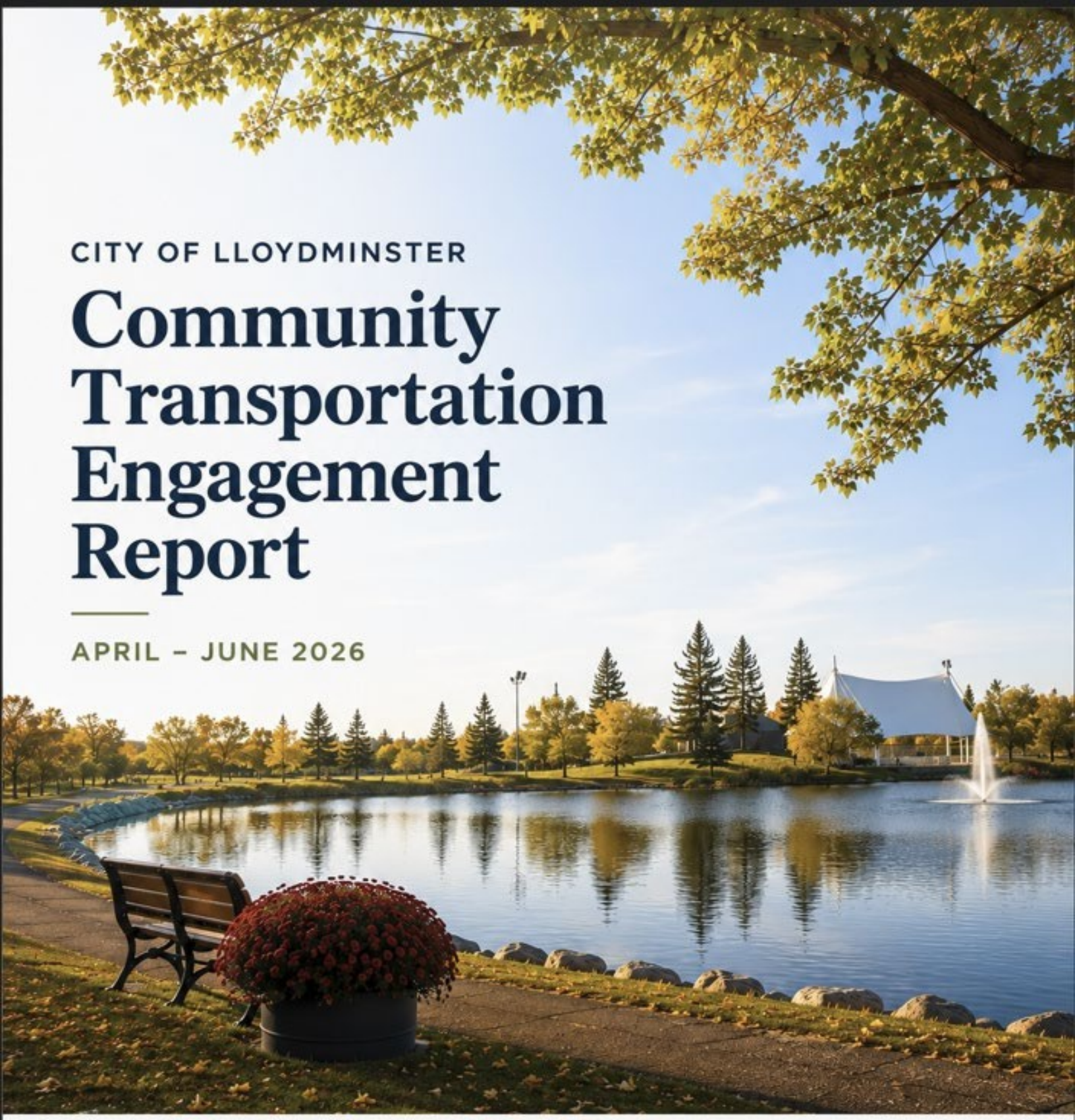
CITY OF LLOYDMINSTER

Community Transportation Engagement Report

APRIL – JUNE 2026



PREPARED BY

Wendy Plandowski

June 2026

Contents

1 Executive Summary....3
What We Asked and What We Heard....4
2 Community Priorities at a Glance....5
3 About This Engagement....8
The Engagement Process....8
How to Read This Report....8
4 What We Heard: The Focus Groups....9
Social Sector Focus Group....9
Education Sector Focus Group....12
Resident Focus Group....14
Business Sector Focus Group....17
5 The Transportation Design Jam....20
What a Design Jam Is, and Why It Was Used....20
The Four Concepts....21
Why Independent Convergence Matters....22
6 What We Heard Across All Sectors....24
The Seven Cross-Sector Themes....24
Where Recurring Observations Appeared....25
Existing Community Assets....26
Notable Observations....27
Where Opinions Differed....28
7 Financial Considerations....29
What We Heard About Cost....29
Taxpayer Sensitivity....29
The Tension Between Compassion and Fiscal Responsibility....30
Public Transit Versus Targeted Mobility....30
Benefits and Financial Concerns Raised by Participants....31
The Financial Consensus....31
8 Emerging Design Principles....33
9 Conclusion....34
Compassion and Pragmatism....34
The Outcomes Residents Described....35
The Opportunity....35
Appendix A · Transportation Challenges by Population....37
Appendix B · Potential Indicators Discussed....37
Appendix C · Engagement Activities....38

1 Executive Summary

WHAT THIS REPORT IS

This is a record of what participants said. It presents the findings of a community engagement process — not a Transportation Master Plan, a Strategic Plan, or a set of consultant recommendations. No transportation model is recommended in these pages.

The findings below reflect the perspectives of more than 70 residents, employers, educators, service providers and community organizations who took part between April and June 2026.

During April, May and June 2026, the City of Lloydminster engaged residents, businesses, educators, social service providers, community organizations, and stakeholders in a series of focus groups and a Transportation Design Jam to better understand transportation needs, challenges, opportunities, and future possibilities within the community.

While transportation was the topic of discussion, participants consistently framed the conversation around something much larger:

> **Transportation is not simply about moving people. Transportation is about access to opportunity.**

Across all engagement sessions, participants linked transportation to employment, education, healthcare, recreation, shopping and daily living, community participation, independence, and quality of life.

Participants repeatedly emphasized that transportation challenges are often invisible to those who own vehicles but become significant barriers for residents who do not.

The engagement process revealed strong support for exploring transportation solutions; however, participants generally favoured flexible, targeted, partnership-based approaches over traditional fixed-route public transit systems.

Perhaps the clearest message emerging from the engagement process was this:

> **Future transportation solutions should be practical, accessible, financially responsible, collaborative, and uniquely reflective of Lloydminster's needs.**

What We Asked and What We Heard

What We Asked	What We Heard
Is transportation an issue in Lloydminster?	Participants generally agreed that transportation barriers exist, although they affect different populations in different ways.
Who experiences the greatest transportation challenges?	Seniors, students, newcomers, persons with disabilities, shift workers, and residents without access to reliable transportation were frequently identified.
What type of solutions were discussed?	Participants favoured practical, flexible, and scalable approaches rather than simply replicating traditional transit systems.
What role should partnerships play?	Strong support emerged for collaboration among community organizations, educational institutions, employers, and government.
What existing assets already exist?	Participants noted that Lloydminster already has a number of transportation supports and community resources that could potentially be strengthened or better connected.
What financial considerations were raised?	Participants emphasized the importance of affordability, sustainability, and responsible use of public resources.
What themes emerged regarding future opportunities?	Participants frequently discussed pilot projects, phased implementation, and solutions that are right-sized and reflective of local needs.
What overall message emerged?	Transportation was viewed not simply as a service, but as a means of helping people access employment, education, healthcare, recreation, and community life.

2 Community Priorities at a Glance

A one-page summary of the engagement findings. Every item below is drawn from what participants said.

THE HEADLINE FINDING

> **Residents are not asking for transportation for transportation's sake. They are asking for improved access to opportunity.**

EIGHT QUESTIONS, EIGHT ANSWERS

We Asked	We Heard
Does Lloydminster need transportation solutions?	Yes
Does everyone experience transportation barriers?	No
Are some residents significantly impacted?	Yes
Is transportation about more than moving people?	Absolutely
Is there support for a traditional transit system?	Mixed
Is there support for exploring solutions?	Strong
What type of solutions were preferred?	Flexible, targeted, partnership-based models
What themes emerged regarding next steps?	Explore pilot projects and Made-in-Lloydminster solutions

WHERE CONSENSUS WAS STRONGEST

Priority	Who identified it	Strength
Transportation enables participation	All five engagement activities	Consensus
Accessibility is critical	All five engagement activities	Consensus
Flexible transportation preferred	All five engagement activities	Consensus
Partnerships are essential	All five engagement activities	Consensus
Support existing services	All five engagement activities	Consensus
Pilot projects before major investments	All five engagement activities	Consensus
Data-driven decision making	Education, Residents, Business, Design Jam	Strong
Traditional transit concerns	Social, Residents, Business, Design Jam	Strong

WHERE OPINIONS DIFFERED

Point of difference	What participants said
Traditional fixed-route transit	Some residents supported it as a way to improve accessibility and quality of life. Others questioned whether it fits Lloydminster's size, geography and travel patterns.
User fees	Views varied on how much users should pay and how affordability should be balanced against sustainability.
Tax increases	The business focus group expressed the strongest concern. Some participants would support targeted investment; support weakened for broad transit with substantial annual subsidies.
Safety concerns	Raised as a consideration in transit discussion; participants did not reach a common position.
The role government should play	Participants differed on where municipal responsibility begins and ends relative to employers, institutions and community organizations.

EMERGING OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunity	Description
Workforce Transportation	Employer partnerships, shift-worker transportation, transportation hubs
Student Mobility	Student transportation supports and educational partnerships
Accessible Transportation	Seniors, healthcare access and disability supports
On-Demand Transportation	Flexible user-driven transportation services
Transportation Hub Model	Centralized connection points linking services
Transportation Vouchers	Expansion of existing subsidy programs
Community Partnerships	Coordinated service delivery across organizations
Pilot Projects	Small-scale demonstrations to test concepts and gather local data

3 About This Engagement

The Engagement Process

During April and May 2026, the City of Lloydminster undertook a targeted community engagement process to better understand transportation needs, challenges, and opportunities within the community.

The process included four sector-based focus groups and a Transportation Design Jam designed to encourage collaborative problem solving and the exploration of future possibilities. Invitations were extended to residents, businesses, educators, community organizations, social service providers, and other stakeholders, with the goal of achieving a broad cross-section of perspectives and experiences.

Each focus group lasted approximately two hours and provided participants with the opportunity for thoughtful and in-depth discussion. Conversations explored transportation barriers, community strengths, financial considerations, and ideas for improving access to opportunity.

The Transportation Design Jam brought together participants from multiple sectors and utilized a facilitated design-thinking approach to move beyond identifying challenges and toward generating practical and innovative ideas.

> In total, more than 70 participants contributed to the engagement process. While the intent was not to achieve statistical representation, considerable effort was made to ensure a diversity of perspectives and lived experiences. The resulting discussions provided rich qualitative insights into the opportunities, challenges, and values that residents and stakeholders believe should inform future transportation conversations.

How to Read This Report

This report is organized to follow the engagement itself. Section 4 presents what each sector said in its own words and on its own terms. Section 5 describes the Transportation Design Jam and the concepts participants developed. Section 6 draws the sectors together and identifies where they converged and where they did not. Section 7 addresses the financial considerations raised throughout. Sections 8 and 9 set out the design principles that emerged and the opportunity participants described.

Throughout, a distinction is maintained between evidence and interpretation. Statements attributed to participants are findings. Where the report characterizes patterns across sectors, this is identified as an observation drawn from those findings.

4 What We Heard: The Focus Groups

Four sector-based focus groups were held. Each brought a distinct lens to transportation, and each is presented here on its own terms. The sectors did not say the same thing in different words — they identified different priorities arising from different experience. Section 6 examines where they nonetheless converged.

THE FOUR SECTOR LENSES

Each focus group carries its own colour through this section.

Social Sector Focus Group
HEALTH · DIGNITY · INCLUSION

Education Sector Focus Group
OPPORTUNITY · PARTICIPATION · WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Resident Focus Group
COMMUNITY FIT · PRACTICALITY

Business Sector Focus Group
WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION · ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Appendix C lists the organizations and groups represented in each session.

Social Sector Focus Group

HEALTH · DIGNITY · INCLUSION

Overview

The Social Sector Focus Group brought together representatives from health care, social service agencies, community organizations, accessibility advocates, seniors' organizations, housing and outreach programs, and municipal representatives to explore how transportation affects access to essential services and overall community well-being.

Participants brought extensive frontline experience supporting residents experiencing poverty, disability, housing instability, mental health and addiction challenges, food insecurity, aging,

and other vulnerabilities. Throughout the discussion, transportation was consistently described not simply as a means of getting from one place to another, but as a critical component of health, independence, dignity, and community inclusion.

What We Asked and What We Heard

What We Asked	What We Heard
Who experiences the greatest transportation barriers?	Individuals experiencing poverty, seniors, people with disabilities, newcomers, individuals in recovery, those experiencing housing instability, and residents without access to a personal vehicle.
What are the consequences of transportation barriers?	Missed medical appointments, reduced access to food, delayed healthcare, lost employment opportunities, increased social isolation, reduced independence, and poorer health outcomes.
How are organizations currently responding?	Organizations are investing significant staff time, personal vehicles, taxi vouchers, volunteer supports, and agency resources to help clients access essential services.
Where should future transportation efforts focus?	Access to healthcare, employment, grocery stores, housing supports, community services, recreation, and quality of life opportunities.
Is there support for future transportation solutions?	Yes. Participants strongly supported practical, phased, community-based transportation solutions that respond to Lloydminster's unique needs.
Can one transportation solution meet every need?	No. Participants recognized that different populations have different transportation needs and that layered or complementary approaches may ultimately be required.

Transportation as a Social Determinant of Health

Participants consistently described transportation as one of the most significant barriers affecting vulnerable residents. Rather than viewing transportation as an isolated issue, the discussion framed mobility as directly connected to healthcare, housing stability, employment, food security, mental health, recovery, independence, and overall quality of life.

Numerous examples were shared illustrating how transportation barriers prevent residents from accessing medical appointments, medications, food programs, employment opportunities, counselling, addiction recovery services, and other essential supports. Participants emphasized that these barriers often compound existing challenges and contribute to poorer health and social outcomes.

Community Organizations Are Already Filling the Gap

A recurring theme throughout the discussion was that many community organizations have become informal transportation providers.

Participants described using staff vehicles, taxi vouchers, agency vans, volunteers, fundraising, and significant staff time to help clients reach appointments and services. Several organizations noted that transportation already represents a substantial operational expense and administrative burden.

Participants also highlighted the growing pressures on existing specialized transportation services, such as Border City Connects, which continue to experience increasing demand while operating with limited capacity and resources.

Transportation Is About More Than Essential Services

Although healthcare and basic needs dominated much of the discussion, participants emphasized that transportation should not be viewed solely as a means of accessing essential services.

Access to recreation, volunteering, employment, community events, social activities, and opportunities to build relationships were viewed as equally important contributors to quality of life, mental wellness, and community belonging.

Participants noted that a transportation system focused only on survival would fail to support the broader goal of helping residents participate fully in community life.

A Layered Community Solution

Participants acknowledged that no single transportation model would address every need within the community.

Different transportation requirements were identified for medical appointments, employment, education, recreation, seniors, individuals with disabilities, and vulnerable populations. Rather than seeking one universal solution, participants consistently supported practical, flexible, and phased approaches that could evolve over time as community needs change.

Several examples from other municipalities demonstrated that successful systems often begin by addressing specific needs before expanding as community support and demand increase.

> **KEY TAKEAWAY**
>
> The Social Sector Focus Group identified transportation as one of the most significant barriers affecting vulnerable residents and the organizations that support them. Participants consistently described transportation as a critical contributor to health, independence, employment, food security, housing stability, social inclusion, and overall quality of life.
>
> The discussion also highlighted that community organizations are already investing considerable financial and human resources to overcome transportation barriers through informal supports, specialized services, staff transportation, and community partnerships. Participants recognized that while no single transportation solution will meet every need, there was strong support for practical, phased, and collaborative approaches that improve access to essential services while also enabling fuller participation in community life.

Education Sector Focus Group

OPPORTUNITY · PARTICIPATION · WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Overview

The Education Sector Focus Group brought together representatives from Lloydminster Public School Division, Lloydminster Catholic School Division, Lakeland College, the Lloydminster Learning Council, students, and other education stakeholders to discuss current transportation challenges, future opportunities, and the potential role of education partners in improving community mobility.

While transportation was the focus of the discussion, participants consistently framed the conversation around something much broader. Transportation was viewed as an enabler of educational success, employment, independence, recreation, volunteerism, and community participation. Throughout the discussion, participants emphasized that transportation is not simply about moving people from one place to another—it is about ensuring people have access to opportunity.

What We Asked and What We Heard

What We Asked	What We Heard
What are the education sector's greatest transportation priorities?	Transportation barriers outside the traditional school day, particularly for post-secondary students, newcomers, adult learners and youth without access to personal vehicles.
Is transportation to and from K–12 schools the primary issue?	Generally no. Existing school transportation systems were viewed as meeting their primary purpose.
Who experiences the greatest transportation barriers?	International students, newcomers, adult learners, youth without vehicles and families with limited transportation options.
What opportunities exist?	Employment, extracurricular activities, healthcare, recreation, community participation and access to essential services.
Is there support for continued collaboration?	Yes. Participants supported continued collaboration between education partners and the City.
What would future partnerships require?	A defined transportation model, governance framework, business case and clear understanding of roles and responsibilities before operational or financial commitments could be considered.

K–12 Education

Representatives from both school divisions generally agreed that existing transportation systems are successfully meeting the primary need of transporting eligible students to and

from school. As a result, routine school transportation was not identified as the most significant transportation gap requiring municipal intervention.

Instead, participants emphasized that transportation barriers become most apparent outside the school day. Students without access to reliable transportation may miss opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities, part-time employment, tutoring, recreation, volunteer opportunities, appointments, and other experiences that contribute to personal growth and long-term success.

Participants also acknowledged the significant role families currently play in transporting students throughout the community. Transportation responsibilities were noted as particularly challenging for single-parent households, one-vehicle families, shift-working families, and newcomer families. Several participants observed that these challenges often remain hidden because families work hard to create informal transportation networks to support their children.

Post-Secondary Education — Lakeland College

Representatives from Lakeland College described transportation as a broader community mobility issue that extends beyond simply travelling to and from campus. Transportation was identified as an important factor influencing student success, employment opportunities, independence, recruitment, retention, and community integration.

International students and newcomers were consistently identified as experiencing the greatest transportation barriers. Participants noted that many students arrive from communities where public transportation is a normal part of daily life and are often surprised by the limited transportation options available in Lloydminster. Transportation barriers were described as affecting students' ability to access employment, grocery stores, healthcare services, recreation, community events, and opportunities to become more connected within the community.

Participants also recognized that improved transportation options could strengthen student recruitment and retention while supporting workforce participation and broader community integration.

Adult Learning and Community Education

Representatives supporting adult learners emphasized that transportation barriers already create significant operational and financial impacts for organizations serving learners throughout the community.

Transportation challenges were described as affecting learners' ability to attend training, employment programs, appointments, and community services. Participants noted that organizations are already investing considerable resources to overcome transportation barriers through taxi vouchers, staff coordination, and informal transportation supports.

The discussion highlighted that transportation barriers affect not only individual learners, but also create additional costs and administrative demands for community organizations working to connect residents with education, employment, and support services.

> *"Transportation isn't really about transportation. It's about whether someone gets to participate."*

Education Sector Focus Group participant

KEY TAKEAWAY

The Education Sector did not identify transportation to and from K–12 schools as the primary transportation gap within Lloydminster. Instead, participants consistently highlighted broader community mobility challenges affecting post-secondary students, newcomers, adult learners, employment opportunities, and participation beyond the traditional school day.

Although participants represented different educational organizations with distinct mandates, transportation was consistently viewed as an important contributor to educational success, workforce development, and community participation. Participants linked mobility to access to employment, recreation, healthcare, volunteerism, and opportunities that help individuals become active members of the community.

There was also broad recognition that transportation needs differ across the education sector. While K–12 transportation systems were generally viewed as meeting their intended purpose, participants identified greater opportunities to improve mobility for post-secondary students, newcomers, adult learners, and individuals seeking access to employment or activities beyond the traditional school day.

Participants expressed strong support for continued collaboration between the City and education partners while recognizing that future operational or financial partnerships would require a clearly defined transportation model, a shared understanding of roles and responsibilities, and a sound business case before commitments could reasonably be considered.

Resident Focus Group

COMMUNITY FIT · PRACTICALITY

Overview

The Resident Focus Group brought together community members representing a broad cross-section of ages, experiences, and transportation perspectives. Participants included seniors, youth, active transportation users, newcomers, long-term residents, and individuals familiar with transportation systems in other municipalities.

Residents acknowledged that Lloydminster is, and will likely remain, a vehicle-oriented community. However, participants also recognized that transportation barriers continue to affect many residents who do not have reliable access to a personal vehicle. Throughout the discussion, participants demonstrated a strong desire to improve community mobility while preserving the convenience, affordability, and practicality that residents value about living in Lloydminster.

What We Asked and What We Heard

What We Asked	What We Heard
Who experiences the greatest transportation barriers?	Seniors, students, newcomers, lower-income residents, active transportation users, and individuals without access to a personal vehicle.
What transportation challenges matter most?	Access to employment, healthcare, recreation, shopping, community services, safe active transportation routes, and winter mobility.
Do residents support improving transportation?	Yes. Participants consistently supported improving mobility and accessibility within the community.
Do residents support a traditional fixed-route transit system?	Opinions were mixed. Many participants questioned whether a traditional transit model best fits Lloydminster's size and travel patterns.
What type of solution received the greatest support?	Practical, flexible, and targeted transportation solutions that respond to the needs of specific populations while building upon existing community assets and services.
What should future transportation planning consider?	Lloydminster's compact size, existing community transportation programs, financial sustainability, and the differing needs of residents who rely on transportation compared to those who have transportation choices.

Lloydminster's Transportation Reality

Participants consistently described Lloydminster as a community built around personal vehicle ownership. Most residents can reach destinations within approximately ten minutes by car, and many households own multiple vehicles to accommodate work schedules, school activities, and family commitments.

Participants viewed this convenience as one of Lloydminster's greatest strengths and acknowledged that most residents who already own vehicles would likely continue driving, even if additional transportation options became available.

At the same time, participants recognized that this experience changes dramatically for residents who do not own a vehicle.

> *"If you have a vehicle, transportation isn't really a problem. If you don't, it's a completely different story."*
> Resident Focus Group participant

Transportation Challenges Affect Different Groups Differently

Residents consistently identified transportation barriers affecting seniors, newcomers, students, lower-income households, and individuals relying on active transportation.

Discussion highlighted challenges related to accessing employment, healthcare, recreation, community programming, grocery stores, and other essential destinations. Participants also discussed winter mobility, pedestrian connectivity, bicycle theft, pathway safety, and the difficulty of accessing industrial employment areas and destinations located on the outskirts of the city.

Rather than identifying one universal transportation challenge, participants recognized that different populations experience different mobility needs throughout the community.

Building on Existing Community Strengths

Participants were surprised by the number of transportation initiatives already operating within Lloydminster, including Border City Connects, the Senior Taxi Voucher Program, transportation assistance provided by Lakeland College and the Learning Council, church transportation programs, medical transportation services, and transportation supports offered by community organizations.

Several participants questioned whether future transportation planning should build upon these existing investments rather than creating an entirely new system.

Practical Solutions Over One-Size-Fits-All Approaches

Discussion revealed differing opinions regarding traditional public transit.

Some participants supported the idea of a fixed-route transit system, recognizing its potential to improve accessibility and quality of life. Others questioned whether this approach represented the most effective use of public resources within a community where most residents already rely on personal vehicles.

Despite these differing opinions, there was broad agreement that future transportation solutions should be practical, financially responsible, flexible, and tailored to Lloydminster's unique circumstances. Participants consistently expressed interest in targeted transportation options, partnerships, and phased approaches that respond to demonstrated community needs rather than simply replicating larger urban transit systems.

> **KEY TAKEAWAY**
>
> Residents recognized that Lloydminster's transportation needs differ from those of larger urban centres. While participants acknowledged that the community's size and high rate of vehicle ownership provide significant advantages, they also recognized that transportation barriers continue to affect residents who do not have reliable transportation choices.
>
> Rather than expressing unanimous support for a traditional public transit system, participants demonstrated stronger support for practical, flexible, and community-based transportation solutions that improve mobility while reflecting Lloydminster's geography, travel patterns, existing community assets, and financial realities.

Business Sector Focus Group

WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION · ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Overview

The Business Sector Focus Group brought together representatives from retail, industrial employers, construction, economic development, workforce support organizations, transportation providers, commercial real estate, community organizations, the Chamber of Commerce, municipal administration, and elected officials to explore transportation through the lens of workforce participation, economic development, business competitiveness, and community growth.

Unlike other focus groups, participants viewed transportation primarily from the perspective of employers, workforce recruitment, customer access, and long-term economic sustainability. Throughout the discussion, participants acknowledged that while transportation barriers affect only a portion of the population, those barriers can have significant implications for labour force participation, business operations, newcomer integration, and community inclusion.

What We Asked and What We Heard

What We Asked	What We Heard
Who experiences the greatest transportation barriers?	Entry-level workers, students, newcomers, shift workers, lower-income employees, individuals with disabilities, and households without reliable access to a personal vehicle.
How do transportation barriers affect businesses?	Transportation limits access to available jobs, creates recruitment challenges, increases employee turnover, reduces workforce participation, and can affect customer access and community inclusion.
Are businesses currently helping address transportation challenges?	Yes. Many employers and organizations already provide informal transportation supports, including flexible scheduling, taxi assistance, rides, and partnerships with existing transportation providers.
Is there support for improving transportation?	Yes. Participants recognized transportation as an important workforce and economic development issue and supported exploring practical transportation improvements.
Is there support for a traditional fixed-route public transit system?	Opinions were mixed. Participants expressed significant concerns regarding operating costs, taxation, ridership, safety, and long-term sustainability.
What approach received the strongest support?	Practical, phased, partnership-based transportation solutions that build upon existing services, leverage technology, and address the needs of specific user groups before expanding.

Transportation as a Workforce and Economic Development Issue

Participants consistently viewed transportation through the lens of workforce participation rather than traditional public transit. While many established employees own personal vehicles and experience few transportation challenges, participants noted that barriers become much more significant for entry-level workers, students, newcomers, lower-income employees, shift workers, and individuals without reliable transportation.

A recurring observation throughout the discussion was that employment opportunities often exist within the community; however, transportation barriers can prevent some residents from accessing those jobs. Participants emphasized that transportation should therefore be viewed not only as a mobility issue, but also as an economic development and workforce participation issue.

Transportation Costs Create Employment Barriers

Several participants shared examples demonstrating how transportation costs can reduce the financial benefits of employment.

Examples included employees spending a significant portion of their wages on taxi fares, newcomers relying on expensive transportation to maintain employment, and families facing higher overall living costs because affordable employment or shopping opportunities were difficult to access without a personal vehicle.

Participants also noted that transportation challenges often create secondary barriers, making it more difficult for individuals to maintain employment, access childcare, or achieve long-term financial stability.

Businesses Are Already Part of the Solution

A consistent theme throughout the discussion was that many organizations are already addressing transportation challenges informally.

Examples included employers coordinating rides between employees, providing transportation assistance, adjusting work schedules, utilizing taxi vouchers, and collaborating with organizations such as Border City Connects to help employees and clients access work and essential services.

Participants recognized that transportation support is already embedded within many organizations, although these efforts require considerable staff time and financial resources.

Practical Solutions Over Traditional Transit

While participants broadly acknowledged that transportation barriers exist, there was considerably less agreement that a traditional fixed-route public transit system represented the best solution for Lloydminster.

Discussion frequently returned to concerns regarding operating costs, long-term financial sustainability, taxation, ridership, safety, and Lloydminster’s dispersed geography.

Instead, participants consistently expressed stronger support for practical, flexible approaches that could evolve over time. Suggestions included expanding existing transportation programs,

employer partnerships, on-demand transportation, technology-enabled services, targeted transportation initiatives, and pilot projects that could be evaluated before broader implementation. Participants repeatedly emphasized that future transportation solutions should reflect Lloydminster's unique characteristics rather than replicating larger urban transit systems.

Collaboration as a Community Strength

One of the strongest themes emerging from the discussion was the business community's willingness to collaborate.

Participants consistently identified partnership as one of Lloydminster's defining strengths and expressed interest in future collaboration involving employers, community organizations, educational institutions, transportation providers, and municipal government. Rather than expecting a single organization to solve transportation challenges independently, participants emphasized shared responsibility and community-based solutions that build upon existing strengths.

> **KEY TAKEAWAY**
>
> The Business Sector Focus Group identified transportation as a workforce participation, economic development, and community inclusion issue rather than simply a public transit issue. Participants recognized that transportation barriers affect labour force participation, newcomer integration, recruitment, customer access, and business competitiveness, particularly for residents without reliable access to personal vehicles.
>
> While there was broad support for improving community mobility, participants expressed stronger support for practical, financially sustainable, partnership-based transportation solutions than for a traditional fixed-route transit system. Throughout the discussion, businesses emphasized that any future transportation strategy should be flexible, scalable, locally designed, and responsive to Lloydminster's unique economic and geographic realities.

5 The Transportation Design Jam

FROM IDENTIFYING PROBLEMS TO DESIGNING POSSIBILITIES

The Transportation Design Jam represented the final stage of the community engagement process. While the focus groups were designed to understand transportation challenges and gather diverse perspectives from across the community, the Design Jam shifted the conversation from identifying barriers to designing potential solutions.

What a Design Jam Is, and Why It Was Used

Design Jams are a collaborative facilitation methodology commonly used in strategic planning, community engagement, product development, and service design to generate creative, practical solutions to complex problems. Rather than evaluating a single proposal, participants work together to explore new ideas, challenge assumptions, and combine diverse perspectives into innovative concepts.

Unlike a traditional workshop or brainstorming session, a Design Jam encourages participants to build upon one another's ideas, rapidly test possibilities, and focus on the characteristics of successful solutions rather than immediately debating costs or implementation. The objective is not to produce a final design, but to identify promising directions that warrant future exploration.

A traditional workshop	A Design Jam
Evaluates a proposal that already exists	Generates concepts that do not yet exist
Participants respond individually	Participants build on one another's ideas
Feasibility and cost debated early	Feasibility deferred; characteristics of success explored first
Output: feedback on an option	Output: promising directions warranting further exploration
Participants grouped by sector	Participants deliberately mixed across sectors

For the Lloydminster Transportation Engagement Project, participants represented a cross-section of the community, including education, business, social services, municipal government, transportation providers, accessibility advocates, and residents. Bringing these perspectives together created opportunities for participants to learn from one another, challenge assumptions, and develop ideas that reflected the broader needs of the community rather than the priorities of any single sector.

The Four Concepts

Working independently in four facilitated teams, participants were challenged to develop transportation concepts that responded to the needs and priorities identified throughout the focus groups. Each team approached the challenge from a different perspective; however, despite working independently, remarkable similarities emerged across the concepts they developed.

Team One • Workforce Transportation Support

This concept focused on improving access to employment and education by supporting individuals who experience transportation barriers during the early stages of workforce participation.

Primary populations included:

- Students
- Entry-level employees
- Shift workers
- Newcomers

Team Two • Ride Connect

This concept explored a flexible, technology-enabled transportation service centred on demand-responsive travel rather than fixed schedules. The concept emphasized accessibility, convenience, and the collection of local transportation data to inform future decision-making.

Key features included:

- On-demand transportation
- Accessible vehicles
- Transportation hubs
- Advance booking
- Data collection

Team Three • Transportation Enhancing Community Life

This concept emphasized transportation as a means of supporting independence, healthy aging, and community participation. Rather than focusing solely on essential trips, the concept recognized transportation as an important contributor to quality of life.

Primary priorities included:

- Seniors
- Healthcare access
- Recreation
- Shopping
- Social connection

- Independence

Team Four · Connecting Communities Through Transportation

This concept proposed a flexible transportation framework combining multiple transportation options supported through community partnerships and sustainable funding models.

Key elements included:

- Hybrid transportation models
- Fixed routes where appropriate
- On-demand services
- Employer partnerships
- Educational partnerships
- Sustainable user fees

Why Independent Convergence Matters

Although each team worked independently, several common themes consistently emerged across all four concepts.

Perhaps the most significant outcome of the Design Jam was not the individual transportation concepts themselves, but the remarkable level of agreement regarding the characteristics of a successful transportation system for Lloydminster. Participants consistently arrived at similar conclusions despite approaching the challenge from different perspectives and beginning with different assumptions.

> **WHY THIS STRENGTHENS THE FINDINGS**
>
> Four teams were deliberately mixed across sectors, worked separately, and were not asked to reach agreement. They were not presented with a shared list of options to choose from. Under those conditions, agreement is not a product of the process — it is a signal.
>
> That the four concepts converged on accessibility, flexibility, partnerships, pilot projects and financial sustainability — the same priorities the four focus groups had raised separately, weeks earlier — provides additional confidence that these priorities are broadly shared across the community rather than particular to any one sector or any one conversation.

This convergence reinforced many of the findings identified throughout the focus groups and provided additional confidence that the priorities emerging from the engagement process were broadly shared across sectors.

Rather than identifying a single preferred transportation model, the Design Jam validated many of the themes that had consistently emerged throughout the engagement process and demonstrated that practical, flexible, partnership-based approaches resonated across multiple sectors.

A fuller account of the Design Jam — including the design challenges, the Design Thinking phases, the Innovation Sparks exercise, and the questions participants raised — is available in the accompanying ***Lloydminster Transportation Design Jam Summary Report****.*

6 What We Heard Across All Sectors

The four focus groups and the Design Jam were separate conversations, held weeks apart, with different participants and different starting assumptions. This section identifies where they nonetheless arrived at the same place — and where they did not.

The Seven Cross-Sector Themes

Perhaps the most important finding from the engagement process is that the same themes emerged repeatedly across every focus group and again during the Design Jam.

Theme 1 · Transportation Enables Opportunity

Participants consistently viewed transportation as a means of connecting people to opportunity rather than simply moving people between destinations. Access to employment, education, healthcare, recreation, shopping, volunteering, and community life were repeatedly identified as the outcomes transportation should support.

Theme 2 · Focus on Access Rather Than Transit

Participants challenged the assumption that transportation must mean buses.

Throughout the engagement process, the conversation gradually shifted away from asking,

“How do we move people?”

toward a more fundamental question,

“What are people trying to access?”

This shift encouraged participants to think beyond traditional public transit and explore a wider range of transportation solutions tailored to specific community needs.

Theme 3 · Build on Existing Community Assets

Rather than creating an entirely new transportation system, participants consistently supported building upon services and partnerships already operating successfully within Lloydminster. These included:

- Border City Connects
- Senior Taxi Voucher Program
- Educational transportation initiatives
- Community organization transportation supports
- Existing public and private partnerships

Participants viewed these existing assets as important foundations upon which future transportation solutions could be developed.

Theme 4 · Flexibility Is Essential

Across every engagement activity, participants expressed stronger support for flexible transportation options than for traditional fixed-route systems. Participants consistently favoured on-demand services, hybrid transportation models, pilot projects, and user-centred transportation solutions that could evolve alongside community needs.

Theme 5 · Partnerships Drive Success

Every sector identified collaboration as one of Lloydminster's greatest strengths.

Participants envisioned future transportation solutions involving partnerships between employers, educational institutions, community organizations, transportation providers, and municipal government rather than relying upon a single organization to deliver transportation independently.

Theme 6 · Accessibility Should Be Built In

Participants emphasized that accessibility should not be treated as an afterthought. Successful transportation solutions should be intentionally designed from the outset to meet the needs of seniors, students, persons with disabilities, newcomers, families, and lower-income residents.

Theme 7 · Start Small, Measure, Learn, Grow

Rather than immediately implementing a large-scale transportation system, participants consistently supported a phased approach that allows solutions to be tested, evaluated, refined, and expanded over time.

Pilot projects, local data collection, measurable outcomes, and continuous improvement were viewed as practical ways to ensure transportation investments remain responsive to community needs while demonstrating financial stewardship.

Where Recurring Observations Appeared

The matrix below records where each recurring observation was raised across the five engagement activities. It uses the groupings recorded during the engagement, which differ slightly from the seven themes above: data-driven decision making and concerns regarding traditional transit were tracked in their own right.

Recurring Observation	Social	Education	Residents	Business	Design Jam
Transportation enables participation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Accessibility is critical	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Flexible transportation preferred	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Partnerships are essential	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Support existing services	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Pilot projects before major investments	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Data-driven decision making		✓	✓	✓	✓
Traditional transit concerns	✓		✓	✓	✓

Six of the eight observations were raised in every engagement activity. The two that were not are shown exactly as they were recorded.

Existing Community Assets

One of the most interesting findings from the engagement process was the realization that Lloydminster already possesses many elements of a transportation network.

While these services operate independently and often serve specific populations, participants identified numerous transportation supports already active within the community.

Existing Asset	Current Users
Border City Connects	Individuals with disabilities
Senior Taxi Program	Seniors
Lakeland Supports	Students
Learning Council Supports	Newcomers
Caravan	Medical appointments
Family and Informal Networks	Everyone
Pathways	Active transportation users
Employer Ride Sharing	Workers
Taxi Services	General public

Rather than asking whether transportation exists, participants frequently explored whether existing services could be strengthened, expanded, coordinated, or connected in new ways.

This perspective shifted portions of the conversation away from creating something entirely new and toward building upon assets that already exist within the community.

Notable Observations

The following are observations drawn from the findings above, rather than statements made by participants.

One of the most interesting aspects of the engagement process was not necessarily the differences between sectors, but rather the consistency of themes that emerged across the conversations.

Similar Themes Emerged Across All Sectors

Despite approaching transportation from different perspectives, social service providers, educators, residents, businesses, and Design Jam participants often identified many of the same opportunities and challenges.

Transportation Was Viewed as Access to Opportunity

Participants spent surprisingly little time discussing buses or routes. Instead, conversations focused on employment, education, healthcare, recreation, independence, and quality of life.

Existing Transportation Assets Were Stronger Than Expected

Participants identified numerous transportation supports already operating within the community and frequently explored opportunities to strengthen or better connect those assets.

Innovation Was Favoured Over Replication

Participants demonstrated openness to new ideas and flexible approaches while expressing limited interest in simply replicating traditional transit models from larger urban centres.

Compassion and Fiscal Responsibility Coexisted

Participants consistently expressed a desire to support residents experiencing transportation barriers while also emphasizing affordability, sustainability, and prudent use of public resources.

Different Solutions May Be Needed for Different Populations

Participants recognized that transportation challenges vary considerably and that a single approach may not meet the needs of all residents.

Where Opinions Differed

Consensus was not universal. The engagement process surfaced genuine differences, and these are recorded here rather than smoothed over.

Participants generally agreed	Opinions differed on
Accessibility matters.	Traditional transit.
Start small.	User fees.
Partnerships matter.	Tax increases.
Build on existing assets.	Safety concerns.
Solutions should be practical.	The role government should play.

7 Financial Considerations

Financial impact was one of the most important considerations raised throughout the transportation engagement process. While participants consistently recognized that transportation barriers affect some residents in significant ways, they also expressed strong concern that any future solution must be financially responsible, right-sized, and sustainable.

Across the focus groups and Design Jam, participants generally did not reject the idea of transportation investment. However, there was caution about implementing a traditional public transit system without clear evidence of demand, usage, cost-effectiveness, and long-term sustainability.

The overall sentiment could be summarized as:

> **Residents and stakeholders want Lloydminster to help people who face transportation barriers, but they want the solution to be practical, affordable, targeted, and carefully tested before major taxpayer investment is made.**

What We Heard About Cost

Participants repeatedly acknowledged that transportation services do not operate without subsidy. Whether delivered through a municipal bus system, taxi vouchers, specialized transportation, on-demand service, or community partnerships, someone must fund the gap between what users can reasonably pay and what the service actually costs.

Several financial realities surfaced during discussion:

- Traditional transit systems require significant operating subsidies.
- Fare revenue rarely covers the full cost of service.
- Vehicle purchase, insurance, maintenance, driver wages, scheduling, administration, and replacement costs must all be considered.
- Specialized transportation is highly valuable but expensive to operate.
- Existing programs are already being subsidized by the City, institutions, agencies, families, employers, and non-profit organizations.
- Transportation costs are already being paid in fragmented ways across the community.

A recurring concern was that Lloydminster should avoid creating a system that is too large, too expensive, or poorly matched to actual community use.

Taxpayer Sensitivity

Participants were particularly sensitive to the potential impact on taxpayers.

The business focus group expressed the strongest concern about large-scale property tax increases. When the discussion turned to examples from other municipalities and the possibility of a significant tax increase to support full public transit, participants were clear that there was little appetite for a large tax increase without a very strong business case.

Some participants indicated they may support targeted investment if it directly addressed the needs of those facing the greatest barriers. However, support weakened considerably when the conversation shifted toward a broad traditional transit system with substantial annual subsidies.

> The general consensus was not:
> *"Do nothing."*
>
> **Rather, it was:**
> ***"Do something carefully, and make sure it is the right thing before asking taxpayers to fund it."***

The Tension Between Compassion and Fiscal Responsibility

A major theme across the engagement process was the tension between wanting to help and needing to be financially responsible.

Participants consistently expressed care and concern for residents who cannot drive, cannot afford taxis, cannot safely use current transportation options, or cannot access services without help.

At the same time, participants cautioned against creating a costly system that may not be widely used or financially sustainable. This tension was especially clear in the business and resident discussions.

The community appears willing to explore solutions, but participants want assurance that future investments are evidence-based, targeted, affordable, measurable, scalable, practical, and sustainable.

Public Transit Versus Targeted Mobility

Financial concerns were strongest when participants discussed traditional fixed-route public transit.

Concerns raised about fixed-route transit	Targeted mobility options that drew stronger support
High operating costs	Expanding existing programs
Low or uncertain ridership	On-demand or microtransit models
Limited ability to serve Lloydminster's spread-out geography	Transportation vouchers
Potential safety and security costs	Employer-supported transportation
Long-term replacement costs	Student or workforce pilots
Risk of creating a service that is underused	Community connector services
Potential tax burden on residents and businesses	Partnerships with existing providers
	Small-scale pilot projects

Participants appeared more comfortable with investments that could be tested, measured, and adjusted before expansion.

Benefits and Financial Concerns Raised by Participants

Potential Benefit	Financial Concern
Improved access to jobs	Ongoing operating subsidy may be high
Better healthcare access	Fare revenue unlikely to cover costs
Reduced isolation	Risk of low ridership
Support for seniors and vulnerable residents	Cost of accessible vehicles and trained drivers
Improved workforce participation	Employers may expect City to solve workforce transportation
Better student mobility	Service may not align with schedules or demand
Reduced fragmented spending	Coordination may require administration and staffing
More inclusive community	Taxpayers may resist funding services they do not personally use

The Financial Consensus

The financial consensus across the engagement process can be summarized as follows:

1. Transportation barriers are real and affect some residents significantly.
2. The community values helping people access employment, education, healthcare, recreation, and community life.
3. There is limited appetite for a large, traditional, fixed-route transit system if it requires a major tax increase.
4. There is stronger support for practical, targeted, flexible, and partnership-based solutions.
5. Existing transportation investments should be examined before new systems are created.
6. Pilot projects should be used to test demand, cost, usage, and outcomes.
7. Any future solution must be financially sustainable for both users and taxpayers.
8. The public should be asked clear budget questions that connect service options to tax impacts.

The financial discussion did not suggest that Lloydminster should avoid transportation investment altogether. Rather, it suggested that Lloydminster should be careful, creative, and disciplined. Participants want a solution that reflects both community compassion and fiscal responsibility.

One of the strongest messages emerging from the financial discussions was clear:

> **Lloydminster should not build a transportation system simply because other cities have one. Lloydminster should invest in a transportation solution only if it is right-sized, targeted, measurable, financially sustainable, and genuinely responsive to local needs.**

That is the financial foundation of a “Made-in-Lloydminster” solution.

8 Emerging Design Principles

Seven design principles emerged consistently across the focus groups and the Transportation Design Jam. They are presented here as characteristics participants described, not as recommendations.

Design Principle	What participants described
1. Accessibility First	Transportation solutions should be designed for all users from the outset
2. Flexible Models	Services should adapt to community needs rather than rely solely on fixed routes
3. Partnership-Based Delivery	Solutions should involve employers, schools, community organizations and government
4. Leverage Existing Assets	Build on current transportation investments and programs
5. Pilot Before Expansion	Test ideas, gather data and refine before scaling
6. Data-Informed Decisions	Measure outcomes and evaluate effectiveness
7. Made in Lloydminster	Solutions should reflect local geography, culture and community

These principles were reinforced by both the focus groups and the Transportation Design Jam. While the teams developed different concepts independently, many arrived at remarkably similar conclusions regarding accessibility, flexibility, partnerships, affordability, and phased implementation.

9 Conclusion

One of the most important findings emerging from the engagement process is that residents are not necessarily asking for a traditional public transit system.

Across all focus groups and the Transportation Design Jam, participants consistently acknowledged that Lloydminster is a community where most residents currently rely on personal vehicles and value the convenience, flexibility, and independence they provide. Many participants openly stated that even if a transit system existed, they would likely continue to use their own vehicles for most trips.

At the same time, participants demonstrated a strong sense of community responsibility and a recognition that not all residents have the same transportation choices.

Students, seniors, newcomers, individuals with disabilities, lower-income residents, and those experiencing temporary life challenges often face transportation barriers that can limit access to employment, education, healthcare, recreation, and community participation. Participants consistently expressed a desire to find solutions that support these residents while remaining practical, affordable, and sustainable.

Throughout the engagement process, the conversation increasingly shifted away from the question of whether Lloydminster needs traditional transit and toward a broader question:

> **How do we ensure that everyone in our community can access opportunities?**

Many of the ideas generated through the focus groups and Design Jam shared characteristics commonly associated with emerging transportation approaches, including on-demand services, community connector models, partnership-based mobility solutions, and other flexible approaches designed to respond to local needs. These approaches are typically designed to be flexible, scalable, and responsive to local needs rather than relying solely on traditional fixed-route transit systems.

Participants repeatedly emphasized that Lloydminster's solution should reflect the realities of our community. It should be right-sized. It should build upon existing strengths. It should leverage partnerships. Most importantly, it should reflect the values that define Lloydminster.

Compassion and Pragmatism

One of the strongest findings from the engagement process was that participants consistently approached transportation with both compassion and pragmatism. Residents recognized the challenges faced by those who cannot drive, cannot afford transportation, or cannot safely access services, while also emphasizing the importance of fiscal responsibility and practical implementation.

The discussion was not framed as whether the community should help, but rather how it could do so in a way that is practical, sustainable, and reflective of local values.

> The engagement process demonstrated that Lloydminster residents are not asking for transportation for transportation's sake.
>
> **They are asking for improved access to opportunity.**

The Outcomes Residents Described

While opinions varied regarding the best transportation model, there was remarkable consistency regarding the outcomes residents hope to achieve:

- Greater independence
- Improved workforce participation
- Enhanced educational access
- Better healthcare access
- Increased community inclusion
- Stronger quality of life

Participants described what those outcomes could look like in practice:

Outcome Area	Potential Community Benefit
Employment	More residents able to access available jobs
Education	Increased access to learning, training and student employment
Healthcare	Fewer missed appointments and improved health outcomes
Recreation	Greater participation in sports, arts and leisure activities
Social Inclusion	Reduced isolation and improved community connection
Economic Development	Improved workforce recruitment and retention
Accessibility	Greater independence for seniors and persons with disabilities

The Opportunity

The engagement process revealed a community that values innovation, collaboration, and caring for one another. Residents consistently demonstrated a willingness to explore new ideas,

provided they are practical, fiscally responsible, and focused on improving quality of life for those who face the greatest transportation barriers.

Throughout the engagement process, there was a shared belief that communities are strongest when people can access opportunity and remain connected to the things that matter most.

The opportunity before Lloydminster is not to replicate the transportation systems of larger cities, but to demonstrate how a mid-sized community can create a flexible, community-driven approach that reflects local needs, local partnerships, and local values. In many ways, the challenge is not simply about transportation, but about finding a solution that demonstrates the ingenuity of our community while ensuring that residents facing transportation barriers are still able to participate in community life and access the opportunities that matter most.

> **Participants consistently demonstrated a willingness to explore innovative solutions, provided they are practical, financially responsible, and reflective of the values that have long defined Lloydminster.**

WITH THANKS

More than 70 people gave their time to this conversation. They came from health care and industry, from classrooms and front-line agencies, from the Chamber and the Council table, and from neighborhoods across the city. They were candid about what is not working, generous about what is, and consistently more interested in solving the problem than in defending a position.

Wendy Plandowski
Facilitator, Community Transportation Engagement Project
Lloydminster, Alberta · June 2026

Appendix A · Transportation Challenges by Population

Population	Transportation Challenges Identified
Students	Employment access, extracurricular activities, internships, recreation
Seniors	Medical appointments, shopping, social activities, aging in place
Newcomers & International Students	Employment access, groceries, community integration
Individuals with Disabilities	Accessible transportation, independence, specialized supports
Lower-Income Residents	Transportation affordability, employment access
Shift Workers	Transportation outside traditional business hours
Families	Childcare logistics, multiple destinations, transportation costs

Appendix B · Potential Indicators Discussed

Participants discussed how the success of any future transportation initiative might be measured. Notably, success was not defined solely by ridership. The following indicators were raised during discussion.

Outcome	Indicator Discussed
Workforce participation	Jobs retained
Education	Student engagement
Health	Fewer missed appointments
Seniors	Aging in place
Inclusion	Reduced isolation
Economic development	Recruitment

Appendix C • Engagement Activities

Activity	Participants Represented
Social Sector Focus Group	Health care, social service agencies, community organizations, accessibility advocates, seniors' organizations, housing and outreach programs, municipal representatives
Education Sector Focus Group	Lloydminster Public School Division, Lloydminster Catholic School Division, Lakeland College, Lloydminster Learning Council, students, education stakeholders
Resident Focus Group	Seniors, youth, active transportation users, newcomers, long-term residents, individuals familiar with transportation systems in other municipalities
Business Sector Focus Group	Retail, industrial employers, construction, economic development, workforce support organizations, transportation providers, commercial real estate, community organizations, Chamber of Commerce, municipal administration, elected officials
Transportation Design Jam	Cross-section including education, business, social services, municipal government, transportation providers, accessibility advocates, residents

More than 70 participants contributed across the five activities.