



Brunswick Street & Rainnie Drive Complete Streets

What We Heard Report



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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

The municipality is currently developing a functional plan to evaluate options for connections within the existing and proposed All Ages and Abilities (AAA) bicycle network and improvements to pedestrian connections.

The Integrated Mobility Plan (IMP) and Centre Plan Package B both highlight the project area, highlighted on the map below, for enhanced streetscaping and the addition of an AAA bicycle facility. This route is also identified in the Active Transportation Priorities Plan and candidate or desired routes. Rainnie Drive and Brunswick Street create an important link between existing segments of the active transportation network.

The current Brunswick Street bike lane ends at Sackville Street leaving cyclists to find their own connections to the existing Dalhousie active transportation facilities. Pedestrian facilities also deteriorate south of Sackville Street making it challenging for those on foot to access the Spring Garden Road Business area.

1.2 Project Objectives and Goals

Several design elements are considered part of a complete street, the following features will form an important part of the design:

- Pedestrian infrastructure (tactile warning indicators, curb cuts, sidewalks, and crosswalks,)
- Traffic calming measures (narrowed lanes, medians, shorter curb radii, and elimination of right-turn slip lanes)
- Bicycle infrastructure (protected or dedicated bicycle lanes, bicycle parking, and multi-use path)
- Public transit accommodations

This project assesses the impacts of lane reconfiguration and allocation of space to create an improved active transportation link in the downtown area providing improved pedestrian amenities and a permanent protected bicycle lane while maintaining necessary vehicular functions along the corridor.

1.3 Project Area

The project area encompasses Brunswick Street from Cogswell Street to Spring Garden Road, Gottingen Street between Rainnie Drive and Brunswick Street, and all of Rainnie Drive (see figure 1). The project area has been broken into smaller segments based on their different functional needs:

1. Rainnie Drive
2. Gottingen Street
3. Brunswick Street between Cogswell Street and Sackville Drive
4. Brunswick Street between Sackville Drive and Spring Garden Road



Figure 1 - Project Context

1.4 Key Project Considerations

The addition of the bicycle lane along Brunswick Street will impact parking availability along the corridor. Efforts have been made to mitigate these losses in advance through work with developers, such as The Doyle, to provide additional public parking within the area. Brunswick Street also serves as a truck route north of Sackville Street requiring additional turning considerations and lane widths.

2.0 Shape Your City Survey Summary

2.1 Engagement Process

Public engagement was launched on August 23, 2021 via Shape Your City and YouTube. The survey and recorded presentation were advertised through sponsored posts on Facebook and shared on the municipality's Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook accounts. The survey link was also emailed to external stakeholders including businesses along the corridor and cycling advocacy groups.

The survey closed on September 30, 2021 with 1100 responses, at that time the video had been viewed 325 times on YouTube and the Shape your City page had received more than 3700 visits.

This report summarizes responses based on survey input. This feedback will assist the project team to determine the most desirable configuration for the Brunswick Street and Rainnie Drive corridors within the parameters of a complete street.



1100 Survey Responses



325 Views



3700 Site Visits

2.2 What We Heard

Survey Demographics

The map below illustrates the locations of respondents. The map was created using the first 3 characters of postal codes as provided in the survey. A small portion of responses came from outside HRM, the map shows the responses from within HRM.

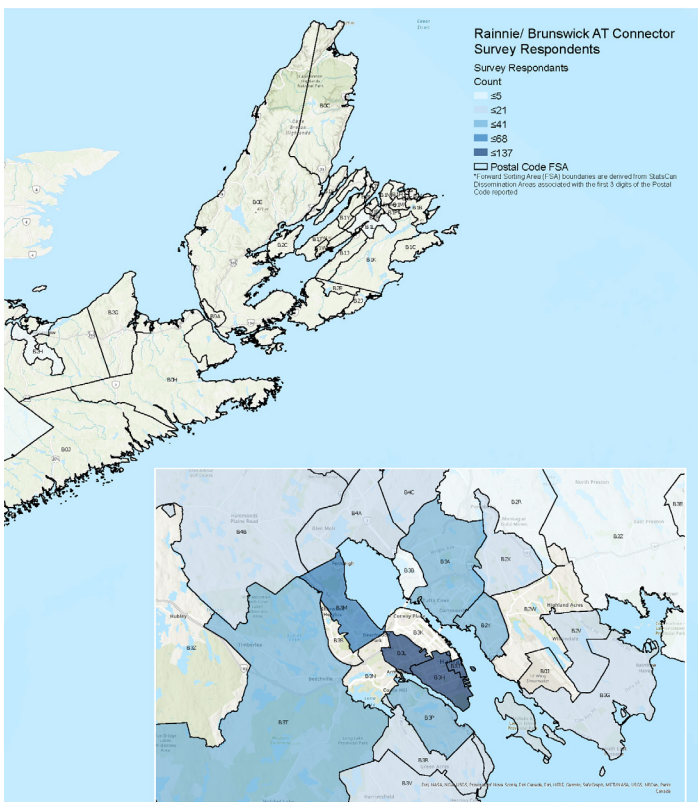


Figure 2 - Survey Response Heatmap

The age and gender demographics are shown in the graphs to the right. When compared to data from Statistics Canada (2016) the 25-44 age group was over represented (53.5% to 32%) and the other groups under represented. The gender demographics are also not fully in line with the 2016 Statistics Canada data. Males are over represented by approximately 8% and females under represented by 16%. The 2016 census did not include a category for non-binary people and there is also no option to abstain.

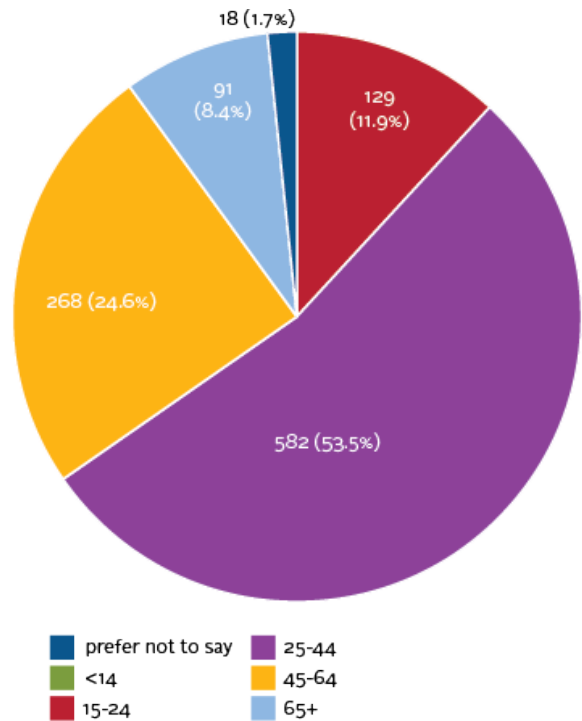


Figure 3 - Respondent age groups

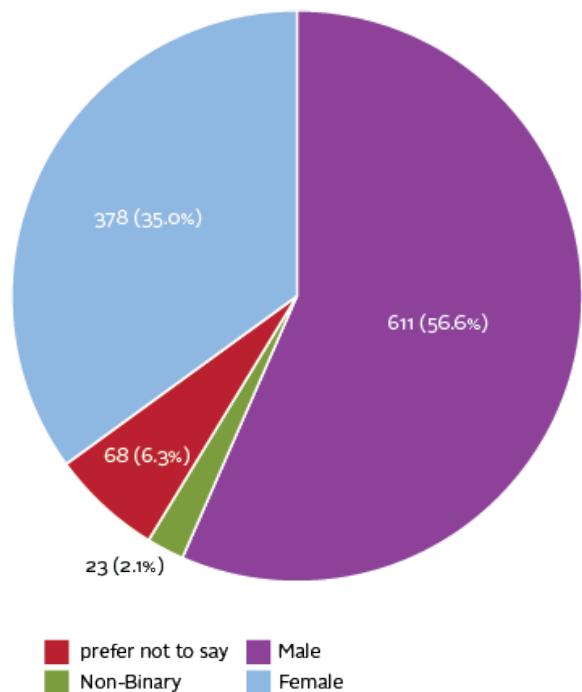


Figure 4 - Respondents by gender

Key Trends

The survey contained both multiple choice and open ended questions. Respondents discussed a number of topics, summarized here:

Active Transportation

- Pedestrian space was considered very important by the majority of participants with 53%, only 15% of respondents indicated it was not important or having a neutral opinion. Respondents want improved cycling infrastructure and better connections to existing facilities (21%)
- Respondents discussed the pros and cons of bi-directional versus unidirectional bikeways

Green Space

Green space was highly valued by respondents both in the general responses and the response to the options. Many respondents also indicated that green space needs to compliment our pedestrian space and should not be sacrificed to increased paved surfacing.

Safety

Respondents expressed concerns regarding the current configuration of the Brunswick St. / Gottingen St intersection for cyclists.

Transportation

15% of respondents felt that more parking and drive lanes would be more beneficial than bike lanes on Brunswick Street, overall 9% of respondents were against bike lanes in general

Current Modes of Transportation

Respondents were asked about their current primary mode of transportation when visiting the project area. The majority (53.4%) arrive by car or motorcycle either as a driver or passenger. The full responses are summarized in the table below.

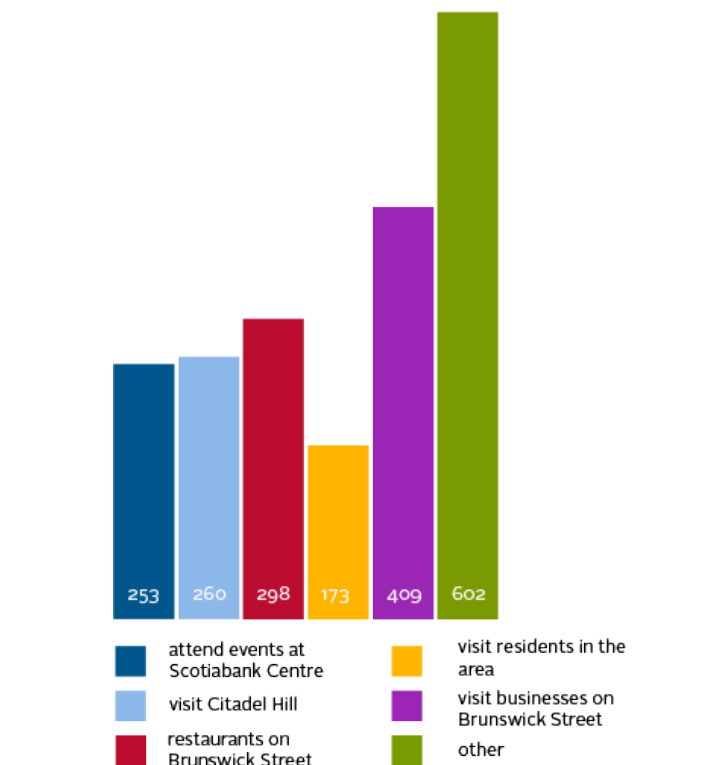


Figure 5 - Reason for visiting project area

Area Usage & Frequency

Respondents were asked how frequently they visited the project area and for what reasons. The majority indicated at least weekly trips. Reasons for visiting varied, the ‘other’ category being the most common indicating they work downtown or they use Brunswick Street and Rainnie Drive as part of their commute.

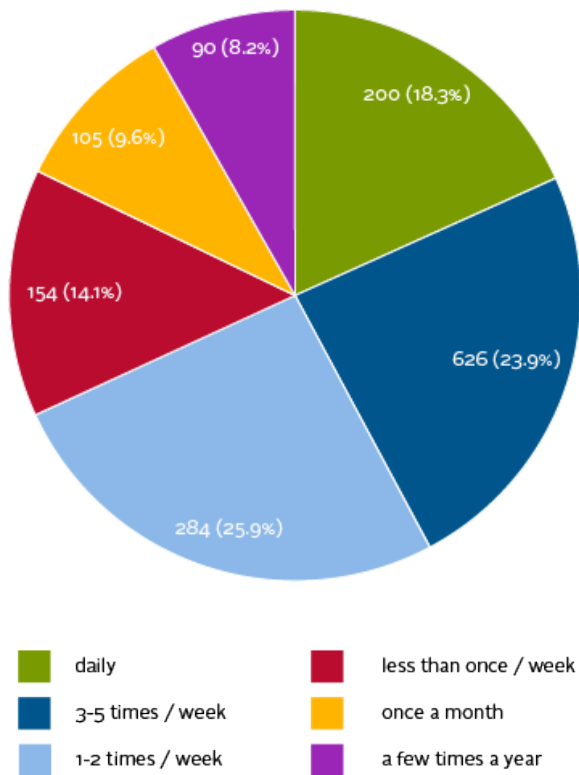


Figure 6 - Area visitation frequency

Rainnie Drive

Concepts for Rainnie Drive were not presented as part of the public consultation due to ongoing internal staff conversations about the possibilities for the corridor. Respondents were given the opportunity to rank the importance of key features within the area. Pedestrian space and space for cyclists were given the highest priority. The results are summarized in the table below. The complete results will be made available as part of the Functional Plan Report.

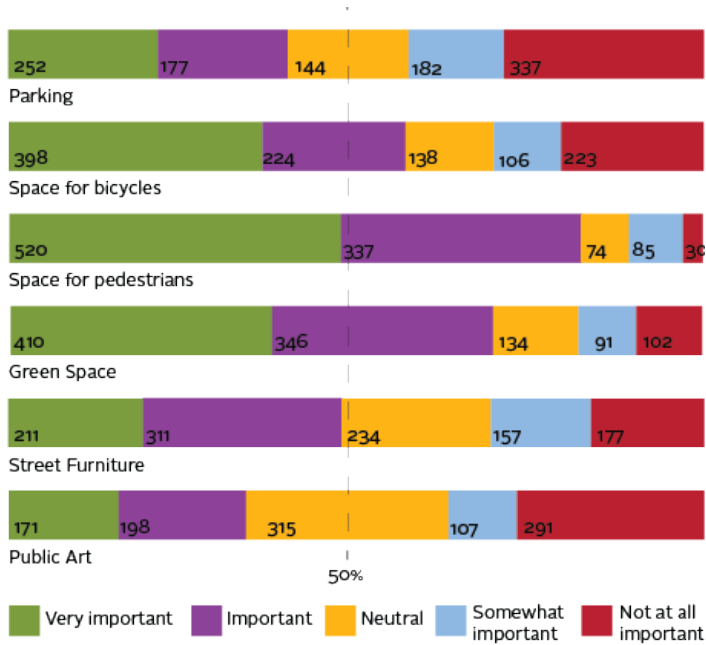


Figure 7 - Importance of features for Rainnie Drive

Brunswick Street

Respondents were asked to rank the current features of Brunswick Street by importance. The results are shown in the table to the right.

Parking was split almost in the middle regarding importance in the corridor, pedestrian space received the highest priority, followed closely by green space and space for cyclists. These preferences were reflected in the comments received on the individual concepts as well.

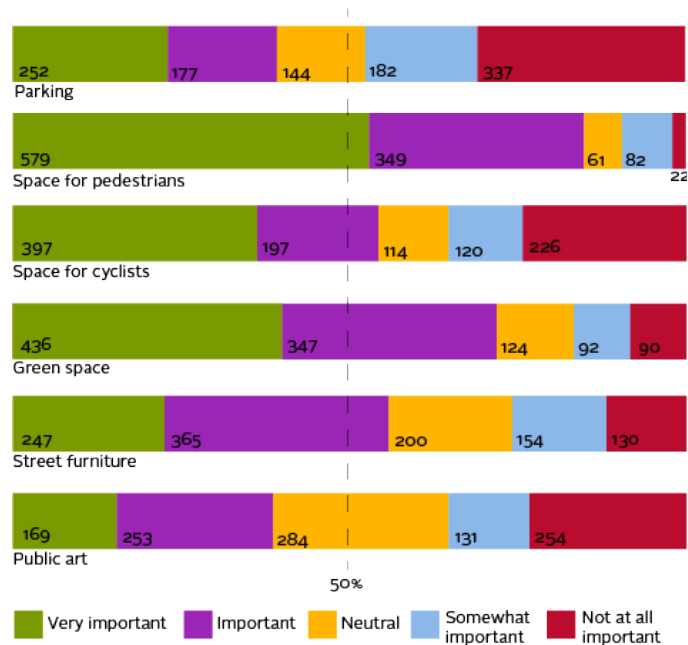


Figure 8 - Importance of features for Brunswick Street

Concept Feedback

Respondents were asked to select their preferred concept for each segment of the corridor. In all cases the balanced option was the preferred choice, and for the 17.3m segment green space was preferred over pedestrian priority.

23.3m Cross Section

The majority of respondents preferred the balanced option for the 23.3m cross section (55%). This option allowed for a 3.5m sidewalk and 3.3m landscape buffer while maintaining east side curb access.

21m Cross Section

The majority of respondents preferred the balanced option for the 21m cross section (52%). This option allows for a 3m sidewalk and a 1.85m landscape buffer while maintaining east side curb access.

17.3m Cross Section

For the 17.3m cross section, our most constrained, only 2 options were presented. The majority of respondents preferred the green space priority option for this segment (65%).

18.3m Cross Section

For the 18.3m option pedestrian priority received slightly more favour than retaining parking (50.3% to 49.7%), further consultation with businesses and landowners in the area will take place to gain a better understanding of their current and future needs.

2.3 Stakeholder Engagement Summary

The project team engaged a large cross-section of stakeholders and special interest groups as well as local businesses to get a broad understanding of the implications of the proposed design. Stakeholders include representatives from the following groups:

- cycling advocates
- accessibility organizations (CNIB, HRM Office of Diversity and Inclusion)
- local businesses
- business improvement districts
- HRM advisory committees will also be consulted

Key Trends

Stakeholder groups noted several key themes, noted below. These themes are very similar to the themes found in the public consultation.

Safety

- There were concerns about conflicts between pedestrians and cyclists. Most groups were concerned that adequate separation would be provided between the groups to ensure no accidental encroachment
- There were concerns about the bi-directional facility and potential for conflict with motor vehicles. At the time of the survey bicycle signals had not been approved for use by the Province of Nova Scotia. The current design approach includes the use of bicycle signals to create a more controlled environment and safety for all user groups at intersections

Parking

A small number of businesses indicated concerns related to loss of parking or loading. The bulk of these activities have retained their existing function or can be relocated to nearby side streets, the majority agreed that this option would be acceptable.

3.0 Next Steps

The project will move into the final stages of functional design and will be presented to advisory committees, Transportation Standing Committee and Regional Council before moving to detailed design. Construction is currently planned for 2024/2025.