



**STRATHCONA  
COUNTY**

## **2020 Seniors Transportation Survey**



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## **I. Introduction and Purpose of the Survey**

In September 2020, the Strathcona County Seniors Advisory Committee conducted the fourth of a series of online survey of seniors in order to obtain perceptions toward a variety of topics that potentially could impact seniors either now or in the future. The purpose of the Seniors Advisory Committee is to provide advice and recommendations to Council on issues and opportunities related to the physical, emotional and social wellbeing of seniors in Strathcona County. This purpose of this survey was to gain an assessment of seniors current and future transportation needs.

Obtaining data directly from residents provides the Seniors Advisory Committee information to make recommendations to Council of what seniors require from the County based on the perspectives and attitudes of residents. It should be noted that a number of participants and valuable input were not represented in the survey, with no input provided by seniors in assisted living or long-term care facilities. Access and familiarity with technology is a barrier for many seniors and with COVID-19 protocols in place at the time, providing paper surveys and collecting them was not a viable option. While the survey only represents a fraction of all seniors living within the County the participation level was consistent with other SCOOP surveys.

This report provides a comprehensive review of all steps undertaken in the development and implementation of the survey, as well as a detailed summary of the results.

A review of the methodology associated in the development and implementation of the survey can be found in the next section of this report.

## **II. Methodology**

### **A. The questionnaire**

The questionnaire used in this study was newly created specifically for this study. In addition to demographics, a series of questions were asked in this survey pertaining to:

- Current driving patterns;
- Use of Strathcona County public transportation;
- Local travel destinations;
- Projected future transportation methods (if unable to drive);  
and
- If they would make use of a bus service/park and ride option between Ardrossan and Sherwood Park if it was available.

### **B. Sampling design and data collection procedure**

The survey was made available through the Strathcona County Online Opinion Panel (SCOOP). It was tailored specifically to be answered by residents aged 55 or older (age 55 was established as the benchmark for identifying seniors in Strathcona County).

The online survey ran between September 21 and October 6, 2020 during which 308 people aged 55 or older took part in the survey.<sup>1</sup> Although poll based data is based on people who decide to participate and were not randomly selected, and have access to the online poll, the margin of error for a comparable probability-based random sample of the same size is  $\pm 5.6\%$ , 19 times out of 20. The data was analyzed by Strathcona County's Communications using SPSS for Windows.

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<sup>1</sup> An additional 44 people younger than age 55 also provided input, but were excluded due to not fitting the age criteria established for this survey.

### III. RESULTS

This section of the report presents a summary of the results associated with the perceptions and awareness of residents. Socio-demographic comparisons, where significant, will also be highlighted. It should be noted that a number of participants (and potentially valuable input) were unfortunately not represented in the survey, as there was no input from seniors residing in assisted living or long-term care facilities. Access and familiarity with technology is also a barrier for many seniors so being able to sign up for SCOOP to complete the survey was an obstacle to participation. In addition, with the COVID protocols in place at the time, providing paper surveys and collecting them was not a viable option. Excluding this group of seniors may have affected some results, including use of the mobility bus and their views of public transportation. They would have also been less likely to still be driving themselves as much as those registered for SCOOP.

#### A. Demographic overview

This section of the report presents an overview of the type of seniors who completed the survey. In terms of gender, 40.7% were male (♂) and 59.3% were female (♀).<sup>2</sup>

A breakdown by age is as follows:

- 36.4% were in the 55 – 64 age group;
- 48.7% were in the 65-74 age group; and
- 14.9% were 75 or older.

The final urban/rural split was fairly close to the actual proportions, with 75.6% of the respondents being from Sherwood Park and 24.4% living in rural Strathcona County.

With respect to how long respondents have lived in the County, the breakdown is as follows:

- 0.3% have lived in the County for less than one year;

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<sup>2</sup> This excludes 1.9% of respondents who preferred not to indicate their gender.

- 2.6% have lived in the County for 1-4 years;
- 5.2% have lived in the County for 5-10 years;
- 15.3% have lived in the County for 11-20 years; and
- 76.6% have lived in the County for more than 20 years.

## B. Ways of getting around

Initially, respondents were asked a series of questions about their current transportation habits. Overall, it can be seen in Figure 1 that almost all of the respondents drive a vehicle fairly regularly at the present time.

**FIGURE 1**  
**Do you Currently Drive**

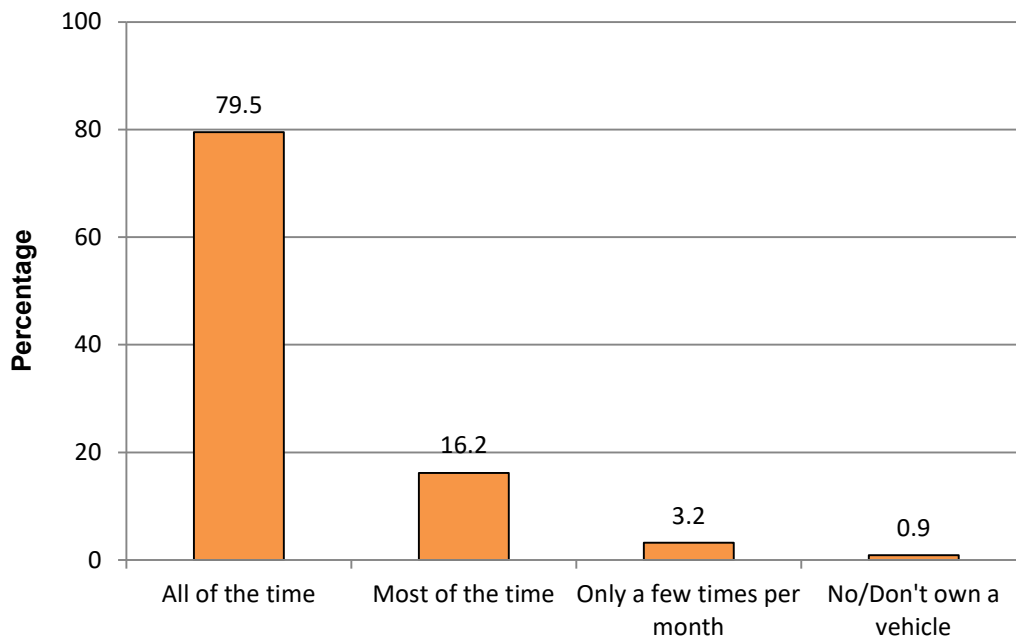
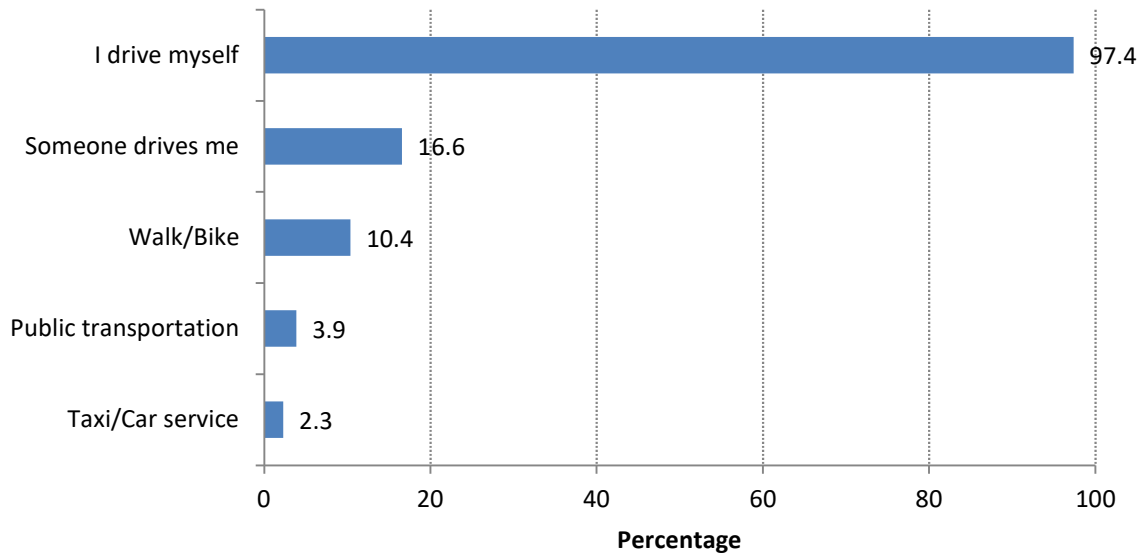


Figure 2 presents a breakdown of how people typically get to a destination (such as a doctor's appointment or shopping). Overall, almost all the respondents drive themselves. On occasion, 16.6% indicated that someone such as a family member or friend drives them. A small percentage indicated that they might walk or bike to a destination. Less than 4% indicated they currently use public transportation or the mobility bus. Even fewer utilize a taxi or car service. It was also found that no one used a bus service from a seniors' care home and no one stayed in their residence most or all of the time. The lack of response from a seniors' care home is consistent with the demographic notes earlier that SCOOP does not collect data from this group.

**FIGURE 2**  
**How do you get to a Destination?**



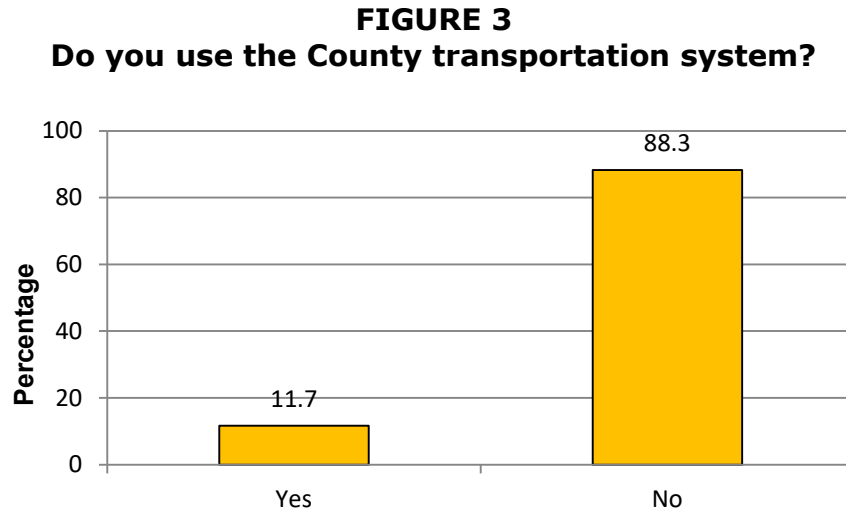
When asked about their local destinations, it was found that:

- 90.6% went to destinations within Sherwood Park;
- 45.5% went to destinations in rural Strathcona County;
- 77.9% went to destinations in Edmonton; and
- 15.9% went to other destinations. There were people who did travel to other towns and cities within the Edmonton metropolitan area, such as Leduc, Fort Saskatchewan, Elk Island and St. Albert. However, many of the destinations mentioned were not local, such as other provinces and distant cities such as Calgary.



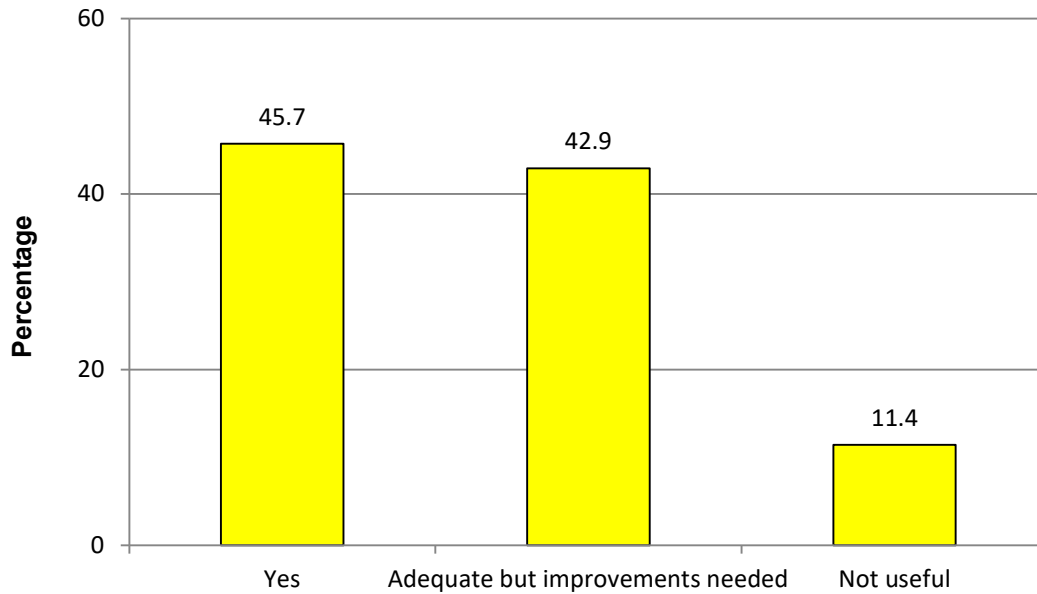
### C. Public transportation

As seen in Figure 3, a subsequent question determined that only about 1 in 8 (11.7%) of the respondents made use of Strathcona County's current public transportation system offerings.



When these respondents who used it were asked if public transportation was sufficient for their needs, the results were further divided as almost half of the users felt it was adequate, while the others thought improvements would be helpful, or that it was not useful at all.

**FIGURE 4**  
**Was the County transportation system sufficient?**  
**(Users only)**



Those respondents who did not make use of public transportation were asked why they did not do so. Overall, it was found that:

- 62.7% preferred to drive;
- 26.0% felt that it took too long to get where they needed to go;
- 19.2% had limited access to public transportation from where they lived;
- 4.5% had accessibility issues with public transportation;
- 3.6% thought it was too expensive; and
- 12.0% had other reasons, with the most common answers being that they were rural residents or that there was no public transportation routes from where they lived in Sherwood Park. There were a few residents who indicated that they would consider using public transportation when they could no longer drive.

With respect to awareness of the County's mobility bus program:

- 62.3% were aware of the program, though they did not make use of it at the present time;
- 2.6% were aware of the program, but they felt the program was too restrictive for them to access service when they needed it;
- 0.3% used the service; and
- 34.8% were unaware of the service.

#### **D. Rural transportation/Park and Ride Option**

Respondents were also asked if they would make use of a bus service between Ardrossan and Sherwood Park if it was available. Although 8.6% clearly said they would, a further 22.7% thought they might, and the majority (68.8%) indicated said no. However, further investigation showed that of the 308 total respondents, (233 urban and 75 rural) about 1/6 of the rural surveyed (16.2%) clearly indicated yes. This number increased when both rural and urban were combined for yes or maybe (30.8% - 95/308). As no rural transit is currently offered and the question was looking at establishing rural service between Ardrossan and Sherwood Park, the optimistic 30.8% response was significant in comparison to only 1 in 8 that currently utilize County transit at all.

#### **E. Future transportation considerations**

When asked how they would get around once they were no longer able to drive, respondents put forward the following alternatives:

- 42.0% would use public transportation;
- 44.2% would get friends and/or family to drive them;
- 42.2% would get their spouse or significant other to drive them;
- 33.1% would rely on taxi services;
- 19.5% would make use of a ride share service (such as Uber, Lyft, etc.)
- 13.6% would make use of a shared bus coming out of a seniors living facility; and
- 22.7% were unsure what they would do.