



Actively Connecting Windsor-Essex

COUNTY WIDE ACTIVE
TRANSPORTATION STUDY
(CWATS) FEEDBACK SURVEY

SUMMARY REPORT





BACKGROUND

In January 2010, the Corporation of the County of Essex (COE) initiated an active transportation study. The purpose of the County Wide Active Transportation Study (CWATS) is to examine options and make recommendations to improve the conditions for active transportation facilities. It will look at improving the connectivity between municipalities in and around Essex County through on and off road trail systems. Once linked, these trail networks will encourage and support people to consider active transportation as a viable option for moving around Windsor-Essex County (WEC).

The final draft of the CWATS Master Plan was completed in September 2010. The next step was to gather public feedback. Which contributed to final recommendations included in the CWATS Master Plan. It increased public knowledge and support of this study.

The COE decided to partner with Go For Health Windsor-Essex and the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit (WECHU) to develop a survey, promote CWATS and gather public feedback (see Appendix A). The goals of the survey were to:

- Assess if WEC residents were aware of the CWATS
- Assess whether residents would use the trails proposed in the CWATS
- Understand why the public would most likely use active transportation trails
- Assess overall support for the CWATS
- Assess if formal public gatherings such as the Ruthven Apple Festival was an effective way to gather public input from a cross-section of WEC residents

To reach residents from towns across WEC, public feedback on the CWATS was collected at three locations: the Ruthven Apple Festival in Kingsville, the Town Hall in Tecumseh, and the Town Hall in LaSalle. The call for prior feedback on the CWATS at these events was advertised to local residents through various media releases prior to the events.

At all three events, the COE had a booth that displayed the final draft of the CWATS Master Plan. Personnel from the COE and consultants from MMM group attended each event to answer questions and relay information to the public about the CWATS Master Plan. Go For Health Windsor-Essex and Windsor-Essex Communities in motion (W-E CIM) also assisted with the booth at the Ruthven Apple Festival. These two community groups highlighted the health promotion and safety aspects of the CWATS.

Members of the public attending the CWATS booth were asked to participate in the brief CWATS feedback survey. Those who completed the survey received a small gift (i.e., flashing bike light reflector) and an entry into a grand prize draw for either a: \$400 bicycle, WII fit, gift card, or one of four bicycle tune-up and accessory packages.

A public survey was developed to assess if people would use an active transportation system and what they would use these trails for.



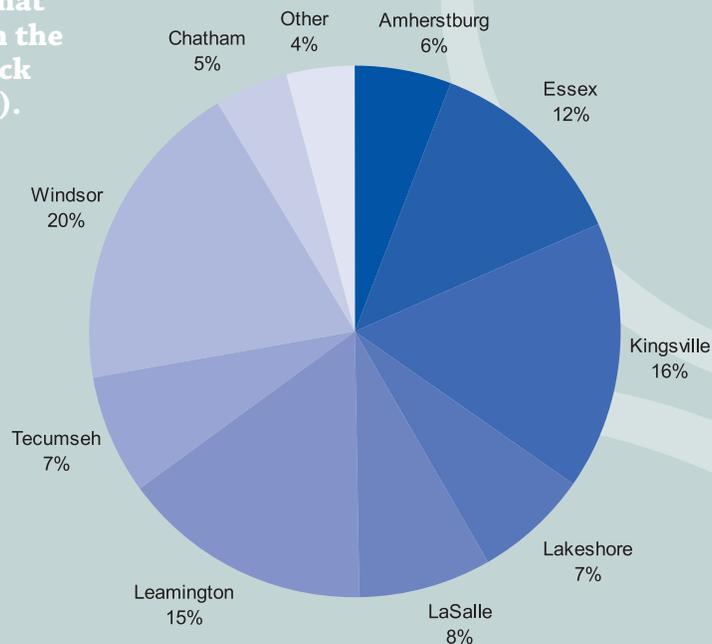
KEY FINDINGS

2.1. Program Response

Participation at the CWATS booth at the Ruthven Apple Festival was great. Over 400 people attended the booth and 360 of these completed a survey. Usually, a public consultation of this sort is done at a local town hall and attracts no more than a dozen people. There were 381 survey responses received from all three locations. It's thought that a variety of factors caused the high rate of interest and feedback on the CWATS (i.e., bringing the information to a public event, the location of the booth at the festival, booth giveaways, the prize draw, physical activity resources, media advertising, outreach by booth personnel, and public interest in CWATS).

The Ruthven Apple Festival CWATS booth was most effective in reaching residents from WEC. See figure 2.1.0. The number of survey responses by municipality indicates that residents from every municipality attended the CWATS booth. It should be noted that the higher number of survey responses from Essex, Kingsville, and Leamington is likely due to the location of the Ruthven Apple Festival which is more central to residents of these towns. Windsor may also be higher in responses, due to a higher population than the other municipalities. Finally, the fifteen respondents in the "other" category came from municipalities outside of the WEC area such as Michigan, Cottam, Comber, London, Orillia, Ridgetown, Sudbury, and Toronto.

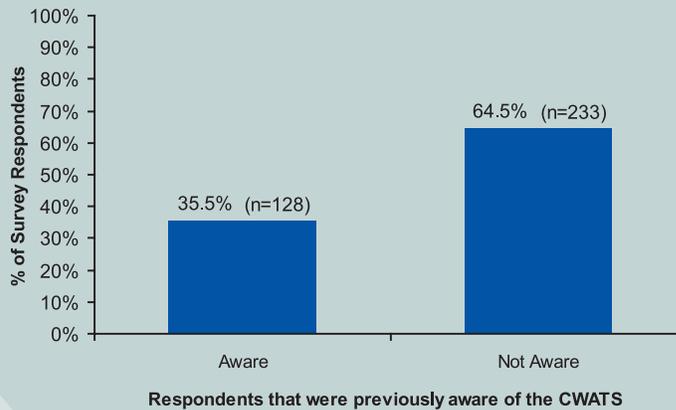
Figure 2.1.0. Survey respondents by municipality that participated in the CWATS feedback survey (n=370).



2.2. Public Awareness on CWATS

It was important to understand whether or not WEC residents were aware of the CWATS and if displaying the study at community events increased their awareness. As shown in Figure 2.2.0., only 35.5% of respondents were aware of CWATS prior to visiting the CWATS booth (n=361) in September 2010. This feedback tells us that there's a need for more promotion and educational interventions on the CWATS to the public. Increased public awareness prior to the adoption and implementation of the CWATS would only further enhance public support and answer any issues upfront during the planning stages of this project.

Figure 2.2.0. Survey respondents (n=361) that were aware of the CWATS prior to these public interventions in September 2010.

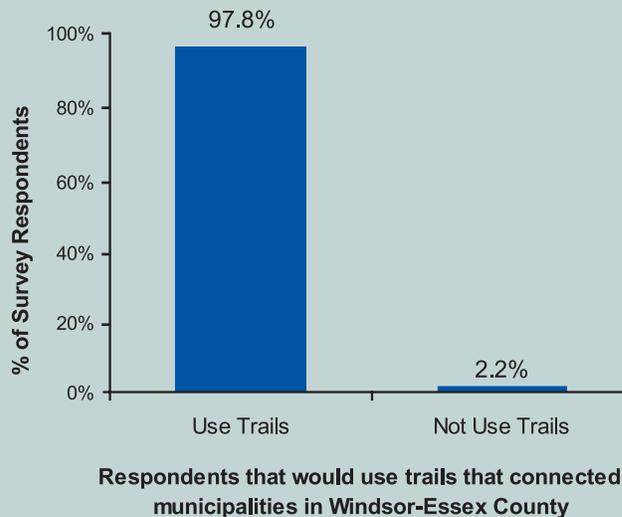


“nearly all (97.8%) survey respondents answered that they would use these trails.”

2.3. Public Interest on Active Transportation Systems

The COE and its partners also wanted to understand if the public would use the active transportation systems (e.g., bike lanes, multi-purpose trails), if CWATS was implemented. As shown in Figure 2.3.0., nearly all (97.8%) survey respondents answered that they would use these trails. It's important that all residents from around WEC showed similar rates of support for these trails.

Figure 2.3.0. Survey respondents (n=356) that would use active transportation trails if WEC municipalities were linked by CWATS.



The feedback survey was successful in finding out why the public would most likely use the active transportation trails. All of the following answers were available to the respondents on the feedback survey:

- Commuting (e.g., to work, school)
- Workplace travel (e.g., walking, biking to do errands during the workday, go to meetings)
- Destination oriented trips (e.g., errands)
- Recreation (e.g., cycling, walking, cross-country skiing, walking your dog)
- Quality of life/ health benefits (e.g., improve your health and lifestyle)
- Environmental benefits (e.g., reduce gasoline usage and air emissions)
- Other

As shown in Figure 2.3.1., recreation was the most cited reason for using the proposed trails. Over 93% of respondents would use the trails for recreational purposes. This supports the fact that active transportation trails interest the general population and not just the avid cyclist or elite athlete. Also, **over 77% would use these trails for quality of life/health benefits**. More than 25% indicated they would use them from destination oriented trips. One in five (19%) indicated that they would use these active transportation systems for commuting purposes.

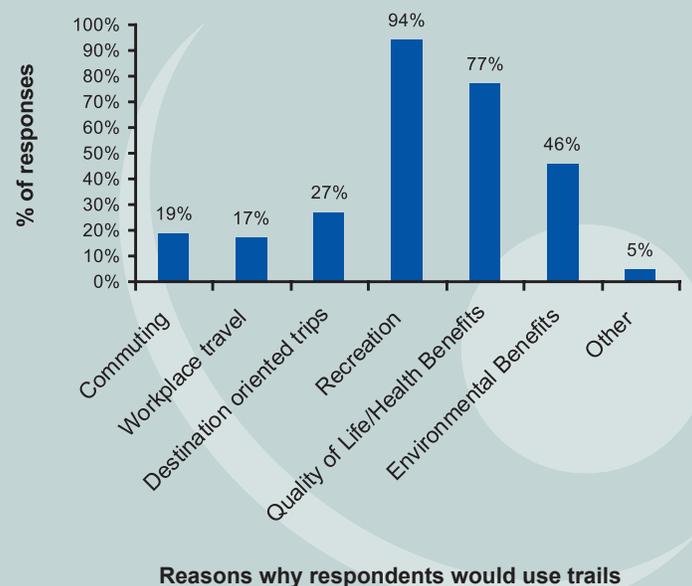
It's important to note that **over 55% of the respondents gave up to three different reasons why they would use these trails**. For example, a respondent may have checked off that they would use these trails for the following reasons: recreation, quality of life/health benefits, and destination oriented trips. **These results show that active transportation trails would be versatile and flexible to the varying needs of the public.**

Finally, people that responded with “other” as a reason why they would use these trails provided some of the following reasons:

- Relationship-building activities such as: going to see friends, teaching grand-children about nature, and stress relief.
- Community-based initiatives such as: charity walks; tourism, and group exercise programs.
- Individual motivations such as: fun, safety, and personal satisfaction.

“Over 93% of respondents would use the trails for recreational purposes.”

Figure 2.3.1. Reasons why respondents (n=381) would use active transportation trails.





CONCLUSION

Public events such as the Ruthven Apple Festival have been an effective method of increasing public interest and getting input on the CWATS. This public consultation strategy was unique to the development process of an Active Transportation Master Plan. Feedback from more than 360 participants across WEC was received.

The feedback survey was useful in assessing the public's current awareness level of the CWATS. Only 35.5% of respondents (where n=361) were actually aware of the CWATS prior to seeing it at these public events. Opportunities to share progress of the CWATS with the public at other public gatherings should be explored, as an effective way of reaching the public.

The survey provided information on what the public's interests are regarding the county wide active transportation proposal. Nearly all (98%) survey participants said that they would use these trails if they connected towns in WEC for one reason or another. Linking municipalities by trails in WEC could potentially lead to a healthier and more active Windsor-Essex Community, given the large percentage of respondents who indicated that they would use the trail systems for recreation (94%), and quality of life/health benefits (77%).

In closing, there is clear support for the CWATS. Ninety-eight percent (98%) of those surveyed indicated they intend to use a WEC trail system. In addition, over half (55%) of the people who responded to the survey indicated that they would use these trails for more than one reason. This suggests that a county wide active transportation system would meet the needs of all residents in the WEC area.

“Linking municipalities by trails in WEC could potentially lead to a healthier and more active Windsor-Essex Community, given the large percentage of respondents who indicated that they would use the trail systems for recreation (94%), quality of life/ health benefits (77%).”



APPENDIX

County Wide Active Transportation Study (CWATS) Feedback Survey

1. Before today, were you aware of the County Wide Active Transportation Study (CWATS), which will link towns within the Windsor-Essex County Area?
Yes or No
2. If towns/municipalities were linked, would you and/or your family use these trails?
Yes or No
3. Why would you use an active transportation system, such as bike lanes, multi-purpose trails, etc.?
 - commuting (e.g., to work, school)
 - workplace travel (e.g., walking/biking to do errands during the workday, go to meetings)
 - destination oriented trips (e.g., errands)
 - recreation (e.g., cycling, walking, cross-country skiing, walk your dog)
 - quality of life/ health benefits (e.g., improve your health and lifestyle)
 - environmental benefits (e.g., reduce gasoline usage and air emissions)
 - other _____

Contact information for Grand Prize Draw:

Name: _____

Phone number: _____

Email: _____

What town in Windsor-Essex County do you currently live in?

- Amherstburg
- Essex
- Kingsville
- Lakeshore
- LaSalle
- Leamington
- Tecumseh
- Windsor
- Chatham
- Other: _____



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