

Strathcona County

# Sherwood Drive Traffic Circle Online Survey Results

April 7, 2015

# I. Executive Summary

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The Sherwood Drive Traffic Circle Survey was administered in March 2015. In total, 2,263 residents provided input on the traffic circle.

The majority of those responding to the survey have used the circle for more than ten years (69.3%), and 81% of respondents use the circle frequently (more than once a week). The majority of those responding use the circle at peak times more than once per week (55.2%), with 33.7% using the circle at peak times occasionally (once per week to once per month), and 11.1% using the circle at peak times less than once per month.

The vast majority of those responding reported the circle was Somewhat Easy (23.5%) or Very Easy (57.9%) to use. Few rated the circle Somewhat Difficult (6.6%) or Very Difficult (2.8%) to use. Those who have used the circle longer and who report using it in peak times tended to rate the circle easier to use.

A smaller majority of those responding rated the safety of the circle as Very Safe (30%) or Somewhat Safe (32%). Only 20% rated the circle as Somewhat Unsafe or Very Unsafe. Perceptions of safety of the traffic circle tend to be higher in those who use the circle more in peak hours and in those who have been using the circle longer.

Generally, respondents showed a great deal of support for keeping the traffic circle, with greater than 80% indicating that keeping the circle was a priority. Less than 10% of respondents expressed that they strongly disliked the circle and felt it should be removed and replaced by an alternative intersection design.

Almost everyone who completed the survey expressed that what works well with the traffic circle is it is very effective in keeping traffic flowing. Very commonly, this response was qualified by a statement like “as long as drivers know how to use it”.

Other aspects of the traffic circle that respondents felt were working well included the fact that there were no signals, and that the large size of the traffic circle adds to visibility and flow at the circle. Some noted that the safety of the intersection is one of the things that works well. A few responses also pointed out that the circle was quiet and aesthetically pleasing. A few respondents did limit their positive comments about traffic flow to times of lesser demand.

By far the most common response on what could be improved at the traffic circle was driver behaviour. Many responses indicated that poor driver behaviour at the intersection was the result of lack of driver understanding of the rules of the road. Other respondents felt that poor driver behaviour was likely tied to the geometry of the circle or the lack of signage at the traffic circle, both with regards to way finding and for educational purposes. Less commonly suggested improvements included better maintenance and better pedestrian facilities.

## II. Methodology

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The Sherwood Drive Traffic Circle Survey was administered March 9-22, 2015 using Fluid Surveys. Overall, 2,251 people responded to this online survey to provide their input on the traffic circle, located at the intersection of Sherwood Drive and Broadmoor Boulevard. Paper surveys were made available upon request, and the two received this way were manually entered and included in online results.

In addition to the information gathered from the online survey, administration received seven emails and five phone calls from residents who wanted to give input on the traffic circle. These views have been included with the online qualitative results.

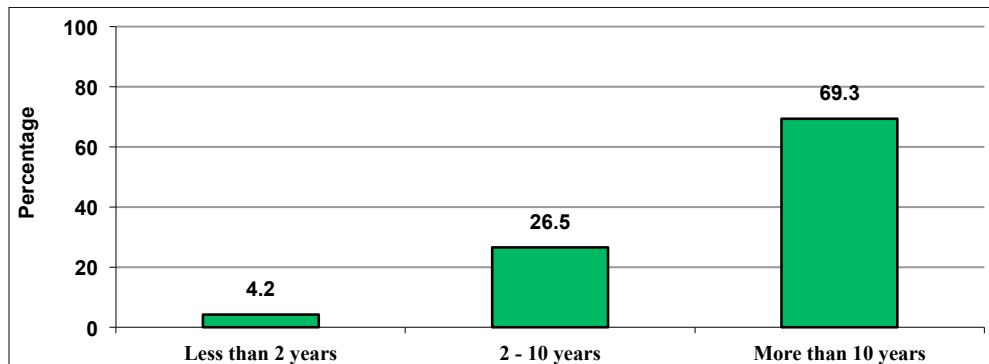
In total, 2,263 residents provided input on the traffic circle.

## III. Quantitative Results

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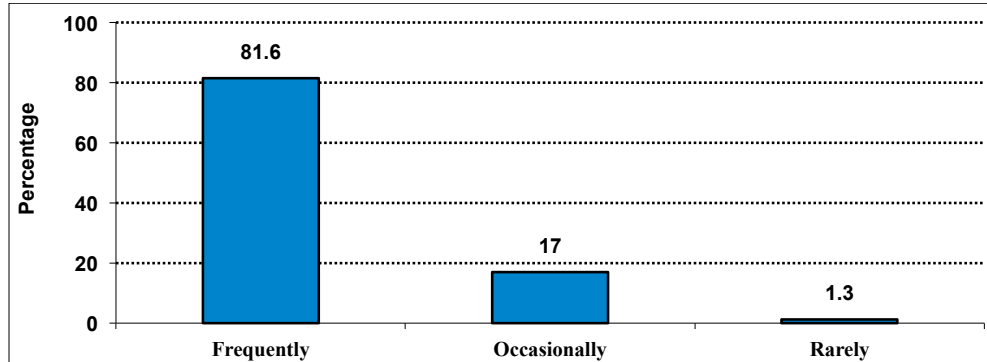
### A. How long have you been driving the traffic circle?

- The majority of drivers have used this traffic circle for more than 10 years.



## B. How often do you use the traffic circle?

- The majority of drivers use the traffic circle *Frequently*, defined in the survey as more than once a week.



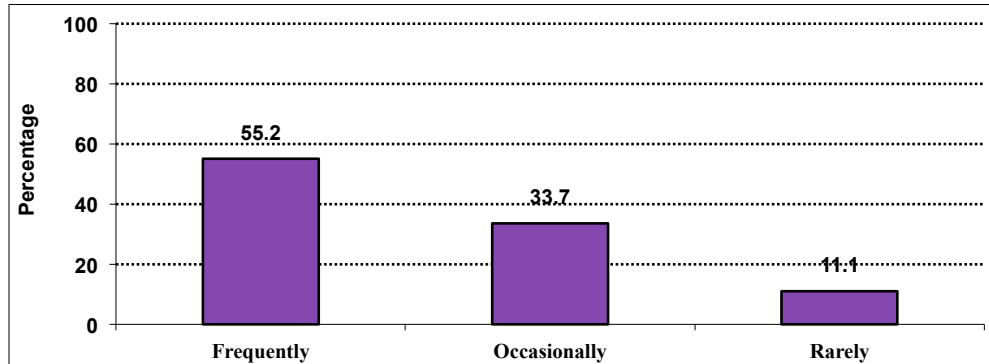
- *Occasional use* was defined as a time frame ranging from once a week to once a month.
- *Rarely* was defined as using this traffic circle less than once a month.

### If rarely, why do you use the circle so infrequently?

- The majority of drivers who used it rarely indicated that they rarely have the need to use that route (0.9% of the total sample or 64.5% of the sub-sample who used the traffic circle rarely).
- Only a small percentage of drivers who used the traffic circle rarely indicated that they went out of their way to avoid it because they don't like driving it (0.4% of the total sample or 25.8% of the sub-sample who used the traffic circle rarely).
- One other reason given included: "used to get into a parking lot on Broadmoor." Another person indicated that they did not reside in Strathcona County so they didn't need to use that particular route.

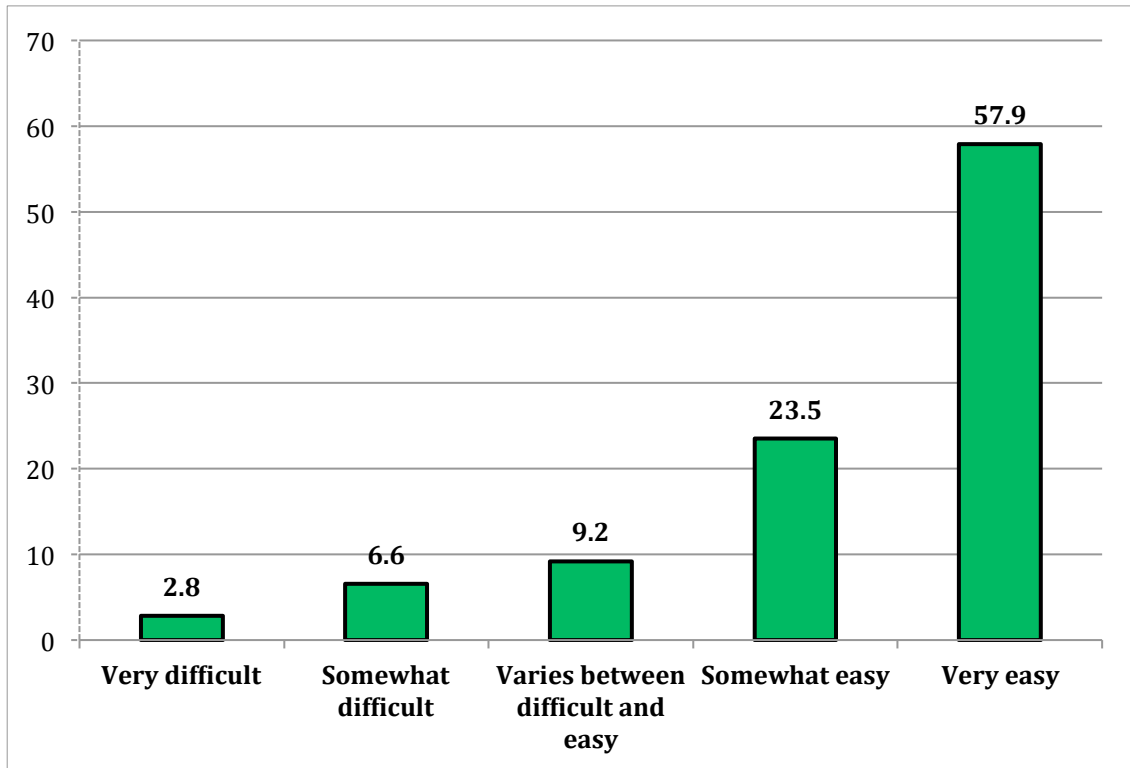
### C. Do you use the traffic circle during peak times (7-9 a.m. and/or 4-6 p.m.)?

- A small majority of drivers use the traffic circle frequently during peak times (defined in the survey as more than one a week).



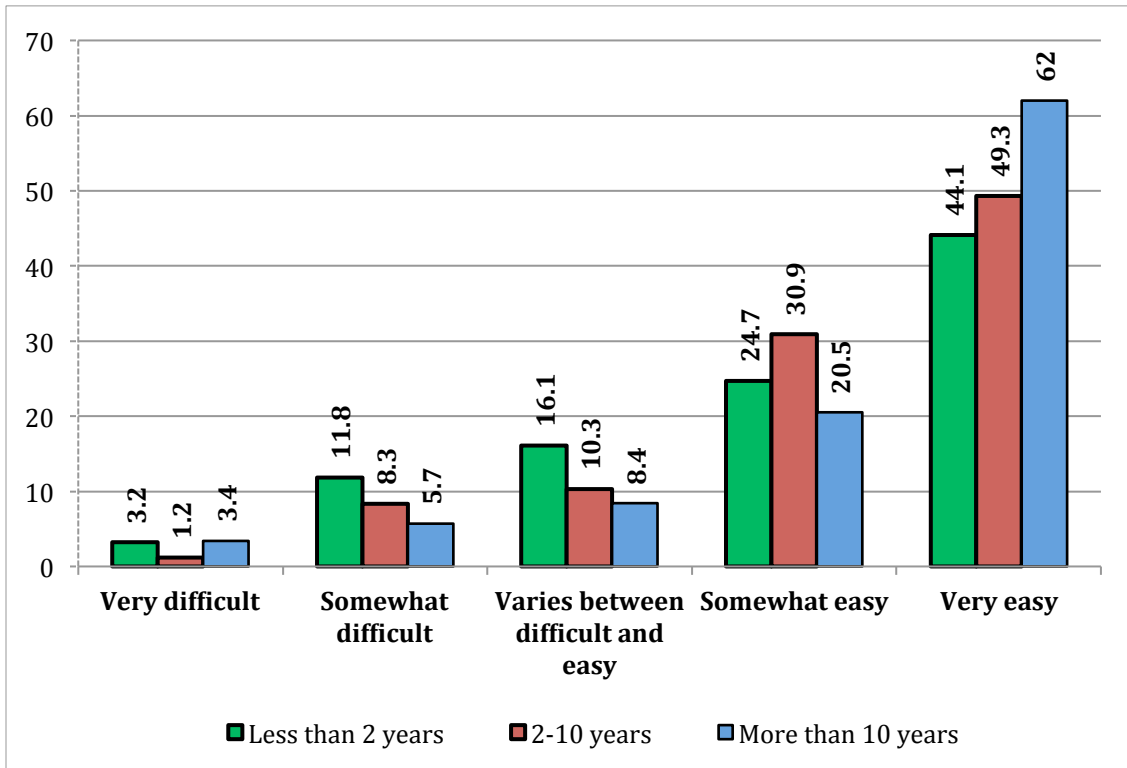
#### D. How would you rate the ease of driving the traffic circle?

- A five point Likert scale allowed respondents to rate this question. It can be seen that the majority of respondents found the traffic circle to be somewhat easy or very easy to use. The numbers in the graph are percentages.



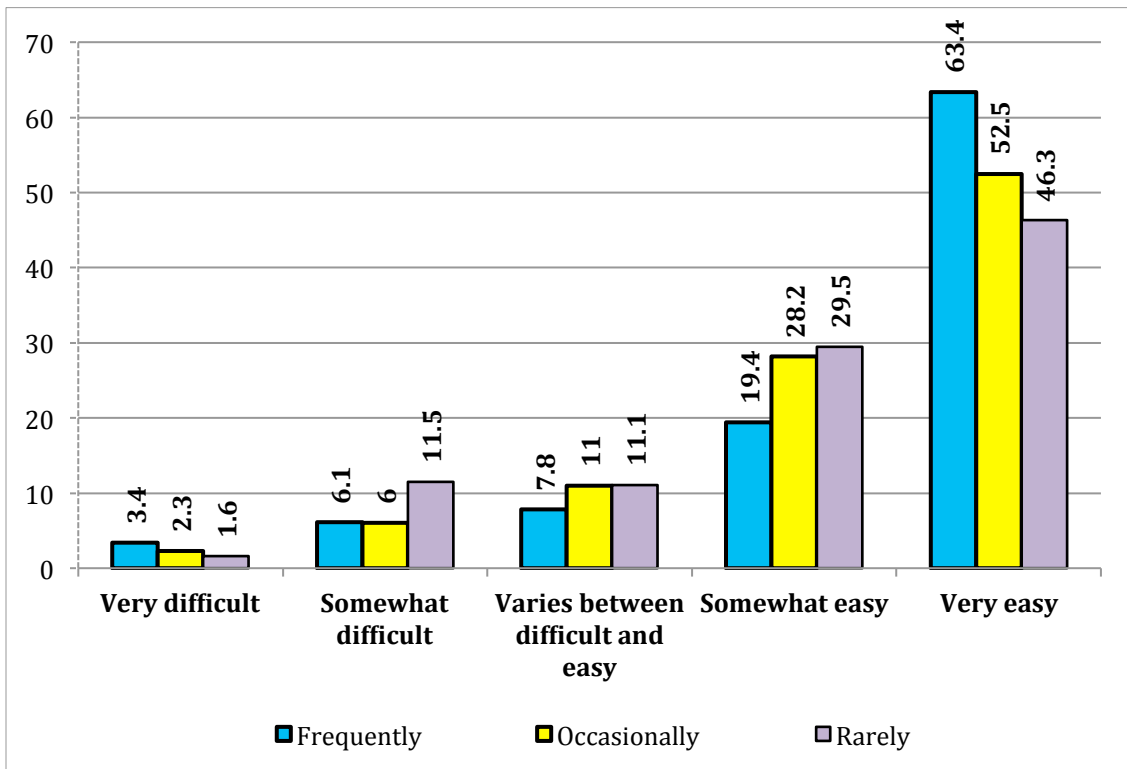
## Rating the ease of driving the traffic circle – based on how long respondents have used it

- It can be seen that ease of use increased as the number of years the traffic circle was used increased. The numbers in the graph are percentages.



## Rating the ease of driving the traffic circle – based on how frequently respondents used it during peak time periods

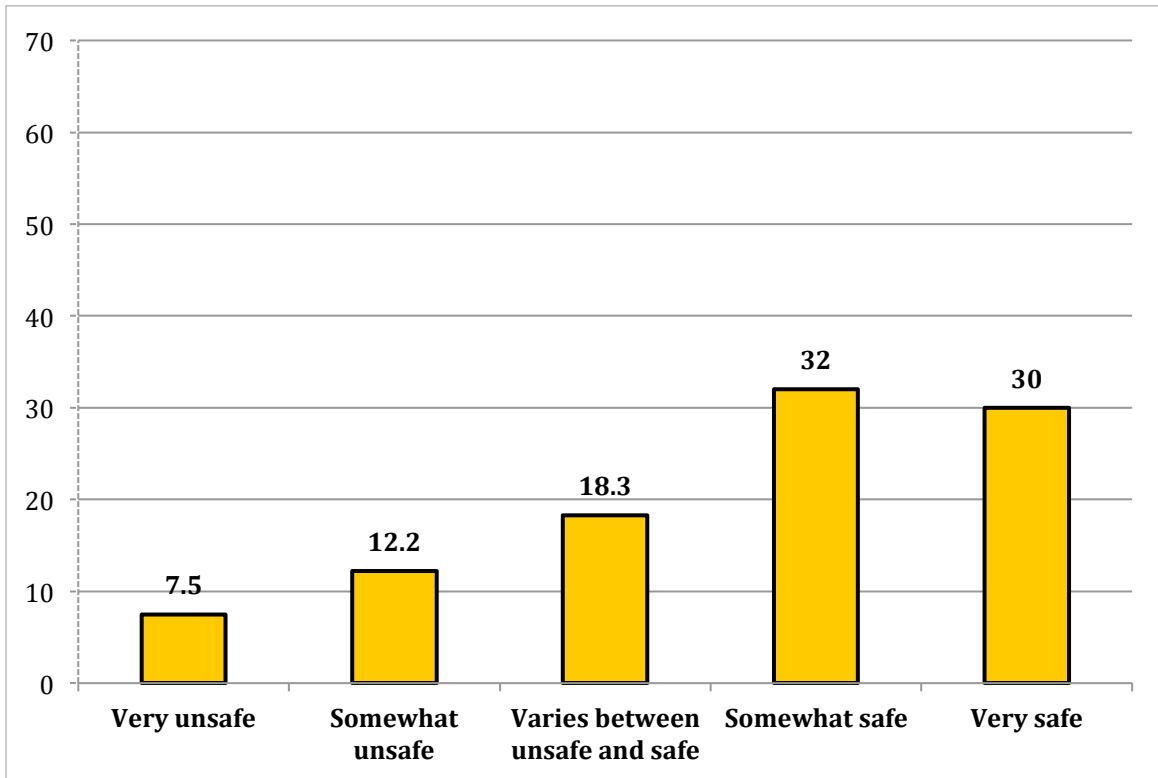
- It can be seen that ease of use increased as the use of the traffic circle in peak periods increased. The numbers in the graph are percentages.





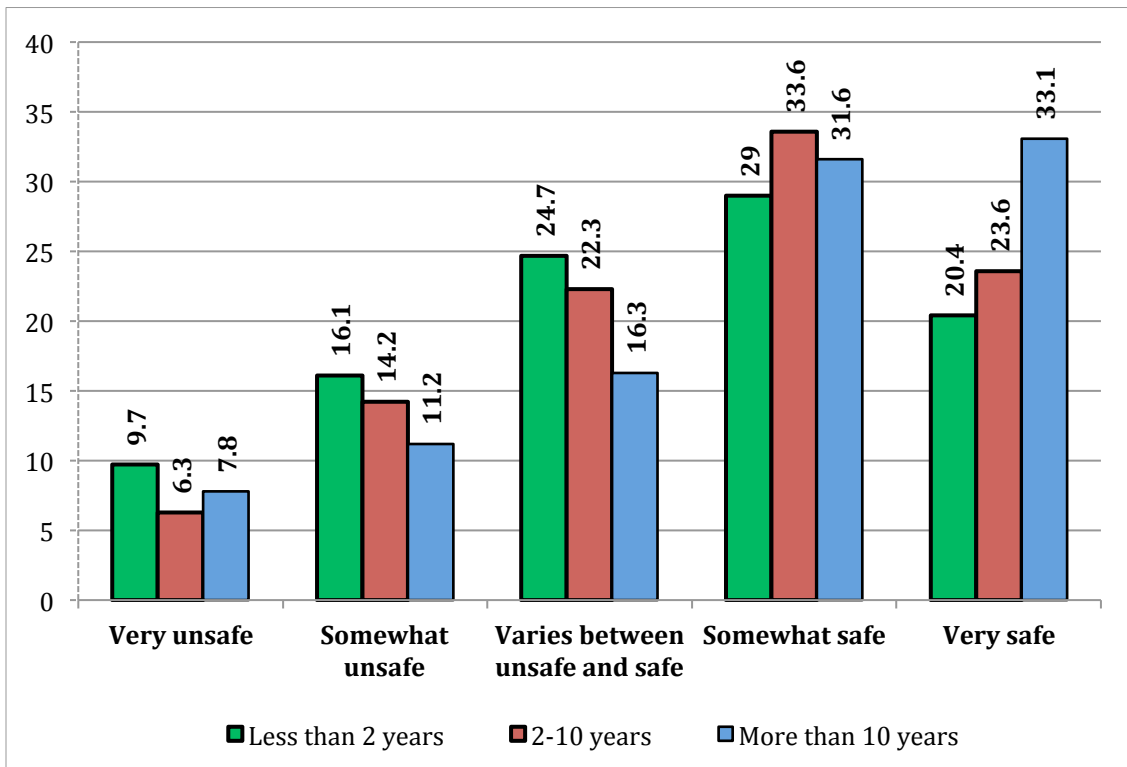
### E. As a driver, how would you rate the safety of the traffic circle?

- A five point Likert scale allowed respondents to rate this question. It can be seen that a majority found the traffic circle to be somewhat safe or very safe to use. The numbers in the graph are percentages.



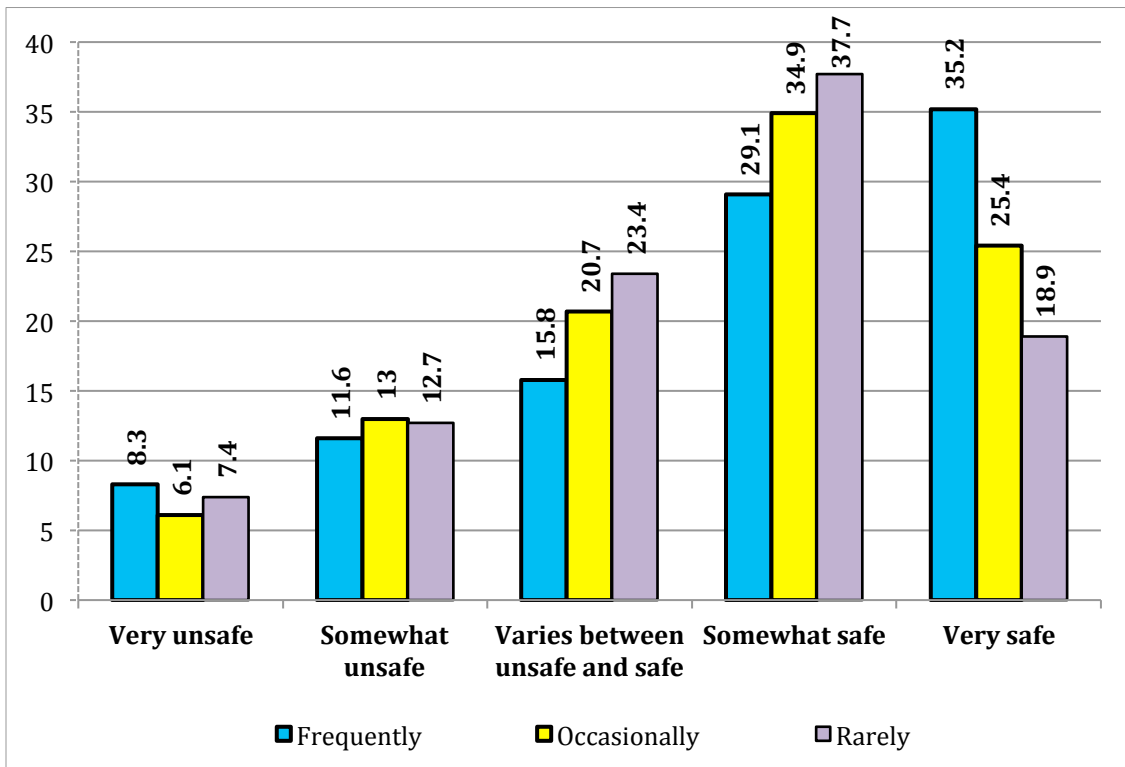
## Rating the safety of driving the traffic circle – based on how long respondents have used it

- It can be seen that perceptions of safety of the traffic circle of use was considerably higher in terms of safety as the number of years the traffic circle was used increased. The numbers in the graph are percentages.



## Rating the safety of driving the traffic circle – based on how frequently respondents used it during peak time periods

- It can be seen that perceptions of safety of the traffic circle of use was considerably higher in terms of safety as the frequency of use in peak hours increased. The numbers in the graph are percentages.

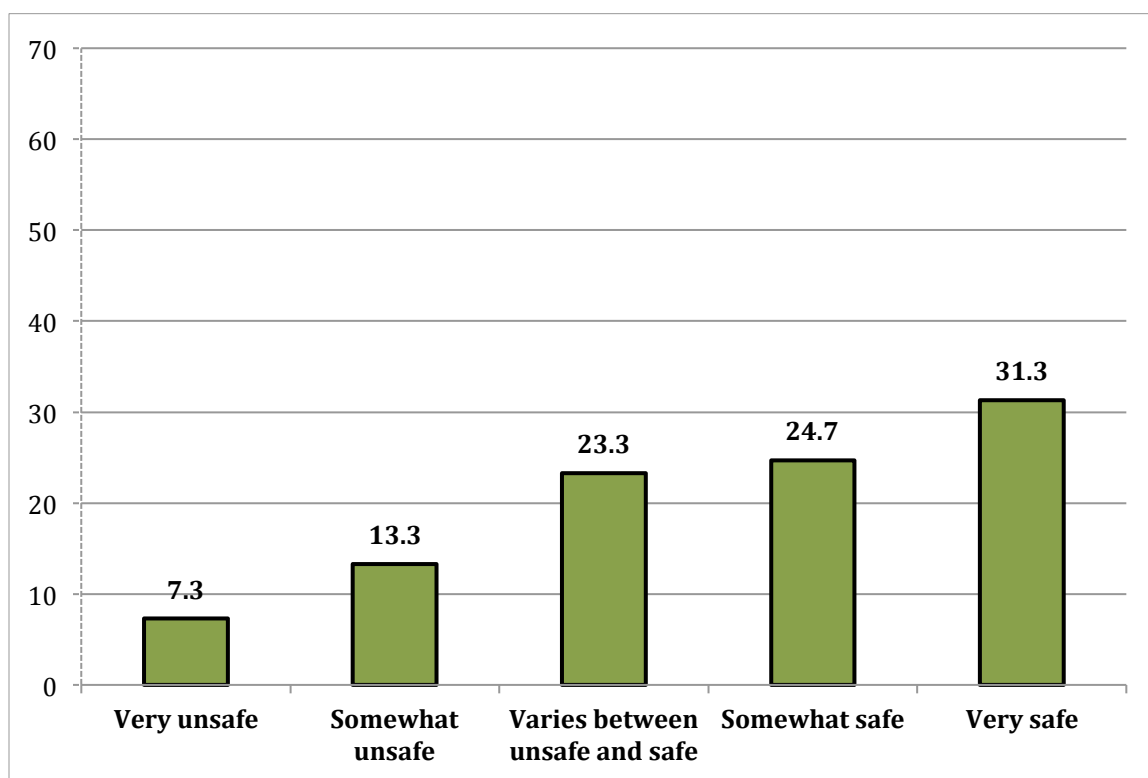


## F. Do you ever negotiate the traffic circle on a bicycle?

- Overall, only a small percentage of respondents negotiated the traffic circle on a bicycle (6.8%). The remaining did not use the traffic circle with a bicycle.

### If yes, as a cyclist, how would you rate the safety of the traffic circle?

- This graph is based on the 6.8% who used a bicycle in this traffic circle. It can be seen that only a slight majority felt it was safe. Almost a quarter of these respondents felt that it varied. Still, only a small percentage (20.6%) felt that it was unsafe to use with a bicycle.



## IV. Qualitative Results

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The 2015 Traffic Circle Survey asked two open-ended questions to better understand the public's opinions and concerns about the Sherwood Drive traffic circle.

Generally, respondents showed a great deal of support for keeping the traffic circle, with greater than 80% indicating that keeping the circle was a priority. Some residents even spoke to how the traffic circle was a Sherwood Park landmark that contributes to community identity.

*"It's part of what makes Sherwood Park unique!"*

*"I've lived here my entire life. That traffic circle is what makes the park. Poor driving habits should NOT be rewarded with its removal!! The circle is loved by real Sherwood Parkians!!!!"*

About 5% of resident feedback was so strongly supportive of keeping the traffic circle that respondents felt the County was wasting money even considering options for its improvement.

*The County Admin, etc, should leave the traffic circle alone. There are enough higher priority items to be taken care of with our tax dollars without taking on something that doesn't need improving.*

Less than 10% of respondents expressed that they strongly disliked the circle and felt it should be removed and replaced by an alternative intersection design.

*"It is VERY DANGEROUS! ... I have lived here for 15 years have almost been hit at least once to twice a week!!! I hate that traffic circle!"*

### What works well with the traffic circle?

1916 responses were received to this open-ended question.

#### Most common responses

Almost all of those who completed this question expressed in some way that the circle is very effective in keeping traffic flowing.

A very common response to this question indicated the traffic circle worked well as long as drivers knew how to use it.

*"I don't think the safety issues at the circle are because of the circle, I 100% think that it's because drivers have no idea how to properly use a circle. Please leave it there. They are a good way to keep traffic flowing."*

### Common responses

Many respondents specifically indicated what they like about the circle is that there are no signals, and expressed that there are already too many in Sherwood Park.

*"Works Great, Moves traffic! Way better than the thousand lights in the County!"*

Some respondents even commented on their support for more roundabouts in the County as an alternative to other intersection control.

*"Please also consider even more roundabouts in the community instead of spending money on lights and stop signs."*

Several respondents spoke to how the large size of the traffic circle works well, adding to visibility and flow at the circle.

*"It is wide and easy to see oncoming traffic."*

### Less common responses

A few respondents did limit their positive comments about traffic flow to times of lesser demand.

*"Traffic flow, especially during non-peak hours."*

Some noted that the safety of the intersection is one of the things that works well.

*"The flow of traffic is consistent even during peak times. I have worked in the community as a first responder for over 20 years and I know that while there have been accidents in the traffic circle, my experience is that they have never been as severe as those I've attended at almost every other major controlled intersection in the community."*

Some responses felt the separation of pedestrians and cyclists from the intersection was one of the things that worked well with this intersection.

*"Existing placement of pedestrian crossings well outside the circle is a great setup."*

*"There are multi use paved sidewalks that accommodate bicycles."*

*"Had to come back to this... ON A BICYCLE...!! Are you kidding me. Why do we have all those trails, km after km of shared walk / bicycle paths? What works well is not having stupid bicycle lanes in our driving lanes."*

A few responses also pointed out that the circle was quiet and aesthetically pleasing.

*“The traffic circle keeps the flow of traffic moving. The trees in the middle of the traffic circle act as a noise buffer for families living close to the traffic circle. Strathcona County needs to keep the traffic circle instead of replacing it with a noisy unsafe major intersection.”*

*“I especially like the beautiful trees in the middle, those should stay.”*

About five percent of the responses to the survey felt that nothing worked well with the intersection. However, most of these responses also tied their dislike of the circle to poor driver behaviour.

*“nothing really works well... I get nervous every time I enter the circle, expecting to be hit by a driver not knowing how to navigate the traffic!”*

Similarly, about five percent of responses indicated that everything worked well with the circle.

*“I use it every day to get to and from work. I have no issues with it, and so far has met my needs. “*

## **What could be improved?**

1873 respondents provided input on what could be improved at the traffic circle.

### **Most common responses**

By far the most common response to this question was that driver behaviour at the circle was the single most important thing to improve.

Many responses indicated that poor driver behaviour at the intersection was the result of lack of driver understanding of the rules of the road.

*“Driver education. People are the #1 problem. They don't follow the rules of the road. People in outside lanes don't yield to exiting drivers and that is my daily issue in the traffic circle.”*

Many of these responses suggested that Strathcona County should take some role in educating drivers.

*“COMMUNICATE TO DRIVERS HOW TO USE A TRAFFIC CIRCLE PROPERLY”.*

## Common responses

Other respondents recognized the design of the circle was not traditional and felt that poor driver behaviour was likely tied to the geometry of the circle.

*"The entrance on the north side into the traffic circle is straight in, rather than a slight curve in like a normal traffic circle. Drivers not paying attention or unfamiliar with the circle may not realize it's a traffic circle as it seems odd to have a yield sign on a straight line major road. Fix this road so it's not straight in. Make it like the other entrances or more of a "normal" traffic circle where you enter on the curve."*

*"What a nightmare! It's too large, so promotes high speeds and the entry/exit is so confusing I can't believe there aren't more crashes. I avoid it when I can."*

Several responses also felt that poor driver behaviour was related to the lack of signage at the traffic circle, both with regards to way finding and for educational purposes.

*"Better signage prior to entering the traffic circle would allow for people who are unfamiliar with the road and that they are approaching a Traffic Circle is could get in the proper lane in advance!"*

*"Signage--this is not a traditional traffic circle and it is not always clear who has the right of way, especially if you are entering the circle from the entrance near the water tank."*

## Less common responses

A few responses indicated that pedestrian and cyclist safety at the intersection could be improved.

*"The crosswalks. I've seen people almost hit in the crosswalks as the drivers are paying attention to the circle and are surprised by the crosswalks"*

*"The crosswalk is unlit, too close to the circle and a hazard when cyclists go barreling across from one bike path to the other."*

*"Yes, I do ride around the traffic circle ... very carefully and actually it's not that big an issue. BUT, heading south (southwest?) on Sherwood Drive heading for Wye, the bail-out place to get you up on the bike path is unfortunately 100 metres (?) down the road so you have to duke it out with the cars exiting the traffic circle. Maybe my imagination but I think that particular stretch of pavement is pretty narrow, with a high curb, and not a lot of "give" between the cars in the driving lane and the cyclist off on the right."*

Other potential improvements suggested by a few responses included visibility and maintenance at the traffic circle.



*“Getting rid of the trees not on the traffic circle the ones to the right if coming from Broadmoor Blvd so you can see oncoming traffic. ”*

*“Pavement condition in and around the traffic circle, especially in winter months. Visibility at the entrances to the circle, in winter snow can get piled up causing visibility issues, and in summer sometimes the vegetation growth is not properly maintained to allow clear visibility.”*

*“...water cannot drain from the south west quarter of the circle allowing for lakes to form in that area. That area also has ice build up [in winter]. Keeping this in mind you need to sand the road frequently! This circle is on a hill so proper drainage and sanding/plowing would keep the accidents down. I have witnessed several accidents as ice on a circle forces inside cars to hit cars or run off into the curbs.”*

A few respondents suggested that nearby traffic lights were affecting the operation of the circle.

*“The issue is not with the traffic circle, rather the lights surrounding it. If heading south towards the Wal-Mart traffic is congested during peak times because of the lights on Wye Road which in turn backs up the traffic circle. The congestion and heavy usage of traffic lights in that area contribute to the slow pass that can sometimes occur... It could be improved by possibly creating alternative traffic control other than the usage of lights or at least creating more efficient timing for the lights.”*

A few respondents felt that increased enforcement at the traffic circle would solve driver behaviour problems.

*“The RCMP need to watch for lane infractions and enforce them.”*

As with the first open-ended question, there were about five percent of respondents who felt no improvements were needed.

*“I see no real reason for improvement. This is, and has been a very effectively designed traffic circle. Any other "improvement" would complicate the road design too much, or impede traffic flow, neither of which are good for anyone.”*

Similarly, a small percentage of residents felt the entire traffic circle should be removed.

*“Get rid of it, install traffic lights and reconfigure the roads”*