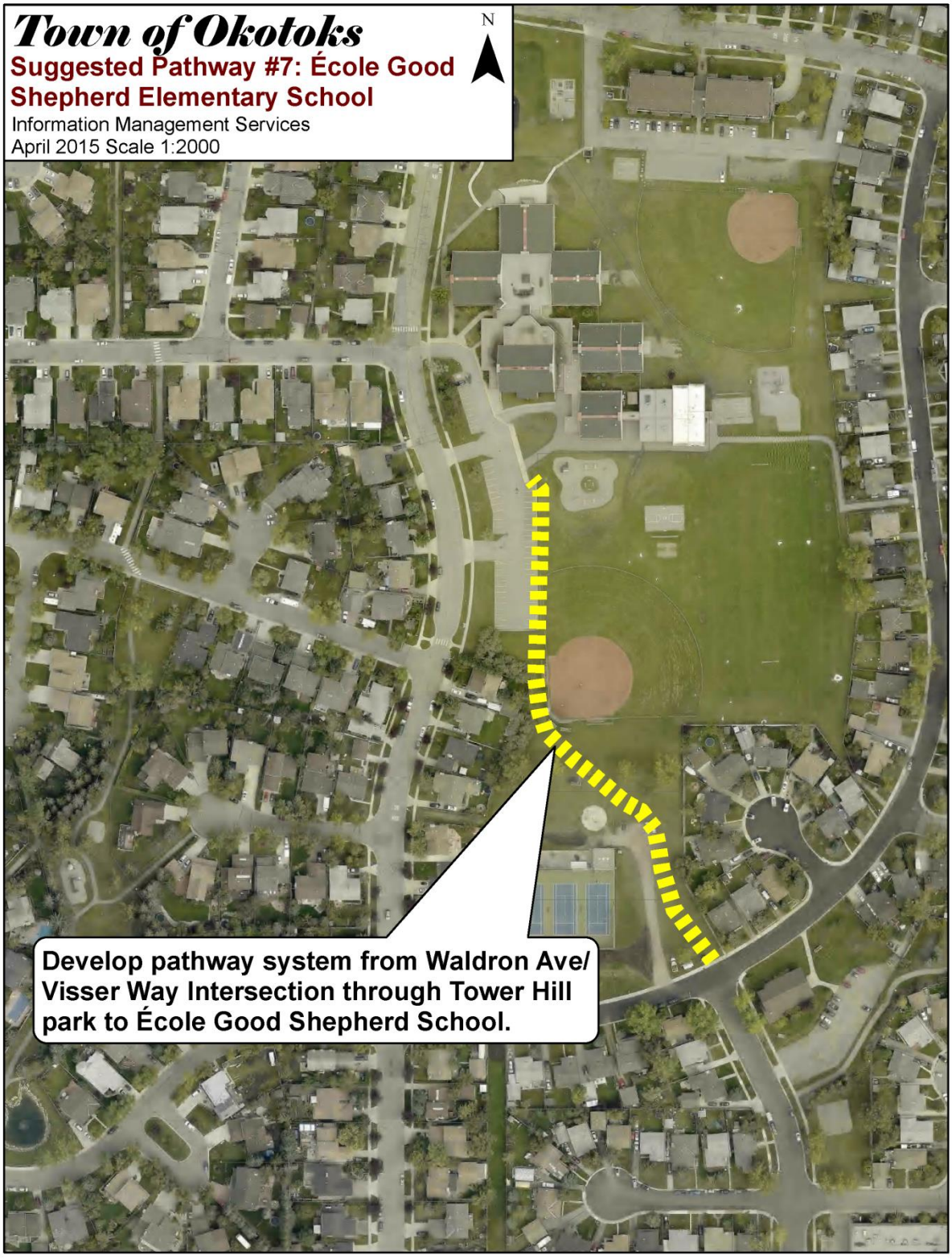


Figure 13: Suggested Pathway #7

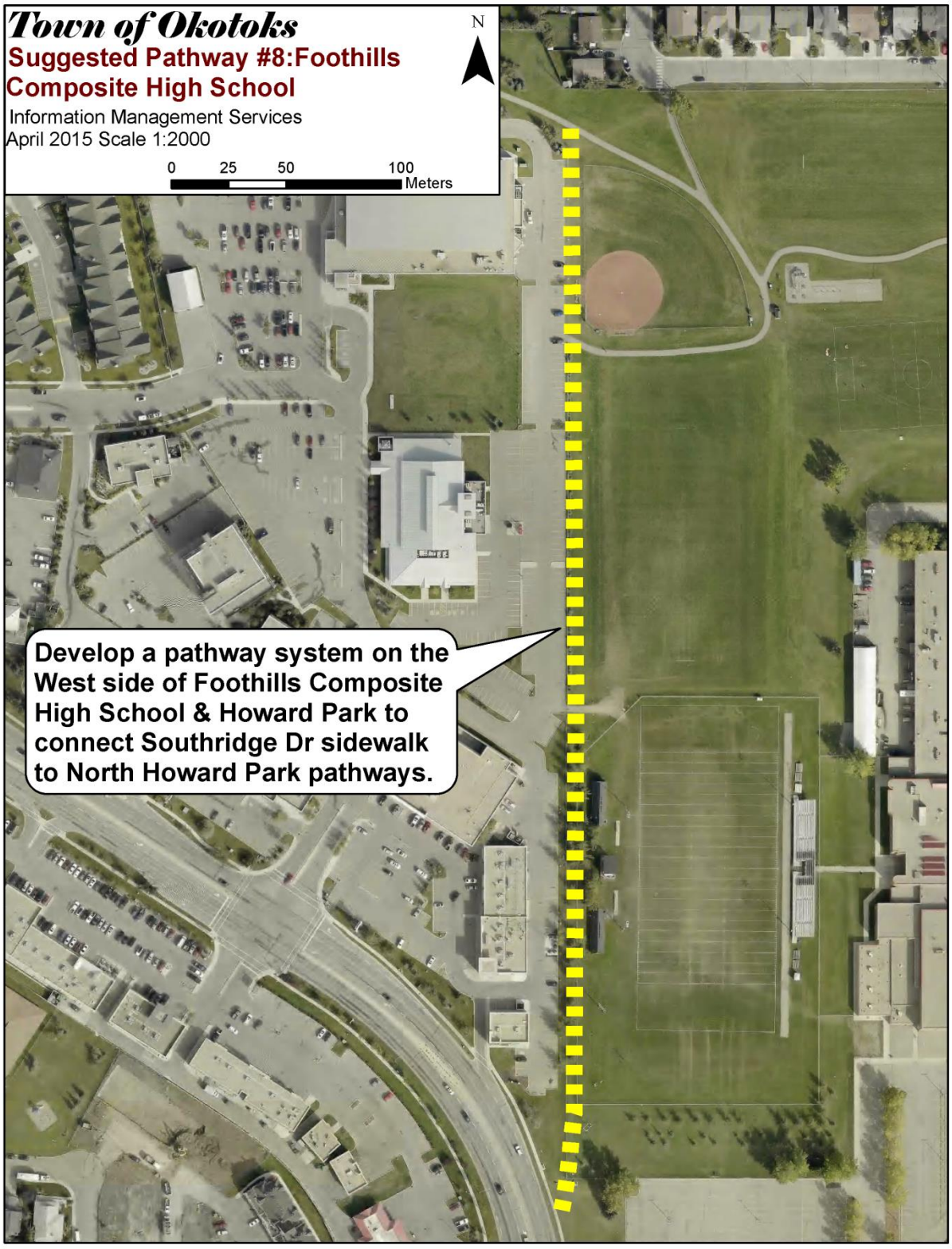


Figure 14: Suggested Pathway #8

Figure 15: Suggested Pathway #9

Figure 16: Suggested Locations for New CP Rail Pedestrian Crossing

Goal 8: Increase Awareness on the Benefits of Active Transportation

Principles:

- The Town will adopt a promotional strategy that will project an image of “An Active and Sustainable Community”
- The Town will work with the schools to develop a program that emphasizes active transportation as a key element of life in this community
- The Town will work with the business community to develop advertising and communication strategies emphasizing the benefits of active transportation

Actions:

- Develop an education program for bicycle safety and other modes of active transportation
- Develop a communication strategy for health and environment benefits as well as pathway and crosswalk safety/ etiquette
- Work with agencies to educate the public on how safe active transportation is
- Increase Municipal Enforcement presence on pathways, especially those paths used for travelling to and from school
- Create location markers for emergency responders
- Consider voluntary assistance with pathway patrol
- Educate Town staff on active transportation principles and continue communication with the public and clients
- Develop information for land developers and other key stakeholders highlighting the importance of active transportation and expectations for new development
- Encourage Town staff to lead by example and use active transportation to get to and from work

Goal 9: Develop an Implementation and Monitoring System that Measures the Progress of the Active Transportation Policies Adopted by the Town

Principles:

- The Active Transportation Strategy adopted by the Town will have embedded in it a system to measure progress on all aspects including the development of infrastructure and the impact on active transportation
- The monitoring system will address deficiencies and emphasize successes
- Active transportation projects should be as important and receive similar consideration as road projects

Actions:

- Develop an implementation plan to achieve the goals of this Active Transportation Strategy within one year of adoption
- Implement a yearly report card to Council on the progress of achieving the active transportation goals
- Develop a cross-functional staffing plan to ensure key Town Business Centres have appropriate staff resources to ensure the successful implementation of the Active Transportation Strategy

Strategy Implementaion and Review

This Active Transportation Strategy covers all of the Town of Okotoks' operations, construction, planning and working with other branches of government including private businesses and non-profit groups. With this board mandate, it is proposed that an individual from planning be designated to champion active transportation in the Town of Okotoks.

This person will lead staff, committees, and residents to make Okotoks an active transportation community.

The various boards and committees in the Town will have active transportation responsibility and, when required, be consulted. To review the goals set out in this plan, an annual report should be provided to Council on the progress and successes of active transportation in Okotoks.

Background Research Documents 1: Walkable Alberta: Okotoks Community Report

The Walkable Alberta Okotoks Community Report is available on the Town of Okotoks website

http://www.okotoks.ca/discover-okotoks/community-initiatives/walkable-okotoks

Background Research Documents 2: Communications Plan

Okotoks Active Transportation

Communications Plan

March 27, 2013

Executive Summary

As outlined in the Okotoks Active Transportation Strategic Plan, active transportation is a relatively new term that is becoming increasingly important to communities in North America. The Public Health Agency of Canada defines active transportation as: *"any form of human-powered transportation. It is any trip made for the purposes of getting yourself, or others, to a particular destination – to work, to school, to the store or to visit friends. As long as it is "active", you can choose the mode – walking, cycling, wheeling, in-line skating, skateboarding, etc."*

Active Transportation (AT) may not be a term that most people are familiar with. Therefore, the goals of the Active Transportation Committee are to inform citizens on what AT is, why it is important and why residents should get involved. Further, a plan will be developed that assists the Town in decision making in terms of infrastructure, etc.

This is the future of our community for many reasons including personal health, the environment, safety, quality of life and economics. The benefits of increasing active transportation are an important message to bring to residents.

The committee will employ a number of methods in order to get this message out as well as obtain feedback from residents: Sheep River Clean-Up, hand-delivered/online survey, brochure for wide distribution, newspaper public education campaign in the Western Wheel (advertising), Social Media: Facebook & Twitter, the Town website, , school and community presentations, school newsletters, utilize summer Conservation Educators to spread info (they can use brochure) while they do their home visits and events.

Short & Long-Term Vision and Key Messages

1. Develop an AT vision for the Okotoks community.
    - Theme: ”Active Transportation: This is the Future”
    - Brand/Images: see attached logo

2. Communicate to the public the plan that will be developed assisting the Town in decision making in terms of pathways, infrastructure, etc.

3. Promote a community profile of AT as a new and improved way of life and one that compliments Okotoks’ sustainable reputation. Encourage all residents to partake. Highlight the benefits for personal health, the environment, safety, quality of life and economics.

4. Promote positive impacts of AT:

    - improved well-being
    - increased social cohesion
    - increased community identity
    - increased equality

5. Promote why AT Matters:

    - Health: reduce major health risks; reduce stress levels; improve time management by incorporating exercise into commuting;
    - Environment: reduce greenhouse gas emissions and associate climate change impacts; reduce air pollution; conserve green space with reduce vehicle parking/roadway requirements;
    - Quality of Life: reduce roadway noise, pollution & congestion; increase social interaction; reduce crime with increased activity and surveillance from the street; accessible to children, youth, seniors, low income families and persons with disabilities
    - Economic: reduced personal costs for motor vehicle ownership/operation; reduced infrastructure costs; increased tourism potential; increased value. of real estate

6. Keep positives of active transportation in forefront:

    - AT is easy to use and fun! AT is catching on all over the world with more people choosing to realign their travel patterns and get around using their own steam;
    - Active transportation is about using vehicles less for short trips to and from work or around the neighbourhood. AT is also about enjoying nature, being healthier and more active, making our town more livable and cutting down on air and noise pollution.

7. Outline key concepts of AT:

    - **Functional active transportation**: active destination oriented trips (e.g.: commuting to work or school); active workplace travel (e.g.: attending meetings); using vehicles less for short trips to and from work, school shopping or around the neighbourhood;
    - **Leisure active transportation**: recreational pursuits and fitness; may take place in off-road locations.

8. Promote AT-related events such as: car-free day/bicycle to work day; annual commuter challenge; Conservation Educator event during Environment Week (June); Internal events such as Town Lunch n' Learn

9. Future Communications– budget implications (will be included in previously mentioned plan); bylaw changes; land use plans; maintenance standards; infrastructure

Goals and Objectives

- To raise awareness and provide details on active transportation
- To receive public input on AT and how it plays into Okotoks' future
- Create a dialogue between Town, active transportation committee (and others), residents and other stakeholders (e.g. developers, consultants, seniors, youth, families, service groups, sports groups, media)
- Extensive public education campaign

Target Audience

All town of Okotoks residents & business owners; stakeholders; Town staff

Tactics

A draft public education campaign will be created and be launched upon approval. This will include a hand-delivered survey, same survey on the Town website (in July 2013); brochure, local print media/, social media, Town website page and public forums.

Creation of AT web page (promote Walkable Communities too)

Use of Social Media (Facebook & Twitter)

Hand-delivered/Online Survey – one question will be included in May 2013 Household Survey; survey available on the Town's website (in July on the AT page), potentially available at the Municipal Centre, Recreation Centre, Recycling Centre, Senior's Centres, Library; volunteers from the Active Transportation Committee to hand out at events, on pathways, bleachers at sports fields, Dawgs games, Sobeys, etc. (with direction to take finished surveys to the Rec Centre); include area for comments on survey

AT Info Brochure – wide distribution

Western Wheel Ads - stand-alone and Town Pages

Eagle 100.9 FM radio spots

Local Media – provide them with background, news release, Q & A

School Newsletters/Presentations – Grade 9 curriculum includes an Active Living portion

Community Presentations

Town Staff Presentations (one on one) – Municipal Enforcement; Planning; Engineering; Open Spaces; Economic Development; Communications
Summer Conservation Educators – include brochure in their door-to-door visits

Timelines

Survey to be handed out at the Sheep River Valley Clean Up on May 4, 2013 and then available online in July. Complete by the end of the summer 2013

Presentations complete by October 31, 2013

Resources

1. Town of Okotoks Communications/Planning/Engineering/Open Spaces/Economic Development/Fire Services/Municipal Enforcement
2. Council
3. Council Committees
4. Citizen Committees
5. Local/Social Media Outlets

Outcomes/Evaluation

Review with committee to assess whether the communications plan will meet the stated goals and make adjustments where necessary.

The plan being developed needs to be reviewed by appropriate Council Committees and these Town business centres: Communications, Municipal Enforcement, Engineering, Open Spaces and Economic Development

Educate the public

Background Research Documents 3: Resident Survey Data

Summary Report

How do you most frequently travel within Okotoks? Please check all that apply.

Response	Count	
Bicycle	54 *27.1%*	
Walking/Jogging/Running	118 *59.3%*	
Walking with Stroller	17 *8.5%*	
Inline Skating/Skateboard/Scooter/Long Board	4 *2.0%*	
Car/Truck	166 *83.4%*	
Other	4 *2.0%*	
	Total: 199	

In the past 12 months have you used Active Transportation to get from place to place? (eg. walking, cycling, inline skating)

Response	Count	
Yes	175 *89.3%*	
No	21 *10.7%*	
	Total: 196	

In the past 12 months have you used Active Transportation as a leisure activity?

Response	Count	
Yes	115 *89.1%*	
No	14 *10.9%*	
	Total: 129	

In reference to the previous questions if yes, what did you use? Please check all that apply.

Response	Count	
Bicycle	86 *47.5%*	
Walking/Jogging/Running	169 *93.4%*	
Walking with stroller	22 *12.2%*	
Inline Skating/Skateboard/Scooter/Long Board	8 *4.4%*	
Other, please specify...	2 *1.1%*	
	Total: 181	

In reference to the previous question, what was the frequency of your chosen activity/activities?

Variable	Bicycle	
once daily	12 *100.0%*	*Total:* 12
2 or more times per day	9 *100.0%*	*Total:* 9
once per week	15 *100.0%*	*Total:* 15
2 or more times per week	37 *100.0%*	*Total:* 37
once per month	21 *100.0%*	*Total:* 21
2 or more times per month	25 *100.0%*	*Total:* 25

Variable	Walking	
once daily	45 *100.0%*	*Total:* 45
2 or more times per day	36 *100.0%*	*Total:* 36
once per week	13 *100.0%*	*Total:* 13
2 or more times per week	63 *100.0%*	*Total:* 63
once per month	6 *100.0%*	*Total:* 6
2 or more times per month	11 *100.0%*	*Total:* 11

Variable	Walking with a stroller	
once daily	6 *100.0%*	*Total:* 6
2 or more times per day	2 *100.0%*	*Total:* 2
once per week	3 *100.0%*	*Total:* 3

Variable	Inline Skating/Skateboard/Scooter/Long board	Choice 2	
once daily	0 *0.0%*	1 *100.0%*	*Total:* 1
2 or more times per day	3 *100.0%*	0 *0.0%*	*Total:* 3
once per week	1 *100.0%*	0 *0.0%*	*Total:* 1
once per month	1 *100.0%*	0 *0.0%*	*Total:* 1
2 or more times per month	4 *100.0%*	1 *25.0%*	*Total:* 4

If you have children in your household, do they use Active Transportation to get to school/other activities? (If no children, please skip to next question)

Response	Count	
Yes	48	*57.1%*
No	33	*39.3%*
If no, why not? Please explain:	16	*19.0%*
	Total:	84

Of the possible factors below, what is the rate of impact that they would have in prevent you from using active transportation more than you do right now? Please rate the significance of each of the following on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means no impact and 5 means high impact.

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	
Inclement Weather	35 *20.1%*	16 *9.2%*	28 *16.1%*	26 *14.9%*	69 *39.7%*	*Total:* 174
Time Constraints	30 *18.6%*	27 *16.8%*	40 *24.8%*	30 *18.6%*	34 *21.1%*	*Total:* 161
Lack of sidewalks/pathways	63 *39.9%*	29 *18.4%*	24 *15.2%*	22 *13.9%*	20 *12.7%*	*Total:* 158
River Crossings	32 *38.6%*	17 *20.5%*	19 *22.9%*	7 *8.4%*	8 *9.6%*	*Total:* 83
Unsafe conditions (eg. traffic volume, traffic speed, poor lighting)	57 *35.6%*	26 *16.3%*	28 *17.5%*	22 *13.8%*	27 *16.9%*	*Total:* 160
Distance	56 *34.6%*	31 *19.1%*	28 *17.3%*	20 *12.3%*	27 *16.7%*	*Total:* 162
Fear of Crime	97 *61.0%*	26 *16.4%*	19 *11.9%*	10 *6.3%*	7 *4.4%*	*Total:* 159

Variable	Count
Other (please elaborate)	13 responses

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following factors that might encourage you to walk or bike more often.

Variable	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Stronly Disagree	
Secure bicycle parking at the work/school/shopping areas	43 *26.5%*	47 *29.0%*	58 *35.8%*	6 *3.7%*	8 *4.9%*	*Total:* 162
Wider sidewalks/pathways	23 *24.2%*	33 *34.7%*	32 *33.7%*	5 *5.3%*	2 *2.1%*	*Total:* 95
River crossings	21 *24.7%*	32 *37.6%*	26 *30.6%*	3 *3.5%*	3 *3.5%*	*Total:* 85
Cycling and trails route map/signage	34 *20.9%*	57 *35.0%*	56 *34.4%*	9 *5.5%*	7 *4.3%*	*Total:* 163
Dedicated bike lanes or paved shoulders for cycling	45 *27.4%*	46 *28.0%*	49 *29.9%*	8 *4.9%*	16 *9.8%*	*Total:* 164
More connections to key destinations (i.e. shopping, school, downtown)	48 *30.0%*	58 *36.3%*	43 *26.9%*	6 *3.8%*	5 *3.1%*	*Total:* 160
Increased police/bylaw presense on pathway	9 *10.2%*	18 *20.5%*	45 *51.1%*	7 *8.0%*	9 *10.2%*	*Total:* 88
Improved sidewalk and pathway maintenance	30 *18.4%*	58 *35.6%*	54 *33.1%*	15 *9.2%*	6 *3.7%*	*Total:* 163
None of the above will encourage me to walk or bike more often	11 *7.2%*	13 *8.5%*	39 *25.5%*	30 *19.6%*	60 *39.2%*	*Total:* 153
No improvments are necessary, the existing trails and sidewalks are meeting my needs	37 *21.9%*	40 *23.7%*	40 *23.7%*	32 *18.9%*	20 *11.8%*	*Total:* 169

Please select which reasons currently encourage you to use the pathway system more often in Okotoks? Please check all that apply.

Response	Count	
Enjoyment of the natural environment (eg. bird watching)	141 *81.5%*	
Fitness/Exercise	155 *89.6%*	
Commute to work/school	29 *16.8%*	
Destination oriented trips such as travel, visiting family/friends, run errands, etc.	54 *31.2%*	
Dog walking	56 *32.4%*	
Other, please specify...	10 *5.8%*	
	Total: 173	

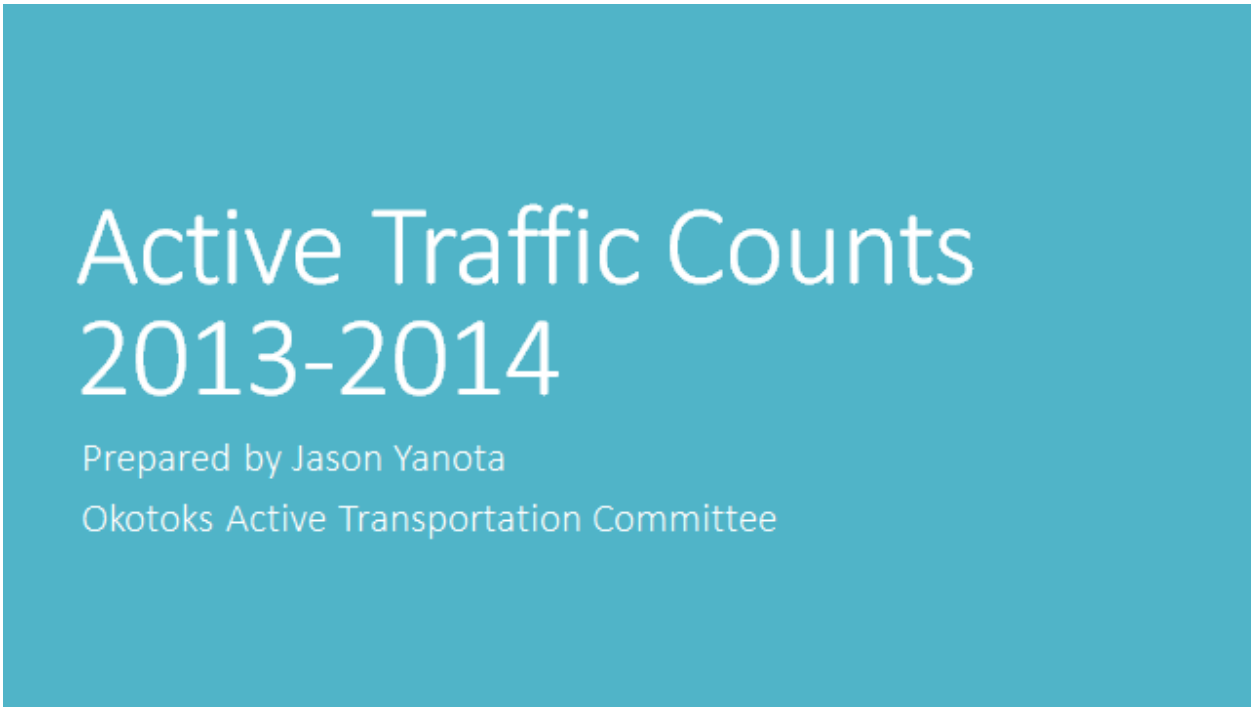
Which neighbourhood do you live in?

Variable	Count
Which neighbourhood do you live in? [0]	135 responses
If you are unsure, please write the name of your street	50 responses

What is your age group?

Response	Count	
12-18	9 *4.9%*	
19-29	14 *7.7%*	
30-50	62 *34.1%*	
51-60	12 *6.6%*	
61-70+	85 *46.7%*	
	Total: 182	

Background Research Documents 4: Pathway Counter Data



Project Summary

How are people moving through Okotoks?

Why are they using these routes?

Year	Site	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	AOT	Days with data	AOTx365
2013	Centre Ave								12,334	10,715	9,846	11,871		439.693	118	160,489
	Crystalridge Pathway						5,171	3,855	5,253	1,514	1,858	281		86.886	177	31,604
	Homus parkway												257	9.256	31	3,379
	Laura Boyd Bridge						12,910					5,745	5,184	134.944	36	49,255
	LDS North Pathway				2,845	3,954								93.196	46	34,016
	McAlpine Crossing								4,744	4,273	1,058	896	600	75.497	183	27,556
	Sheep River Place					4,216	4,096							136.250	46	49,731
	Woodbend Pathway						10,910	8,846	7,822	8,546	8,846	5,105	4,278	245.993	183	89,788
2014	Homus parkway	451	769	784	1,807	1,981	1,740							36.906	183	13,471
	Loudon Ave				767	1,004	510							30.769	59	11,231
	Laura Boyd Bridge	4,737	3,870	1,859										122.508	85	44,715
	McAlpine Crossing	729			3,573	3,991	3,010							106.733	68	38,958
	Woodbend Pathway	4,040	3,535	3,956	7,554	5,333	5,700							180.338	140	65,823

Project Summary

The Town acquired 4 Infrared Traffic Counters for the purpose of surveying non-vehicle traffic.

The Active Transportation (AT) Committee placed the Counters in different locations throughout Okotoks over the last 14 months.

Counter data tell us how many people are using active modes of transportation and help us see the effects of an Active Transportation Plan.

9 Sites have provided data since April, 2013.

We try to pick sites that would capture commuters travelling to a destination.

Trips vs people – counters can't detect whether 1 person or a group

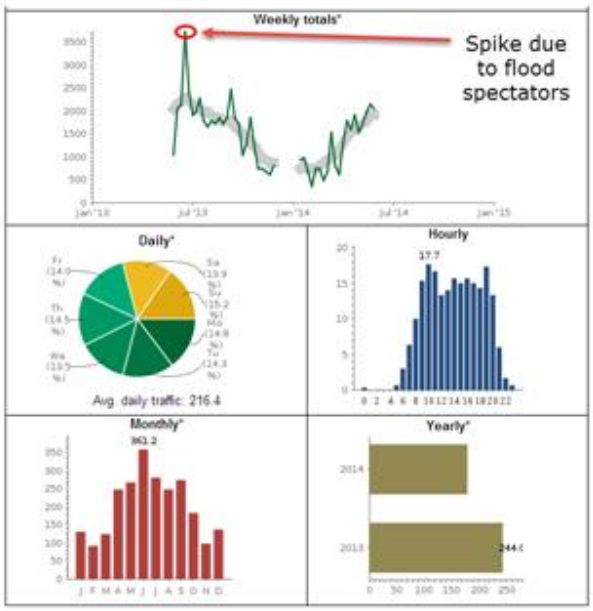
Still need to acquire more data in other areas:

Southwest connectors

South Power centers

Rec center connector pathways

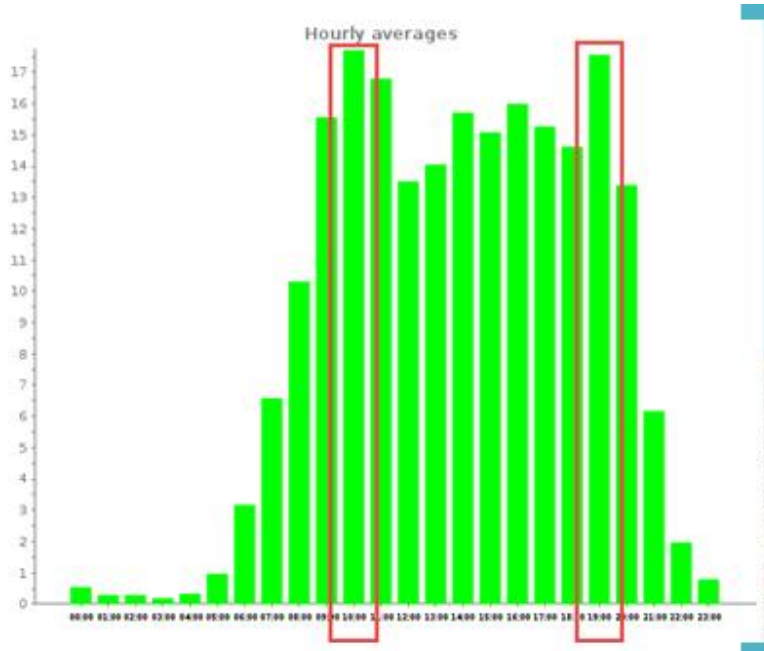
Centennial arena pathways



Control Site – Woodbend Pathway

High traffic location with daily activity so we can make seasonal and weather comparisons.

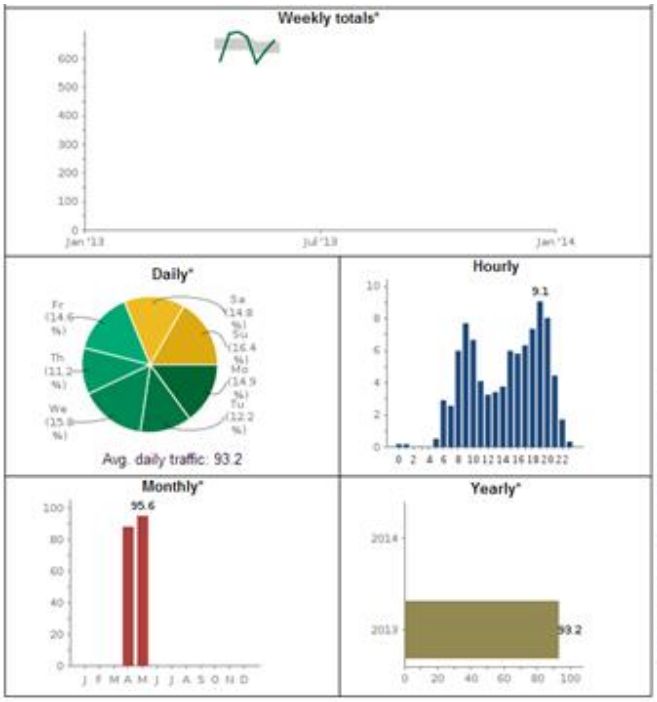
216 trips per day



Control Site – Woodbend Pathway

Traffic peaks in later morning, early evening

216 trips per day

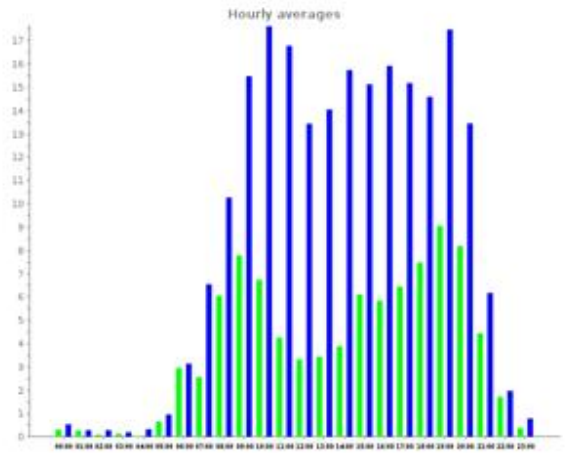


Pathway – LDS Church

First Counter site

93 trips per day

Morning and evening pattern



Site Name	Average	Median	STDV (pop)	Min	Max
LDS North Pathway	3.8	3.7	2.9	0.0	9.1
Woodbend Pathway	9.0	11.9	6.8	0.2	17.6

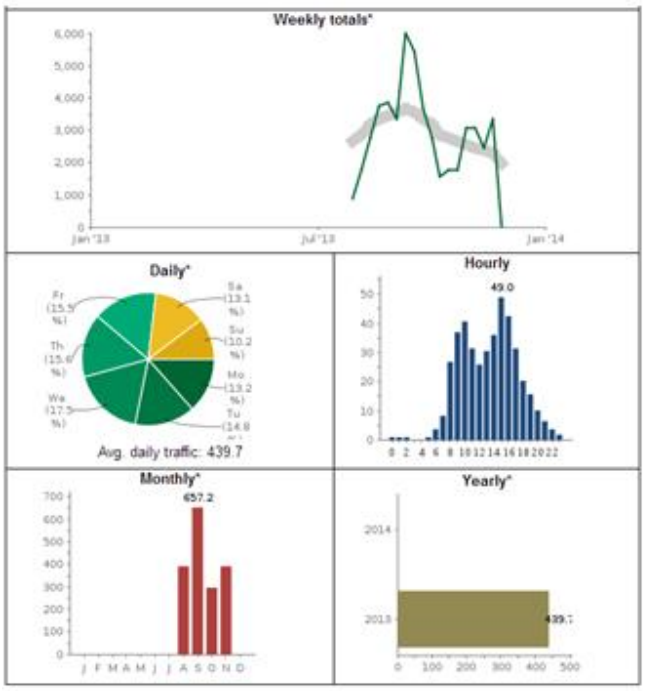
Pathway – LDS Church

First Counter site

93 trips per day

Morning and evening pattern

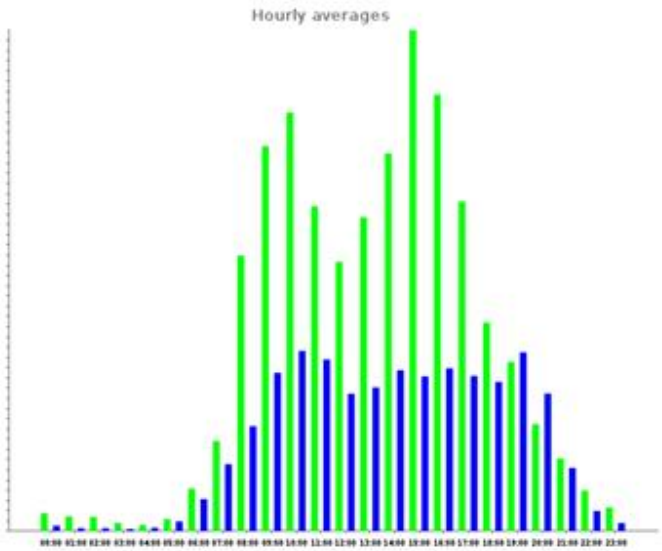
Draft AT PLAN



Downtown – Centre Ave

440 trips per day

Mostly weekday traffic

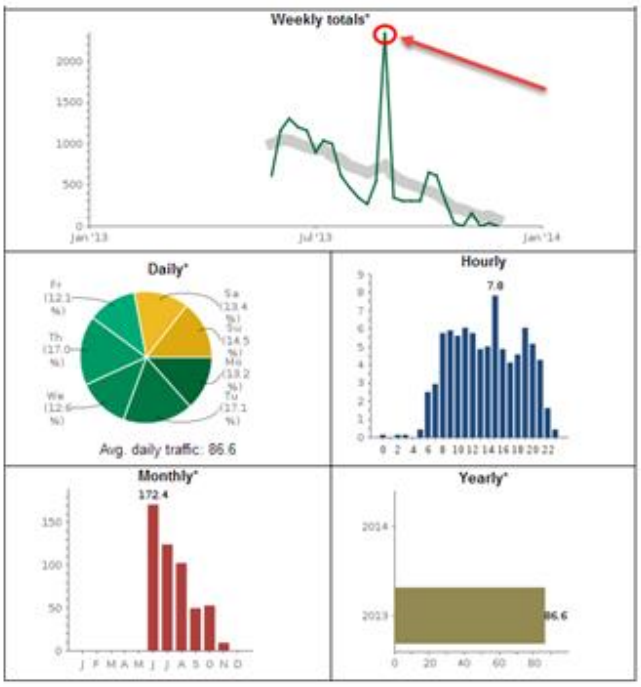


Site Name	Average	Median	STDV (σpop)	Min	Max
Centre Ave	18.2	13.5	16.0	0.6	49.0
Woodbend Pathway	9.0	11.9	6.8	0.2	17.6

Downtown – Centre Ave

440 trips per day

8-10 am and 3-4 pm

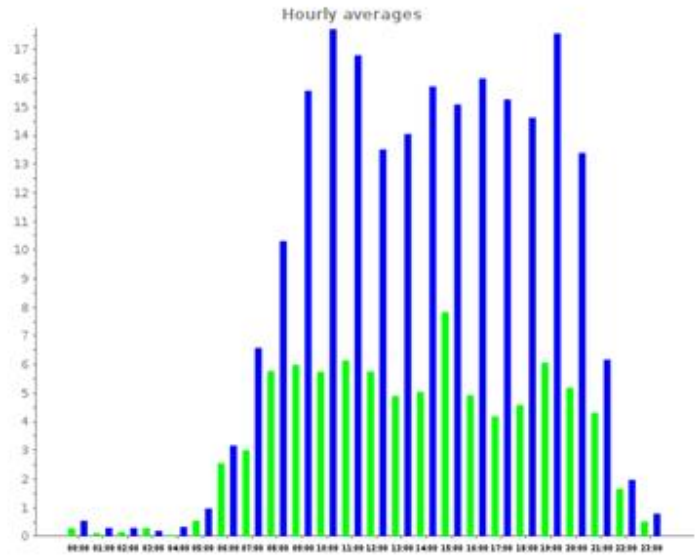


Connector pathway– Crystalridge

87 trips per day

Tuesdays and Thursdays

Summer traffic



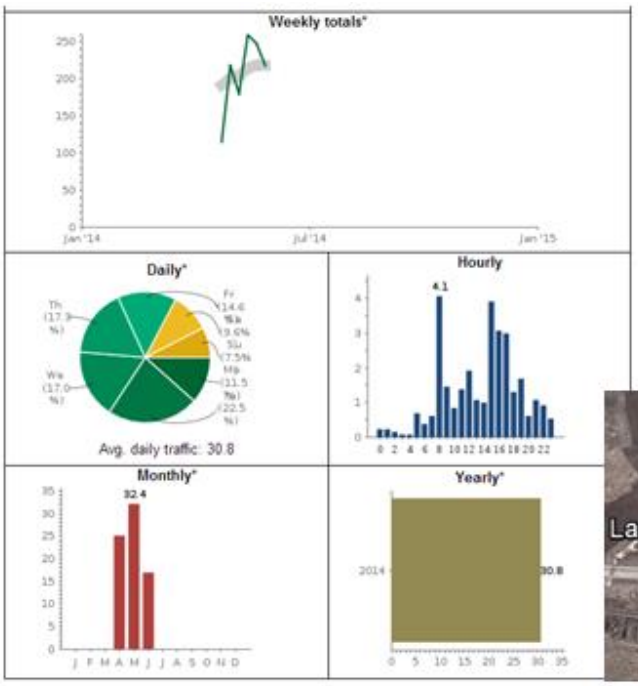
Site Name	Average	Median	STDV (pop)	Min	Max
Crystalridge Pathway	3.6	4.5	2.4	0.0	7.8
Woodbend Pathway	9.0	11.9	6.9	0.2	17.7

Connector pathway– Crystalridge

87 trips per day

Tuesdays and Thursdays

Summer traffic



Connector pathway– Lauden Ave

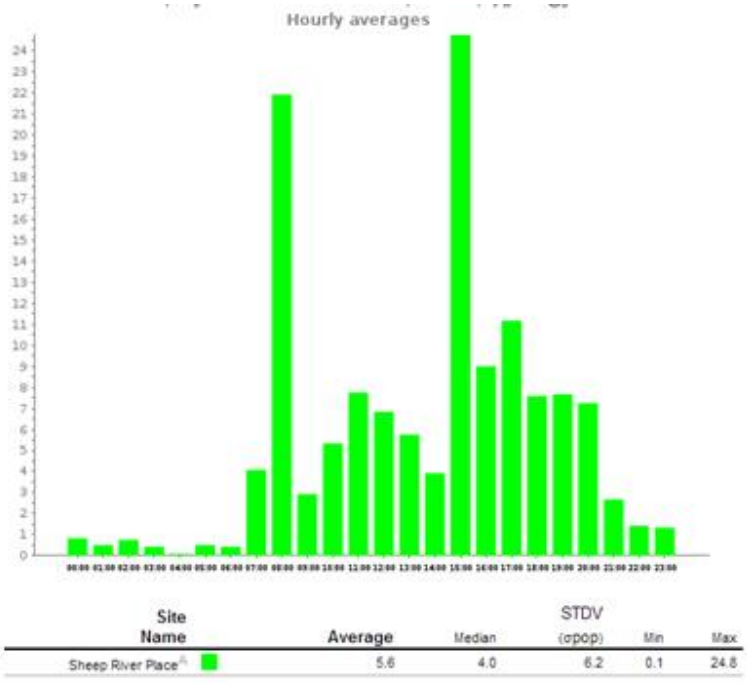
31 trips per day

Weekdays, Tues - Fri

West end of town, commuting South?

Mountainview population?

Former road, converted to path



Connector pathway– Lauden Ave

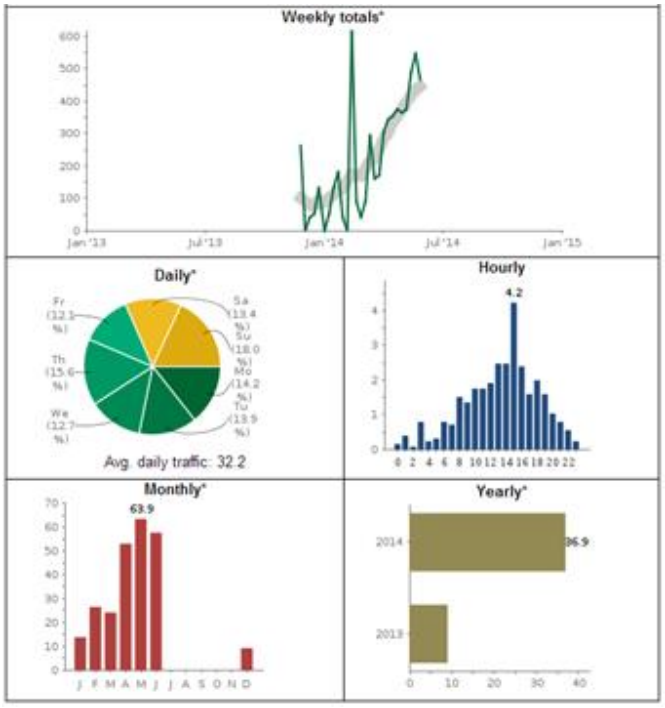
31 trips per day

Weekdays, Tues - Fri

West end of town, commuting South?

Mountainview population?

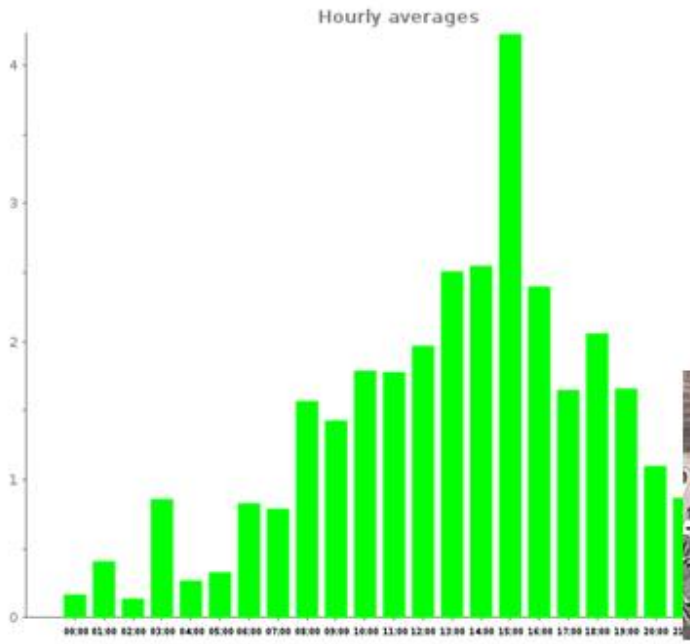
Former road, converted to path



Connector pathway– Hemus Parkway

32 trips per day - increasing with warmer weather

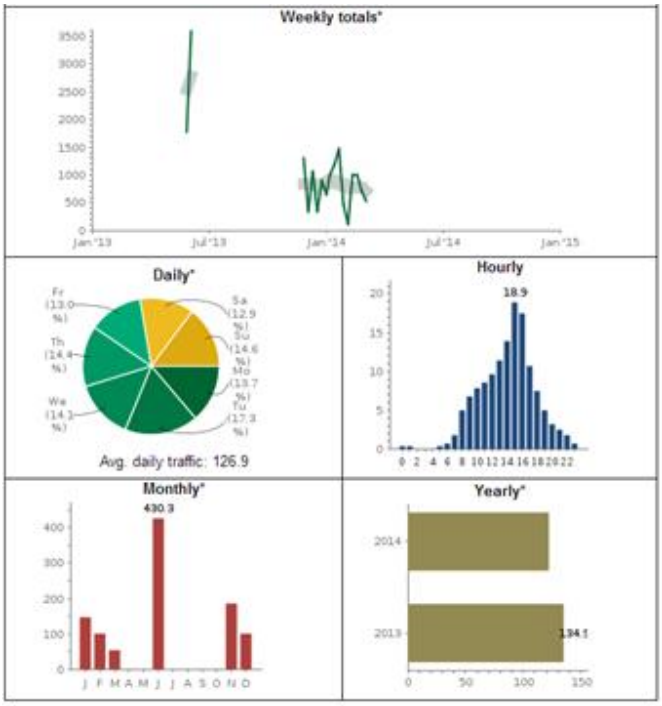
Commuting pathway between Sandstone / Grocery store and residential



Connector pathway– Hemus Parkway

32 trips per day - increasing with warmer weather

Commuting pathway between Sandstone / Grocery store and residential



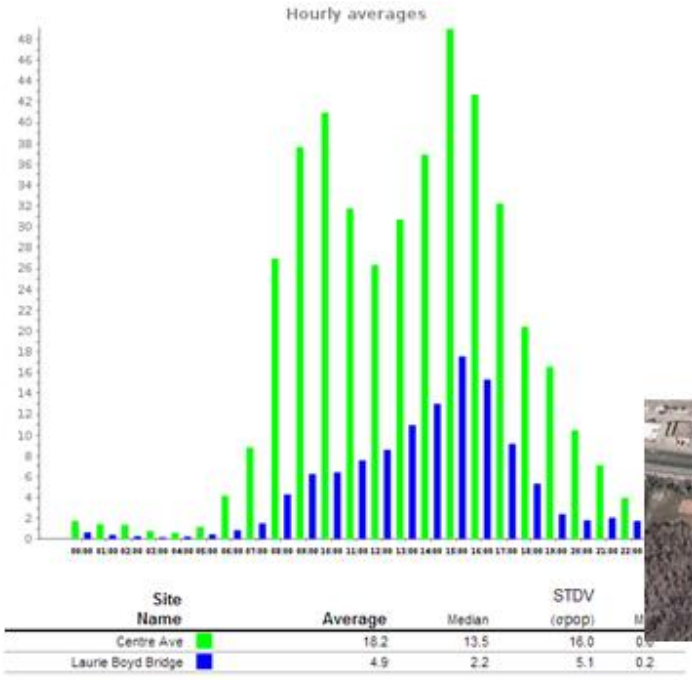
Laurie Boyd Bridge

127 trips per day – 430 in the summer

Single track bridge

Affected during flood season

Mainly winter data -

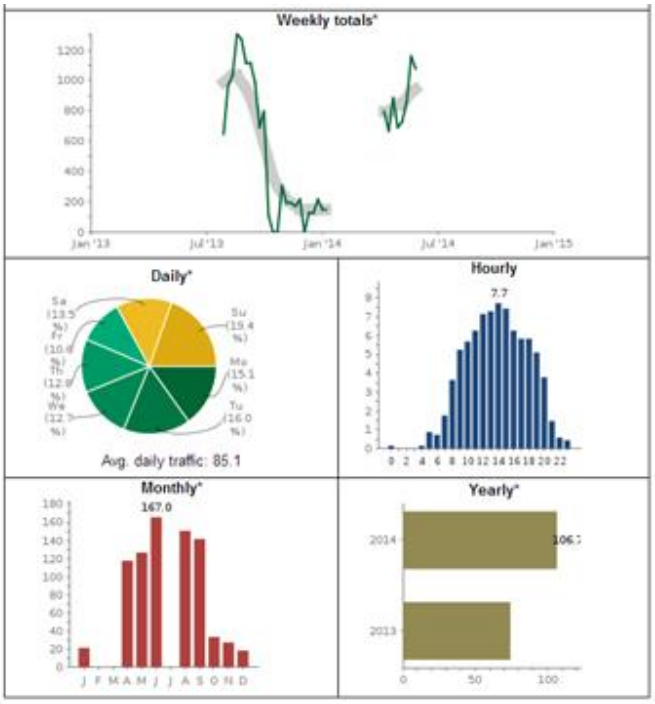


Laurie Boyd Bridge

127 trips per day – 430 in the summer

Late afternoon traffic

Flood damage on the south side of river



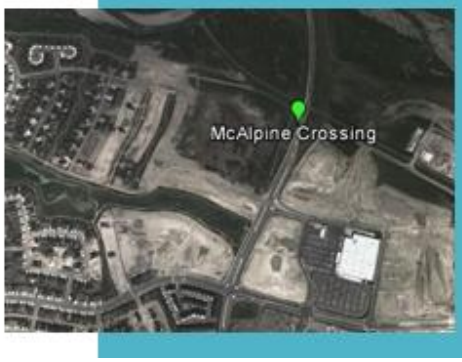
Bridge – McAlpine Crossing

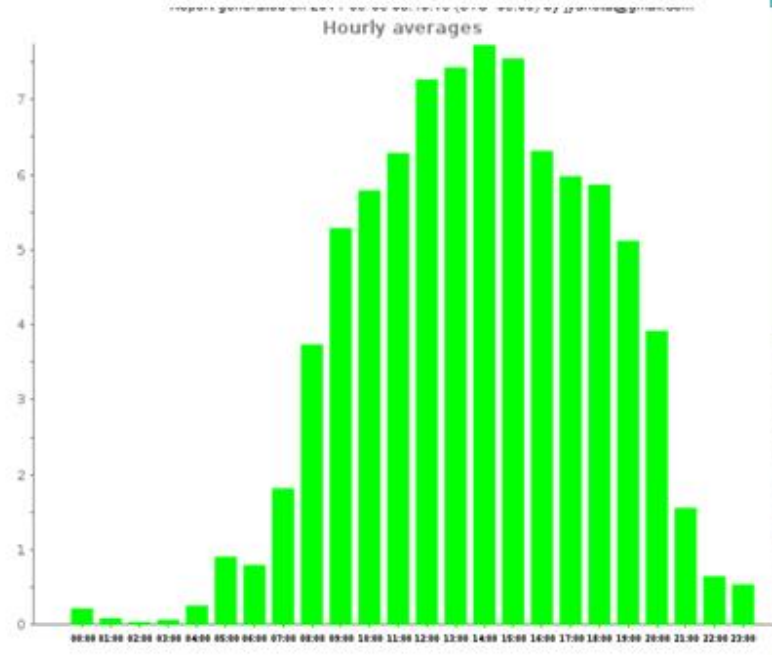
127 trips per day – 430 in the summer

Single track bridge

Affected during flood season

Mainly winter data -





Bridge – McAlpine Crossing

127 trips per day – 430 in the summer

Single track bridge

Affected during flood season

Mainly winter data -

Year	Site	ADT	Days	ADTx365
2013	Centre Ave	439.695	118	*160,489*
	Crystalridge Pathway	86.588	177	*31,604*
	Laurie Boyd Bridge	134.944	36	*49,255*
	LDS North Pathway	93.196	46	*34,016*
	McAlpine Crossing	75.497	153	*27,556*
	Sheep River Place	136.250	48	*49,731*
	Woodbend Pathway	243.995	183	*89,058*
2014	Hemus parkway	36.908	152	*13,471*
	Lauden Ave	30.769	39	*11,231*
	Laurie Boyd Bridge	122.508	65	*44,715*
	McAlpine Crossing	106.735	68	*38,958*
	Woodbend Pathway	180.336	140	*65,823*

615,000 Trips estimated over 2 years

What sort of planning and investment does that deserve?

Will better infrastructure and maintenance increase the number of trips?

Background Research Documents 5: Feedback from Stakeholder Groups

COUNCIL COMMITTEES

October 9, 2013 Presentation to Okotoks River Valley Committee

- Active Transportation Committee role, objectives and timelines
- Active transportation in Okotoks and potential ideas

November 27, 2013 Presentation to Okotoks Public Safety and Security Committee

- Active Transportation Committee role, objectives and timelines
- enforcement of bylaws for cycling on pathways
- reviewing current bylaws and improving support for active transportation users
- improving lighting for pedestrian crossings and key corridors, such as Centre Avenue / Pedestrian Bridge Corridor
- need for new pedestrian bridge
- desire for more functional active transportation routes in new development areas

November 28, 2013 Presentation to Okotoks Municipal Planning Commission

- Sidewalk design, including widening to accommodate strollers and wheel chairs, ensuring there are efficient curb-cuts and pedestrian ramps for improved mobility, and requiring sidewalks on both sides of all streets
- snow clearing, including keeping 'pork chops' (i.e. triangular islands placed adjacent to free-right turn lanes) clear of snow
- pedestrian bridges
- bicycle lanes and planning for bicycle users
- missing connections, such as locations were pathways do not connect to sidewalks, and the need to identify these gaps
- desire for improved active transportation connection between St. Mary's School and Cimarron Park, Centre Avenue, staircases, and Sheep River Cove area

January 21, 2014 Presentation to Okotoks Economic Development Committee

- the process to date in developing the Active Transportation Strategy, public workshops held, the target audience, and goals
- bicycle parking challenges
- pathway access improvements for elderly and physically challenged citizens
- the need for additional washrooms and wider pedestrian bridge crossings
- promotional events
- safety concerns for active transportation users
- snow clearing and maintenance on pathways and sidewalks
- linking of pathways with regional destinations, including Calgary

TOWN ADMINISTRATION

December 19, 2013 Meeting with Okotoks Planning, Engineering, and Sustainability Staff

- the importance of integrated land use and complete mobility transportation planning town wide
- need for "big picture" principles for future development and redevelopment of existing areas
- need for identifying funding and budget sources for projects to retrofit existing areas

- accessibility of older buildings for all user groups (i.e. barrier-free design is lacking in some older structures such as downtown area)
- consideration of the safe routes and design to so as to “feel” safe
- safe routes to school and Active Transportation Strategy for school sites
- regional pathway connections in and out of Town, including potential for active transportation pathway route along Highway 7 with connection to Fieldhouse and beyond
- designing multi-purpose pathways
- discussion on Centre Avenue improvements and idea of separated pedestrian and bicycle design options

Background Research Documents 6: Summary of Active Transportation Workshop

The workshop was hosted by the Okotoks Active Transportation Ad-Hoc Committee over the course of two days in June (June 6th and 7th, 2013) and was designed to provide a chance for discussion among different interest groups, organizations, and individuals to provide recommendations about active transportation. Attendance at the workshop was by invitation only to limit the total number and included representatives from Town Administration, Council Committees, land developers, schools, and other interested groups.

On the first day of the workshop, the attendees were introduced to the concept of active transportation and data that had been gathered by the Committee to that point. All attendees were then divided into small discussion groups. Each group was facilitated by a member of the Active Transportation Committee and asked to consider a topic related to active transportation for the discussion. The topics considered and feedback received through the group discussions are summarized below.

TOPIC 1: SCHOOL SITES

Attendees asked to focus on consider school sites and consider issues specific to active transportation challenges as well as opportunities for improvement.

Things to avoid

- 4 way stops near schools

Things to improve

- good infrastructure
- education - pedestrian
- destination
- routes

Safety:

- increase distance of sidewalks from curb (buffer)
- enforce speed limit in school zones
- busyness
- promote children walking in groups
- Walking bus
- Bicycle lanes

Thing considered unsafe

- sidewalks not clean
- Did my children arrive safely?

Changes:

- wider bridge at Laurie Boyd crossing
- Buffer from vehicular traffic on major routes

Fund campaign to work with schools to motivate/educate/encourage parents to let their kids walk

Why Don't Kinds Walk to School?

- Pathway links
- Major intersections
- Speed enforcement
- Drop off management / enforcement
- Predator fears
- Distance
- Sidewalk width
- Education – forced walking

Barriers for Walking to School

- Parent attitudes re: safety, perception of distance, child's ability, car seen as only transportation tool – need perception shift
- Lack of connections through residential crescents, cul-de-sacs, etc.
- Time perception
- Traffic created by parents driving

Ways to Promote Walking to School

- Parents teaching children where and how to walk to school
- Identified routes through neighbourhoods
- Policy for subdivision requiring pathway connectivity
- Make walking “the thing to do”

GENERAL

- Campground park problem/party area prior to lighting, with lighting problems have decreased drastically
- Intersection at Denny’s pedestrian light doesn’t come on, Riverside Way
- Long waits for signal intersection crossings
- Stairs
- Nice river pathway route from Sheep River neighbourhood to Seaman Stadium
- Pathways without snow clearing
- SHAPE Group providing education of routes to schools

SCHOOL SITES

- Concerns over safety on major roads
- Time it takes to get ready and get kids to school might make parents want to drive but demonstrate short distances

Barriers

- Crossing busy streets
  - crossing guards at major roads
  - promoting traffic safety practices
- Congested parking/drop-off areas
- More time to walk back and forth then drop-off and drive to work (i.e. commuters)
- Flow of traffic and vehicles
  - Enforcement / intersection management
  - Pilot crossing guards with counter data
- Schools competition – number of students walking
- Point system for active transportation use – schools compete with each other
- Making active transportation fun – SHAPE
- Prizes for seeing someone use active transportation mode
- Hard to make walking to school appealing to kids – add amenities to school routes
- Designing schools for active uses from the start – direct walking connections / don’t have to walk through parking lot
- Distance to school signs on pathways

TOPIC 2: SAFE ROUTES

Attendees were then asked to consider the concept of ‘safe routes’ such as where they should be located and what they should be included in developing them.

SAFE ROUTES

- If we call one route safe are the others unsafe?
- Clean, slope, visibility
- Uniformed law enforcement presence on routes, patrolled
- Off-leash dogs problematic, more off-leash areas needed
- Minimize road crossings, well-marked crossings
- Need wide sidewalks on both sides of street on busy routes
- Lighting of isolated access
- Physically separated cycle paths
- Gradual slopes up escarpments needed

SAFE ROUTES

- Safe routes to school should be a priority
- Downtown and commercial areas should have safe routes
- Major shopping areas need safe route through parking areas
- Improved crossings on major roads (e.g. Northridge/Southridge Corridor)
- Wider, more attractive routes along major roads
- Away from traffic having "scramble-crossings" at key peak travel times on major intersections
- Building safe routes into planning for new areas
- Patrolling safe routes – volunteers
- "Block Parent" signs visible from pathway
- Addressing the perspective of animal and stranger dangers – giving kids somewhere to go
- Volunteer parents walking with child groups
- Walking school busses / buddy walking programs
- Work with individual schools to establish best safe route locations
- Wide, barrier-free designs
- Pedestrian bridges over Northridge/Southridge corridor – accessible

TOPIC 3: DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS AND MAINTENANCE

The attendees were asked to think of their neighbourhood and where they walk with a focus on standards and maintenance.

MAINTENANCE:

1. Proactive enforcement of sidewalk snow clearing
2. Who cleans the snow piled by plows at path/road intersections?
3. Pathways cleared to roads that haven't been cleared
4. Pathway cleaning on weekend and holidays
5. Increase frequency of road sweeping
6. Better quality paint for crosswalks
7. Drainage grates should be at right angle to traffic flow to prevent bicycle wheels from slipping in
8. Better location of some mail boxes so that they are cleared in the winter
9. Bicycle racks at every new commercial, industrial and institutional facility
10. More benches on pathways
11. More washrooms on pathways

Set priority Cleaning

- Add connectors that lead to schools
- Gravel icy slops/steps

Maintenance of vegetation on path

- Trees on corners
- Visibility
- Safety – exit to streets

Priority of gravel cleaning
Painting on crosswalks
Barrier curbs to bicycles/strollers on commercial developments (no vertical [curb] faced onto pathways)
Lighting at each pathway crossing for major roads

Crossing swells
Visibility – at pathway and street intersection

- Vehicles parked too close need setback
- Lighting where appropriate

Bicycle racks – at major recreation/shopping centres put in high visible area
Benches – additional memorial with cement apron for mowing ease
Playgrounds accessible from pathways
Sidewalk beside asphalt wider than sidewalks with green strip
Walking dog – tie downs at key locations

DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS & MAINTENCE

- Sidewalks separated from roads
- Separation of vehicles, bicycle, and pedestrians

- Gravel on roads concern for bicyclists
- Wide pathways/sidewalks to allow for people and bicycles passing each other
- Separate jogging pathway of different material
- Higher visibility crosswalks
- Explore additional paint types for durability for marked crosswalks
- Materials in crosswalks that encourage snow/ice melt
- Snow clearing on pathways to schools and commercial areas
- Recycling bins on pathways
- Bicycle racks in parks, sports fields
- stroller parking at stores
- dog “hitching posts” at stores
- internal connections in commercial areas, connected with bicycle racks – walkways to encourage people to walk between stores
- locate bicycle rack at bicycle path
- Bicycle racks at parks/sports fields
- Stroller parking
- “you are here” component to pathway maps

TOPIC 4: DOWNTOWN AND COMMERCIAL AREAS

Attendees were asked to consider current barriers, modifications, and work works.

COMMERCIAL AREAS

- clustering buildings with courtyards and parking on outside
- Improved walkways to front of store and to connect to building
- Reduced parking and increased landscaping requirements
- Require bicycle racks in front of building but not necessarily right by the door – room for bicycle trailer
- Integrated active transportation network planning between highway corridor and site
- Walkways on both sides of internal roads
- Connecting pathways to open areas are protected from vehicles
- If there are stairs, provide an alternative access nearby which allows for bicycles, strollers, wheelchairs, etc.

TOPIC 4: EDUCATION

Attendees were asked to consider the type of education that is currently provided, where the gaps are, and how education for active transportation can be improved.

<u>EDUCATION</u>

- Every school should generate a set of walking maps to and from school
- Parents teaching children how to walk to and from school – walking award system
- Bicycle travel/safety education
- Way finding signage that includes walking travel time and bicycle travel time
- Numbered signs for emergency response, house numbers that back onto paths
- Events and education opportunities
- Town info at businesses
- Mobile sign that states: “driving time to rec centre 5 min, walking time to rec centre 2 min”
- Okotoks way finding App

Developers Motion:

- Town standards for active transportation

Business Motion:

- Increased sales/customers
- Clusters of business people will walk from one to the other

EDUCATION

- Signs on popular bicycle paths on bicycle etiquette
- Schools and Town partnership on safety training – e.g. Safety City
  - Full program with field trips
  - Every spring as refresher course
  - Include Bylaw/RCMP
- Distance signage at key points on signs
- 'you are here' location pathway signs with distances – include schools
- Use existing business to promote bicycle safety and training
- Okotoks Bike Week – promotion events – focus on schools
- Look at partnerships with bicycle clubs
- Bringing bicycle businesses and clubs into schools to promote safety/training

Communications

- Km markers
- Pathway education at peak pathway counter time
- You are here signage
- Encouraging businesses promote AT
- Working with schools

Big push to change community culture to be pro AT

EXERCISE: Connections and New Pathways

On the second day (June 7th), a summary of the previous day was held and the attendees who come out were split into two groups and tasked with considering good, challenging, and missing active transportation routes on maps of Okotoks. Using coloured dot stickers and coloured markers, attendees explored and discussed visions for an improved Town wide active transportation network.

Figure 17: Group 1 recommendations for Town wide active transportation improvements

Figure 18: Group 2 recommendations for Town wide improvements to the active transportation network

Background Research Documents 7: Active Transportation Resources

2013 Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth, Active Healthy Kids Canada
http://dvqdas9jty7g6.cloudfront.net/reportcard2013/AHKC-Summary-2013.pdf

Canadian Municipal Active Transportation Policy Map, Canadian Partnership Against Cancer
http://www.cancerview.ca/cv/portal/Home/PreventionAndScreening/PSProfessionals/PSPrevention/PreventionPoliciesDirectory/PPDPolicyMap/PPDMunicipalMap?_afrLoop=25920696205000&lang=en&_afrWindowMode=0&_adf.ctrl-state=uxrmicim6_85

PODCASTS:

1. "Paying for Parking" (January 28, 2013); CBC/Ideas

2. "Walking Matters" Part 1 and Part 2 (March 12 and March 19, 2014); CBC/Ideas

Background Research Documents 8: Active Transportation Committee Terms of Reference

1. DEFINITIONS

1.1 "Active transportation" is defined as any form of self-propelled mode of transportation (e.g. walking, cycling, in-line skating, skateboarding) that relies upon the use of human energy to get from one place to another (e.g. work, school, library, shopping, worship). The modes may utilize on-road and off-road facilities such as bike parking, sidewalks, bike lanes, and multi-use trail.

2. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 That a Okotoks Active Transportation Ad-hoc Committee of the Okotoks Culture, Parks and Recreation (CPR) Committee be established for a two (2) year period to develop an Active Transportation Management Plan.

2.2 Work with a variety of partners within the Town of Okotoks to develop and enhance an environment for walking, cycling and other self-propelled modes of transportation that is safe, secure, convenient, efficient, and attractive.

2.3 The Town of Okotoks Active Transportation Ad-hoc Committee ("the Committee") will advise the Okotoks Culture, Parks and Recreation Committee on matters related to active transportation and encourage, promote and participate in the planning of active transportation policies, programs and facilities and without limiting the generality of the foregoing:

a) Develop an active transportation vision for the Okotoks community.
b) Develop opportunities and partnerships to enhance active transportation infrastructure and facilities.
c) Advise on the design, development, delivery and maintenance of active transportation policies, programs and facilities.
d) Promote active transportation as a feasible mode of transportation in Okotoks and encourage citizens to use forms of active transportation through public outreach, education programs and events.
e) Educate the public on the benefits, necessities and safety aspects of active transportation.
f) Promote and enhance a continuous and integrated pedestrian and bicycle network (i.e. trails, sidewalks, bicycle lanes) within Okotoks, including future network connections from outside the Town boundaries.
g) Encourage legislation and policy changes that support and strengthen active transportation for consideration once the Municipal Development Plan requires updating.

3. WORK PLAN

3.1 An Okotoks Active Transportation Strategy which identifies long and short term goals specific to active transportation strategies shall be developed. The plan shall include the

current strengths (what is already in place and should be maintained), what is currently planned and a gap analysis.

4. LEAD DEPARTMENT

4.1 Community Services and Development Services will be the lead for the Committee. Staff from other departments and/or members of other agencies may attend meetings as required to provide expertise or report on various matters.

5. REPORTING RELATIONSHIP

5.1 The Committee is to serve as an advisory body to the Culture, Parks and Recreation Committee and work with other Town Committees as appropriate. The Committee does not have any delegated authority. Recommendations requiring implementation, expenditures, reports or staff actions must first be considered by staff and/or Council.

6. COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE

6.1 The Committee shall be comprised of up to seven (7) voting members who must be Okotoks residents as follows:

a) one (1) member of Council
b) one (1) member of River Valley Committee
c) one (1) member of Culture, Park and Recreation Committee
d) one (1) member of Municipal Planning Commission
e) up to three (3) members of the community at large.

6.2 A Recording Secretary will provide organizational and procedural support to the Committee. The Community Services Manager or designate shall be an ex-officio member and shall attend all Committee meetings with all rights, except voting, extended to a full member.

6.3 Other staff and delegates may be invited to provide input at times, however, they are not to be counted towards quorum and do not have voting privileges.

6.4 Committee may be terminated by motion at any regular meeting.

7. MEMBERSHIP

7.1 Voting members may serve a maximum of two (2) consecutive years (length of the ad-hoc Committee), subject to the discretion of the CPR Committee.

7.2 Voting member(s) who are absent for three consecutive meetings of the Committee may, unless authorized by the Committee Chair, forfeit the appointment and another member shall be appointed by the Committee.

7.3 Any voting member may resign from the Committee at any time upon providing written notice to the Committee. The written notice shall include the effective date of resignation; otherwise the effective date of resignation shall be the date the notice is received.

7.4 Appointments may be revoked at any time at the discretion of staff and/or the

Committee.

8. OFFICERS OF THE COMMITTEE

8.1 Of the voting members a chairperson and co-chair shall be elected by majority vote. The chairperson is responsible for leading the discussion at each meeting pursuant to the meeting agenda and the Committee's mandate. If a chair or co-chair is not present, members are to select an acting chairperson to serve in the same capacity for the duration of that meeting.

9. SUB-COMMITTEES

9.1 Sub-Committees may be formed to complete specific tasks related to the Committee's mandate and work plan but must report through the Committee.

10. MEETINGS

10.1 The Committee shall hold regular meetings at a frequency to be determined by the Committee, with a minimum of four (4) meetings per year.

10.2 Regular meetings will be held on a bi-monthly basis. Agendas for each meeting will be distributed to members in advance along with the minutes of the previous meeting. Minutes will be received by the CPR Committee and substantive recommendations will be forwarded to staff for review and action if deemed necessary. Recommendations must relate to the Committee's mandate.

10.3 In consultation with the Committee and Council, representatives from Community Services and Development Services will generate content for each meeting so as to ensure progress of the Committee's work plan.

10.4 Special meetings may be called by the Chair or in the Chair's absence, the Vice-Chair, by providing the members with five (5) days' notice. The Committee may, by unanimous consent, waive notice of a special meeting at any time if every member of the Committee is present.

10.5 Quorum shall be a simple majority of the total number of Committee members (i.e. 50% plus one). If determined practical, a meeting may proceed without a quorum, however, substantive recommendations are not to be fully ratified until supported by the majority of members. If no quorum is present and there are time constraints with respect to a particular item on the agenda, the Recording Secretary may canvass members through alternative means in order to determine Committee support for that particular item.

10.6 The Committee shall be governed by the rules and regulations of the Town of Okotoks Procedure Bylaw, and amendments thereto.

10.7 Each member, including the Chair, shall have one vote. Motions shall only be carried upon receiving a majority of votes. In the event of a tie vote, a motion will be deemed to be defeated.

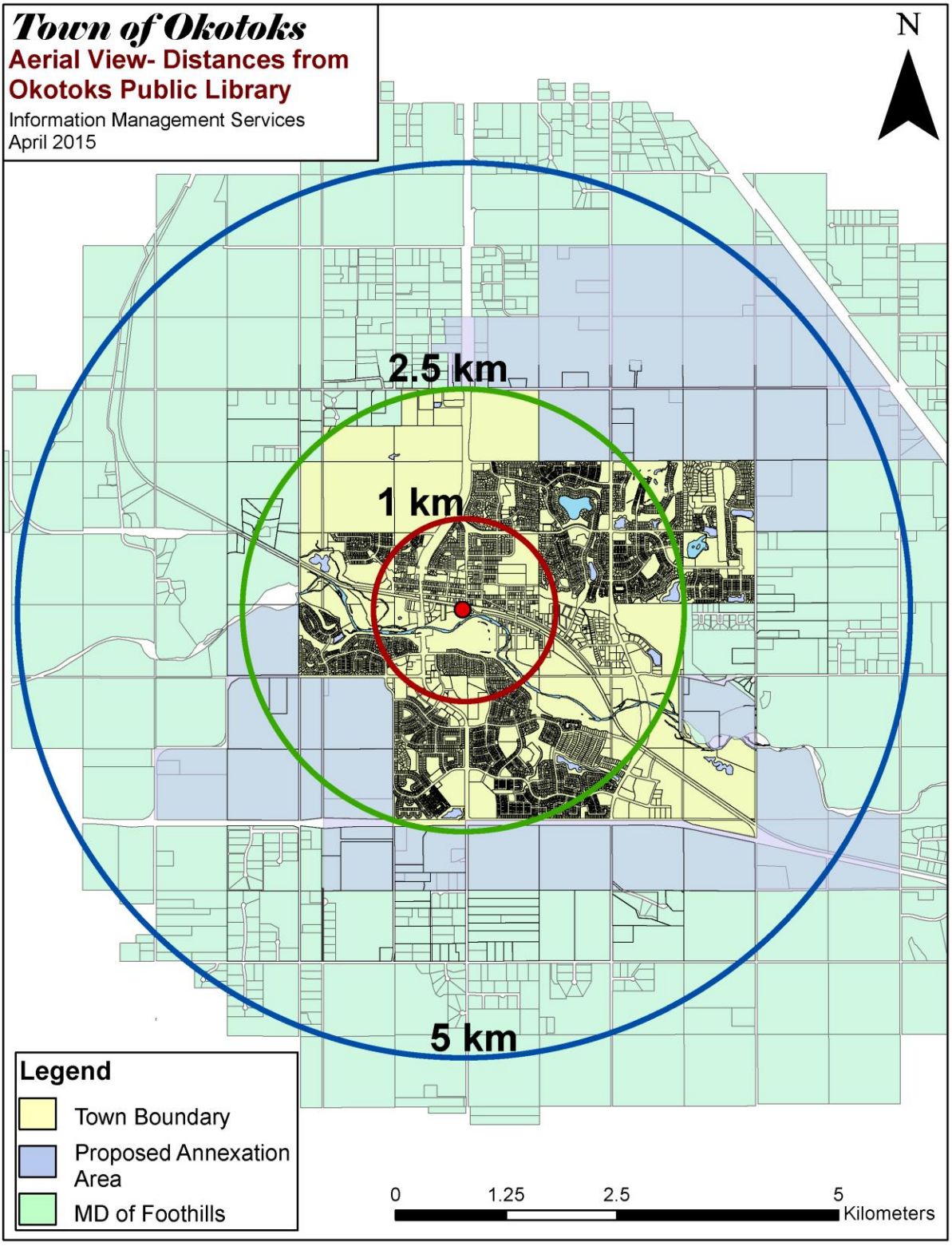
10.8 Meetings of the Committee shall be open to the public.

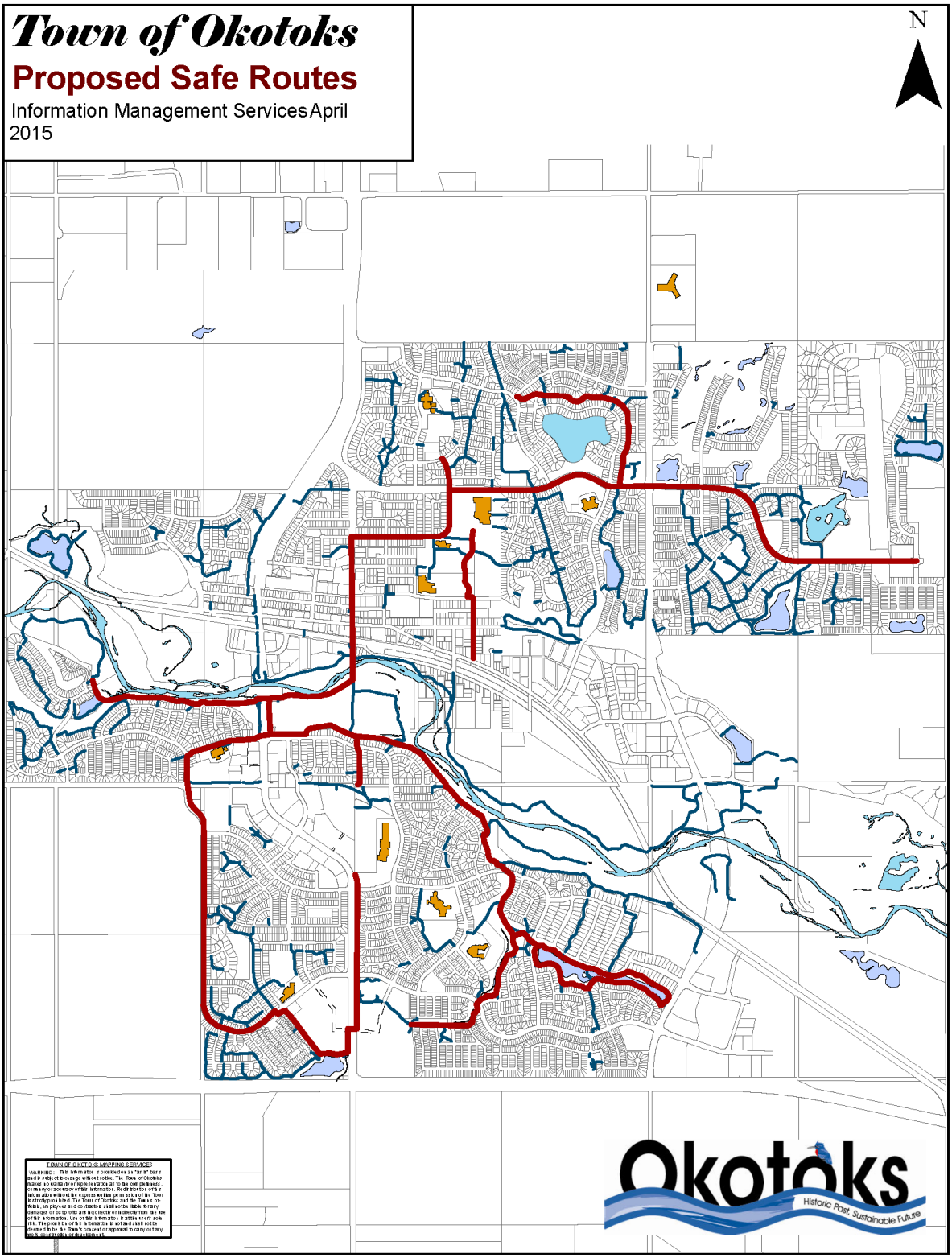
10.9 The Committee may report to the CPR Committee on matters of public concern as the Committee deems appropriate and in the public interest. The Committee shall also report to the CPR Committee when requested to do so.

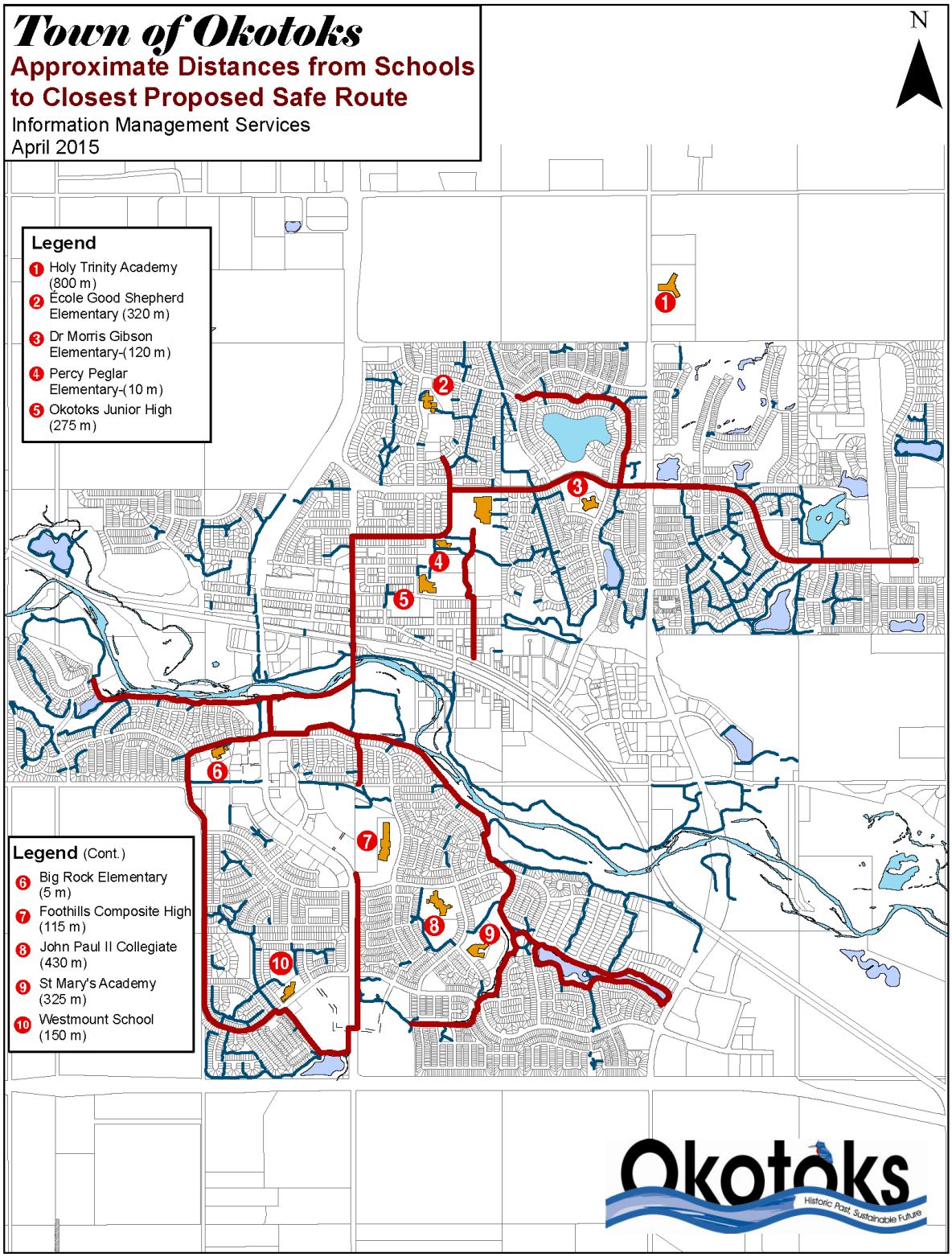
11. LIMITATIONS

11.1 Neither the Committee nor any member shall have the power to pledge the credit of the Town of Okotoks in connection with any matters whatsoever, nor shall the Committee or any member thereof have any power to authorize any expenditure to be charged against the Town of Okotoks.

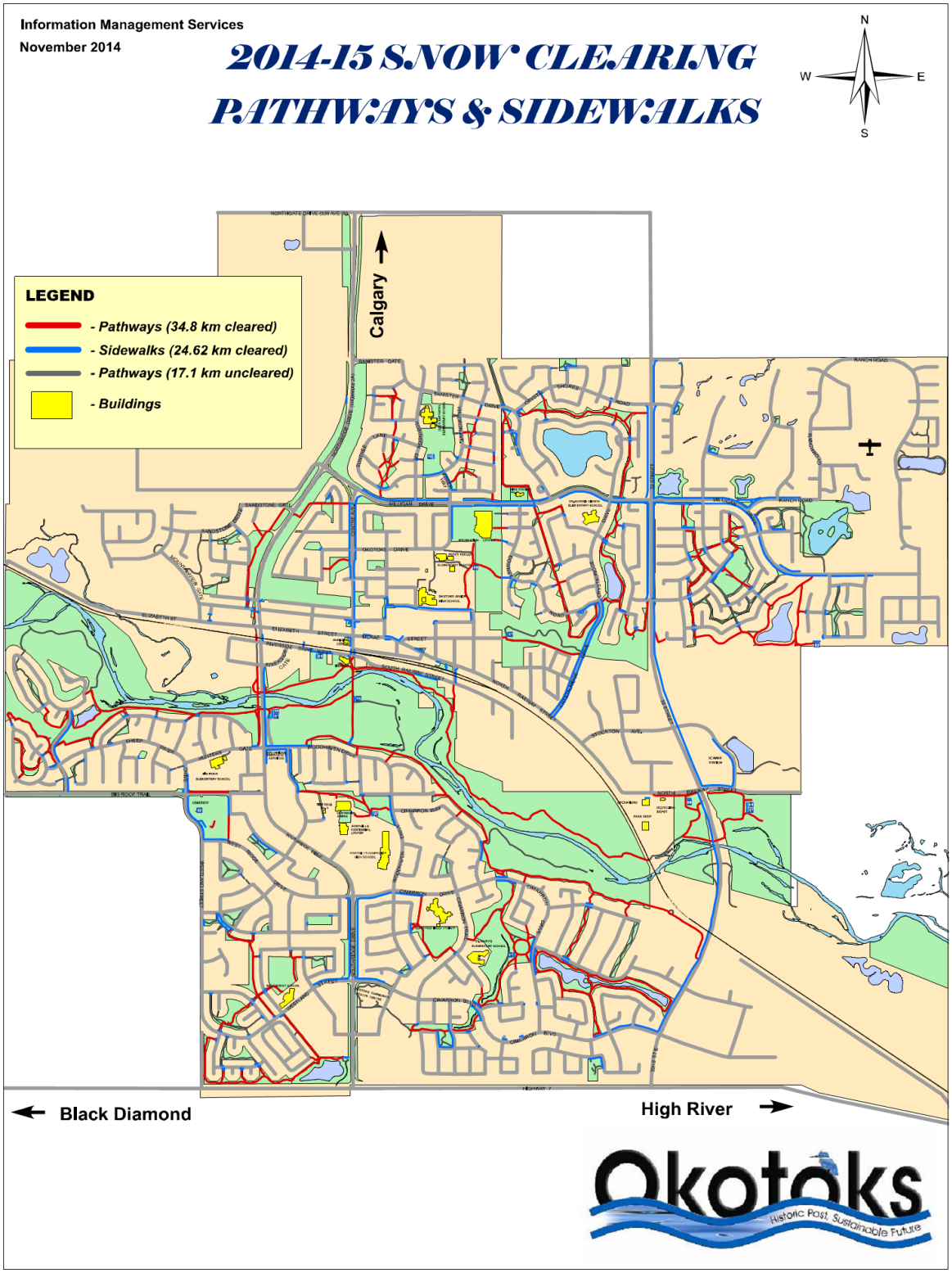
Background Research Documents 9: Active Transportation Strategy Maps and Figures

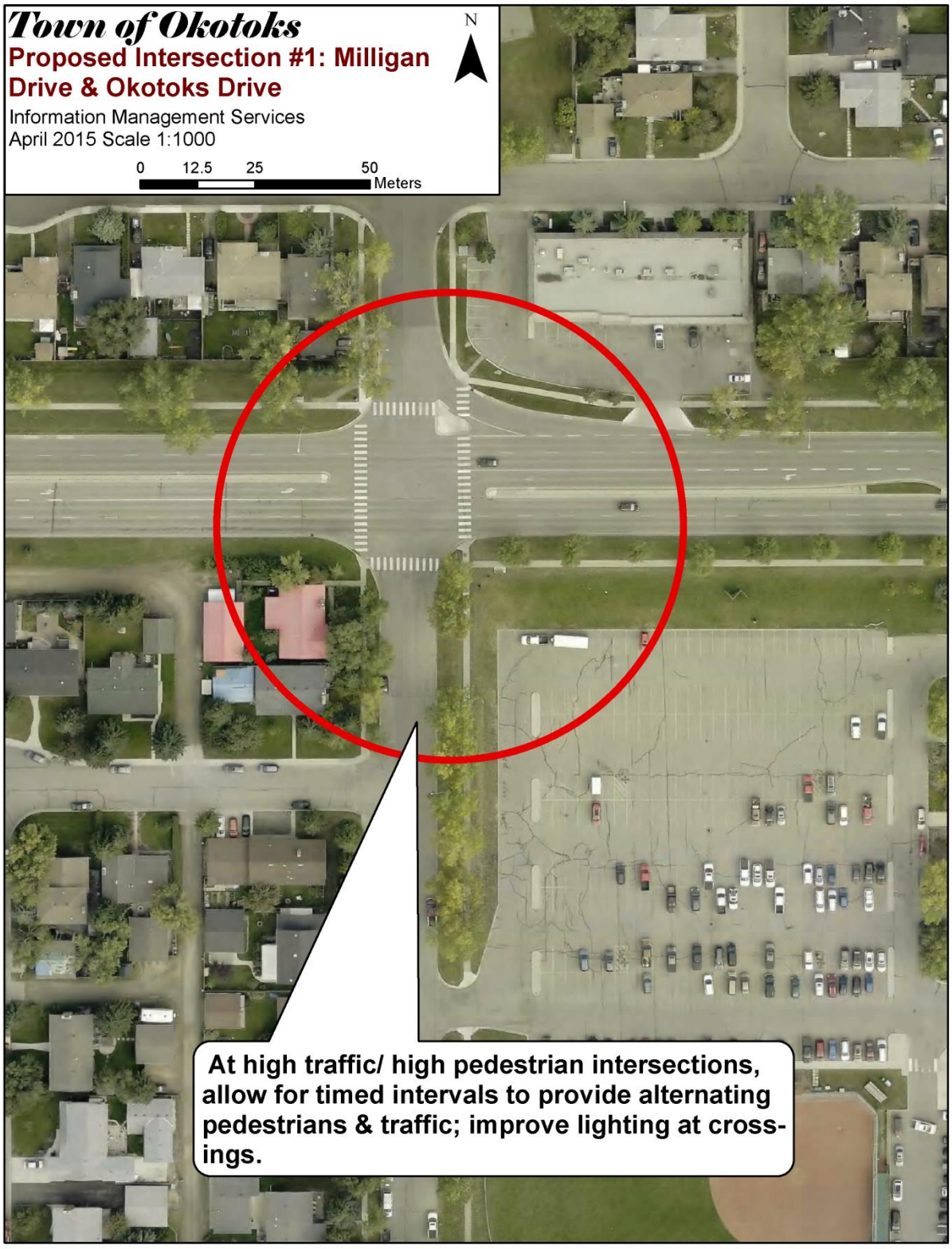


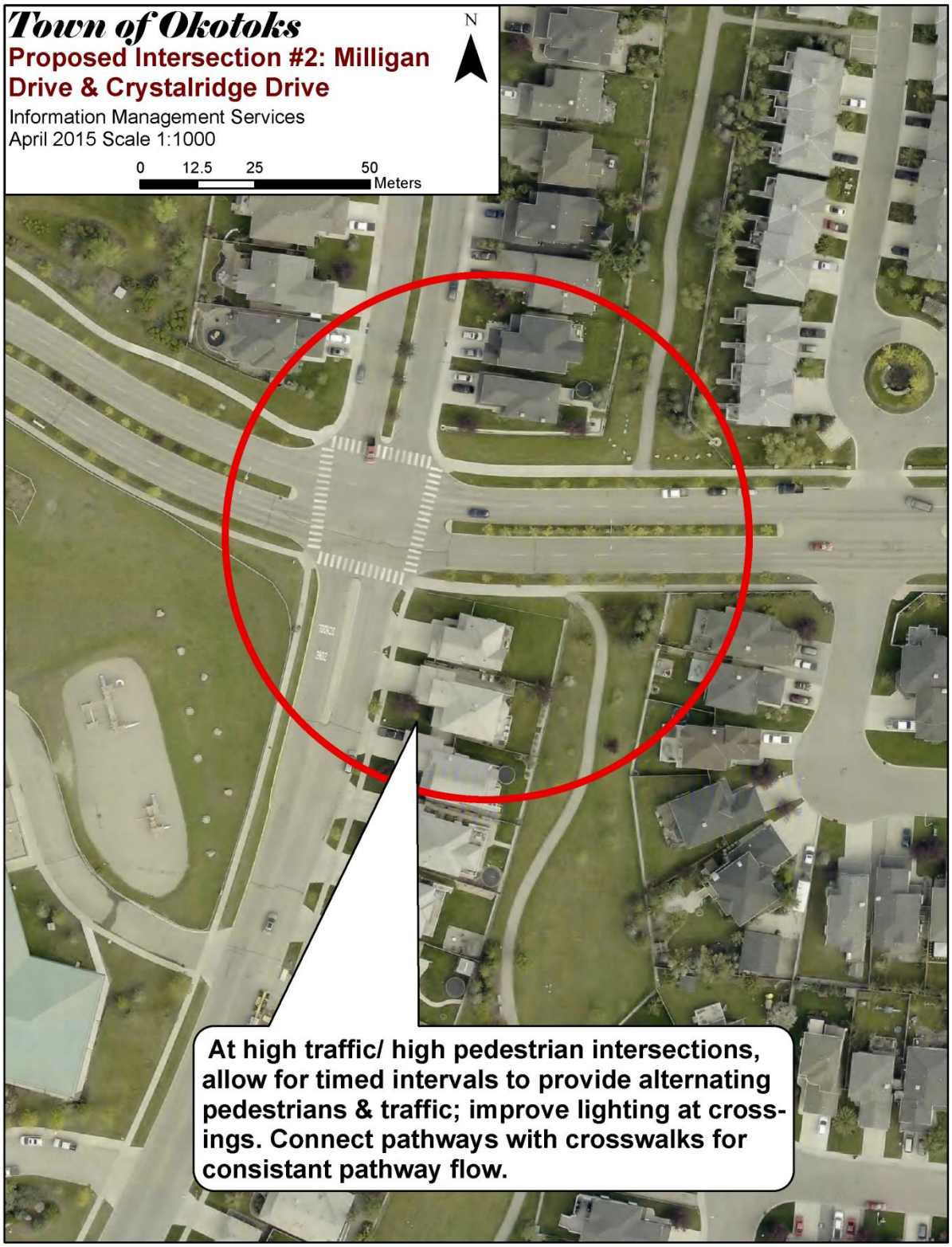

Town of Okotoks
Proposed Safe Routes
Information Management Services April 2015
N
Okotoks
Historic Past, Sustainable Future

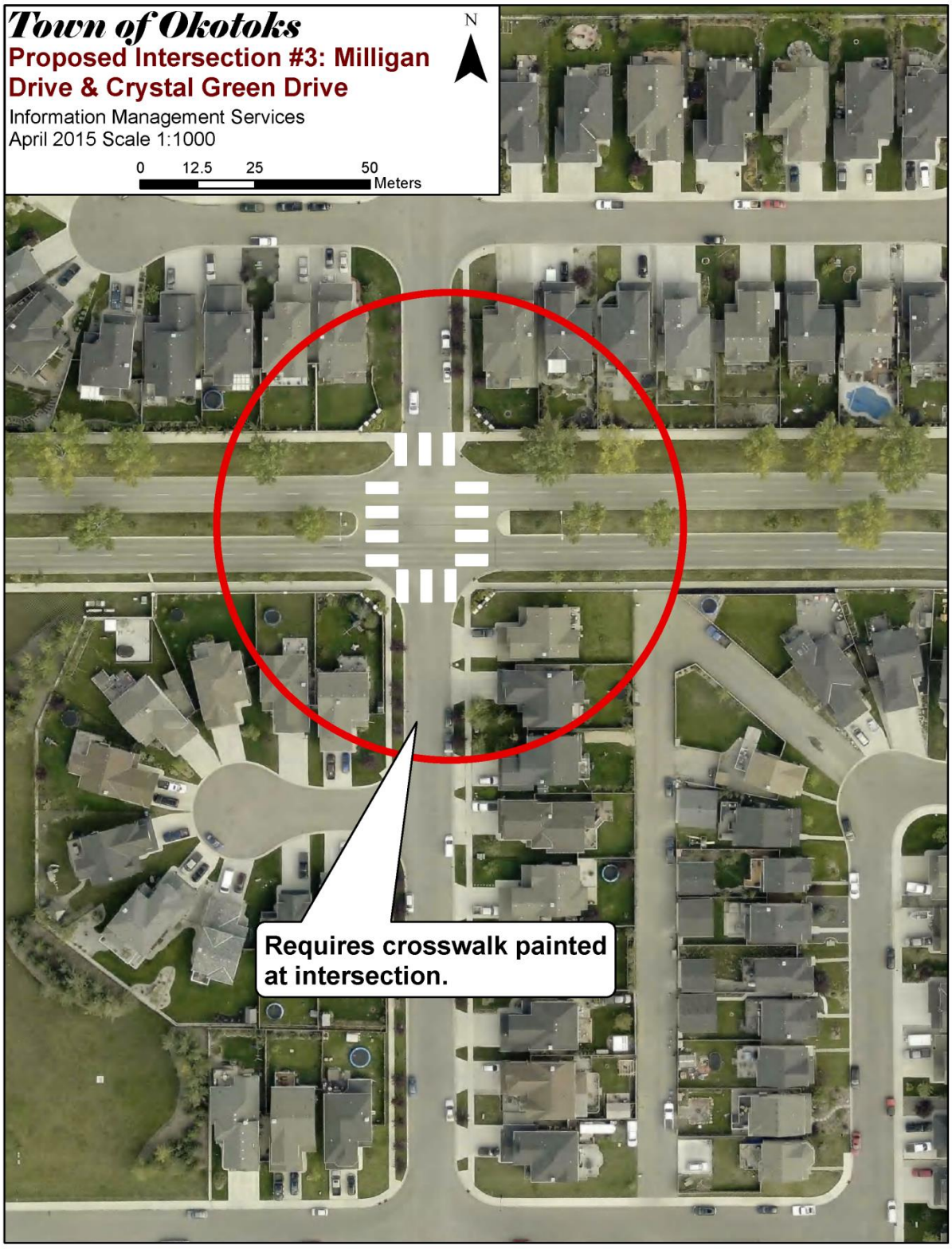

Town of Okotoks
Approximate Distances from Schools to Closest Proposed Safe Route
Information Management Services
April 2015
N
Legend
1 Holy Trinity Academy (800 m)
2 École Good Shepherd Elementary (320 m)
3 Dr Morris Gibson Elementary-(120 m)
4 Percy Peglar Elementary-(10 m)
5 Okotoks Junior High (275 m)
Legend (Cont.)
6 Big Rock Elementary (5 m)
7 Foothills Composite High (115 m)
8 John Paul II Collegiate (430 m)
9 St Mary's Academy (325 m)
10 Westmount School (150 m)
Okotoks
Historic Past, Sustainable Future


© 2014 Pictometry

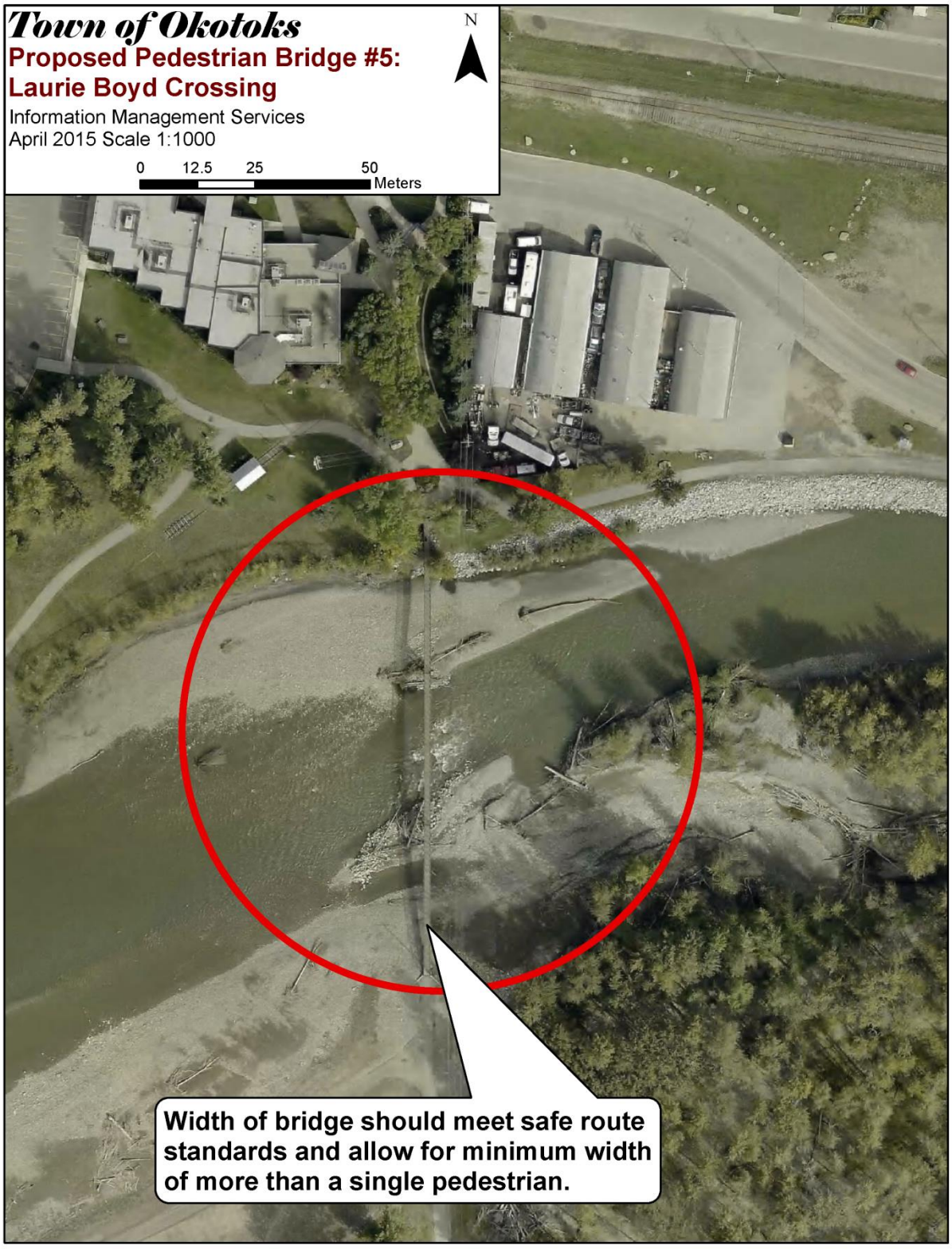

Information Management Services
November 2014
2014-15 SNOW CLEARING
PATHWAYS & SIDEWALKS
N
W
E
S
LEGEND
- Pathways (34.8 km cleared)
- Sidewalks (24.62 km cleared)
- Pathways (17.1 km uncleared)
- Buildings
Calgary
Black Diamond
High River
Okotoks
Historic Past, Sustainable Future

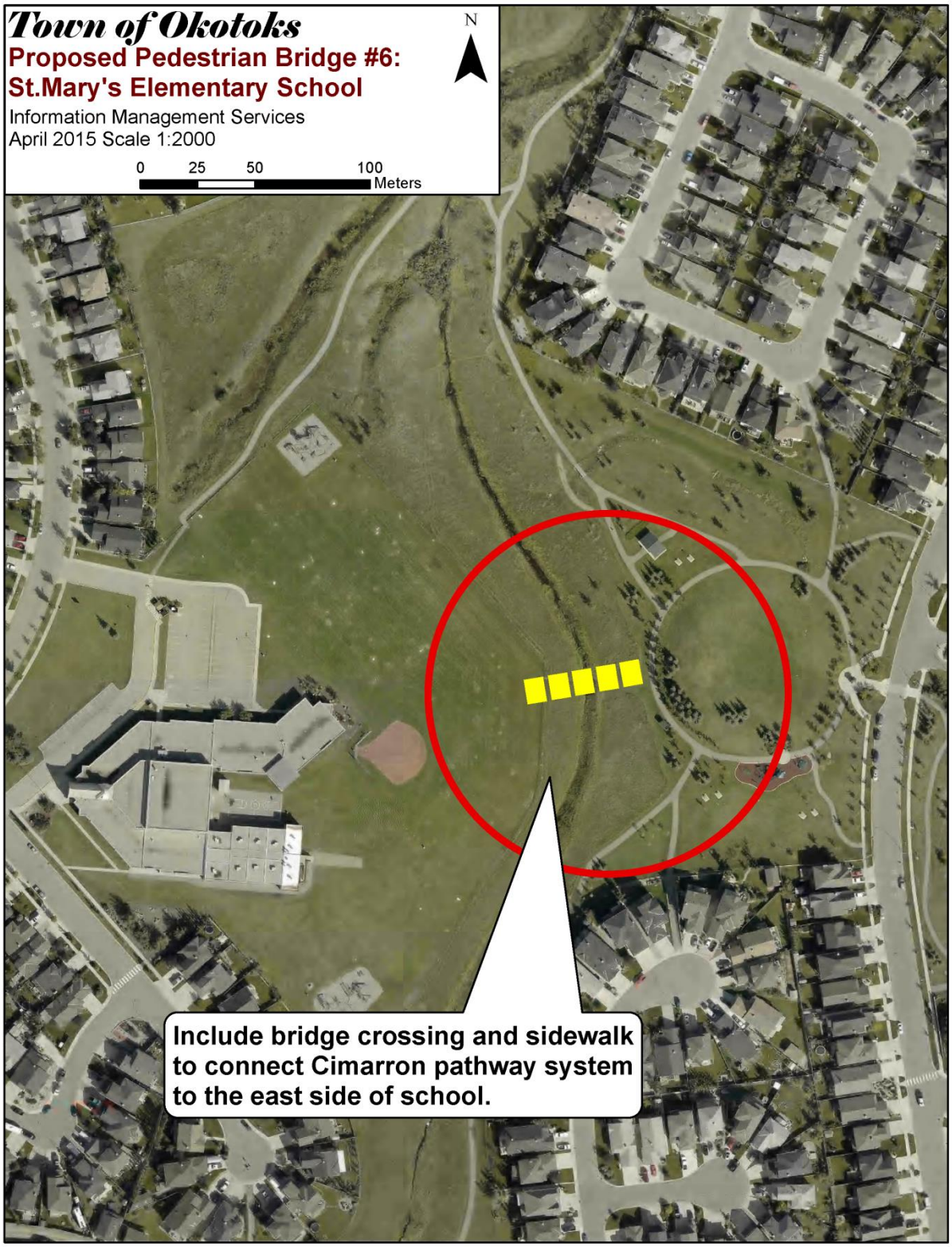

Town of Okotoks
Proposed Intersection #1: Milligan Drive & Okotoks Drive
Information Management Services
April 2015 Scale 1:1000
0 12.5 25 50
Meters
N
At high traffic/ high pedestrian intersections, allow for timed intervals to provide alternating pedestrians & traffic; improve lighting at cross-ings.

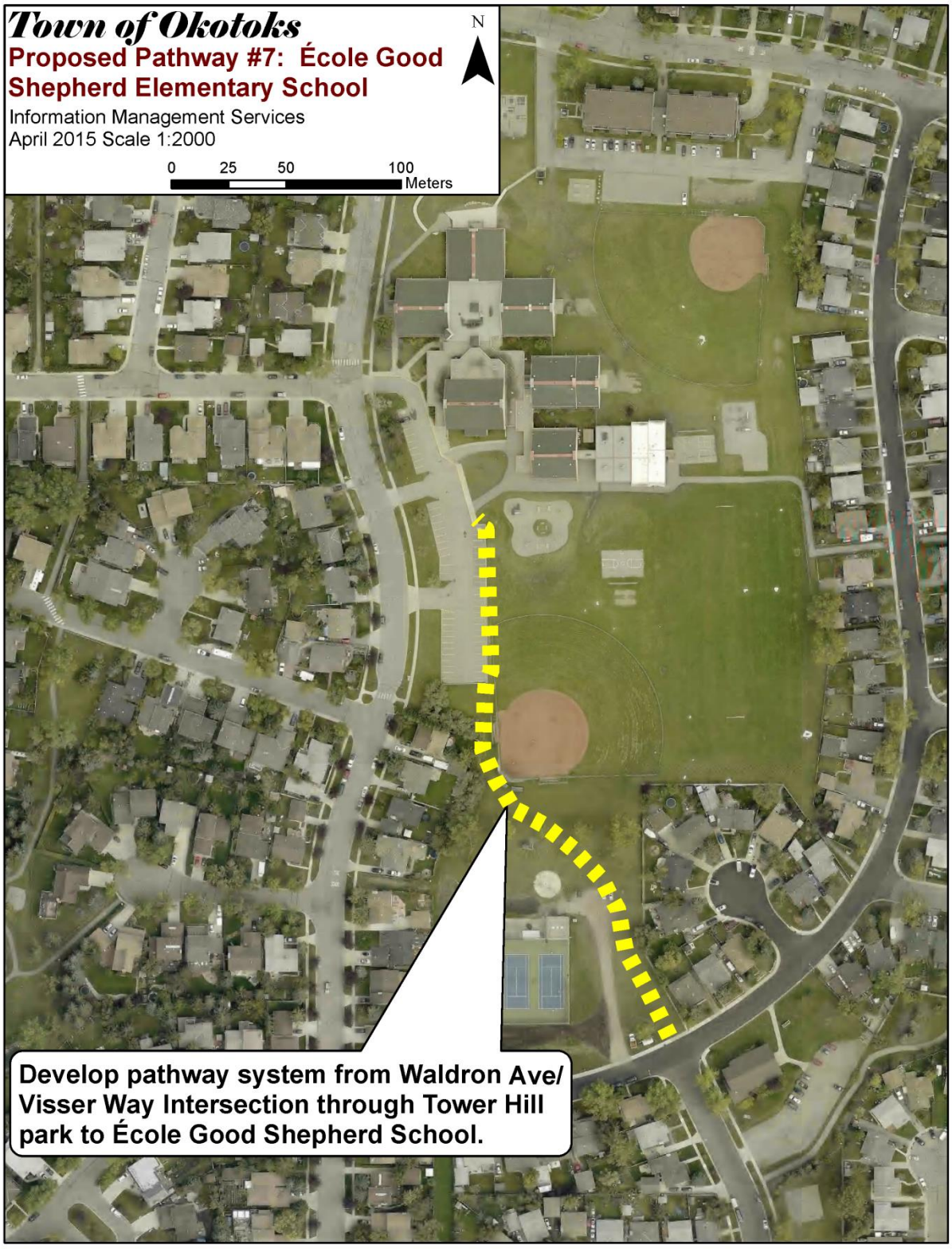

Town of Okotoks
Proposed Intersection #2: Milligan Drive & Crystalridge Drive
Information Management Services
April 2015 Scale 1:1000
0 12.5 25 50
Meters
N
At high traffic/ high pedestrian intersections, allow for timed intervals to provide alternating pedestrians & traffic; improve lighting at cross-ings. Connect pathways with crosswalks for consistant pathway flow.

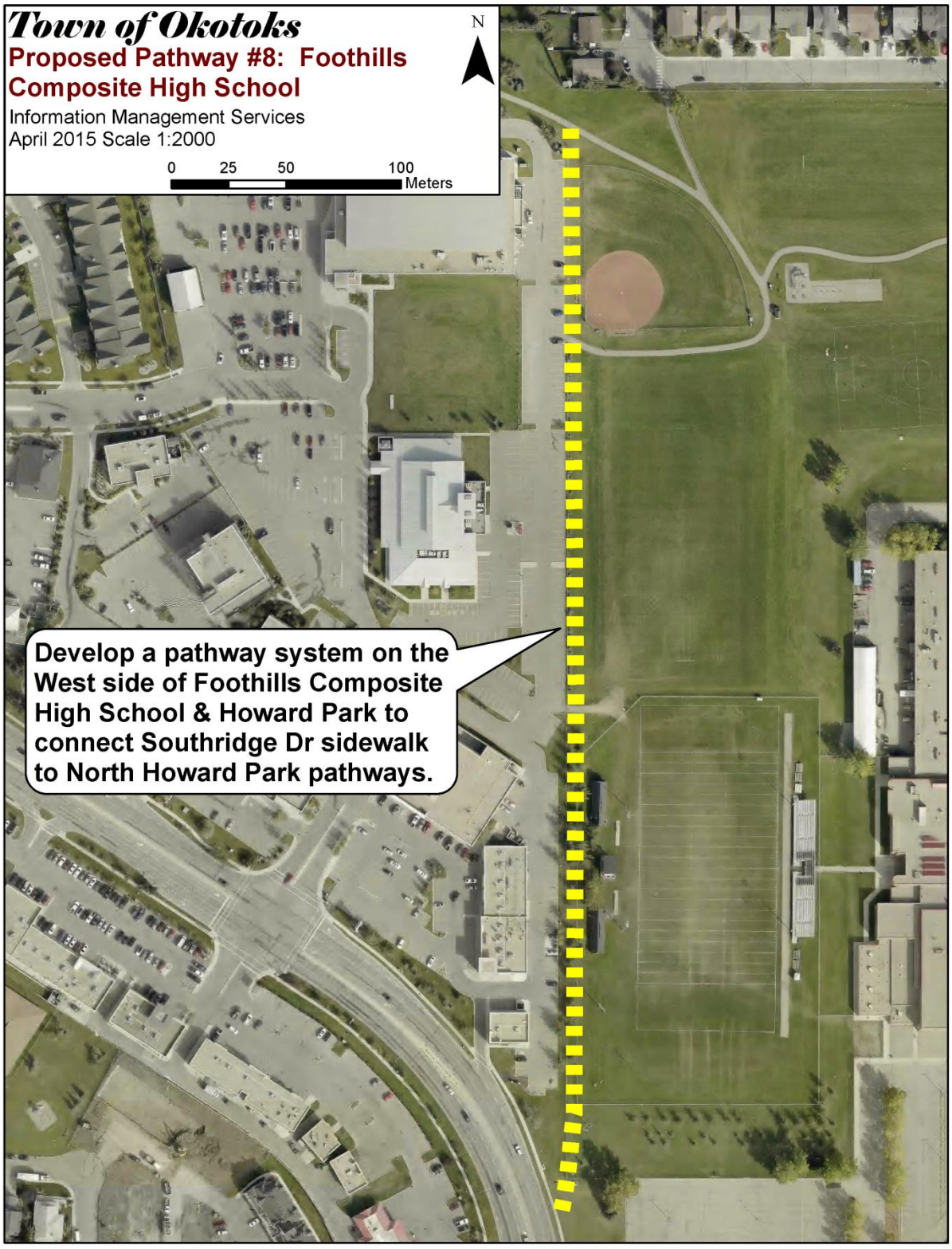

Town of Okotoks
Proposed Intersection #3: Milligan Drive & Crystal Green Drive
Information Management Services
April 2015 Scale 1:1000
0 12.5 25 50
Meters
N
Requires crosswalk painted at intersection.


Town of Okotoks
Proposed Intersection #4: Milligan Drive & Drake Landing Heights
Information Management Services
April 2015 Scale 1:1000
0 12.5 25 50
Meters
N
More crosswalks are required along all sidewalks.

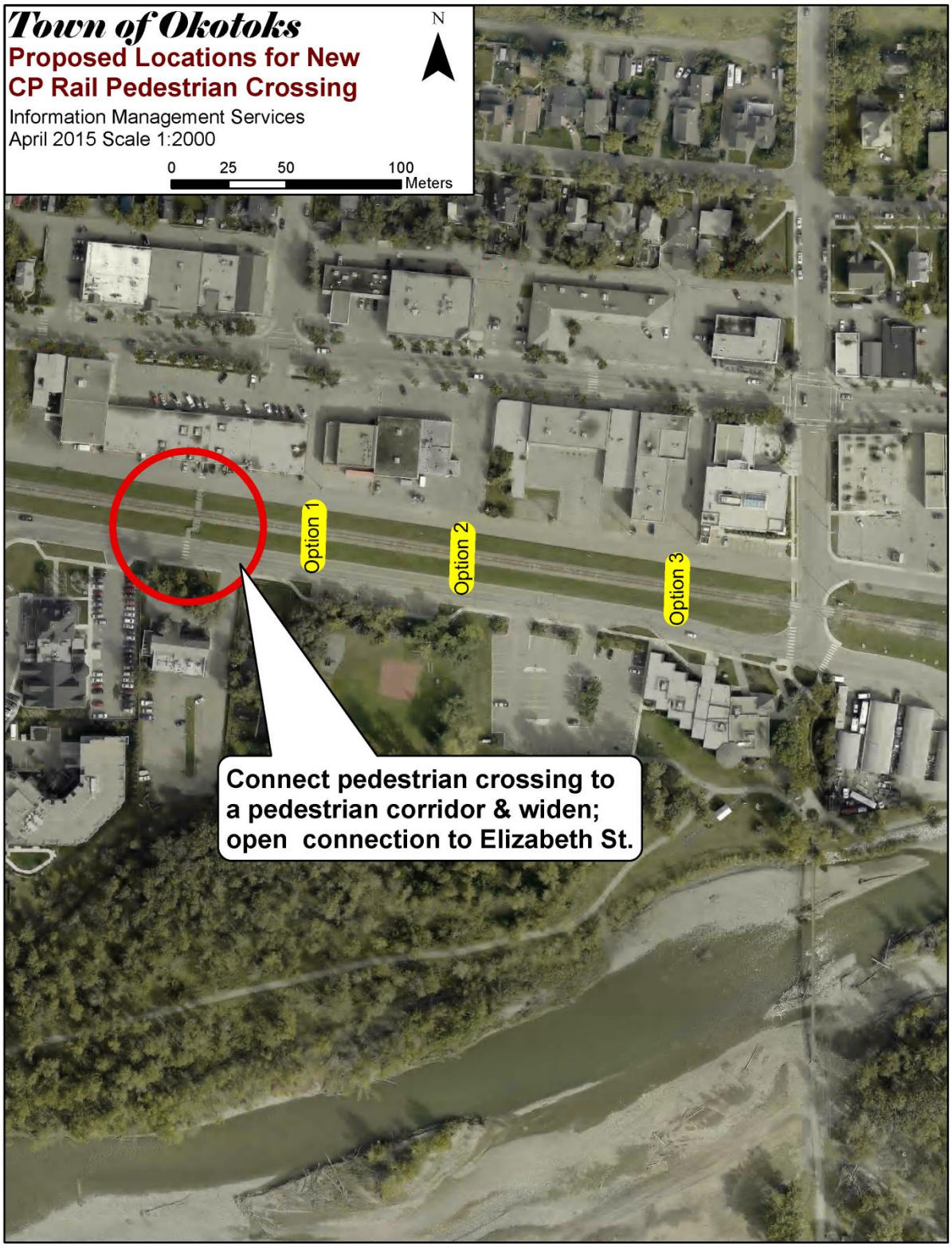

Town of Okotoks
Proposed Pedestrian Bridge #5:
Laurie Boyd Crossing
Information Management Services
April 2015 Scale 1:1000
0 12.5 25 50
Meters
N
Width of bridge should meet safe route standards and allow for minimum width of more than a single pedestrian.


Town of Okotoks
Proposed Pedestrian Bridge #6:
St.Mary's Elementary School
Information Management Services
April 2015 Scale 1:2000
0 25 50 100
Meters
N
Include bridge crossing and sidewalk to connect Cimarron pathway system to the east side of school.


Town of Okotoks
Proposed Pathway #7: École Good Shepherd Elementary School
Information Management Services
April 2015 Scale 1:2000
0 25 50 100 Meters
N
Develop pathway system from Waldron Ave/ Visser Way Intersection through Tower Hill park to École Good Shepherd School.


Town of Okotoks
Proposed Pathway #8: Foothills Composite High School
Information Management Services
April 2015 Scale 1:2000
0 25 50 100 Meters
N
Develop a pathway system on the West side of Foothills Composite High School & Howard Park to connect Southridge Dr sidewalk to North Howard Park pathways.


Town of Okotoks
Proposed Pathway #9:
Cornerstone
Information Management Services
April 2015 Scale 1:2000
N
0 25 50 100
Meters
Develop a pedestrian corridor to connect a pathway to the South& West businesses.


Town of Okotoks
Proposed Locations for New
CP Rail Pedestrian Crossing
Information Management Services
April 2015 Scale 1:2000
0 25 50 100
Meters
N
Option 1
Option 2
Option 3
Connect pedestrian crossing to a pedestrian corridor & widen; open connection to Elizabeth St.


Good
Bad
Proposed