The **DOABLE** Neighbourhood Project

8-80 Cities

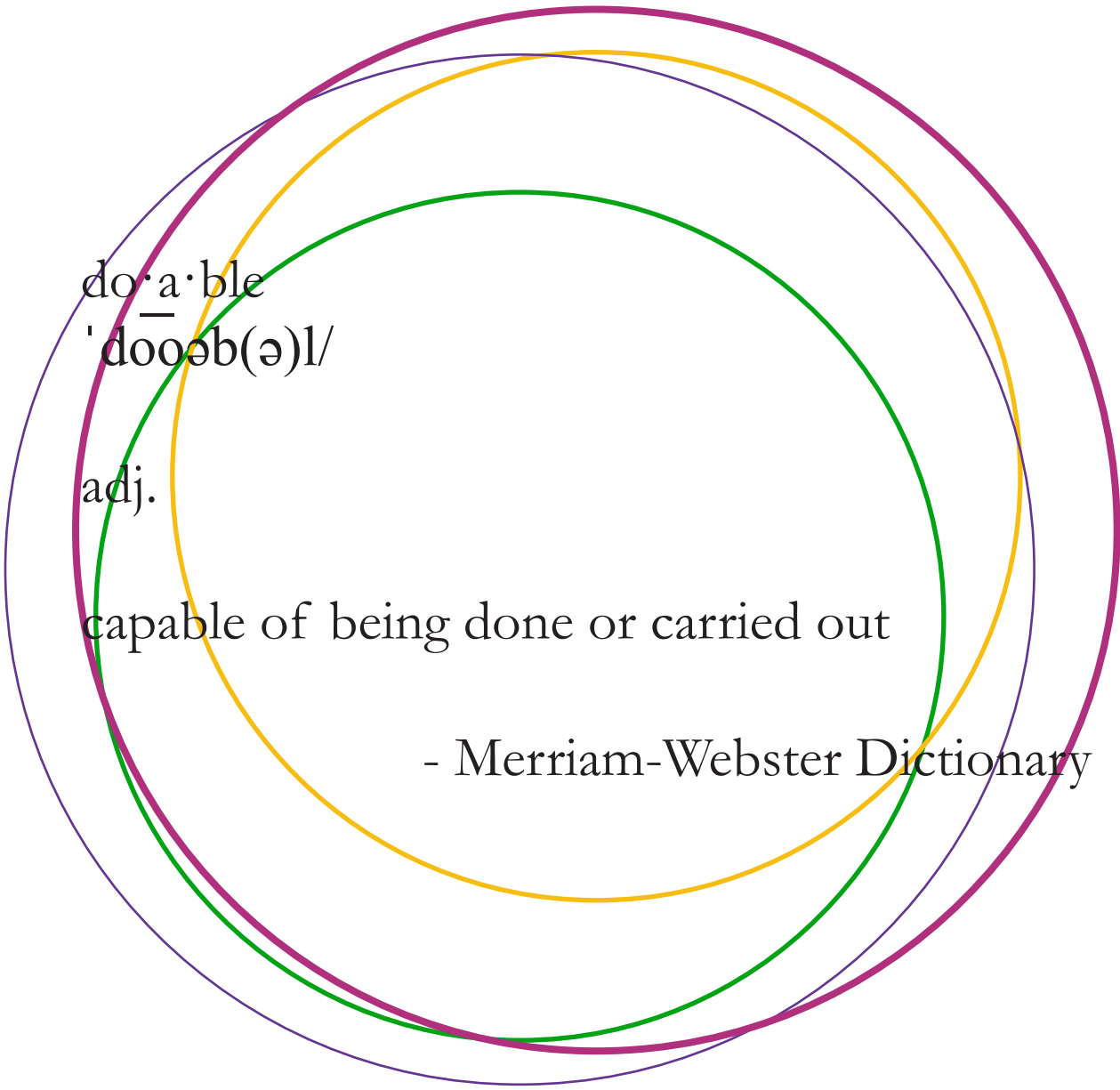# COCHRANE, ONTARIO

do·a·ble
ˈdo͞oəb(ə)l/

adj.

capable of being done or carried out

- Merriam-Webster Dictionary

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Freedom 55
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Life Insurance
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2014

FAMILY FUN
CIRCUS

CIRCUS IN TOWN
COCHRANE
APRIL

...come

01 The Project

WHO IS 8-80 CITIES?

8-80 Cities is a non-profit organization based in Toronto, Canada. We are dedicated to contributing to the transformation of cities into places where people can walk, bike, access public transit and visit vibrant parks and public places. Our approach is to engage people and communities across multiple sectors to inspire the creation of cities that are easily accessible, safe and enjoyable for all. We achieve our mission through grant projects, advocacy work and our innovative services.

8-80 Philosophy

If you create a city that's good for an 8 year old and good for an 80 year old, you will create a successful city for everyone. This is an 8-80 City.

Walk & Bike · Parks & Streets

8-8
Cit

80
ies ©

• For All

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WHAT IS THE DOABLE NEIGHBOURHOOD PROJECT?

Implementation of pilot projects to show, in the short-term, how communities can become great places for walking, cycling, animating park/public spaces and sociability.

The Doable Neighbourhood Project (DNP) is a results-oriented initiative to create healthier communities in Ontario. Our approach is to build on community assets and empower local leaders to implement short-term, high impact pilot projects that enhance the neighbourhood's walkability, bikeability, and access to parks and public spaces. Although temporary, pilot projects were used to demonstrate that grassroots efforts can lead to long-term cultural shifts towards healthier cities. The scale of Canada's public health and transportation systems calls for immediate and urgent action.

Research has proven that the built environment and public health are intricately linked. The way we plan, design, and build our neighbourhoods has a direct impact on our ability to develop healthy lifestyles and habits. In Canada we have spent the last century building cities to accommodate the automobile. Our growing reliance on the automobile has led to a culture of inactivity. Today in Canada, seven out of ten adults and nine out of ten children do not get the daily recommended amounts of physical activity.[1] These sedentary lifestyles not only affect our health, but also our pocketbooks.

Everyone has the right to mobility. But, when you build cities for cars, you get more cars. The lack of safe walking or cycling networks and accessible public transit systems leaves 20% of Ontarians without reliable means of transportation. In Ontario, 14% of the population is between 5-14 years old (ineligible for a driver's license), and 5% is over the age of

74 (beginning to limit their driving). As a result, 2.4 million Ontarians are disadvantaged in terms of transportation choices, not counting those that choose not to drive or cannot afford an automobile.

Finally, our reliance on automobiles and detachment from the public realm has led to unprecedented levels of social isolation. This decline of community cohesion has detrimental effects on our mental health, and overall wellbeing. Knowing and trusting your neighbours, or having a dependable social network has been proven to enhance our overall happiness and life satisfaction.[4] Revitalizing neighbourhood parks and public spaces is a key strategy for improving social connectivity in our communities. Research shows that residents of neighbourhoods with greenery in common spaces are more likely to enjoy stronger social ties than those who live surrounded by barren concrete.[5]
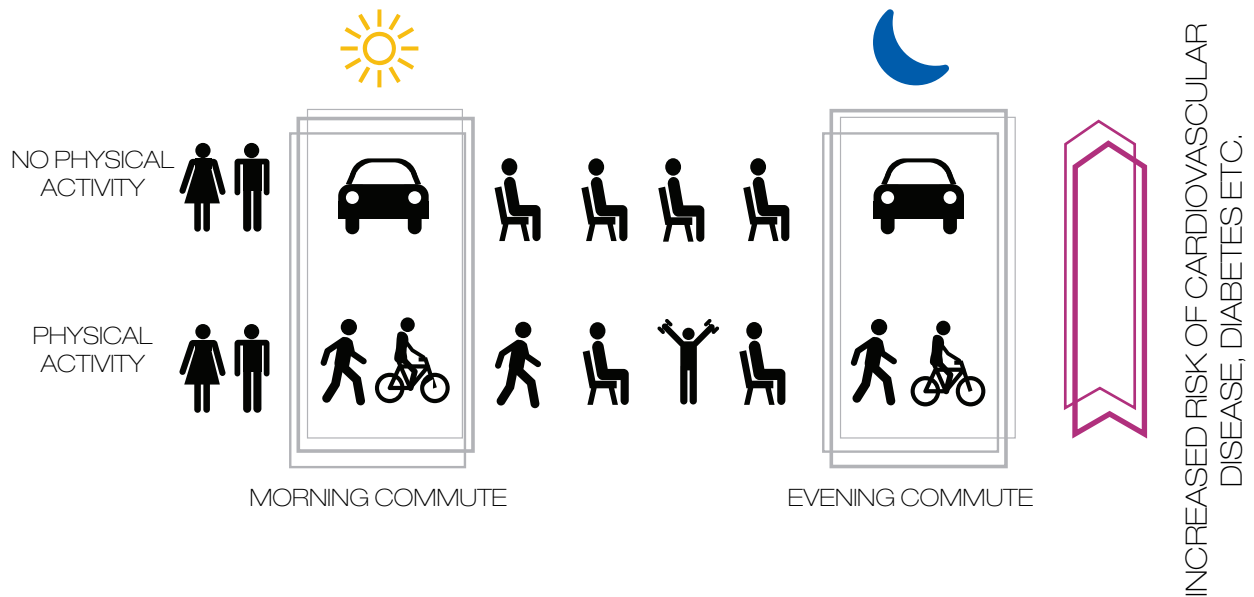
There is so much that can be done to make our cities happier, healthier and more prosperous places. Some of those things will take years or decades to happen. But others can happen right now. They are happening. Every day in cities around the world citizens and city planners alike are showing us how small actions can scale up to have massive impact. The Doable Neighbourhood Project is designed to help people kickstart change in their communities on short timelines and modest budgets.

THE GOAL

The goal of the DNP is to create healthier communities by reshaping the physical environment in a way that supports active modes of transportation (walking and cycling), and promotes the use of existing parks and public spaces. Parks, public spaces, streets, and sidewalks are essential for fostering healthier cities. Designed properly, they can provide opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to be physically active, whether by walking on the sidewalk, cycling in a bike lane, hiking a trail, or playing soccer on a field. Having access to public social spaces also enhances a person's emotional and spiritual well-being, partly by helping to mentally and physically relax.

10% of population health outcomes can be attributable to our physical or built environment, with an additional 50% being related to social and economic determinants, many of which are deeply interconnected with environments [6]

NO PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

MORNING COMMUTE

EVENING COMMUTE

INCREASED RISK OF CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE, DIABETES ETC.

KEY COMPONENTS OF THE DNP

The DNP addressed the following four aspects of great community building:

1. Health and the Built Environment

Taking a built environment approach to better public health is driven by the fact that our current health care system is not meeting the needs of most Canadians. According to the 2012 Commission on the Reform of Ontario's Public Services known as the Drummond Report, Ontario's health care system needs to be dramatically reformed. Health care is the Ontario government's single biggest spending program. In 2010-11, the province spent $44.77 billion on health. This is equivalent to 40.3% of its total spending on programs, and health care costs are only projected to increase in the future.[7] Nevertheless, even with massive investment in health care, Ontarians are only getting sicker. We are more overweight, less active, and more susceptible to chronic disease than ever before.[8] It is clear we need a new approach to creating healthy communities that focuses on keeping people healthy, rather than fixing them after they are sick.

2. Parks and Public Spaces

Improving access to quality parks and public spaces drastically increases people's likelihood of physical activity and reduces air pollution. Many studies have also shown that parks and public space access have a drastic effect on mental health and community cohesion. Exposure to nature immediately reduces our stress, gives us energy and enhances our mental alertness, attention, and cognitive performance.

Too often our parks and public spaces are undervalued by decision makers and community members alike, and this is reflected in the state of many parks and public spaces across Ontario. Did you know that, according to a recent report by Parks and Recreation Ontario, more than 50% of public recreation facilities in municipalities of all sizes are more than 50 years old? This is indicative of the general state of parks and recreation services in Ontario – we have lost sight of the important role these public facilities play in our communities, and they seem to be sliding farther down the political priorities list year after year.

We need to talk about how great places do more than just provide a nice place to spend a sunny afternoon; they play a vital role in the health of our economy, environment, society, our bodies, and our minds. According to a study conducted by Parks and Recreation Ontario in 2009, 67% of Ontarians would be willing to pay more for improved local services.[10]

COMPONENTS OF THE DOABLE NEIGHBOURHOOD PROJECT

1 HEALTH AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

2 PARKS AND PUBLIC SPACES

3 WALKABILITY

CYCLING

3. Walkability

The healthiest, wealthiest, and most vibrant communities around the world are unique in many ways. But there is one factor above all others that these communities have in common: they are, nearly without fail, highly walkable places.

There is good reason for this. Every day, every one of us is a pedestrian. No matter where we are going or how we choose to get there, every journey begins and ends with a walk. But by creating places that are built for walking, we flick a switch that unlocks the best our cities can offer us and creates communities that are healthier and richer in every way.

4. Cycling

A bicycle is a powerful tool that expands boundaries and connects people to neighbourhoods and essential services outside of their immediate community. In many cases, cycling is the fastest and most convenient way to travel, with many secondary benefits to health and happiness. This is particularly true for people who do not have access to cars due to age, physical ability, or economic reasons. Creating accessible, safe, and comfortable cycling networks requires infrastructure and maintenance. A great cycling network is one that connects all major community destinations to each other and with residential areas. Physical separation is also essential. Building bike lanes with physical buffers and barriers (ie. planters, bollards, etc.) is necessary to attract more cyclists. A truly bikeable community is one where it is safe, efficient, and comfortable to use bicycles for both recreational and daily commuting purposes.

Streets as Spaces

The road network is a vital, but often overlooked component of the public realm. Streets are our cities largest public spaces. It is estimated that approximately 80% of a city's public space is composed of streets and sidewalks.[12] We need to re-think how these spaces can be used to create healthier cities. Streets can be places that not only facilitate mobility, but also provide space for community building, physical activity, forming neighbourhood identity and contributing to people's quality of life. Providing safe, extensive infrastructure for cyclists and pedestrians has also proven to alleviate congestion. Such infrastructure paves the way for affordable and convenient transportation, which in turn can have a profound impact on the economy. Traffic congestion contributes to delays in moving goods, lost productivity and higher fuel costs. Congestion costs the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area over $3.3 billion in lost GDP every year.[13]

Complete Streets provide space for all road users, like this one in Kitchener

completestreetsforcanada.org

WHY PILOT PROJECTS?

We know that major retrofits can bring positive community change. But big wins can take decades to pull off. With communities facing severe health and mobility challenges, change needs to happen sooner than that – and it can. By starting out with low cost, low risk, but high visibility initiatives, we can immediately begin to transform and improve our neighbourhoods within days or even hours.

The DNP integrated all four components: Health and the Built Environment, Parks & Public Spaces, Walkability and Cycling into each implemented pilot project.

A Doable pilot project is…
1. Implementable in the short term
2. Contributes to walkability, bikeability and sociability
3. Promotes health
4. Sparks conversation
5. Affordable to implement and use
6. Fun!

At 8-80 Cities, we organize pilot project ideas into two broad categories: hardware and software. Software refer to project ideas that involve events, programming and public space management. Hardware project ideas include investment in physical infrastructure in the public realm.

Software

We know that people bring more people to parks and public spaces. Activities that animate and activate the public realm are one of the greatest predictors of park use.[14]   That is why, when evaluating and planning for parks and public spaces it is important to not only focus on the physical qualities of the space, after all; a great park is so much more than the, grass, trees, benches and other features it may contain.

Making public spaces accessible is about more than providing safe infrastructure. It's also about creating an "invitation" that welcomes people into a space. This is where programming comes into play. Strong programming draws people into a space, which also adds to the site's visual attraction. In other words, activity and design are mutually dependent. Programming in the public realm can include everything from large-scale public events (ie. Pan Am Games) to small community festivals, a pick-up game of soccer at a community centre or a neighbourhood block party. The Town of Cochrane may host or fund some events, but its most important role is to enable residents to program the public realm through simple activities that build community and encourage physical activity.

Programming and animating the public realm must also consider the importance of seasonality. The goal is to activate the public realm so that people feel welcomed and drawn to these spaces 365 days of the year, during the day and night. The ways people use the public realm varies during the course of the day, week, season, and year. Diverse activities and programs such as skating rinks, outdoor markets, festival space, and public art can all be used to transition the public realm from one season to the next.

Community Skill Share - Brooklyn, NY

Front Yard Performance

Jane's Walk - Calgary, AB

Hardware

Well maintained infrastructure, or "hardware", that supports a park's uses and activities is an important component of creating a successful and well used park.

Great parks offer a balance of natural "green infrastructure" that allow people to absorb natural beauty and tranquility, while also providing the infrastructure to support a variety of uses that serves the needs and desires of the community. Public realm infrastructure must support a wide variety of activities including walking, cycling, resting, socializing, gathering and playing. Important elements include benches, community information boards, public art installations, lighting, street trees, play structures, water fountains, electrical outlets (for events) and bicycle parking.

While each of these elements contribute to the overall success of the public realm, the most important piece of infrastructure is the presence of accessible and comfortable seating. Moveable chairs allow people to rearrange the furniture to suit their needs, customize the spaces, and ultimately take ownership over the space. Lighting is also essential to the activation of a park. Effective lighting increases safety, draws people into the public realm, extends seasonal and temporal use and contributes to a sense of place.

Where appropriate, public realm infrastructure should also include physical protection from rain, snow, and wind. Strategically positioned trees and other plantings in public spaces and along streets can provide areas of shade, filter out unwanted noise or views, and create a sense of safety and enclosure. By infusing a space with colour and pleasant scents, natural elements can also stimulate the senses and increase enjoyment.

Pop-Up Piano
São Paulo

Parklet -
Vancouver, BC

Chair bombing -
Windsor, ON

Intersection Repair -
Portland, OR

OUR PROCESS

The first stage of the DNP was to select four community partners. The application process was launched in January 2014, and resulted in submissions from community organizations and municipalities across the province. Short-listed candidates were contacted for telephone interviews.

Each candidate was measured on a set of criteria, which were organized under two categories; organization, and community context. Under the first category, each candidate received a grade (0-5) based on the strength of their partnerships, their level of enthusiasm and perceived commitment, implementation experience, financial capacity, and the level of influence they have with local decision makers. The community context category considered the broader neighbourhood's level of marginalization (social, economic, etc.) and need for the potential benefits of the DNP.

As a result of this process, four unique neighbourhoods in Ontario were selected to participate in the DNP. The successful applicants represented: Downtown Brampton; the Town of Cochrane; New Toronto; and North St. Thomas. These communities vary in size and character, and each presented unique challenges and opportunities. The local partners were equally diverse, and include a business improvement association (Brampton), municipal government (Cochrane), community cycling advocates (New Toronto), and child and family health service providers (St. Thomas).

Downtown Brampton

Cochrane

New Toronto

St. Thomas

Phase 1: Engage the Community

8-80 Cities believes that all successful projects must be designed for the community, and by the community. This philosophy is embedded in the mandate of the DNP. Between March-September 2014, 8-80 Cities spoke to hundreds of residents and stakeholders in Cochrane about the assets and barriers in regards to walking, cycling, and visiting the parks and public spaces in their neighbourhood. The engagement process was designed to maximize inclusiveness, and included methods such as surveys, focus groups, structured workshops, interviews, and walking tours.

Phase 2: Community Engagement Analysis + Pilot Project Planning

After compiling and consolidating the data and ideas from local residents, 8-80 Cities worked with local partners to identify common themes and opportunities. These themes led to a timeline of prioritized pilot projects that could be implemented in the short, medium, and longer terms. Pilot projects were selected for their feasibility and ability to maximize community benefits.
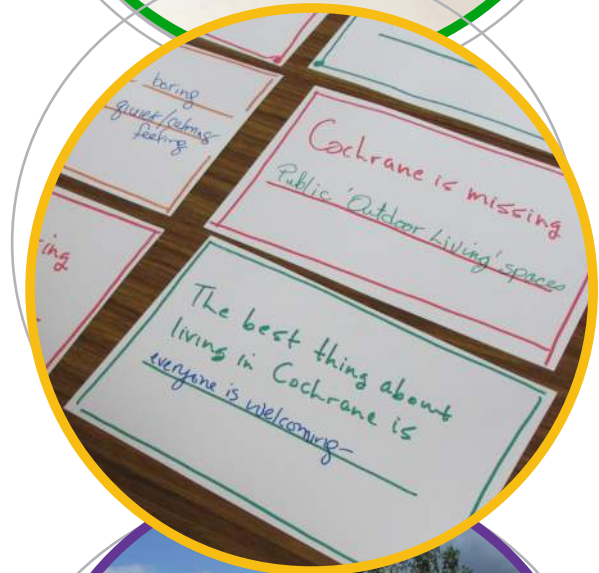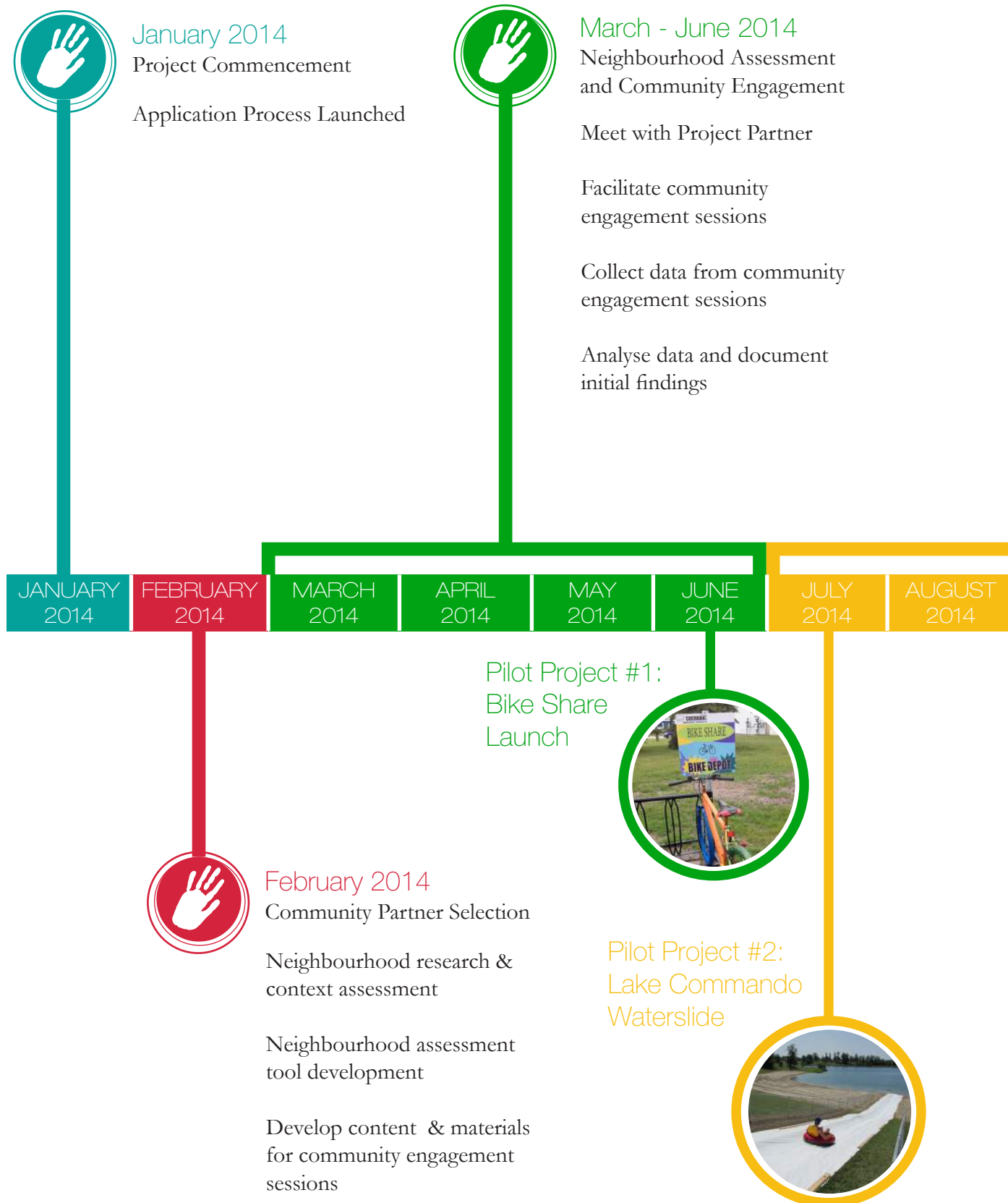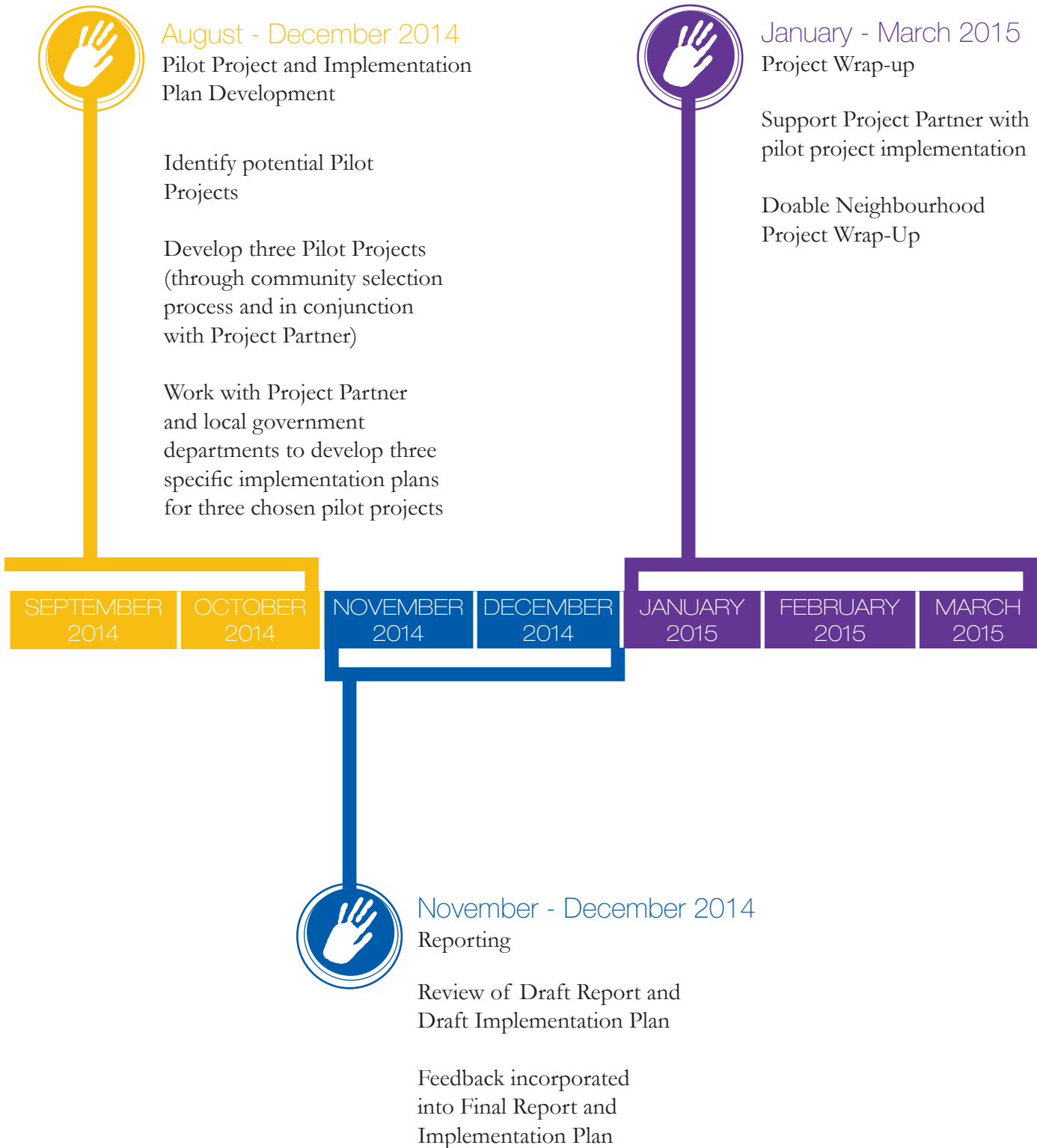
Phase 3: Pilot Project Implementation

8-80 Cities supported community partners to navigate the municipal permissions system, engage and recruit local community champions and volunteers who would be integral to getting each project off the ground. Cochrane residents' enthusiasm for the DNP's objectives led to two early successes in the town. The Community Bike Share program and Commando Lake waterslide each responded to ideas and concerns voiced by local residents during the community engagement process.

PROJECT TIMELINE

January 2014
Project Commencement

Application Process Launched

March - June 2014
Neighbourhood Assessment
and Community Engagement

Meet with Project Partner

Facilitate community
engagement sessions

Collect data from community
engagement sessions

Analyse data and document
initial findings

JANUARY 2014	FEBRUARY 2014	MARCH 2014	APRIL 2014	MAY 2014	JUNE 2014	JULY 2014	AUGUST 2014

**Pilot Project #1:
Bike Share
Launch**

February 2014
Community Partner Selection

Neighbourhood research &
context assessment

Neighbourhood assessment
tool development

Develop content & materials
for community engagement
sessions

**Pilot Project #2:
Lake Commando
Waterslide**

August - December 2014

Pilot Project and Implementation Plan Development

Identify potential Pilot Projects

Develop three Pilot Projects (through community selection process and in conjunction with Project Partner)

Work with Project Partner and local government departments to develop three specific implementation plans for three chosen pilot projects

January - March 2015

Project Wrap-up

Support Project Partner with pilot project implementation

Doable Neighbourhood Project Wrap-Up

SEPTEMBER 2014	OCTOBER 2014	NOVEMBER 2014	DECEMBER 2014	JANUARY 2015	FEBRUARY 2015	MARCH 2015

November - December 2014

Reporting

Review of Draft Report and Draft Implementation Plan

Feedback incorporated into Final Report and Implementation Plan

TOWN OF COCHRANE

Cochrane is a diverse town situated on the edge of the northern Ontario wilderness. The DNP community is bounded by 4th Street (north), Railway Street (south), 5th Avenue (west), and 12th Avenue (east). Known for its one-of-a-kind polar bear habitat, Cochrane is home to 5,340 people and is one of the fastest growing municipalities in Northern Ontario. Cochrane is fortunate to have some very attractive assets both natural and cultural. The social and cultural hubs in Cochrane include the Tim Horton's Event Centre, local schools, library and the beautiful commando lake, situated at the centre of town. It also functions as a service centre for a wide tributary area and has a strong economic base in forest industries, farming, government services and now mining. Cochrane is located 720 kilometers north of the City of Toronto and 725 kilometers east of Thunder Bay.

The primary areas of focus for the DNP in Cochrane are the 6th Street central business district and Commando Lake. Focusing our efforts on these community nodes ensured that the benefits of the DNP would be felt throughout the entire town. Commando Lake is the premier public space in Cochrane. Centrally located, Commando Lake offers a variety of attractions including the lake, walking trails, scenic views, and a beach area. The 6th Street business district hosts the highest concentration of essential services in town. Financial institutions, restaurants, a grocery store, and cinema make 6th Street the busiest street and a central node of activity in Cochrane.

The Town of Cochrane is the ideal setting for an initiative like the DNP. Due to its small size (in land mass and population), the potential benefits of the DNP can be enjoyed by virtually all residents. 8-80 Cities was also drawn by the opportunity to work directly with a municipality in Northern Ontario. Having the Town of Cochrane as our primary partner demonstrated a high level of commitment among elected officials, and a sense of enthusiasm for the objectives of the DNP among town residents. These factors suggested that bringing the DNP to Cochrane would have a high probability of success.

The Town of Cochrane is committed to making their town the most livable community in Northern Ontario. The ongoing Commando Lake revitalization project and recent construction of the town's first bike lanes demonstrate the Town's support for creating a walkable and bikeable community with great parks and public spaces. Cochrane's Doable Neighbourhood Project Committee is comprised of dedicated community leaders representing key institutions and organizations in the town, including the Town of Cochrane Chief Administrative Officer, Town of Cochrane Engineering Department, Cochrane Fire Department, Cochrane Board of Trade, and the Porcupine Regional Health Unit.

725 km

Thunder Bay

720 km

Toronto

8th Street

7th Street

6th Street

5th Street

3rd St

8th Ave

12th Ave

2nd Ave

4th Ave

6th Ave

10th Ave

14th Ave

16th Ave

4th Street

02 Site Assessment

8-80 Cities began the Cochrane site assessment immediately after selecting them for the project. Due to its remote location, we developed a set of information gathering tools that were completed by our local partners. These tools provided baseline data on the Town's social, cultural, and economic context, as well as the preexisting barriers to walking, cycling, and visiting parks and public spaces. These fact finding resources were then supplemented with a site visit to Cochrane.

Community Asset Maps

These maps highlight the locations of various community assets including parks, public spaces, community centres, grocery stores, healthcare facilities, social services, and schools. By identifying key destinations, DNP partners and staff were able to identify existing strengths and develop projects that would help increase access to local hubs.

Doable Neighbourhood Assessment Tool

The Doable Neighbourhood Assessment tool was distributed to local project partners, who then passed it on through their networks. These detailed surveys provided baseline data on resident's perceptions of the walkability and bikeability of their neighbourhood. As a precursor to 8-80 City staff site visits, the Assessment tool helped frame the discussion on how to improve the health and safety of the community.

Online Surveys

The Doable Neighbourhood Project Survey was a quick and accessible way to identify potential projects and existing challenges in Cochrane. The surveys also helped 8-80 Cities staff gauge how people are currently parks, public spaces, streets, and sidewalks. Survey questions included: How often do you bike in your neighbourhood? What would make you walk more? What do you like most about living in your community?
See the full survey: http://goo.gl/tN0aIe

8-80 Cities Site Visit

8-80 Cities first visit to Cochrane took place April 15-17, 2014. During two full days of meetings, we held focus groups with various stakeholders including, municipal department managers, the Mayor's Growth Committee, the Economic Development Board, the Commando Lake Committee, and the Youth Council. 8-80 Cities also hosted a drop-in event at the food bank thrift store, which allowed us to speak directly with local residents and inform them about the goals of the DNP. This first site visit produced valuable feedback and dozens of ideas to move forward with. In between focus groups and interviews, 8-80 Cities staff toured the town to survey key parks and public spaces, and identify existing assets and challenges in the walking and cycling networks.

ONGOING INITIATIVES

The Town of Cochrane has whole-heartedly embraced DNP intent and philosophy! These town initiatives help to create a great community for all ages and will support, and make successful, the implementation of DNP pilot projects in the future.

Lake Commando

The Commando Park project was launched by the Town in an effort to redevelop the public spaces in and around Commando Lake. The goal of this project is to establish a long-term vision and action plan that will ultimately tie together Hector Lake at the Polar Bear Habitat and Lillabelle Lake through expansive walking, biking and touring trails. The first phase of the project was completed in 2013, after the Town received architectural and engineering feasibility and visioning reports. Phase two began in late 2013 which will involve an inclusive public engagement process to ensure the community's interests are reflected in the final plan.[15] New and improved amenities that are planned for Commando Lake include well lit and accessible walking trails, scenic lookout points and gathering places, strategically located docks, fountains, colourful vegetation and trees, and an iconic pavilion and interpretive center located on the peninsula.

Public Transit

An accessible taxi service is provided 24/7 for residents living with disabilities. Fares for this service are $5.50 per ride. Red Cross and the Ininew Friendship Centre each operate a door-to-door service for medical appointments, based out of the Minto Centre. Integration Communautaire Cochrane Community Living (ICCCL) owns and operates an accessible bus for their clients. While the bus is not available for community use, it does meet the needs of ICCCL clients during the day, which adds capacity for our service.

Bike Lanes

In summer 2014, the Town installed painted sharrow bike lanes along 6th Avenue and 3rd Street. These dedicated cycling lanes are the first in Cochrane, and provide direct and safe access to the primary business distract and Commando Lake amenities. The bike lanes were unveiled prior to the launch of Cochrane's public bike share system.
Read more: http://goo.gl/2dHbT8

Sense of Community:

Cochrane is a friendly and safe place to raise a family. This unique sense of community is supported by successful public events, and by community groups that strive to improve Cochrane's liveability.
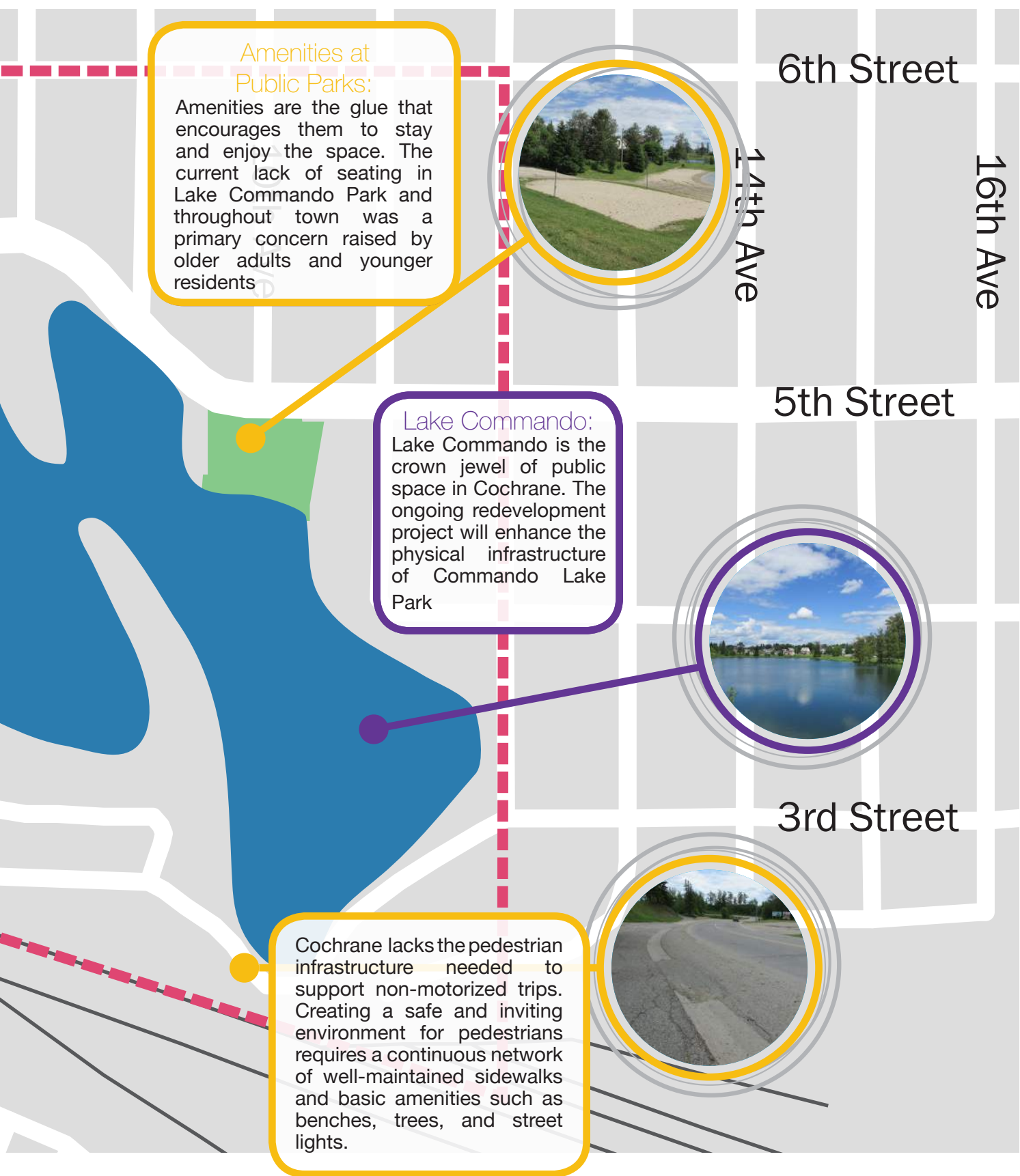
4th Street

Downtown Placemaking:

The main spine of 6th Avenue is a wide arterial with spacious sidewalks and mixed-use business tenants. The challenge lies in turning 6th Avenue into a place where people want to gather and socialize both day and night. The broad roadway on 6th Avenue provides ample opportunities to program the street with more festivals, temporary plazas, and new gathering spaces.

Walkability and Proximity:

Nearly all major destinations including grocery stores, places of employment, basic services, and parks, are located within a ten-minute walking radius from the town's core area. The simple grid pattern of Cochrane's streets makes it easy to navigate the town without a car.

6th Street

Amenities at Public Parks:

Amenities are the glue that encourages them to stay and enjoy the space. The current lack of seating in Lake Commando Park and throughout town was a primary concern raised by older adults and younger residents

Lake Commando:

Lake Commando is the crown jewel of public space in Cochrane. The ongoing redevelopment project will enhance the physical infrastructure of Commando Lake Park

5th Street

16th Ave

11th Ave

3rd Street

Cochrane lacks the pedestrian infrastructure needed to support non-motorized trips. Creating a safe and inviting environment for pedestrians requires a continuous network of well-maintained sidewalks and basic amenities such as benches, trees, and street lights.

SURVEY FINDINGS

In addition to public events and stakeholder interviews, 8-80 Cities distributed short surveys to Cochrane residents. Surveys were also available online. Nearly 50 completed surveys were collected between April-July, 2014. The first half of the surveys are designed to determine residents' current behaviour in regards to walking, cycling, and visiting local parks and public spaces. The surveys conclude by asking participants to identify key variables that would encourage them to walk, bike, and visit local parks more often. The key findings are summarized below.

Walking

Cochrane is a walking community, but a lack of connectivity and perceptions of safety prevent the town from becoming a pedestrian haven. There is a wide range in residents' walking habits, with nearly 30% of those surveyed saying they walk less than 30 minutes per week, but 50% walk more than 45 minutes. Over 33% of those surveyed responded that improved connectivity would encourage them to walk more, while additional 20% replied that improved safety and streetscaping incentivize more walking

Parks & Public Spaces

Cochrane residents value their green spaces, as demonstrated by the fact that 53% of residents visit local parks at least once per week. Over 80% of all respondents stated that regular programming, more seating and basic amenities (washrooms, etc.) would make these spaces more of a destination.

Cycling

Cycling demonstrates an excellent opportunity to increase healthier lifestyles in Cochrane. Half of all respondents stated that cycling infrastructure (bike lanes, bike parking, etc.) is needed, while the other half emphasized the need for enhanced traffic safety, access to equipment, and secure bike parking.
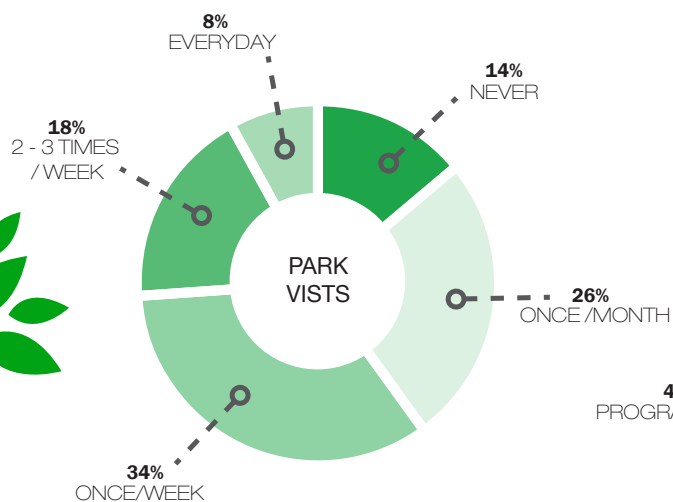
> " I'd like to see colourful crosswalks and better sidewalks in the downtown area. "

> " Cochrane has strong schools and a good sense of community. "

> " Lake Commando is a great place to walk. People drive into town just to walk around it. "

WEEKLY WALKING IN MINUTES

- **12%** 15 MINS OR LESS
- **18%** 15 - 30 MINS
- **24%** 30 - 45 MINS
- **22%** 45 - 60 MINS
- **25%** 60 + MINS

VARIABLES TO INCREASE WALKING

- **25%** SEATING
- **20%** MORE DESTINATIONS
- **16%** STREETSCAPING
- **24%** SAFETY
- **22%** CONNECTIVITY

PARK VISTS

- **8%** EVERYDAY
- **14%** NEVER
- **26%** ONCE / MONTH
- **34%** ONCE/WEEK
- **18%** 2 - 3 TIMES / WEEK

VARIABLES TO INCREASE PARK VISITS

- **10%** MAINTENANCE
- **17%** AMENITIES
- **22%** SEATING
- **10%** GREENERY
- **41%** PROGRAMMING

RATES OF CYCLING

- **6%** EVERYDAY
- **40%** NEVER
- **22%** ONCE / MONTH
- **10%** ONCE/WEEK
- **22%** 2 - 3 TIMES / WEEK

VARIABLES TO INCREASE CYCLING

- **25%** SEATING
- **16%** EQUIPMENT
- **20%** SAFETY
- **8%** AMENITIES
- **56%** BIKE LANES

...thing about
...s in Cochrane is

Cochrane can be _boring_
but mostly it's _a quiet/calm_
feeling

Cochrane is missing
the feeling of "ALIVE"

...l thing about
...ochrane is

liv...
every...

The best thing about living in Cochrane is

Cochrane is missing
Public 'Outdoor Living' spaces

The best thing about living in Coch

03 Community Engagement

WHY BOTHER WITH COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT?

Community engagement is time consuming and sometimes challenging. However, engaging people in the early stages of a project will always result in better public spaces and neighbourhoods. The community can help to define priorities, talk through challenges, brainstorm solutions, and negotiate with each other about specific ideas. But community engagement is about much more than coming up with a good design. The simple act of being engaged---having someone ask your opinion, or discussing a community issue with your neighbours---helps to raise people's level of interest in community projects and builds a sense of neighbourhood pride and belonging.[21]

ELECTED OFFICIALS

COMMUNITY

= CHANGE

PUBLIC SECTOR STAFF
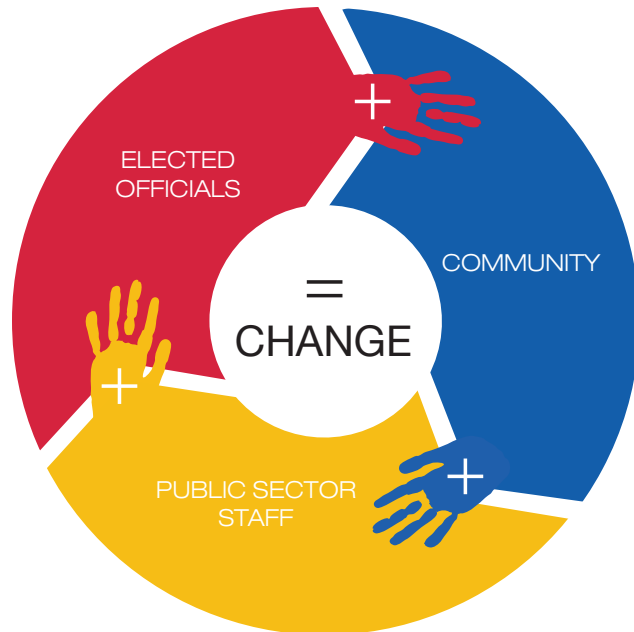
COLLECTIVELY BUILDING A SENSE OF PLACE

The benefits of creating a vibrant and accessible public realm help highlight the reasons why all residents should be encouraged to participate in shaping these spaces. Parks and open spaces should be the heart of a city. They can be gathering places for friends and family, destinations for a variety of activities, and can inspire a sense of mutual ownership and responsibility for them. They can be used by community members for diverse reasons. Most importantly, they can be supported by cooperation between a city and a community. The public realm contributes to both the physical and cultural beauty of Cochrane.

Parks, public spaces, streets, and sidewalks are the verandas of city life. They are where we live amongst each other. They are where we experience our cities. It is our public spaces that make our cities more than just a collection of buildings and spaces in between them — they make them places. Even if one lives in the tiniest apartment or the most dilapidated house, everyone's quality of life is impacted when a city has great parks to serve as front yards and public spaces as living rooms. The public realm must be built to address the needs of Cochrane residents, so the process of designing and programming parks, public spaces, streets, and sidewalks must be done collectively. This is why an inclusive community engagement process is so important.

GROUPS ENGAGED

> "Cochrane is capable of great things when the will is there."

> "We need more focal points for people to walk to. The sidewalks roll up on weekends."

> "Theft and bike parking are an issue in Cochrane."

Town of Cochrane
Mayor Peter Politis

Municipal Managers
Cochrane Polar Bear Habitat
Northern Ontario Wires
Town Treasurer
Cochrane Protective Services
Cochrane Public Library
Cochrane Child Care Centre
North Cochrane Addiction Services

Mayor's Growth Committee
Canadian Red Cross
École Catholique Nouveau Regard
Cochrane Fire Department
Cochrane Protective Services
Community Health Services
Minto Counselling Centre

Other Groups
Cochrane Town Council
Cochrane Public School
Cochrane Arts Club
Cochrane School Board
Lake Commando Committee
Cochrane Arts Council
Cochrane Youth Council
Ininew Friendship Centre
Cochrane Horticultural Society
Porcupine Health Unit
Cochrane Planning Board
Cochrane Cross Country Ski Club
Cochrane Food Bank
Club Amicale 50+
Club Richelieu
Second Mile Club

ENGAGEMENT SESSIONS

During the period between February to July, 2014, 8-80 Cities staff hosted a series of public engagement sessions in Cochrane, including stakeholder interviews, surveys, focus groups, and open house meetings. During these sessions, more than 100 individuals who live, work, and/or play in Cochrane participated in the Doable Neighbourhood Project process. The engagement sessions were supplemented with site visits, during which 8-80 Cities staff carried out observational exercises and analysis to gauge the level of safety, activity, and vibrancy of Cochrane's streets, sidewalks, parks, and public spaces.

Site Visits
The 8-80 Cities team conducted extensive site visits and photo research in Cochrane. This stage of the project occurred over the course of two site visits, which were two days in duration. Each visit included trips to important neighbourhood landmarks, walking and/or cycling tours of the neighbourhood. The purpose of these visits was to increase our understanding of the community context, strengths, weaknesses and challenges. As a result, we were better equipped to relate to, communicate with, and understand community members during engagement stage.

Focus Groups
8-80 Cities uses focus groups as a form of qualitative research in order to gain an understanding of people's perceptions, opinions and attitudes towards the neighbourhood and more generally, how they travel around their community. Focus groups tend to be the most effective way to engage vulnerable or difficult to engage groups. Focus groups can be conducted almost anywhere that makes the participants feel comfortable, and that is conducive to group conversation. Whenever possible 8-80 Cities will conduct a portion of

the focus group in the neighbourhood (i.e. neighbourhood walkabouts, in parks and open spaces etc). Trained in group facilitation, we will develop an interactive group session where participants are encouraged to talk openly and with other participants. 8-80 Cities will use a range of engagement activities (i.e. semi-structured questions, videos, surveys, mapping activities) to draw out ideas and options from the group.

Semi-Structured Interviews
8-80 Cities uses semi-structured interviews as a form of qualitative research in order to gain insight on people's perceptions, opinions and attitude towards specific issues in their community. Semi-structured interviews are usually used to engage key-stakeholders (i.e. community leaders, elected officials, business leaders and potential pilot project "champions"). 8-80 Cities will develop a framework for the interview around themes to be explored and provide a flexible framework for the interview which allows new questions and topics to be brought up during the session.

Presentations & Community Workshops

At 8-80 Cities we know that citizens hold the greatest expertise when it comes to the communities where they live, work and play. We use an interactive and hands-on approach to educate people on the key elements of healthy neighbourhood design, people- oriented cities and public space. Our aim is to equip participants with knowledge essential to understanding the elements of healthy communities, quality public space, international best practices, and specific programs and initiatives that can be adapted to their own community. We will use educational presentations, inspiring images and videos, and interactive activities to encourage creative approaches to community building. We will also discuss the varied challenges cities face when implementing new programs and policies and offer solutions on how to overcome them.

Capacity Building Workshops

Capacity Building Workshops serve to educate residents about the importance of creating walkable, bikeable, and park-friendly communities. Using inspiring case studies and engaging presentations these workshops build knowledge and capacity on the benefits and importance of the public realm. Through interactive exercises, residents are able to identify barriers and opportunities for walking, cycling, and accessing public space in the community. The workshops also serve as a forum for open debate and dialogue among the different stakeholders.

ACTIVITIES

The most productive community engagement processes are fun and accessible. During all consultation sessions, 8-80 Cities uses a series of interactive and engaging activities to solicit valuable information in an inclusive and inviting atmosphere. Some of the activities used in Cochrane include the following:

Cochrane Idea Cards

One of 8-80 Cities public engagement tools included a series of Idea Cards with incomplete phrases written on them. All engagement participants were then invited to complete the cards that spoke to them. In total, 8-80 Cities collected more than 50 Idea Cards, which reveal valuable input about what's great and what's missing in Cochrane. The Idea Cards included the following phrases: Cochrane is missing...; The best thing about living in Cochrane is...; Cochrane can be...But mostly it's...

Postcard from the Future

This simple activity can be used to help people dream big. By asking people to imagine the space 10 years in future, they can free themselves from concerns related to budget, politics, and logistics and get to the essence of what they want the place to become. Participants write a postcard to someone (a friend, the Mayor, a City Councillor) and describe what they see, smell, hear, or feel in that future public space.

Surveys

8-80 Cities distributed short surveys to Cochrane residents, in both a printed copy and an online survey. Nearly 50 completed surveys were collected between April-July, 2014. The first half of the surveys are designed to determine residents' current behaviour in regards to walking, cycling, and visiting local parks and public spaces. The surveys conclude by asking participants to identify key variables that would encourage them to walk, bike, and visit local parks more often.

Community Mapping

Together in groups of 3-5, workshop participants plot community assets and areas for improvement with coloured sticker dots on a large area map. Participants are also asked to write their comments on walking, cycling, and public spaces directly onto the map (ie. "The trees on this block make it a great street to walk along"). This activity was used as an introduction to the interactive portion of the DNP workshops. By identifying specific strengths and weaknesses, Community Mapping inspires participants to imagine what assets (parks, community centres, streets, trails, etc.) can be built on, and which areas need special attention and improvement.

Pilot Project Brainstorming

The rules of this activity are limited only by a participant's imagination. This is a brainstorming exercise that helps workshop participants imagine which pilot projects could build on the existing strengths and weaknesses identified in the Community Mapping activity. Participants sift through dozens of inspirational images of best walking, cycling, and public space practices from the around the world. Ideas that emerged as a result of this activity included both hardware and software pilot projects such as, chair bombing, interactive public art, bike rodeos, and neighbourhood walking tours.

Dotmocracy

All workshop participants vote for their favourite pilot projects that each team developed through the Pilot Project Brainstorming exercise. The winning project from each team will be used in the next activity.

Action Planning

Participants develop an action and implementation plan for bringing their pilot project ideas into reality. Large worksheets provided in this exercise help guide teams through the essential elements of their pilot project, including the what, when, who, where, why, and most importantly, how.

04 Outcomes and Analysis

Using a public engagement feedback matrix, 8-80 Cities staff compiled, categorized, and ranked every idea collected during the public consultation phase. The ideas were gathered over the course of four months, during which more than 100 residents participated in engagement sessions. Over 430 ideas for making Cochrane a more walkable, bikeable, happy and healthy, people-based place, were collected. The ideas were first divided into two broad categories: Software and Hardware (Figure 1). Software refers to project ideas that involve events, programming and public space management. Hardware project ideas include investment in physical infrastructure in the public realm.

By analyzing the community information collected through the engagement process, 8-80 Cities was able to identified six key themes that were identified by community members. The six themes, which appear below, were further divided into a series of sub-categories. The sub-categories allowed us to identify specific project ideas suggested by residents. The themes and sub-categories are explored in the following pages.

Arts & Culture (**20%**)

Parks & Public Spaces (**30%**)

Streets & Sidewalks (**19%**)

Walking & Cycling (**14%**)

Public Education & Awareness (**6%**)

Town-wide Amenities & Economy (**10%**)

Sociability

The underlying message in each major theme is the desire for residents to have more opportunities to interact and come together. Many people noted that the greatest asset that Cochrane has are the residents themselves. Therefore, whichever projects are chosen from this document should reflect the need to enhance social opportunities and personal connections.
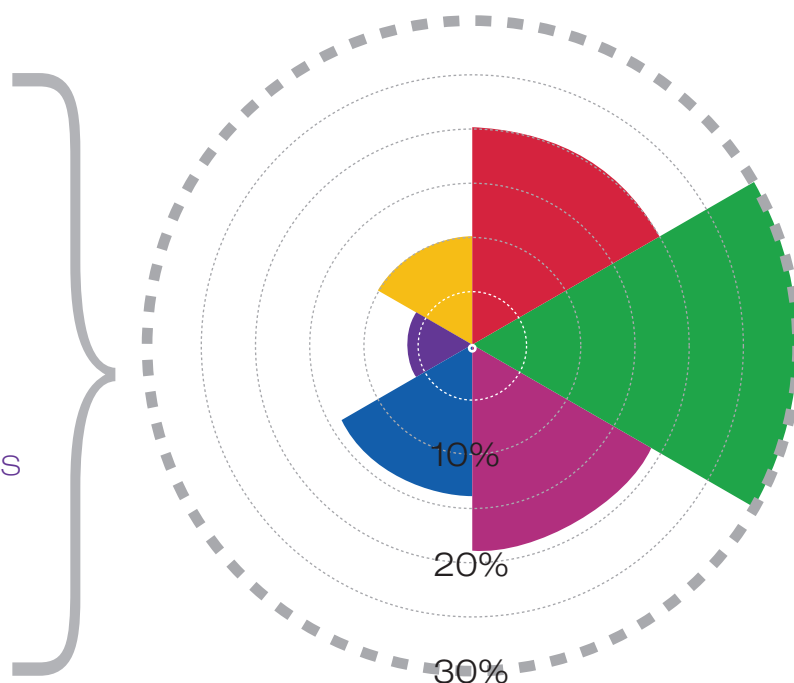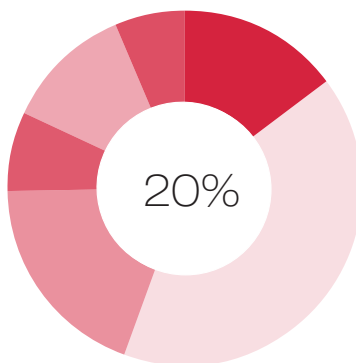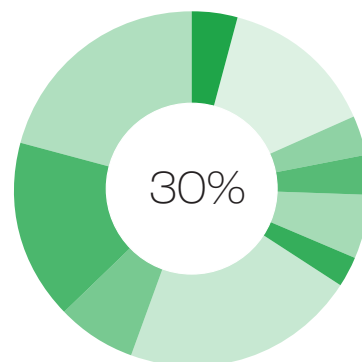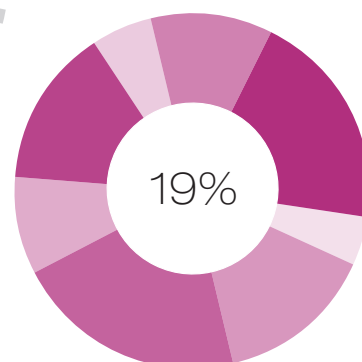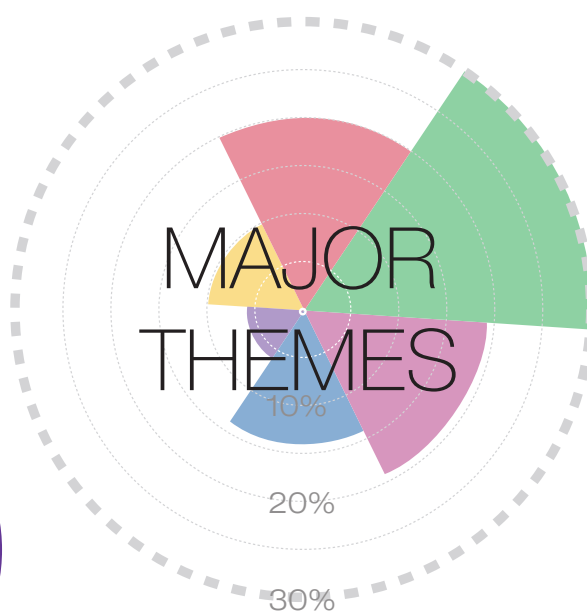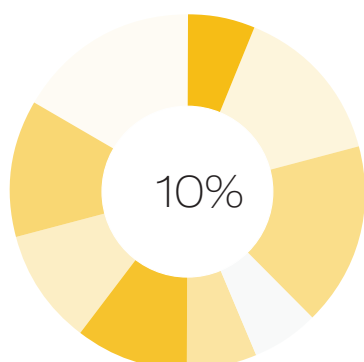

10%

20%

30%

MAJOR THEMES

ARTS
&
CULTURE

20%

TOWN-WIDE
AMENITIES
&
ECONOMY

10%

PARKS
&
PUBLIC SPACE

30%

PUBLIC
EDUCATION
&
AWARENESS

14%

STREETS
&
SIDEWALKS

19%

WALKING
&
CYCLING

6%

10%

20%

30%

6%
OTHER

12%
NEW CLUBS

15%
MUSIC

7%
TOURS

ARTS
&
CULTURE

19%
FESTIVALS

41%
PUBLIC ART
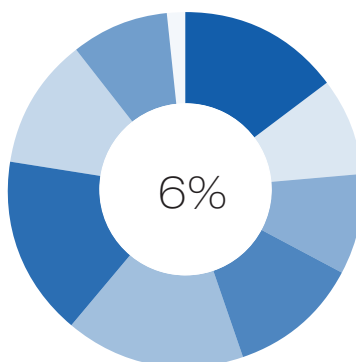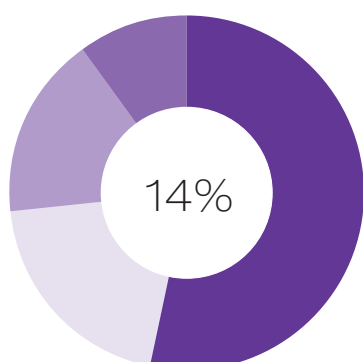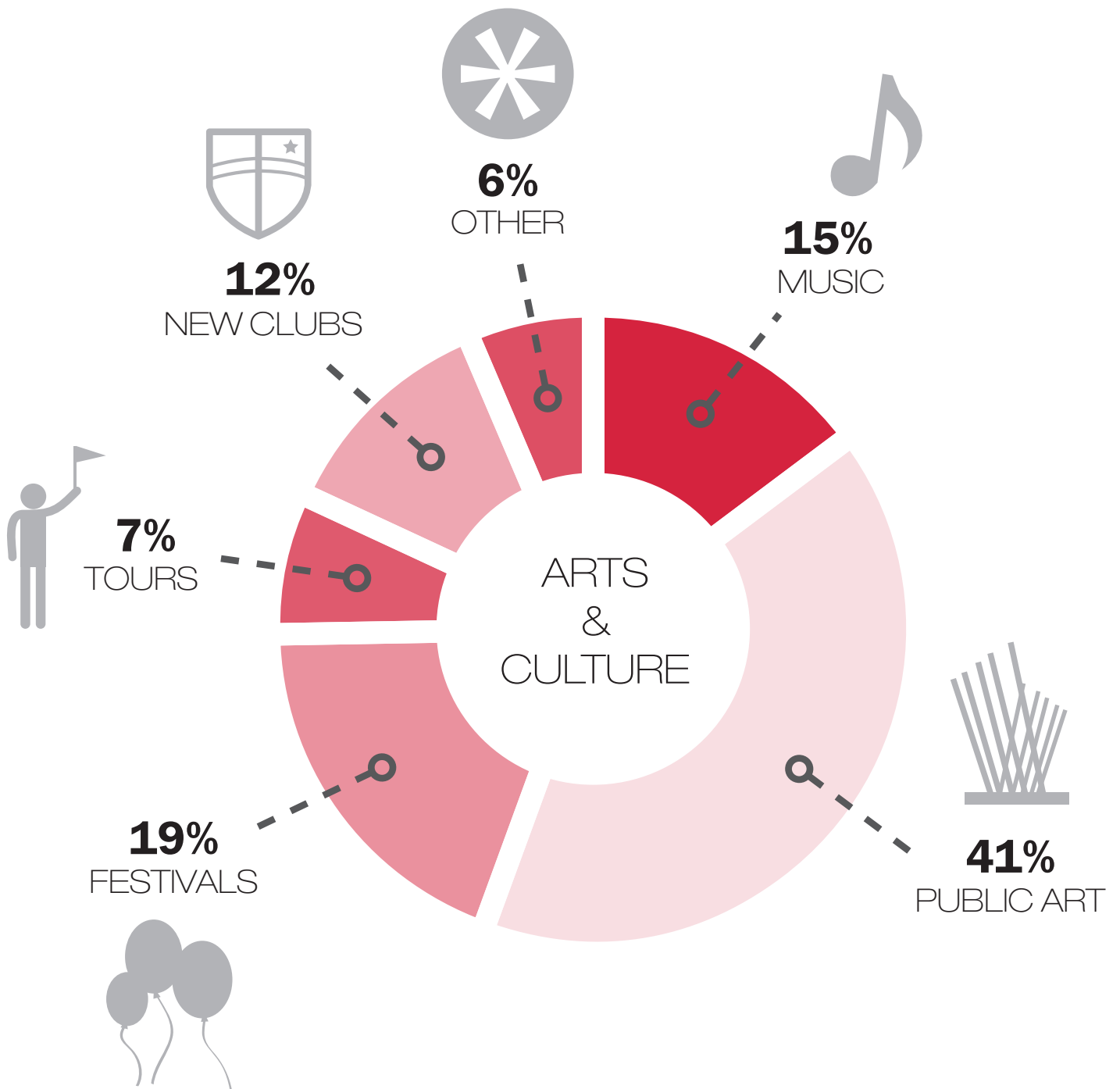
Residents frequently addressed the need to establish a sense of place and identity in Cochrane's core area. Establishing a hub for arts and culture in Downtown Cochrane was commonly mentioned as a strategy to achieve this goal.

Public Art (41% of category ideas):

Public art has the ability to infuse colour and variety, while unifying an area with a common theme or identity. At a pedestrian scale, art can provide visual interest and foster a sense of pride in local residents. Successful public artwork installations generally involve the engagement of community stakeholders and local business owners. Many consultation participants wanted to see more public art, creativity, and colour spread throughout the streets and public spaces of Cochrane. Ice sculptures, interactive art installations, design competitions, sidewalk murals, and enhancing the polar bear imagery were all listed as potential strategies.

Festivals (19% of category ideas):

Consultation participants commonly sited the various events and festivals hosted in town when asked, what do you like most about living in Cochrane? Perhaps building on their excitement about these activities, many residents made recommendations to enhance existing events (including an outdoor café at the farmer' market) or offered their own ideas

for entirely new events that would bring people together to celebrate Cochrane's outdoor assets (including a ball hockey tournament on 6th Avenue). *note* this idea refers to broader festivals and events throughout town, whereas the Event in Parks category refers to ideas specifically for Lake Commando.

Other Arts & Culture ideas:

*percentages represent the number of times each idea was raised during a consultation session (see pie chart)
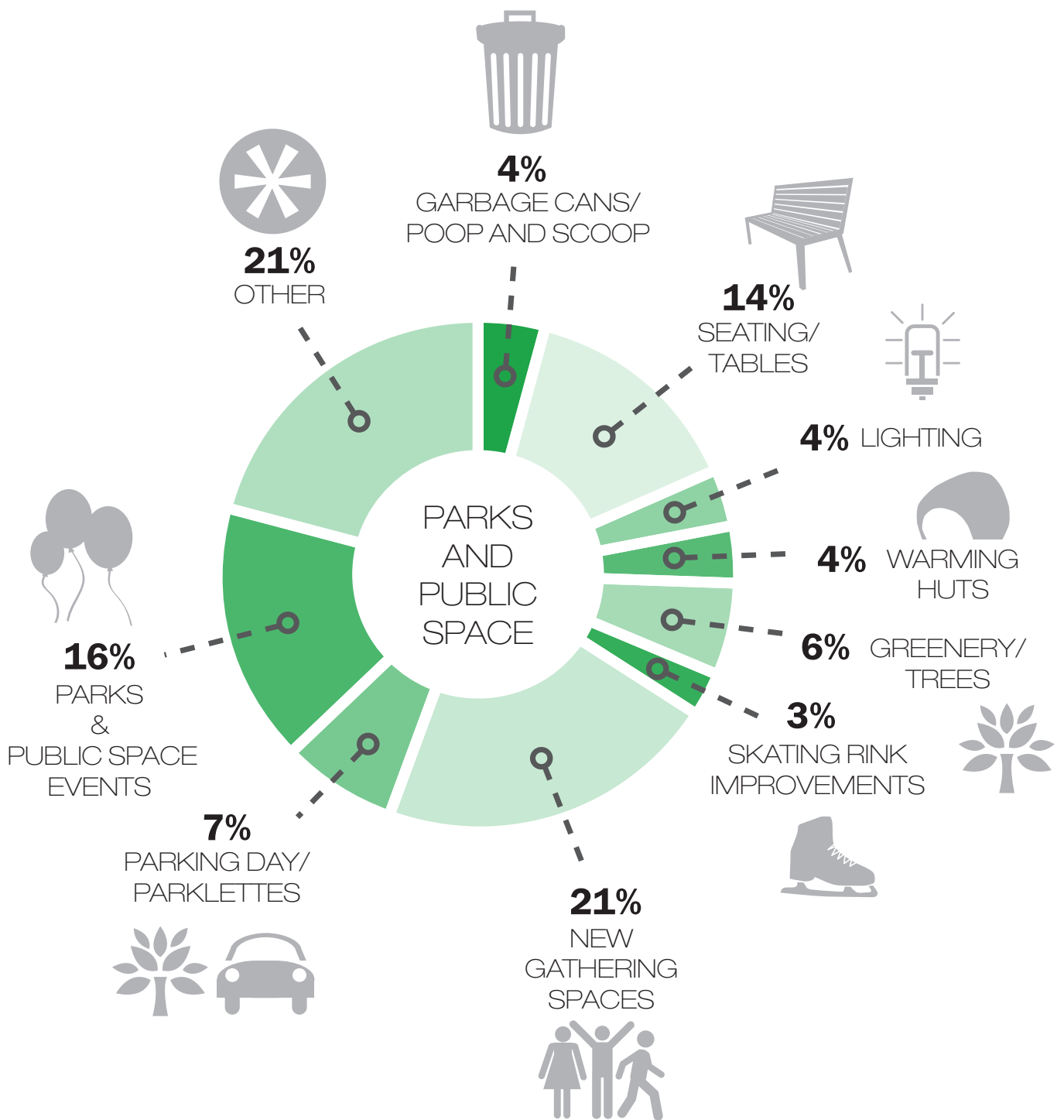
Music (15%): invite local buskers to perform on streets, impromptu concerts in parks and public spaces, pop-up pianos

New Clubs (12%): tool library, repair café, community skill share, Big Brothers/Sisters program, establish a Friends of the Trails to maintain and advocate for walking trails

Tours (7%): guided tours to educate the public and celebrate local culture (themes: garden, heritage, history, walking tours)

Other (6%): art gallery in old railway car, art gallery in vacant drug store on 6th, rename the streets/avenues, winter sweat lodge, boost promo of healing garden

4%
GARBAGE CANS/
POOP AND SCOOP

21%
OTHER

14%
SEATING/
TABLES

4% LIGHTING

4% WARMING
HUTS

PARKS
AND
PUBLIC
SPACE

16%
PARKS
&
PUBLIC SPACE
EVENTS

6% GREENERY/
TREES

3%
SKATING RINK
IMPROVEMENTS

7%
PARKING DAY/
PARKLETTES

21%
NEW
GATHERING
SPACES

Parks and public spaces are vital to the social and cultural life of downtown areas. Cochrane has several public space assets, with the crown jewel being Lake Commando. With the infrastructure already in place, the primary challenge lies in programming these spaces with events and activities that will draw people in, and encourage them to stay.

New Gathering Spaces
(21% of category ideas):

Cochrane residents are enthusiastic about opportunities to create new parks and public spaces throughout town. Doable project ideas such as Park(ing) Day and the creation of small parkettes throughout town were very popular among consultation participants.

Installing parkettes throughout town would create a wider network of impromptu gathering spaces. Residents were interested in converting currently vacant spaces (including the lot adjacent to Tibb's Tavern).

Parks & Public Space Events
(16 % of category ideas):

Building off the popularity of existing events, Cochrane residents want to see more opportunities to come together as a community, meet their neighbours, and celebrate the local culture. As the social and culture hub of Cochrane, most event suggestions centered around Lake Commando. Ideas ranged from broad suggestions (free concerts in the park, movie nights, more children-focussed events) to specific festival themes (video game competition, snowshoeing festival). Many people emphasized that public events do not need to be large-scale, complicated festivals.

Other Parks & Public Space Ideas:

*percentages represent the number of times each idea was raised during a consultation session (see pie chart)

Seating/Tables (14%): chair bombing, muskoka chairs, picnic tables installed along walking trails, in parks and public spaces.

Parking Day/Parkette (7%): reuse parking spaces and vacant lots for public space
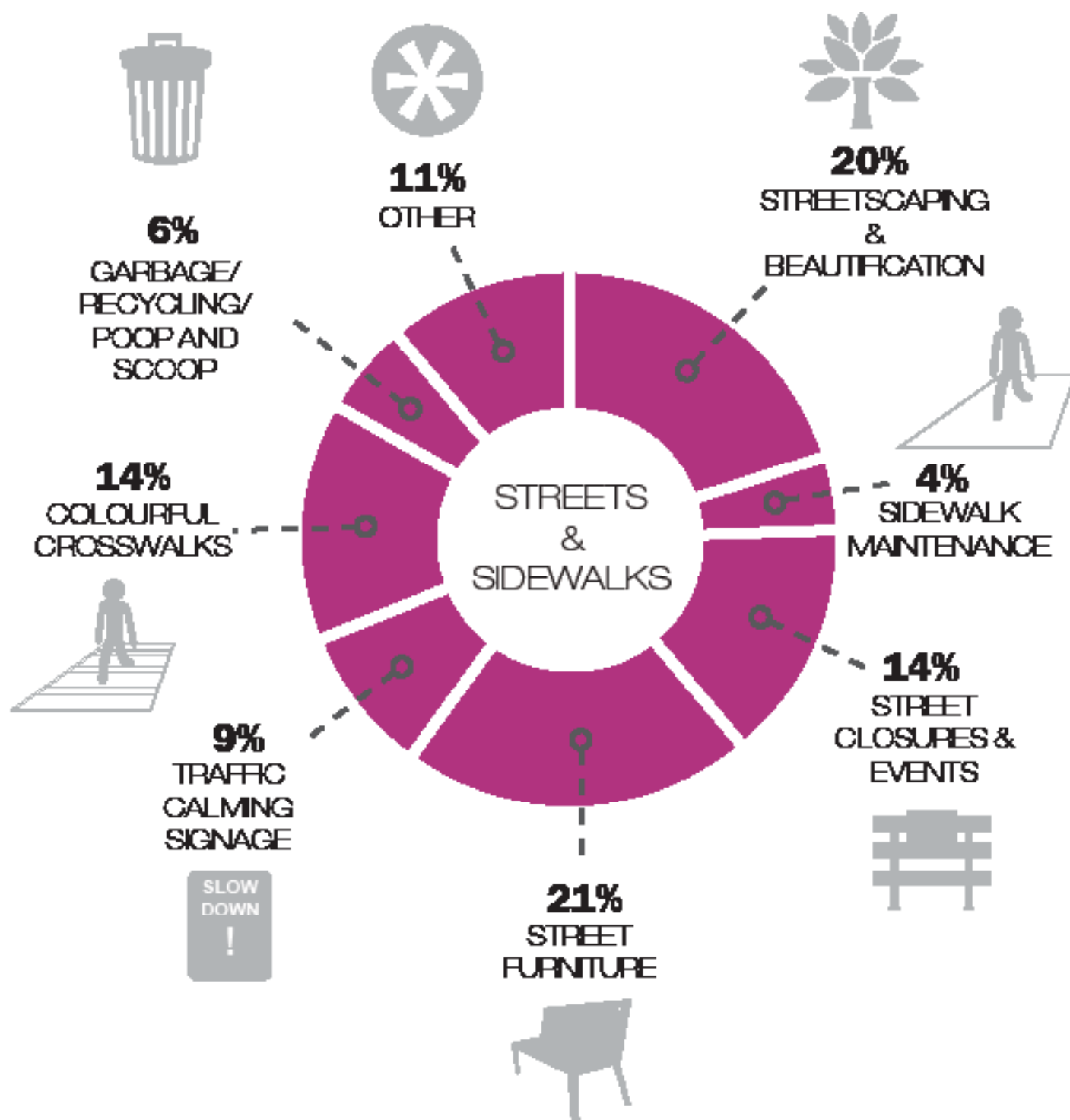
Greenery/Trees (6%): plant more trees, flowers and soft landscapes.

Garbage Cans/Poop n Scoop (4%): increase trash facilities and bag dispensers for dog waste, particularly in Lake Commando

Lighting (4%): improve lighting along the trails, sidewalks, and on the lake in winter to enhance safety and increase winter activity

Winter Warming Huts (4%): commission and then install creative shelters for people to gather in parks in the winter

6%
GARBAGE/
RECYCLING/
POOP AND
SCOOP

11%
OTHER

20%
STREETSCAPING
&
BEAUTIFICATION

14%
COLOURFUL
CROSSWALKS

STREETS
&
SIDEWALKS

4%
SIDEWALK
MAINTENANCE

9%
TRAFFIC
CALMING
SIGNAGE

14%
STREET
CLOSURES &
EVENTS

SLOW
DOWN
!

21%
STREET
FURNITURE

Streets and roads represent the largest public space in every city. Creating better streets and roads that accommodate all transportation modes is essential to building a healthier community for everyone. Participants acknowledged the need to reclaim the streets, laneways, parking spaces, and sidewalks for people of all ages and mobility levels.

Street Furniture
(21% of category ideas):

Street furniture is an integral component of creating streets for people. Benches, moveable chairs, picnic tables, and planters all combine to establish a comfortable and inviting street. Opportunities to sit, rest, socialize, and enjoy the passing street scene is particularly important for residents with mobility challenges. Street furniture can also be an effective way to infuse a space with colour and creativity.

Streetscaping & Beautification
(20% of category ideas):

A ten-minute walk down a vibrant, well-maintained street often flies by. The same walk on a street with broken sidewalks, fast traffic, and bland scenary can seem like twice the distance. Residents called for enhanced streetscaping and beautification projects throughout Cochrane, but particularly along 6th Avenue and throughout Commando Park. Improving sidewalk maintenance, installing more street trees and overhanging planters, and adding more lighting were all suggested as ways to enhance the pedestrian experience in Cochrane.

Other Streets & Sidewalks ideas:

*percentages represent the number of times each idea was raised during a consultation session (see pie chart)

Colourful Crosswalks (14%): paint colourful patterns on the street to increase visibility of pedestrian crossings, while adding public art
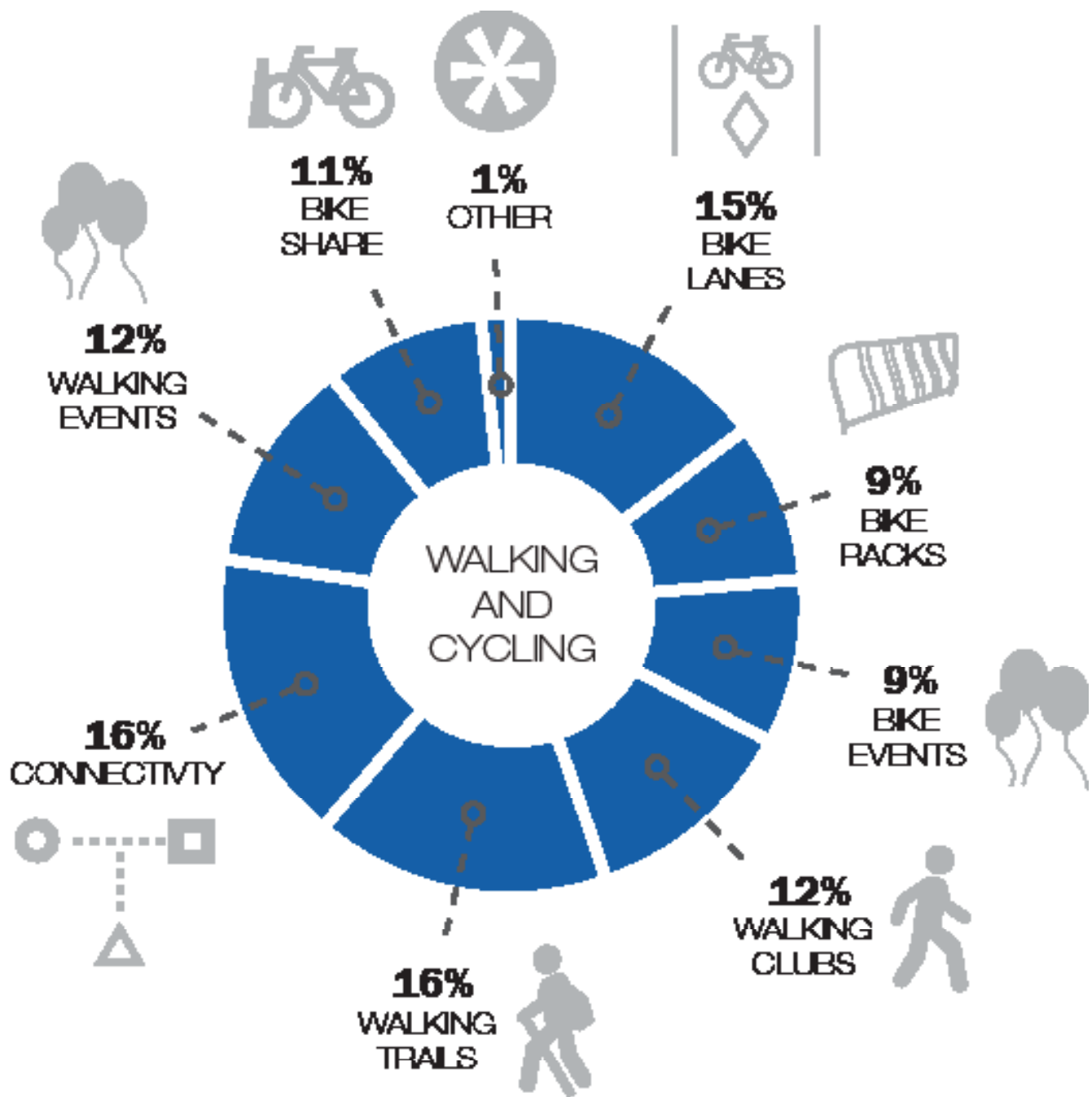
Street Closures & Events (14%): close the streets for public events (themes: urban park, road hockey, closing 6th Ave for fairs)

Traffic Calming Signage (9%): reduce speed limits, install community zone signage, and 'share the road' signage

Garbage Cans/Poop n Scoop (6%): increase number of trash facilities and bag dispensers for dog waste, particularly along 6th Avenue

Sidewalk Maintenance (4%): remove cracks and uneven surfaces, improve snow removal in winter

WALKING AND CYCLING

11% BIKE SHARE

1% OTHER

15% BIKE LANES

12% WALKING EVENTS

9% BIKE RACKS

9% BIKE EVENTS

16% CONNECTIVITY

12% WALKING CLUBS

16% WALKING TRAILS

Cochrane is a highly walkable and bikeable community due to its consistent grid pattern and the relative proximity of major destinations. Building on this foundation will be vital to creating a truly walk and bike friendly town. Many people already walk in Cochrane, but there remains room for improvement to boost walking trips made for utilitarian rather than recreational purposes. Cycling, on the other hand, is not perceived to be a safe or viable option for many reasons, including safety and lack of infrastructure.

Connectivity (16% of category ideas):

A connected network of safe, well-maintained sidewalks are the basic building block for creating a walkable community. Many destinations in Cochrane are often perceived to be further apart than they actually are. A key contributor to this problem is the lack of pedestrian connections that lead from one place to another. On several streets, sidewalks end abruptly and pedestrian paths terminate before leading safely to the nearest destination. Specific locations where residents want better connectivity include the Tim Hortons restaurant, Tim Horton Event Centre, local schools, and Lake Commando.

Walking Trails (16% of category ideas):

People felt that Cochrane needs more established recreational walking trails that are marked, mapped, and maintained. Residents suggested that existing amenities such as the Polar Bear Exhibit and Healing Garden could become destinations if proper trails were provided. Implicit in this need for more walking trails is the need to include basic amenities such as wayfinding signage, seating, and visible access points.

Other Walking & Cycling Ideas:

*percentages represent the number of times each idea was raised during a consultation session (see pie chart)

Bike Lanes (15%): install dedicated bike lanes along 6th Ave, Railway, 4th St., 3rd St.

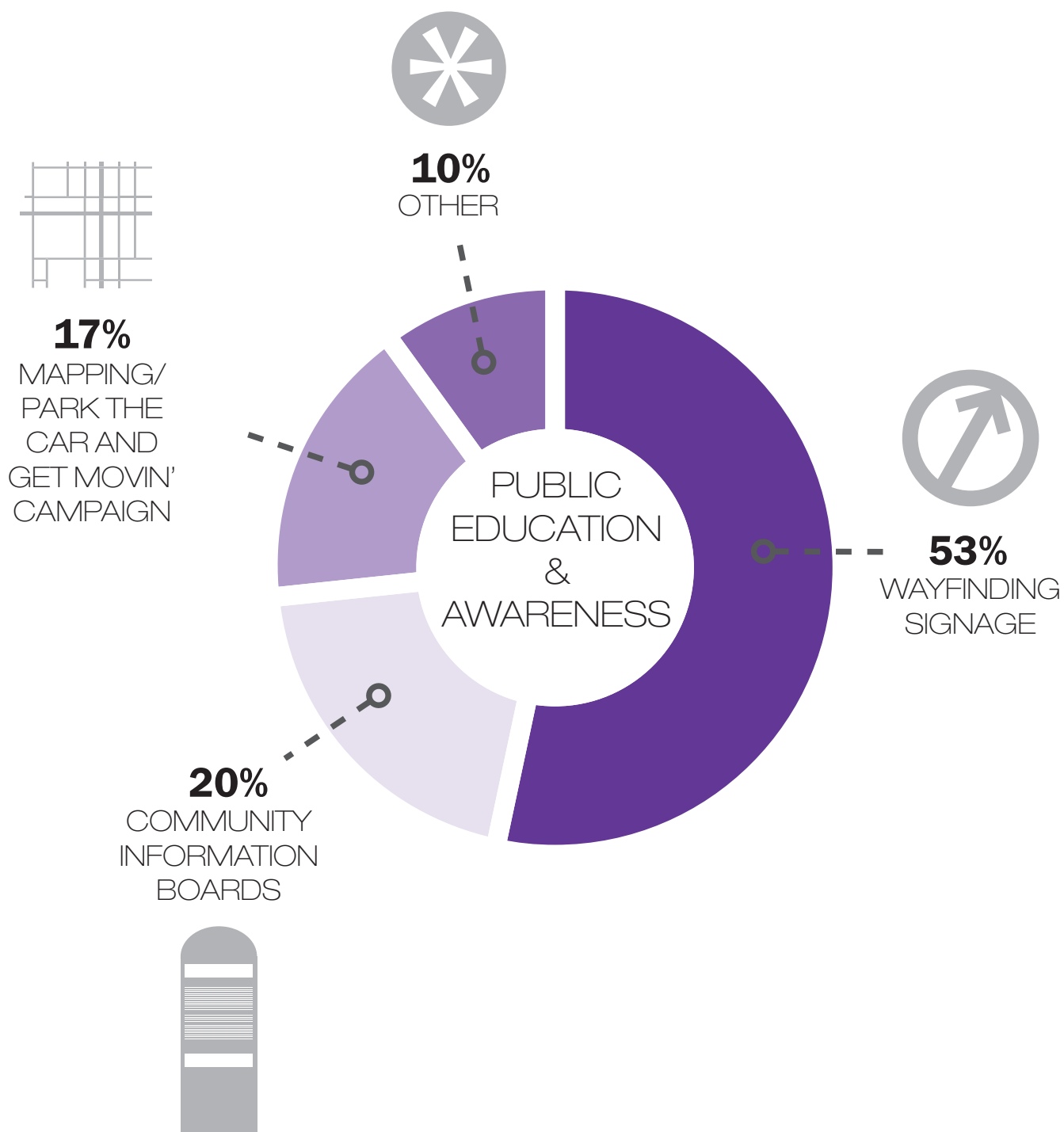**Walking Clubs (12%):** target to older adults, younger people, walking school bus

Walking Events (12%): raise awareness and popularity of walking as a means of transportation through fun runs, fundraising walk events, walking school bus

Bike Racks (9%): install visible and secure bike parking at major destinations

Bike Share (9%): include cargo bikes (groceries), kids bikes, public bike locks

Bike Events (9%): host bike rodeos, free public tune-ups, community bike ride

10%
OTHER

17%
MAPPING/
PARK THE
CAR AND
GET MOVIN'
CAMPAIGN

PUBLIC
EDUCATION
&
AWARENESS

53%
WAYFINDING
SIGNAGE

20%
COMMUNITY
INFORMATION
BOARDS

PUBLIC EDUCATION & AWARENESS

Consultation participants commonly sited the need to increase communication and interaction among residents.

Wayfinding Signage
(53% of category ideas):

As a small town, most residents already know how to get to and from most places in Cochrane. However, many people do not know how long it might take to travel by non-motorized transportation. Creative wayfinding signage based off of the Walk Your City concept would help boost the profile of destinations, while encouraging people to walk or bike throughout town. Suggestions for more conventional forms of wayfinding were also included in this category. Several residents noted that it is difficult for visitors and tourists to learn about the amenities exist in Cochrane. Simple but consistent signage could help solve this problem.

Community Information Boards
(20% of category ideas):

Sometimes a community's best assets and events are hidden in plain sight. Increasing public awareness of the amenities, facilities, and community services available can lead to stronger participation rates and increase residents' sense of belonging. Consultation participants recommended installing community information boards in popular destinations that would highlight upcoming events, employment or volunteer opportunities, and local news. Key locations would include Town Hall, Tim Hortons, Canadian Tire, the post office, baseball diamond, library, Lake Commando, and schools. The key to the success of this project would be dedicated staff or volunteers that would maintain and update the signage.
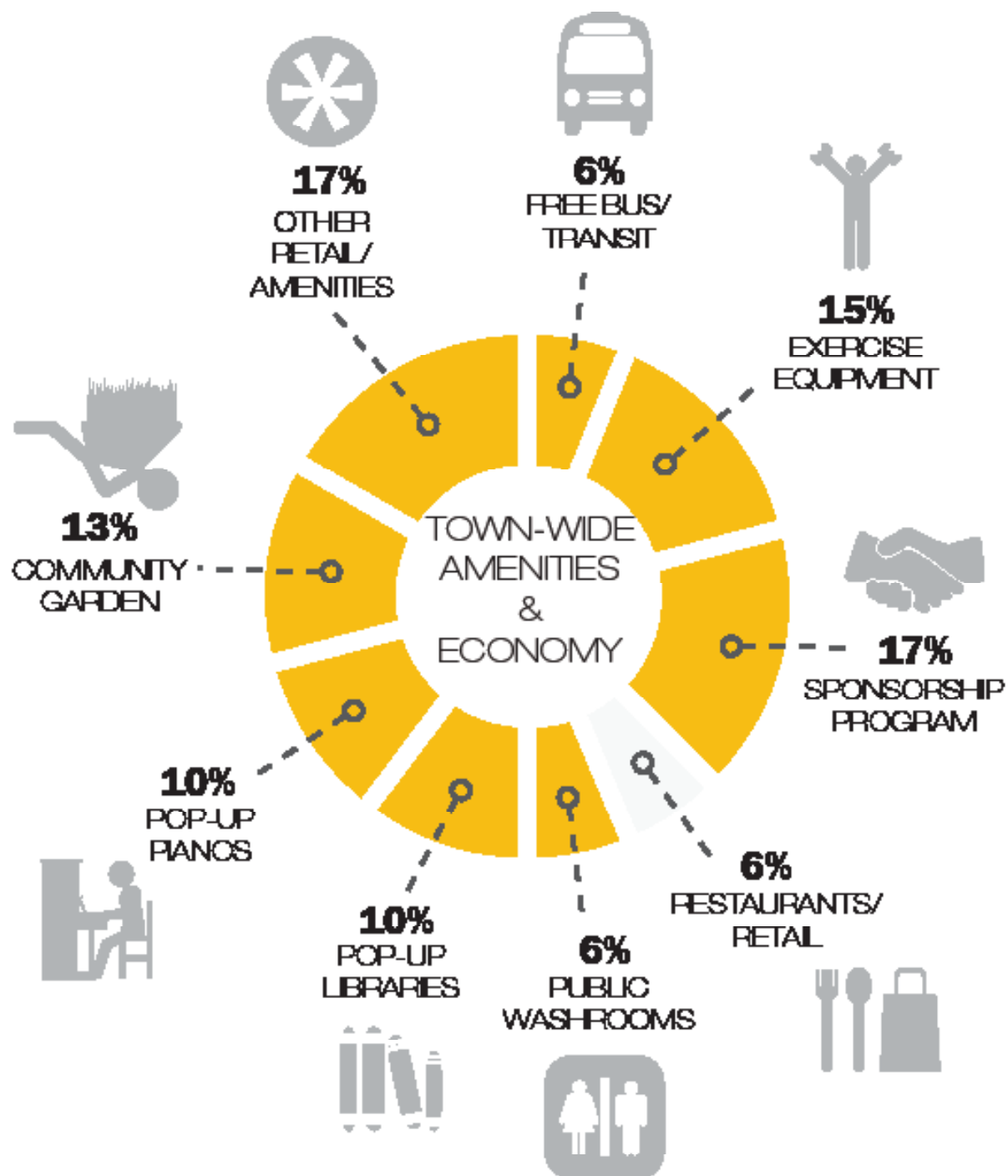
Other Public Education & Awareness Ideas:

*percentages represent the number of times each idea was raised during a consultation session (see pie chart)

Mapping/Park the Car n Get Movin' Campaign (17%): An awareness campaign that would encourage visitors and tourists to park their cars at a designated point (Board of Trade offices) and walk into town from there. The program would be supported by a wider mapping and marketing campaign.

Other (10%): town crier, more historical plaques on local buildings and landmarks, campaigns to increase the public awareness of the health benefits of walking and cycling.

17%
OTHER
RETAIL/
AMENITIES

6%
FREE BUS/
TRANSIT

15%
EXERCISE
EQUIPMENT

13%
COMMUNITY
GARDEN

TOWN-WIDE
AMENITIES
&
ECONOMY

17%
SPONSORSHIP
PROGRAM

10%
POP-UP
PIANOS

10%
POP-UP
LIBRARIES

6%
PUBLIC
WASHROOMS

6%
RESTAURANTS/
RETAIL

The ideas in this category do not fit under one major theme area, but would have positive effects on all DNP objectives. The light infrastructure and programming projects included in this category are not isolated to any geographic area, but could be applied anywhere and everywhere people gather in Cochrane.

Sponsorship Program (17% of category ideas):

Residents often spoke about the generosity of their neighbours. Many people suggested that the Town tap into this generosity by establishing a program that would provide residents with a 'catalogue' of items (ie. park benches, trees, planters) they could purchase for the public realm. Purchasers may have the option to include a small placard on the item to memorialize a loved one. Such a program would enhance community ownership, and allow people to actively participate in making Cochrane a more welcoming place for all.

Outdoor Gym/Exercise Equipment (15% of category ideas):

Outdoor exercise equipment has been installed in streets and public places around the world. Cochrane had their own outdoor gym around Lake Commando in the 1980's, but the equipment has since fallen into disrepair. With increased public health awareness, and growing demands for healthier lifestyles, the time may be right for the Town to reinvest in durable and fun outdoor exercise equipment.

Other Town-wide Amenities and Economy Ideas:

*percentages represent the number of times each idea was raised during a consultation session (see pie chart)

Other (17%): grocery delivery service, arcade, youth sports program

Community Gardens (13%): install community gardens in parks and vacant spaces.

Public Pop-Up Pianos (10%): collect donated pianos, decorate them in bright colours and install them in public places

Pop-up Libraries (10%): work with the community and local tradepeople to design bookshelves, install them in public places, and invite people to take or deposit used books
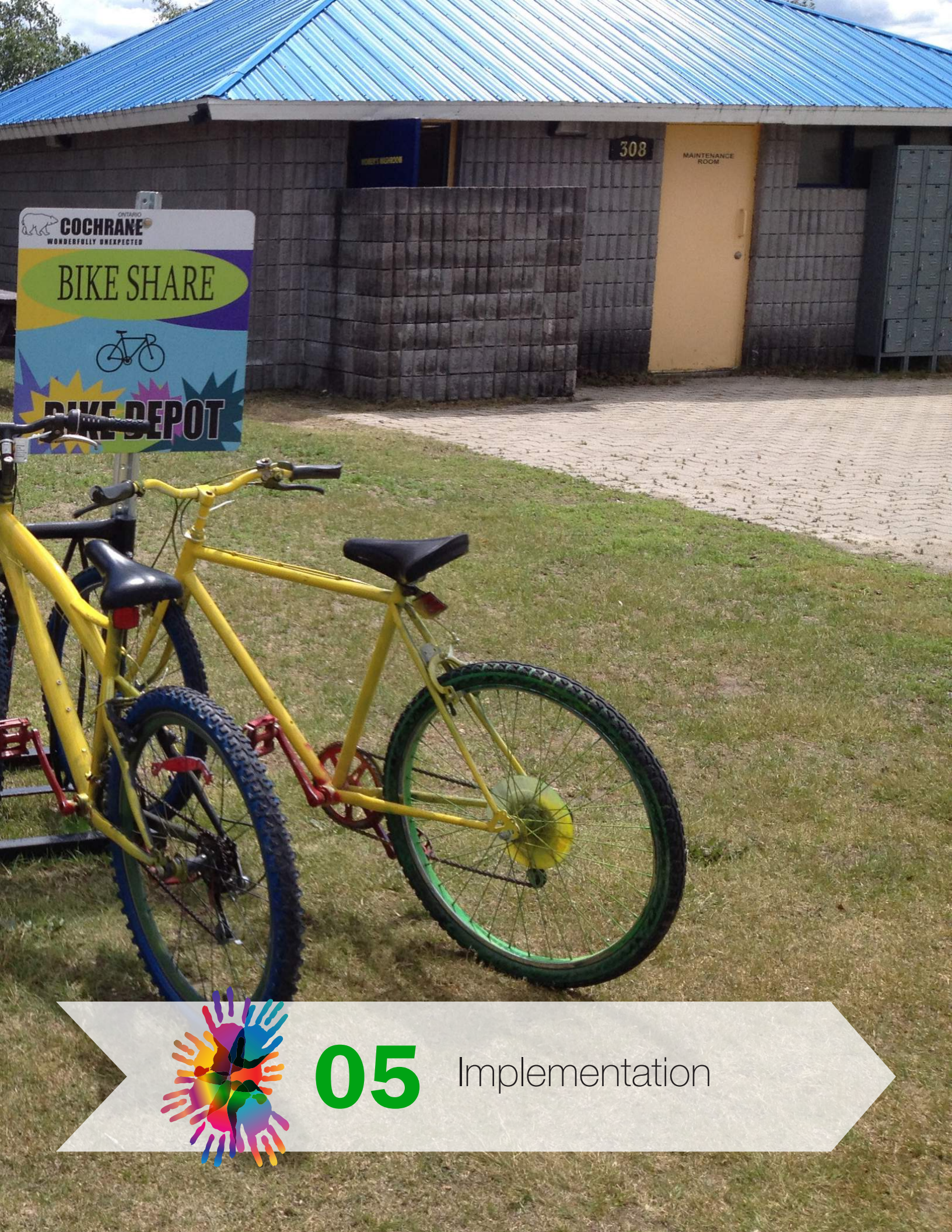
New Retail/Restaurants (6%): work with local business community to identify barriers to the development of cafes, restaurants, and clothing stores.

Transit System (6%): establish a small-scale but reliable public transportation system, particularly for older adults in the winter

Public Washrooms (6%): provide public washrooms in the parks and popular destinations throughout town.

SECTION 4 - OUTCOMES AND ANALYSIS

BIKE SHARE

BIKE DEPOT

COCHRANE
ONTARIO
WONDERFULLY UNEXPECTED

308 MAINTENANCE ROOM

05 Implementation

Cochrane residents shared dozens of inspiring and innovative ideas during the DNP community engagement process. The ideas ranged from the practical and implementable (ie. more benches throughout town) to the creative and aspirational (ie. build scenic lookout towers). 8-80 Cities distilled these ideas into major categories and themes (as seen in the previous section), but the DNP Committee is responsible for selecting which concepts and pilot projects to move forward with. To support this selection process, 8-80 Cities developed a tool that ranked each pilot project idea based its popularity during public engagement, and also placed each idea on a timeline and spectrum of doability. This process helped the Committee identify which projects could be implemented as quick-wins, and which ideas would have the greatest impact over a longer period of time. Through a series of meetings, 8-80 Cities also identified which residents had volunteered to help implement specific projects during the public engagement sessions.

As a result of this rigorous process, two pilot projects were rolled out in the summer of 2014. Several more projects are in various planning stages, and are scheduled to be unveiled in 2015.

Cochrane Public Bike Share

Northern Ontario's first municipally-run bike share system was launched in Cochrane in June 2014 as part of the Doable Neighbourhood Project. The program includes thirty colourful bicycles, donated by the RCMP and painted by local high school students, at four stations across town. The program was launched during Cochrane's Bike to Work Week, and was deemed an immediate success. Over 4,000 residents (80% of the population) now live within walking distance of free bikes, thereby connecting important destinations by active modes of transportation, increasing physical activity, and enhancing cycling as a viable and accessible mode of transportation.

Next Steps: As a pilot project, this bike share program is a work in progress. It will be important to monitor its ongoing success and adapt the program to better serve residents in the future. Variables that might be changed moving forward include: number of bikes available; location of bike stations; ongoing maintenance of bikes; providing diverse styles of bikes (youth bikes, cruisers, cargo bikes).

Commando Lake Waterslide

The Town of Cochrane slid into summer by unveiling a free public waterslide at Lake Commando in early July 2014. The waterslide marked the second phase of Cochrane's Doable Neighbourhood Project. The waterslide helps connect Lake Commando to residents, while creating new and fun spaces for people to gather, socialize, and enjoy the town's greatest natural asset. The waterslide is centrally-located at Lake Commando beach, which is connected to the new bike lane network, and also hosts a bikeshare station. One of the key lessons that the town has learned through is project is that fun is inexpensive. This project further demonstrates the Cochrane's ingenuity when it comes to implementing fun programs on modest budgets. The slide is a simple sheet of synthetic plastic material. Water is pumped to the top of the hill from the lake through buried pipes. The inflatable tubes were purchased in a previous season for use in other programs. The lifeguards operating the slide are hired as part of Lake Commando's annual summer programming.

Next Steps: The waterslide is a seasonal project, for obvious reasons. When summer has ended, the Town will simply roll up the slide and turn off the pumps. The inflatable tubes are stored in a locked trailer after each day. At the end of the season the trailer will be moved off-site for winter storage.
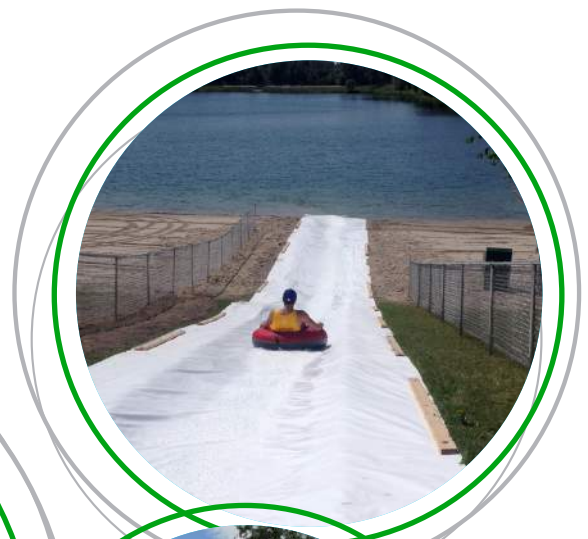
UPCOMING PROJECTS

The DNP was designed to help communities implement projects in the short-term that would have long-term impacts. While several community-identified pilot projects were immediately implementable, many ideas require larger-scale responses. The following pilot projects, selected by the Cochrane DNP Committee, are in various stages of planning, but the goal is to have each initiative on the ground in the medium-term.

Cochrane Street Beautification

Sixth Avenue is the primary shopping street in Cochrane. All essential shops and services can be found on Sixth, including banks, a grocery store, office supplies, and the town's only theatre. Despite this activity, current traffic volumes do not justify the excessively wide road space. Many residents suggested undertaking beautification efforts along Sixth to improve the pedestrian environment and revitalize Cochrane's commercial core. Doable pilot projects to address this need could include the installation of a temporary boulevard down the middle of Sixth, planting more trees along the sidewalks, and constructing new crosswalks to calm traffic.

Downtown Plaza

Cochrane residents want to see new public spaces in the downtown area. Community partners and stakeholders identified a vacant lot at the corner of Sixth Avenue and Third Street as an ideal location for a pedestrian plaza. The site is in the centre of Cochrane's commercial core, and could be easily animated in the short term with relatively inexpensive materials. Moveable chairs and benches, planters, simple lighting, and public art installations would all help to create a safe and welcoming pedestrian space on Sixth Avenue. The site would be Cochrane's first public plaza, which could be named in honour of a local resident to celebrate the town's heritage.

A green boulevard on 6th St. would beautify the road.

Even in winter, fresh landscaping on 6th St. adds a sense of place

A colourful crosswalks plays on the polar bear imagery, while mid-block crossings and a parklet enhance pedestrian realm

Pop-Up Libraries

Pop-Up Libraries are a creative way to promote literacy and inject new life into public spaces by allowing people to borrow and share their favourite books freely. Many Cochrane residents were inspired by the grassroots action taken in communities around the world to install these mini-libraries in parks, underused street infrastructure, and even front lawns. Representatives from the Cochrane Public Library and Cochrane Arts Club were particularly interested in supporting this project in Cochrane by sourcing materials, building the libraries, and finding donated books.

Public Amenity Adoption Program

One of Cochrane's greatest assets is the sense of community ownership and pride among its residents. A Public Amenity Adoption Program would build on this asset by allowing local residents to purchase or sponsor a piece of light infrastructure for the entire community to enjoy and benefit from. This program would provide a streamlined process for submitting donations for a variety of items such as park benches, light fixtures, new trees, play structures, and bike racks. The donor would choose to dedicate that item in the memory of a family member, or opt to have their own name written on a plaque that the Town would install next to their donation.

Lake Commando is an ideal location to install pop-up libraries, and fresh seating options

The corner of Railway St. at Lake Commando is unsafe. Colourful railings could enhance pedestrian safety.

Cochrane can embrace winter with more programming Commando Lake.

SECTION 5 - IMPLEMENTATION

WELCOME
Cochrane
Cross-Country
Ski Club

06 Recommendations

8-80 Cities' recommendations for longer term projects as well as ongoing projects and programs…A successful park, public space, neighbourhood, and town is defined by defined by three key elements; excellent management, consistent programming, and appropriate infrastructure. This section provides a list of recommendations that will make Cochrane a healthier and happier place to live, walk, bike, and cycle.

6 MONTHS   1 YEAR   1 YEAR +

1
EXCELLENT
MANAGEMENT

CONSISTENT
PROGRAMMING

3
APPROPRIATE
INFRASTRUCTURE

2
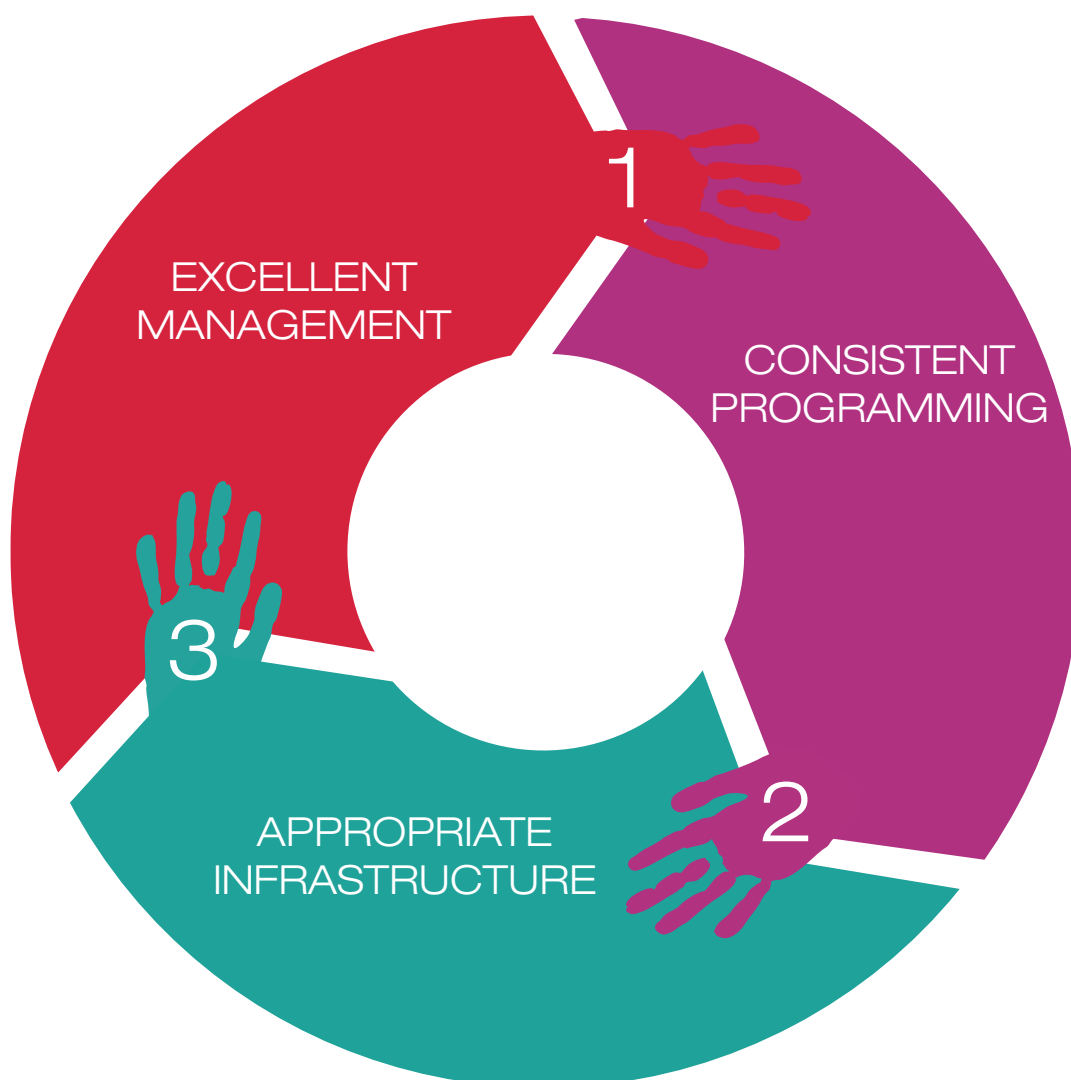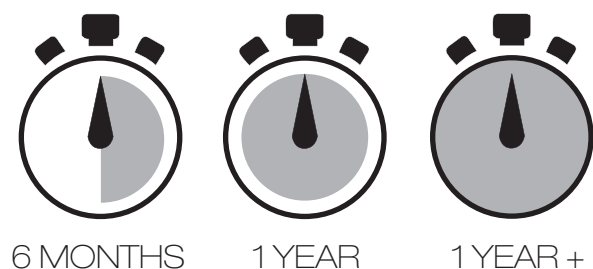
MANAGEMENT

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

- Continue working with the Cochrane DNP Committee to create an annual implementation strategy for temporary projects such as events and activities to animate public spaces throughout town.

- Develop a separate implementation strategy for longer-term projects such as design and infrastructure upgrades

- Continue to collect user data to monitor and measure success of the community bike share program and Commando Lake Slip n Slide.

- Identify opportunities for ongoing funding mechanisms for programming and management.

COMMANDO LAKE

- Develop policies to encourage vendors/commercial activity in or beside Commando Lake that support healthy lifestyles or animate the area.

- Make the process easier and more accessible for community groups to get a permit for small-scale community events and activities.

- Establish a visible daily presence of management and maintenance at Commando Lake. Raise the level of service to respond quickly to resident concerns related to safety, accessibility, and maintenance.

SECTION 7 - RECCOMMENDATIONS

BROADER PUBLIC REALM

- Develop a longer-term retail and commercial development plan for 6th Street

- Create a public space network improvement strategy for the town. Focus on improving linkages between important areas such as 6th Street, Commando Lake, the THEC, and local schools.

- Communicate with the public. Set up a website (or create a dedicated page on the Town's website), use traditional and social media to promote events and activities throughout Cochrane.

- Shift priorities to ensure that pedestrian pathways are the cleared of snow, ice, and debris in all seasons before roadways.

EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

• Maintain and build on the existing calendar of community events. Use these gatherings as an opportunity to talk to residents and collect new ideas.
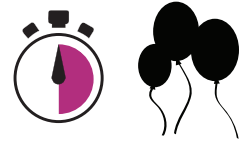
• Implement low hanging fruit by using existing resources and public gathering spaces. Identify events that can be held outdoors in summer and moved indoors (public library, THEC, schools) during the winter months. Begin hosting movie nights, exercise classes, participatory gardening, and children's activities within the short term. Ensure activities and events appeal to a wide range of ages and users.
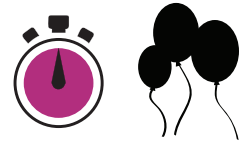
• Have a small-scale community based event or activity at least once a week (ie. yoga classes, children's crafts, live music).
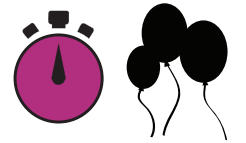
• Use temporary 'pop-up' projects, like colorful art installations, to transform underperforming or vacant spaces in the short-term.
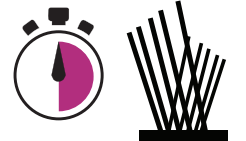
• Develop a long-term funding strategy for programming and activities.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

• Involve the community in all town improvement projects, including the Commando Lake redevelopment. Fun events such as community BBQs or monthly clean-up days are great ways to collect feedback from residents.
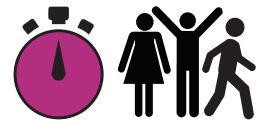
• Use attractive signage and communication to inform the public about events and activities. Explore the possibility of installing a permanent community notice board in a central and accessible location.
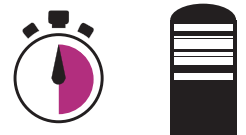
INFRASTRUCTURE

COMMANDO LAKE

- Improve sitting and gathering spaces at Commando Lake. Add more tables, benches, and diversify seating options (ie. moveable chairs).
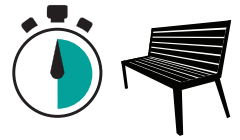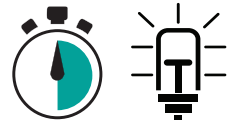
- Build a public fire pit and/or BBQ at Commando Lake to encourage impromptu community and improve winter usage

- Improve the lighting throughout the park. Create a lighting strategy that adds to the ambiance and enhances safety.
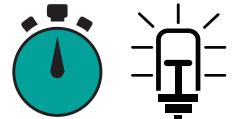
- Provide water and electricity supply to encourage nighttime uses and to diversify the types of events that can occur in the park

- Add public washrooms and drinking fountains within or next to the park.

PUBLIC AMENITY ADOPTION PROGRAM

- Assign a Town staff member to implement this program.

- Source the materials, set costs/fees, develop a website, advertise the new program to the public

POP-UP LIBRARIES

- Work with the Cochrane Arts Club and Public Library to implement this project.

- Source materials for the libraries, hire a local resident to build the libraries, solicit residents for book donations, install the libraries, advertise and promote the project.

BROADER PUBLIC REALM

- Make all public spaces in Cochrane universally accessible.

- Develop a public realm strategy for the entire town. Use this strategy to guide the future development and stewardship of

- Improve access and user flow through Commando Lake by improving the quality and maintenance of the walking trails.

- Install more benches along 6th Street and along other important pedestrian routes

- Enhance the streets and sidewalks with trees and greenery. Focus on native plantings.

- Incorporate public art that reflects the history and culture of the community. Build on the polar bear imagery.

- Add a community events and information board.

- Improve the pedestrian experience on 6th Street, 3rd Street, and Railway by extending sidewalks, adding benches, greenery, and lighting.
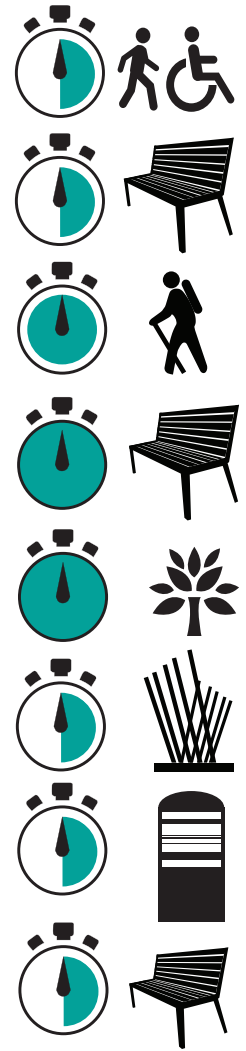
6TH STREET BEAUTIFICATION

- Further engage the public to identify specific changes and infrastructure investments they want to see

- Continue to promote cycling and pedestrian activity as areas of focus for the central business district

- Work with designers and landscapers to install more greenery and identify opportunities to convert excess road/parking space to pedestrian areas.
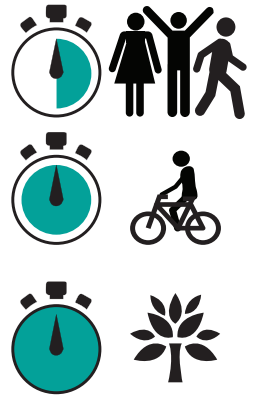
DOWNTOWN PLAZA

- Work with Town Council and property owners to identify feasible spaces that might be converted into pedestrian plazas in the central business district

- Host public events to collect more detailed design and programming ideas to ensure the project is done collectively and inclusively

- Invite members of the public to donate materials or volunteer to help build and implement the project.
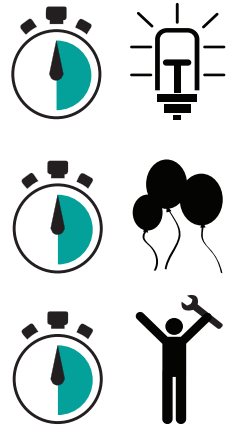
CYCLING

- Continue to build on the momentum for cycling that was created with the bike share program and new bike lanes.

- Expand the existing bike lanes to connect with more residential areas and key destinations. Prioritize the expansion along wide, multi-lane residential streets. Providing separated cycling facilities on these streets will create a safe space for cyclists with minimal disruption to vehicular traffic

- Implement ongoing awareness campaigns to ensure that all road users - motorists, cyclists and pedestrians - are informed and educated on laws and rules of the road. This will foster mutual respect amongst the different road user types.

Appendix

PROJECT CASE STUDIES

Pavement to Parks
San Francisco, CA

San Francisco's Pavement to Parks program converts excess roadway or underused parking areas into small parks or plazas for pedestrian use. Seating, landscaping, and paving treatments are common features of all projects. Although the plazas are designed as temporary installations, several plazas have been made permanent after the pilot phase proved successful. The program was established in 2009, and now functions as a partnership between the city's Planning Department, Department of Public Works, the Municipal Transportation Agency, and local community members. The designs and materials are paid for privately and shepherded by local business owners or community organizations who agree to oversee maintenance. As of January 2013, thirty-eight parklets have been installed throughout San Francisco, and the program is being emulated in cities around the world.
Read more: pavementtoparks.sfplanning.org

Better Block - Dallas, TX

The Better Block project is a demonstration tool that rebuilds an area using grassroots efforts to show the potential to create a great walkable, vibrant neighborhood center. Described as a 'live workshop,' community members and municipalities work together to re-engineer, re-program, and re-design streets, sidewalks, and underused public spaces into people places. These projects allow cities to rapidly implement new infrastructure, streetscaping and policy changes in a way that is inexpensive and immediately impactful. Simple and affordable materials such as planters, small trees, and moveable street furniture are used to test out new configurations and build support

for long term investments. This project began in the auto-oriented city of Dallas, Texas but has since been replicated in cities around the world.

Read more: betterblock.org

Living Innovation Zones - San Francisco, CA

San Francisco's Market Street connects the city from water to hills, through residential neighbourhoods and business districts alike. But for decades now, the street has been little more than a thoroughfare—a way to get from A to B but not to stop in between. But a recent initiative by the city seeks to change that by doing away with its former regulations, and turning city-owned land into flexible spaces called Living Innovation Zones for artistic exploration dedicated to connecting people. A partnership between the San Francisco Mayor's Office of Civic Innovation, the city's department of planning and Public Works, the Living Innovation Zones are places for community groups to come in and install temporary installations that enliven the streets without having to go through the same cumbersome permitting process that would typically halt any type of major installations, especially by smaller local groups. "We're really asking people to push us. With permitting you often get this culture of no. We're asking them to push our limits," said manager and planner Steve Gennrich. The first LIZ installations included a pair of "whispering dishes," that enabled people to whisper to each other from across the plaza, a musical bench activated by hand-holding and a pedal-powered cell phone charging station.[26]

Read more: liz.innovatesf.com

PROJECT CASE STUDIES

Working with Schools to Unlock Public Space - McAllen, TX

Sometimes all it takes to unlock public space resources is simple communication. McAllen, a city of about 130,000 in southern Texas instantly increased its public park space by hundreds of acres by working more closely with the school board to upgrade school playgrounds and develop protocol to leave the fields and facilities unlocked after school hours. New York City later did the same as part of PlaNYC to help reach its goal of having every New Yorker live within a five to ten minute walk of a park by 2030. They added a whopping 290 new parks to the city through the Schoolyards to Playgrounds program. Many cities in North America have done the same and continue to do so, showing over and over again that the space for place is always there – it just takes a little imagination to find it. [27]

Read more: www.nycgovparks.org/greening/planyc/schoolyards

Everyday Poems for a City Sidewalk - St. Paul, MN

A program dubbed Everyday Poems for City Sidewalk invites residents of the city to submit poems to be displayed as permanent public art. Some of those poems are selected by a judging panel and imprinted into the new concrete that is being poured. Replacing broken sidewalks is part of the regular maintenance regime of any city. But since 2008, the city of St. Paul, Minnesota has turned this mundane task into an engine for infusing the everyday lives of its residents with meaningful public art. The project was conceived by Marcus Young, the city's official artist-in-residence. The project is seen as a win all around. In times when the use of taxpayer money is always

scrutinized, it's an affordable way to plentifully populate the city with public art. Most citizens love it — the city gets over 100 submissions of poetry every year and frequently gets calls from people requesting poems outside of their house. [28]

Read more: publicartstpaul.org/poetry

The Happy Wall - Copenhagen, Denmark

The Happy Wall is a 100-foot interactive public art installation in Copenhagen, Denmark. The surface of the Wall consists of nearly 2,000 wooden boards that can be flipped to reveal various colours. Everyone is welcome to manipulate the flaps to create pixellated patterns, symbols, or messages. There's even a sliding ladder to help people reach the top. As a testament to the Happy Walls' popularity, more than 4600 pictures have been uploaded to Instagram with #Happywall hashtag. A second Happy Wall was recently constructed in the happiest place in the world - Las Vegas.

Read more: http://goo.gl/zYH8DM

Themed Playgrounds - Malmö, Sweden

Twenty themed playgrounds offer free and imaginative outdoor fun for families and children in Malmö, Sweden. Local favourites include the Fairytale Playground next to Malmö City Library, the eco-friendly Solar Playground adjacent to the Green Market organic food store, and the Adventure Playground which hosts a whimsical obstacle course. Other playgrounds are designed for worldly exploration and beyond, such as the Space Playground, Africa Park, the Jungle Playground, and the Sea and Beach Playground. Each playground offers different attractions, challenges, and activities for different age groups.

Read more: www.malmotown.com/en/article/malmo-for-kids/

Winter Warming Huts - Winnipeg, MB

Winter in Winnipeg is cold, but these temporary huts on the frozen Red River are helping to warm the city with colour and creativity. This design competition attracts ideas and concepts from around the world. The winning warming huts are placed along the city's 1.2km skating trail at The Forks, a public market and historic site. In recent years, the Warming Huts competition has also included a temporary indoor restaurant, set up right on the ice.

Read more: www.warminghuts.com

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[23] Official Plan for the Town of Cochrane and Suburban Planning Area. Section 4.7 Parks and Open Space, page 22. 2014

[24] Official Plan for the Town of Cochrane and Suburban Planning Area. Section 9.1 Parks, Open Spaces and Trails, page 47. 2014

[25] Official Plan for the Town of Cochrane and Suburban Planning Area. Section 6.1 Natural Heritage, page 31. 2014

[26] Doable City Reader. 8 80 Cities and Discourse Media. www.8-80cities.org/doablecity. 2014.

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APPENDIX - REFERENCES