Understanding Healthy Public Policy Processes: A Multiple Case Study of the Use of Road Modification Policy to Improve Active Transportation: City of Red Deer Case Study

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Prepared for the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer
by the Propel Centre for Population Health Impact

This report highlights the following topics:

- bike lanes, on-street cycling facilities,
- pilot project,
- public engagement,
- transportation planning,
- active commuting

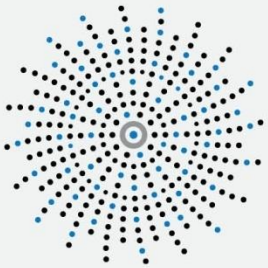

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

This case study provides a detailed description of how road modification policies, for the improvement of active transportation, have been developed in the City of Red Deer. The case description was developed as part of a multiple case study examining the key processes associated with the successful development of innovative municipal-level road modification plans that support active modes of transportation in Canada. Red Deer was selected as a case study because its approach to policy development was unique. In Red Deer, a council-directed Commuter Bike Pilot (Bike Pilot) was completed prior to developing their future active transportation policy.

Council's vision was to create a multimodal transportation system in Red Deer (City of Red Deer, 2013). To help achieve this vision, council mandated the city staff to implement the Bike Pilot, with a goal of improving Red Deer's environment, economy, and social domains particularly, the health of residents. The implementation of the pilot, a 20-kilometer network of bike lanes, which provided connectivity between bike trails and city roadways, was evaluated over a two-year period. Red Deer won the 2013 FCM Sustainable Communities Award for the Commuter Bike Pilot Project (Alberta Urban Municipalities Association, 2013). At the request of council, staff also initiated an *Integrated Movement Study: Project Summary (Integrated Movement Study*, 2012), which included gathering data and engaging citizens in the process. The *Integrated Movement Study* (2012) engaged citizens through a series of educational workshops, and innovative consultation methods, such as the Ross Street Experiment. This experiment demonstrated that the partial road closure for a street café and educational forum generated above average business sales. Evidence gathering from the *Integrated Movement Study (2012)* informed Red Deer's *Ready Set Go! Mobility Playbook (Mobility Playbook*) (2013), a deliverable of the study. The *Mobility Playbook*, developed in consultation with Gehl Architects and 8-80 cities, is the planning strategy that will inform the transit, active transportation, and trails master planning process. It describes a vision for road modification to increase active transportation. The goals of the *Mobility Playbook* (2013) are to transform the current modal split and attain 10-year commuter targets of 15.5% walking, 7.3% cycling, and 9% using transit. Council adopted the *Mobility Playbook*, as a planning document, in May 2013.

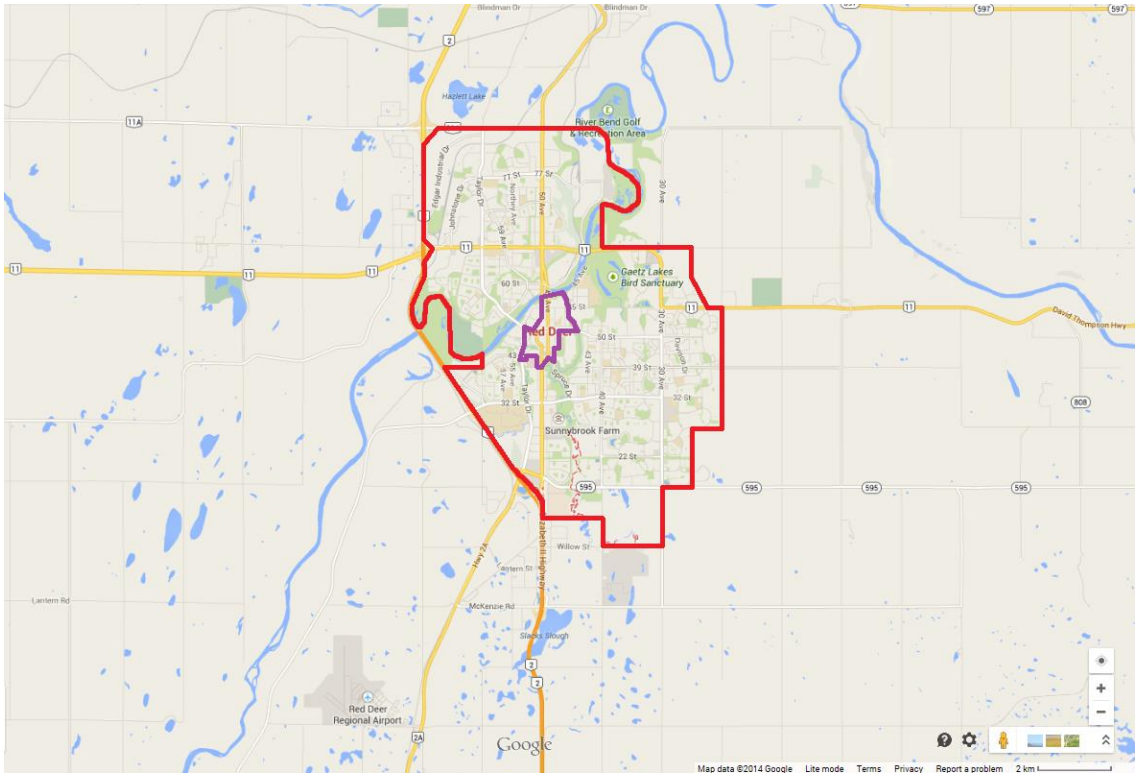
This case study describes the Commuter Bike Pilot, *Integrated Movement Study: Project Summary* (City of Red Deer, 2012), and *Ready Set Go! Mobility Playbook: Red Deer* (City 2013), with a particular focus on the key mechanisms that facilitated the Bike Pilot and subsequent plan adoption. The role of partnerships, champions, the importance of staffs', and community buy-in, and use of evidence are mechanisms that will be reviewed. All documents discussed in this report can be found in the reference section. Additionally, the glossary can also be found in Appendix A. Please note the terms planning and policy are used interchangeable in this case description.

2. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

2.1. Geography /Demographics

The City of Red Deer is the third largest city in Alberta with a population of 90,564 and a population growth rate of 8.9% from 2006 to 2011 (Statistics Canada, 2011). It has a land area of 104.29 square kilometres and corresponding density of 868.4 persons per square kilometer (Statistics Canada, 2011). It is located midway between Calgary and Edmonton with the Red Deer River, a major waterway in the province of Alberta, flowing through the city. Red Deer also has a vast park system and as such is referred to as "The Park City" (City of Red Deer, 2011). Figure 1 below outlines the boundary of the City of Red Deer in red and the boundary of Downtown Red Deer.

Figure 1: Map of Red Deer Showing Downtown



(Google Maps, 2014)

Vehicles represent a key mode of transportation in Red Deer and significant transportation congestion can result during the day as the population can increase by approximately 20,000 because many of the surrounding communities use Red Deer's roadways (City of Red Deer, 2011). Table 1 below lists the transportation trends for Red Deer. In 2011, 88.4% of people used vehicles, 4.4% used public transit, 4.1% walked, and 1.0% used a bicycle to commute to work (Statistics Canada, 2011). Mode of travel remained relatively constant between 2006 and 2011 (Statistics Canada, 2006; Statistics Canada 2011). Red Deer had a higher than the national average of people commuting by vehicle with 88.4% in Red Deer and 79.6% in Canada (Statistics Canada

2006). Rates of public transit, walking, and cycling in Red Deer are lower than the national average (Statistics Canada, 2011). Data from Statistics Canada 2006 is from the Census Survey while Statistics Canada 2011 data is based on the National Household Survey (NHS); Statistics Canada has issued a warning about sampling errors due to the low response rate of 50% impacting on the validity (Statistics Canada, 2011).

Table 1: Key Characteristics of Case's Modes of Transportation

	Red Deer		Canada	
	2006[a]	2011[b]	2006[a]	2011[b]
% Workers commuting by vehicle	88.4	88.4	80.0	79.6
% Workers commuting by public transit	3.7	4.4	11.0	12.0
% Workers commuting by walking	5.4	4.1	6.4	5.7
% Workers commuting by bicycle	1.3	1.0	1.3	1.3

[a]Canada Census data (Statistics Canada, 2006)
[b]National Household Survey data (Statistics Canada, 2011)

2.2. Government

Council plays a key role in decisions about transportation planning; they were the ones who directed actions that led to the road modifications for the Bike Pilot. The governing body for the municipality is the Red Deer City Council, which is composed of one mayor and councilors (City of Red Deer, 2014). Additionally, there are three levels of the government impacting planning in Alberta, which include national, provincial, and municipal levels. The City of Red Deer operates under the *Municipal Government Act* (1994) and is responsible for Communications and Strategic Planning, Community Services, Development Services, Planning and Corporate Services.

3. THE ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION POLICY CONTEXT

In line with Red Deer's history, recent policy documents have included initiatives to promote sustainable design and active transportation. The Bike Pilot built on past planning and initiatives and resulted in 20 kilometers of bike lanes. As indicated in the introduction of this report, the City of Red Deer has a vision of creating a multimodal transportation system. This vision is being achieved in incremental planning stages as components of active transportation are mentioned in past policy. Active transportation has been discussed in several policy documents prior to the *Integrated Movement Study* (2012). While the past policies are not the focus of this case study, a few will be briefly reviewed below to illustrate the integrated planning process that helped to set the stage for current road modification policies and the pilot bike lane project that support active transportation.

3.1. Historical Context

Red Deer's historical focus on sustainability and the environment, the growth and development pressures, and the incorporation of active transportation within major plans have been key

contextual features that enabled active transportation to get on the policy agenda and progress to where it is today. Table 2 lists policies and initiatives that incorporate active transportation and that helped in some way set the stage for current work being done in Red Deer around road modifications.

Table 2: Policies that Include Active Transportation

	1978 - 2004	2004-2009	2010- 2014
Municipal Policy	Vision 2020 (1991) REACT Plan (1995) Greater Downtown Action Plan (2000) Cultural Master Plan (2001) Bicycle Master Plan (2000) 2002-2004 Strategic Plan (2002) Transportation Master Plan (2004) Neighbourhood Planning and Design Guidelines & Standards (2002) City of Red Deer Engineering Services Design Guidelines (2004)	Red Deer Trails Master Plan (2005) The Road Ahead: Strategic Plan 2005-2008 (2005) Waskasoo Park Special Gathering Spaces (2005) Future Directions: Red Deer at 300,000 (2006) Downtown C1 Public Realm Upgrades (2006) Progress and Potential: The Greater Downtown Action Plan 2008 Update (2008) Municipal Development Plan (2008) Community Services Action Plan (2008) Community Cultural Vision (2008) Community Assets Needs Assessment (2008) Strategic Plan 2009-2011 (2009)	Strategic Direction (2011) Movement Charter (2011) Environmental Master Plan (2011) International Charter for Walking (2011) From Strength to Strength: Strategic Direction 2012-2014 (2012) Mobility Playbook (2013)
Programs and Initiatives	Railway Bridge Conversion (1991) Main Street Project (2002) Transportation Study (2003) Growth Study (2004)	Municipal Development Plan (2008) Street Lighting Monitoring Program (2009) Graffiti Removal Program (2010)	Gaetz Avenue Revitalization Project (2010) Ross Street Veteran's Park Project (2010) Primary Care Network and City of Red Deer apply for bike lane funding (2010) Commuter Bike Pilot Project (2010-2013) Integrated Mobility Study (2011) Pathways to Sustainability Conference (2011) Ross Street Experiment (2011) Walkability Roadshow (2011)

			Ross Street Veterans Park Project (2011)

What follows is a brief detail on some of the more relevant pieces that led to road modification policy and initiatives of interest to this case study. Early mentions of active transportation can be found in, the *Greater Downtown Action Plan* (2001) and the *Cultural Master Plan* (2001, 2008). The initial *Greater Downtown Action Plan* (2001) recommended the development of a vibrant, livable downtown with a pedestrian focus. Pedestrian focused corridors between two major cultural centres, were proposed within the *Cultural Master Plan* (2001). Both of these policies recommended walking infrastructure facilities and set the stage for further active transportation policy. There were several other relevant policies developed including:

- Bicycle Master Plan (2000);
- Main Street Project (2002);
- Transportation Master Plan (2004);
- Red Deer Trails, Master Plan (2005);
- Waskasoo Park Special Gathering Spaces (2005);
- Future Directions, Red Deer at 300,000 (2006);
- Municipal Development Plan (2008);
- Community Culture Vision (2008); and
- Community Assets Needs Assessment (2008).

These documents had themes that included active transportation or would support active transportation, such as:

- intensification in the business core;
- connecting the downtown to the recreation trail system;
- emphasis on social interaction space;
- stronger connections between space;
- a pedestrian bridge; and
- an active transportation centre in the downtown.

The focus on walking continued with *Progress and Potential: The Greater Downtown Action Plan 2008 Update*, which built on past planning and recommended an even stronger pedestrian focused design. The *Downtown Action Plan Update* (2008) set the stage for moving towards pilot projects for creating active transportation infrastructure. Two pilot projects were proposed to enhance walkability through creating a more pleasant environment and reducing vehicular volume and speed via traffic calming techniques: the Gaetz Avenue Revitalization Project, and a Veterans Park Project. The plan also proposed that laneway revitalization projects occur to make laneways into new, pleasant retail environments by creating a pedestrian friendly ambiance. The

pedestrian focus of the action plan update was primarily driven by the potential economic gains of creating the downtown as a draw for retail business and tourism.

As noted, growth was a planning consideration in Red Deer; specifically, growth has helped move active transportation forward through a rising demand for transportation options. In the early 2000s, Alberta began to experience a boom in growth. The City of Red Deer was no exception and began to surpass its growth projections (City of Red Deer, 2004). The *Transportation Master Plan* (2004) was conducted to account for the population growth. The transportation study identified infrastructure changes that would be necessary to address concerns and plan for the expected growth. Roadway expansion was the suggested countermeasure. Roadway expansion, however, was not supported by the public due to the impact on roadside properties within existing developments (City of Red Deer, 2004). Recommendations to promote alternative modes of transportation were made to reduce the need for improved vehicle infrastructure (City of Red Deer, 2004).

3.2. More Recent Developments and Current Context

Recently, Red Deer's Strategic Direction (2011) included sustainability as a guiding principle, and movement as a pillar for strategic goals. Within the movement pillar, active transportation was the prevailing theme (City of Red Deer, 2011b). Prioritizing the integration of various modes of transportation into the overall transportation system exemplified a shift in transportation planning from planning for a vehicle oriented roadway system to a multimodal street design. The Strategic Direction (2011) and the Environmental Master Plan (2011) were developed to address the environmental health pillar of sustainability. The Environmental Master Plan document states, "this plan is important to us; we all share the same environment. We also recognize that there are limited natural resources available to us and that we share responsibility for taking care of the community we call home" (City of Red Deer, 2011b). The Environmental Master Plan (2011) contains a strong focus on active transportation initiatives citywide. Broad action plans included incorporating core directions of the Environmental Master Plan (2011) into the Integrated Movement Study (2011) as appropriate.

As stated earlier in the report, the Bike Pilot and Integrated Movement Study (2011) continues to reflect past plans and recent initiatives that supported active transportation. These recent efforts are an attempt to:

- increase the health and healthy lifestyle choices of citizens, and reduce health care costs;
- practice environmental stewardship;
- promote use of the parkway system;
- reduce the maintenance costs for roadways; and
- decrease traffic congestion (Federation of Canadian Municipalities, 2013).

The Bike Pilot was one of the unique features of the City of Red Deer's approach to plan development. Red Deer submitted a proposal to PCN to seek funding for commuter bikeways in Red Deer. The focus of the proposal was to provide a viable alternative to commuting by car,

encourage citizens to make better lifestyle choices, and to address increasing community demand for these types of cycling facilities. The two partners applied for funding to implement bike lanes and although the funding application was unsuccessful there was strong community support for the idea, so council dedicated $800,000 to implement the pilot. Twenty kilometers of bike lanes were implemented and evaluated prior to plans being developed. Throughout the pilot, evaluation was conducted. The 2011 pilot was an effort to create public awareness of the bike lanes and alternative transportation options and install infrastructure in areas outside of the downtown core. Online surveys were available for citizens to express any concerns. The online surveys generated 270 responses in 2011, most of which were supportive of the initiative.

The 2012 Bike Pilot road modifications were based on the comments that citizens raised in the 2011 online surveys requesting increasing connectivity. In some areas, travel lanes were reduced, and some street parking was removed for the bike lanes. The second year of the Bike Pilot involved a larger implementation and included connected bike lanes going from east to west and north to south in the city. Another online survey was administered in August and September 2012, this time generating 2,500 citizen responses that highlighted their strong concerns about the road modifications. Based on the feedback, four bike lanes that had been implemented were removed. Some of the challenges raised about the project centred on:

- tensions with retrofitting existing roads to accommodate bike lanes while also retaining parking;
- accommodating public concerns regarding parking; and
- ensuring that the public was made aware of and educated about road modification changes before, during, and after installation of the lanes.

While there were some sections of the bike network removed due to public concerns, the majority of the bike lanes were left intact. The removal of some of the bike lanes was viewed by a key informant as evidence of council's ability to listen and respond to public opinion regarding the pilot project. The Bike Pilot won the Federation of Canadian Municipalities Award for Transportation in 2013. Overall, the pilot project helped to improve cycling facilities throughout the city and create awareness of cycling-based commuting. This project will be discussed in more detail, in the results section.

While the Bike Pilot was being undertaken, the Development Services Division undertook the *Integrated Movement Study* (2012). This study was conducted using an interdepartmental approach, and also worked in partnership with Gehl Architects and 8-80 cities. 8-80 cities are a non-profit, Toronto based organization, with expertise in transforming cities through citizen engagement to increase active transportation and create vibrant public space. This organization often partners with Gehl Architects, based out of Copenhagen, Denmark, who specialize in the built environment's effect on human interaction. The objective of the *Integrated Movement Study* was to evaluate what the citizens of Red Deer thought about all modes of transportation, and to assess community needs. The study also aimed to identify strategies to overcome barriers to an integrated transportation system and enable safe movement for all modes of transportation based on best practices (City of Red Deer, 2013). One of the outcomes from The

Integrated Movement Study (2012) citizen engagement was the Ross Street Experiment. The Ross Street Experiment was a pilot project to test partial road closure for pedestrian use and turned a portion of Ross Street into a lively café (City of Red Deer, 2011c). The Ross Street Experiment included a presentation by Gil Peñalosa of 8-80 Cities to educate citizens of Red Deer about different modes of transportation. A novel component of the Ross Street experiment was a survey to businesses to evaluate their perceptions of the experience of the partial road closure and its impact on their sales for the day, which turned out to be better than average. This approach demonstrated to companies that they could profit from road changes by using data from their own business and their neighbours.

In addition to the Ross Street Experiment, staff continued to collect additional data throughout the *Integrated Movement Study* (2012), often through citizen engagement using different strategies, including:

- a speaker series covering topics such as walkability, place making, transit, and complete streets;
- a transit survey data;
- from the Bike Pilot Project;
- the *Walkability Roadshow* (2011) (Walk 21); and
- focus groups and workshops with council members, city staff, older adults, business leaders, newcomers, children, and parents.

As part of the *Integrated Movement Study* (2012) information was obtained from the *Walkability Roadshow* (Alberta Health, 2011), which was facilitated by Alberta Health in partnership with Walk21, Canada Walks, the City of Red Deer, and Green Communities Canada. The roadshow helped generate awareness for walking. At the event, the Mayor signed the *International Charter for Walking* (1999), which is a document signed by governments to commit to strategies that promote walkability (Walk21, 2014). An assessment was conducted as part of the *Walkability Roadshow* (2011) and identified key priorities and barriers to walkability in Red Deer, including creating district commercial centres to provide a destination for walking trips, continuing to create trails to the Red Deer River, and expanding trail linkages between neighbourhoods. The walkability barriers identified included challenges to walking during the winter, lack of convenient commercial destinations in neighbourhoods, incomplete sidewalk networks, and a vehicle-focused community with a large proportion of modal split being single occupancy vehicles.

Findings from all the citizen engagement activities noted above and the Bike Pilot were used as part of the *Integrated Movement Study* (2012). These processes informed the development of *Mobility Playbook* (2013) which was a deliverable and conclusion of the Integrated Movement Study. The *Mobility Playbook* (2013) outlines readiness for integrated mobility and how a more balanced, sustainable and integrated system can be achieved (City of Red Deer, 2013). The project used a “heavy public consultation process and set city-specific targets and goals for Red Deer to work towards” (personal communication, January 13, 2014a). One of the goals in the

Mobility Playbook (2013) was to prioritize pedestrians. Some recommendations and road modifications made in the playbook to achieve this goal, included:

- upgrading roads for pedestrians by developing walking infrastructure on both sides of arterial roads;
- bicycle priority at intersections;
- hierarchy of trails designed for multiple users;
- designing transit stops for a variety of weather conditions;
- design for all ages and vulnerable users;
- lighting and passive surveillance to increase safety;
- well maintained sidewalks and trails;
- comprehensive and interconnected network between trails and sidewalks;
- complete interconnected cycle system;
- quality parking for bikes; and
- improvements to transit (City of Red Deer, 2013).

4. KEY POLICY CHANGE MECHANISMS

This section describes the key contextual issues, strategies, and processes that were important to facilitate road modification policy and infrastructure change that supported active transportation in the City of Red Deer. Key partnerships that were important to developing and implementing the Bike Pilot, *Integrated Movement Study* (2012) and subsequent adoption of the *Mobility Playbook* (2013) as a planning document are described first.

4.1. Key Partners and Champions

Health

While strategic planning was progressing towards active transportation as a focus, local community groups were also advocating for change. The Red Deer Primary Care Network (PCN) played a key role in Red Deer's Bike Pilot. The PCN is a partnership between physicians and Alberta Health. There are 80 physicians with the PCN as well as 35 professional staff. Approximately, 116,000 patients are served by the PCN, which includes all of the citizens of Red Deer and the surrounding communities. The PCN is an organization that aims to fill gaps in healthcare by serving as a catalyst for health care development. Interest in addressing active living was prompted by a PCN environmental scan that identified significant gaps in the treatment of obesity, as well as the presence of physical inactivity in the city (personal communication, January 31, 2014). The PCN then proceeded to contact the city of Red Deer senior staff to determine how they could work together to promote active living.

When the PCN presented the issue to the city and found shared interests in building a healthy community, the initial result was an outdoor gym project. The city provided land for the initiative and the PCN installed 10 outdoor gyms. Initially, the Recreation, Parks and Culture Department

was involved in the initiative. As the project progressed, partnerships expanded to include other city departments, such as the Development Services Division. The PCN received a Premier's Award for Health Workplaces, which included an outdoor gym by the PCN office, enabling and developing a culture of active living through the outdoor gyms project. Key informants have highlighted that the key to the project's success was the relationships they had created with those involved, and that the people involved were "passionate about what they were doing. It wasn't just people who were assigned to do something; they were actually interested in the work" (personal communication, January 31, 2014). The work that was accomplished and the relationships that were made through this collaborative initiative set the stage for continued action.

A key issue that had been identified was that the off-road bike trails do not provide direct pathways from people's homes to their workplaces, and that using the existing roadways and sidewalks created safety concerns for both cyclists and pedestrians. The lack of viable routes was seen as a barrier for citizens that preferred to commute to work on their bicycle. The PCN worked together with the city to submit a proposal to Alberta Health (Alberta Government Ministry) to reallocate $2 million in PCN surplus to fund the installation of bike lanes. However, the proposal was declined with the response that "*this is not for health to be doing this. To be laying down the paint and that part of it*" (personal communication, January 31, 2014). Despite this, positive developments emerged as described in this quote:

> Unfortunately, we were turned down for that grant, but it generated a lot of excitement, a lot of interest in the city, with councillors and with local community groups that are interested in cycling. It actually became a bit of a push and a bit of an election issue in the municipal election in 2010, to try something for on-road cycling, not just your off-street trails, but to put bike lanes down on the road, and that was really the first of our pilot project (personal communication, January 31, 2014).

As a result of the buy-in created from the excitement about the potential bike lane project, the bike lanes initiative moved forward with the partnership between the city and the PCN. The PCN took on the role of public engagement and promotion while council approved $800,000 as part of the 2011 annual budget to support the infrastructure and develop the project action plan. Council gave the city's Development Services Division direction to begin the project.

Council

Some key members that generated excitement and enabled the project within council were the mayor who was involved in healthy active living initiatives, and a council member who already participated in active transportation. One key informant discussed the involvement of the previous mayor in the project saying, "we have winter walks and things we do…and the past mayor would join us…. The mayor was very active" (personal communication, January 31, 2014). Council's leadership was seen as an important facilitating mechanism in the pilot as one key informant said, "I think that you at first have to have a council that was ready to sort of accept or to look at this. I think you have to have a bureaucracy that is actually keen on it" (personal communication, January 31, 2014). Champions within Council were critically important as the Bike Pilot was seen as a contentious election issue, as discussed by one key informant:

> The city was basically, in that last year they were stopped. They couldn't do anything…because of the upcoming election…we had to have the report…rushed because the election was in October, so we had to have it in September…the bike lanes were the political thing you couldn't talk about in the campaign…it was actually evident that they were all speaking in favour of health, but then some – and the one that actually then became mayor this time, said, 'No. I can't vote for this' (personal communication, January 31, 2014).

Gaining Buy-In through Early Engagement of City Staff

Council worked with city staff to undertake the Bike Pilot and develop active transportation plans. The Development Services Division was directed by council to undertake the pilot and *Integrated Movement Study* (2012). This department was integral to the overall process of developing, implementing, and promoting the project, as well as for gaining and maintaining buy-in within their own organizations. Tight timelines for the pilot project necessitated a fast rollout.

Key informants noted that a pilot of this magnitude with direct and immediate impacts on the citizens of Red Deer had not been undertaken before. Thus, the Engineering Department of the Development Services Division and council itself were described as having had limited experience with implementing such an initiative. The Engineering Department developed expertise in the area through research, as well as consideration of best practices and existing facilities in various Canadian municipalities and across North America. The Engineering Department engaged private engineering consultants as independent impartial peer reviewers of the project and to act as senior advisors.

Engineering staffs' role was to set the tone of the project by communicating priorities and timelines, forming a steering committee, and prioritizing project tasks for steering committee membership to undertake. The steering committee involved membership from different city department staff as well as community organizations. Some challenges were encountered initially with gaining buy-in from other city departments, but more so with community organizations (discussed in the section below). Limited buy-in established from front-line staff was seen as a missed opportunity since they were the ones talking to the public and were not well prepared to respond to public concerns efficiently when the pilot was implemented. Key informants thought that more staff engagement and education, additional time and resources, and clearer objectives from council would have been helpful overall. They also felt developing consistent project messaging and distribution of that document to city departments as well as partner organizations would have been beneficial in managing communications with the public and preventing the spread of misinformation.

4.2. Community and Partner Engagement

The pilot project team understood that success necessitated public buy-in and ongoing support. Increasing the public's awareness about the pilot project was key and several communication mechanisms were used, such as a steering committee of key stakeholders, engaging council throughout the policy process and being transparent with progress, outreach, and media communication and online surveys.

Using a Steering Committee of Key Stakeholders

Within the city, the action plan of the Bike Pilot was developed by the Engineering Department and involved hiring a "great contractor" who cooperated well with the Engineering and Public Works Departments to meet hard deadlines (personal communication, January 13, 2014a). In addition, cooperation between multiple city departments and community organizations was needed to help refine and implement the plan in a coordinated and seamless manner. Consequently, many city departments were expected to be involved throughout the pilot and, as stated earlier, a project steering committee was formed that involved them. Community groups that advocated for the bike lanes were also invited by the Engineering Department to join the steering committee. At least one person from the following organizations was represented: the Transit Department, Public Works, the PCN, the Red Deer Association for Bicycle Commuting, Safe Communities Central Alberta, Rethink Red Deer, the RCMP, the Engineering Department, the Planning Department, the Recreation, Parks and Culture Department, and the Communications Department.

The steering committee was instituted as a mechanism to build buy-in for the project, co-create the plan for implementation, and promote the project in the community. Despite the important role served by committee members, managing the sometimes conflicting agendas within the steering committee was described as a "massive challenge" (personal communication, January 13, 2014a). Initially, the steering committee convened all partners together at the same time to develop the project plan through consensus, but this created significant delays in implementation. According to one key informant, it was "one of the reasons why we were so late in constructing every year" (personal communication, January 13, 2014a). In an attempt to expedite decision-making, a majority rule approach was adopted, to manage the opposition that was already within the group. Consensus was difficult to reach on some topics. To rectify this challenge and ensure that each group felt their voice was heard, the steering committee and its membership remained in full effect throughout the pilot. However, a change was initiated that required all steering committee members to participate in at least one of the five sub-committees.

The new approach added five subcommittees to address internal issues and to refocus planning based on the five E's of the project: engineering, enforcement, education, encouragement, and evaluation. Community partners, such as the PCN, were involved on the subcommittees and engineering staff sat on each of these sub-committees. The sub-committees were responsible for developing a plan for their area of focus and ensuring their plan was successful. The sub-committees were required to bring their plan to the steering committee as a whole for buy-in and to regularly report to the steering committee on their progress and ultimate outcomes. This was an attempt to increase the engagement and ownership from the partner organizations beyond what had been seen in 2011. It was also an attempt to get more resources working on the project as the Engineering Department doing the vast majority of the work on this project was never intended. Partner organizations were invited to participate because of the knowledge, perspective, interest, and involvement (i.e. resources) that they would bring to the table.

Overall, managing the steering committee and sub-committees was viewed as a full time job. However, engaging the local community groups was deemed critical to the process. For instance,

the local community groups, Red Deer Association for Bicycle Commuting (a local organization of citizens in the city who promote biking), strongly advocated for the bike lanes, and had been lobbying for an initiative like this in the past. “You know, [The Red Deer Association of Bicycle Commuters] actually deserve a lot of the credit because they are the guys that were driving it for years” (personal communication, January 31, 2014).

Maintaining Council Buy-In by Engaging Them throughout the Policy Process

Although the council approved the pilot project, the Engineering Department also recognized the need to maintain council support for the work throughout the pilot planning process. Two key factors that were identified as important to this process included steering and subcommittee representatives demonstrating their support, and being transparent with planning and implementation processes through on-going check-ins with council. Having diverse partners at the steering and subcommittee tables not only contributed to planning processes, their participation also conveyed to council that the project was supported and relevant. Partners also demonstrated their support by completing sign-off sheets that formally declared their support, as well as speaking directly to the council that they supported the plan. Showing a high level of support from the key stakeholders at meetings was “really key, I think, to having us move forward, getting decisions made, not only along the way, but also having council make decisions that they could maybe feel extra comfortable with" (personal communication, January 13, 2014a).

Having regular check-ins with council was also said to be important. Project staff presented to council updates at the beginning of each construction season about how the pilot project was progressing and shared documents and data about how the process was being publicly received. These updates made project implementation, including its successes and challenges, transparent to verify support and ensure that support was maintained at a high level.

Word of Mouth and Outreach

A key mechanism that the project team used to increase awareness and buy-in was to have key stakeholders of the steering committee spread the word, "we relied fairly heavily on encouraging sub-committees to… go out to the public and push the program, get the word out and get some positive buzz going on that" (personal communication, January 13, 2014a). Having the PCN involved was a benefit to the promotion and engagement efforts. The PCN served as a unique channel for word-of-mouth promotion and education because it involved the doctors that served the entire Red Deer population and they promoted the Bike Pilot work to their clients. The Executive Director of the PCN also took up cycling again and promoted the issue by modelling the behaviour to others. Additionally, one of the doctors from the PCN was mentioned as a particularly strong supporter and champion of active transportation.

In addition, the project engaged in outreach whereby the steering committee members went to locations in the community that the public frequented in order to provide education. The farmers’ markets was a targeted location because it functioned as a town square and was a popular hot spot for a diverse group of Red Deer citizens. At the market, the promotional team, which was led by the encouragement and education subcommittee, featured a bike corral lock-up to enable people to try cycling without fear of theft. A booth was also set up to engage

members of the public and to promote cycling and awareness of alternative modes of transportation.

Media Communication and Online Surveys

In addition to word of mouth and outreach tactics, there was “lots of publication… with radio ads and newspaper ads, to let people know that this was coming” (personal communication, January 13, 2014a). Media was also used to promote the bike lanes and the PCN supplied the media with documents and messaging. Although the media was seen as not specifically antagonistic to the process, the project staff still had to contend with the actions of those who opposed the initiative and the extent of damage it could cause, “we had that one guy that got on TV and said, ‘that’s a special interest group’ and a petition [ended up getting circulated] quickly thereafter. I mean it’s just scary how quickly that stuff happens” (personal communication, January 31, 2014).

Feedback through use of online survey was also sought from the public to gage their support and adapt the project to meet identified needs. While positive feedback was obtained, respondents were not representative of the areas that ended up being targeted as locations to pilot test the bike lanes:

> We had an online survey… I think we had 270 responses and they were all very positive. So, we built on that. We said, ‘Okay, you know, people are liking this…they want to see connections with the downtown.’ So, then the real implementation happened and, again, we told people what was going on through newspapers and radio ads and mailing out pamphlets, all this type of thing. Again, we had an online survey… but we had a huge backlash, a massive backlash. (personal communication, January 13, 2014a)

To raise awareness about the impending road modification change, city staff coordinated directly with principals, and their transportation representations. They also provided handouts for the schools to distribute to students and parents prior to the end of the school year. While the city staff thought they had done ample coordination, bike lane implementation at the start of the school year became controversial. Administration from the head office of one school board said they were never consulted and another principal that we had previously consulted said they no longer supported the changes made by their school. A key lesson learned was to have administrative representation, which was authorized to speak for the school board from each affected school board on the steering committee. They in turn can take care of the coordination and messaging to principals, students, and parents and they could inform their communications people so that messaging would be clear and consistent.

Another factor may have been influenced by the community standards that existed prior to the pilot project. Although the strategic directions of the city were progressing towards the inclusion of alternative transportation on the roadways, active transportation was primarily based on pedestrian-oriented initiatives or off-street pathways. In terms of the roadway, Red Deer was identified as having an "initial culture of dualities and big trucks that …go wherever they like… It was not normal for people to expect to ride on the roadways… you ride on the sidewalks and the vehicle has the whole road" (personal communication, January 31, 2014). The bike lane project was also described as an initiative that challenged prevailing norms. According to a key informant, “when you have taken a four-lane roadway and now there’s only two lanes available for vehicles,

it's really in your face and it has an impact on you…that's exactly what the bike pilot did" (personal communication, January 13, 2014a).

4.3. Framing

To promote the pilot project and address emerging negative concerns, efforts were made to frame messaging in a way that dispelled misconceptions or that would appeal to a range of people with different values and interests. Often when meeting with the public face-to-face, such as through outreach efforts, misconceptions were addressed. For example, there was resistance to the Bike Pilot project because people felt that it was intended to compete with the car. This issue was reframed to focus on the cyclist perspective. For instance, 'this project is not intended to compete with the car, it's an attempt to find a place on the road for cyclists' (personal communication, January 13,2014).

Messaging about the initiative was primarily focused on the health benefits of the bike lane project. The PCN played a strong role in consistently framing the project as a way to promote healthy active living and they endorsed the information at various community events.

Although the bike lane project ultimately did work, sustainability of the bike lanes was not a strong message that was promoted. "You know, this ran for two years, but at the end of the day they could have ripped everything out, too. So, [sustainability] was a message, but it wasn't the main theme" (personal communication, January 13, 2014a). Indeed, the growing opposition and feedback through planned engagement activities and unplanned responses to the project forced the project team to revise the bike lane system. In addition to the project not meeting the apparent needs of the community, the opposition to the project was beginning to overload resources at the city. It was noted that responding to calls "became a full-time job in itself once we started getting the 200 responses in a given month" (personal communication, January 13, 2014a). The pressure to revise the bike lanes was not only directed towards the Engineering Department, but all other city departments and members of the council. The framing of the pilot project was also an important influencing factor for council's approval. The pilot project's health message seemed to resonate with council and a near unanimous decision to adopt the plan was reached. Throughout the project evidence was incorporated into messaging.

4.4. Using Evidence to Influence Decision-Making

The pilot was reported to create two opposing forces within the city, those who supported and those who did not. Local data, including traffic data and compiled public feedback, were taken to council to inform them of progress with the pilot and to propose changes or solutions to major issues. Council weighed the feedback from the community against the evidence presented from the Engineering Department and voted on how to address concerns raised about the bike lanes. Proposed changes were supported by context-specific data. Deliberations resulted in maintaining some low-conflict bike lanes in order to address community concerns and also ensure continued support for the remaining bike lanes and support for city administration in general following the pilot project. The approach was successful as illustrated in this quote:

> I guess we could say that we took over 500 complaints in the last two years about specific areas of the network that we then modified, and these calls have virtually dropped off to zero this fall. So, I mean, that is a huge indication that the changes have satisfied the public (personal communication, January 13, 2014a)

Following the changes made by council, the timing of the completion of the pilot coincided with elections, which created some challenges. The temporal proximity of the pilot wrap-up to the 2013 election was an issue because it created time pressures for project staff to finish the project quickly, and lingering resentment towards the project made it a "political issue you couldn't talk about in the campaign… because no one wanted to not get the job based on bike lanes" (personal communication, January 31, 2014).

5. SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS AND LESSONS LEARNED

The City of Red Deer is an innovative municipality that used road modification to support active transportation. The city's approach was unique in that it instituted a bike pilot project prior to policy development. This case report described the development of the city's Commuter Bike Pilot, *Integrated Movement Study* (City of Red Deer, 2012), and *Ready Set Go! Mobility Playbook: Red Deer* (City 2013), with a focus on the Bike Pilot. Several key processes were identified that led to the successful development of the pilot and policy, as well as lessons learned are summarized below.

The Commuter Bike Pilot project helped to advance active transportation and promote alternative modes of transportation in general in Red Deer through an increase in bike lane facilities, increased awareness for alternative modes of transportation, and through generating lessons learned for future active transportation endeavours. Red Deer's focus on sustainability and environment and the incorporation of active transportation into major plans in the past played an important role in setting the stage for the Bike Pilot and development of their current transportation plan. Another key factor that led to the success of Red Deer's work was the role of champions. The PCN was instrumental in gaining council buy-in to move forward with the bike project. Council buy-in was enabled by PCN's demonstrated commitment to promote active living in the community, as well as the strong relationships they had developed with council through previous collaborative health promotion and obesity prevention work in the city. Key leaders within the community, such as the previous Mayor and champions within council, also played an important role by modelling behaviours that were consistent with active living as a demonstration of their support for the pilot and policy work. Although challenging at times to manage, the formation of a steering committee was also critical because it engaged staff from different city departments and community organizations to help plan and promote the bike lane initiative to the public. Useful community engagement strategies that increased public understanding of the initiative and offered opportunities to hear the public's perspective included public outreach, use of the media, as well as online surveys. Also essential was project staff engagement of council and use of local data throughout the pilot project implementation process. City staff regularly brought to council local-level data pertaining to how the bike lanes installation sites were impacting traffic flows. Project staff also brought to council public feedback

they collected via engagement strategies about their support or concerns for these changes. This approach created a transparent process and allowed opportunities for joint decision-making between project staff and council, which helped increase council buy-in.

Barriers were also experienced, including lack of time, resources, and clear objectives. These barriers culminated in valuable lessons learned for the city, including the need to: adequately engage and direct city staff early on in the pilot process. Key informants also noted the need to ensure road modifications were context sensitive by assessing the needs of the people and infrastructure that were specific to the locations being targeted for change. They also stressed the importance of providing timely information to the public regarding impending bike lane installations in their area, before, during, after implementation. In addition, council was also pressured by time. The political timeframe of election affected policy development. This case study demonstrated the importance of consideration of election timing, messaging, and citizen support.

Overall, the city was able to successfully implement bike lanes while getting a multimodal policy approved. The city also won a Federation of Canadian Municipalities Sustainable Communities Award (2013) for the pilot project, which helped encourage the city to continue active transportation initiatives. The implementation of bike lanes and adoption of the *Mobility Playbook* (2013) are just the beginning of road modification changes and policy development as the following quote talks about the work to come:

> Council adopted [the *Mobility Playbook*] as a planning document and we're now going to use that as sort of the springboard to do transportation master planning throughout the city this year. So, we'll be doing a transportation master plan that looks at vehicles and at our road network, as well as a trails and pathways master plan, as well as a transit master plan, and we also have an active transportation and transportation demand management plan that we're going to kick off this year, as well (personal communication, January 13, 2014a).

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