

# Valley Connect



Connecting People, Places and Possibilities

#DESTINATION  
*Drumheller*

 Travel  
**Drumheller**

It's a **starting point for public transportation** in Drumheller and beyond. Valley Connect combines a **pilot shuttle bus** and a **feasibility study** to explore how public transportation can help our community.

Funding provided in part by

Government of Canada:  
Rural Transit Solutions Fund

Province of Alberta:  
Small Community Opportunity Program

Summer Shuttle Bus funding provided by



Community   
Futures Big Country

Project Lead: Lana Phillips, Travel Drumheller

Feasibility Study Consultant: 

Project Support: Town of Drumheller  
Royal Tyrrell Museum of Palaeontology

# Why public transportation matters in Drumheller

35%



... of employers stated that public transit would improve employee recruitment and retention.

Business Impact Survey (2025)

1 in 5



...participants said they couldn't participate in services or activities because they could not get there.

Community Social Needs Assessment (2023)



Limited public transportation options to and around the region are a long-term and systemic challenge to growing tourism in Drumheller.

Destination Development Plan (2023)



MDP

Enhance Valley-wide transportation systems to expand the reach and diversity of mobility options, providing a range of robust options for travelling within Drumheller

Municipal Development Plan (2020)

# Valley Connect



#DESTINATION  
*Drumheller*



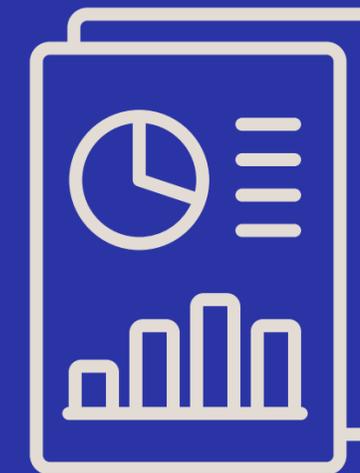
## Shuttle Bus Pilot

A **pilot** is a tool that provides an opportunity to:

- test an idea
- reduce risk
- learn and improve based on collected data and perspectives

The **summer shuttle bus pilot** will be:

- a free hop-on, hop-off service running summer Fridays and Saturdays
- connecting key destinations along a fixed route within Drumheller



## Feasibility Study

wsp

# Valley Connect



#DESTINATION  
*Drumheller*



**Shuttle  
Bus  
Pilot**



**Feasibility  
Study**



A **feasibility study** is a tool that assesses what public transportation may look like in a community. It can include evaluation of:

- existing transportation conditions and trends
- route and stop ideas
- service options (fixed route, on-demand, hybrids)
- vehicle types
- fare options
- capital and operating costs

**TODAY**

# Valley Connect



## Community Touch Points



**Youth Survey**  
Aug/Sep 2025  
Insights for  
community  
youth on the  
shuttle bus

**Community  
Survey**  
Sep/Oct 2025  
Insights from  
community on  
public  
transportation

**Interviews**  
Nov/Dec 2025  
Insights from  
key interest-  
holders

### TODAY

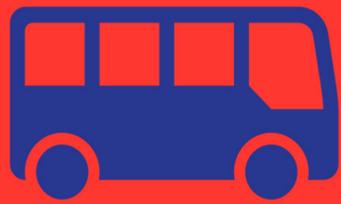
**Open House**  
Learn about the  
route and  
schedule  
Choose the  
central bus stop

**Open House**  
Learn about  
existing  
conditions  
Provide  
feedback on  
draft routes

**Ride the Bus**  
Summer 2026  
Hop-on Hop-off  
On-going  
monitoring &  
feedback

**Final Report**  
June 9  
Presentation to  
Town of  
Drumheller  
Council

**Wrap Up**  
Fall 2026  
Gather input  
and share  
results from the  
shuttle bus pilot



# DRUMHELLER TRANSIT FEASIBILITY STUDY

## PROJECT PURPOSE

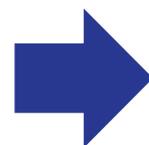
### Assess Feasibility of Public Transit in Drumheller:

Determine what a public transit system could look like, including looking at the financial and logistical feasibility of implementing a new system



#### Address Community Needs:

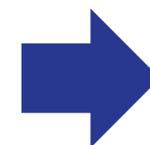
Identify existing conditions and unique needs and challenges to improve access for residents and visitors



#### Evaluate a Range of Service Models:

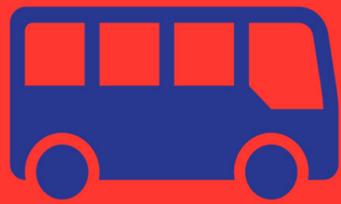
Explore and assess practical transit options for implementation in the community, where different service models and service areas will be looked at.

**We need your input here today!**



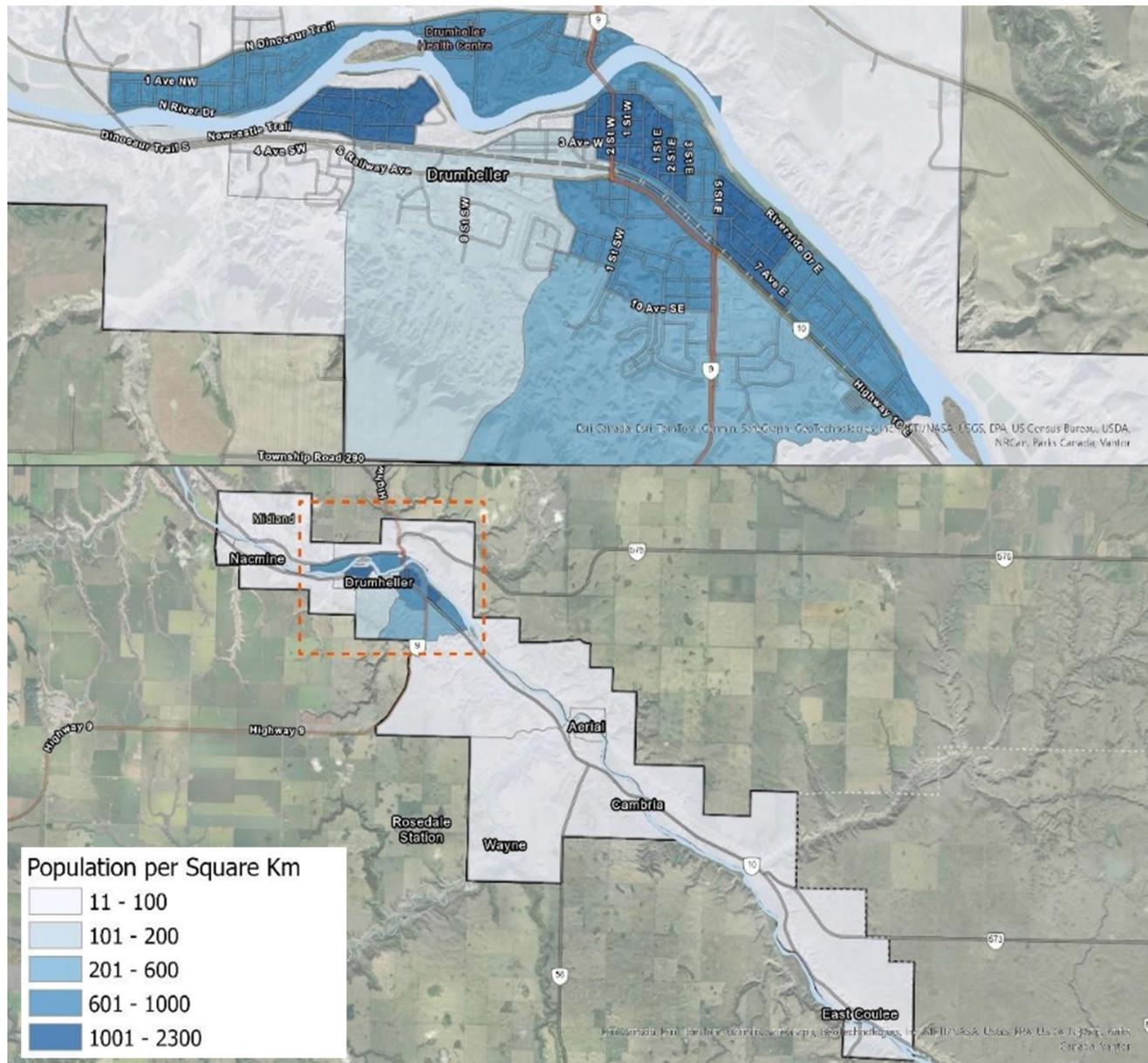
#### Identify a Preferred Option for Delivering Public Transit:

Refine options and select one to serve Drumheller based on community needs and technical analysis.



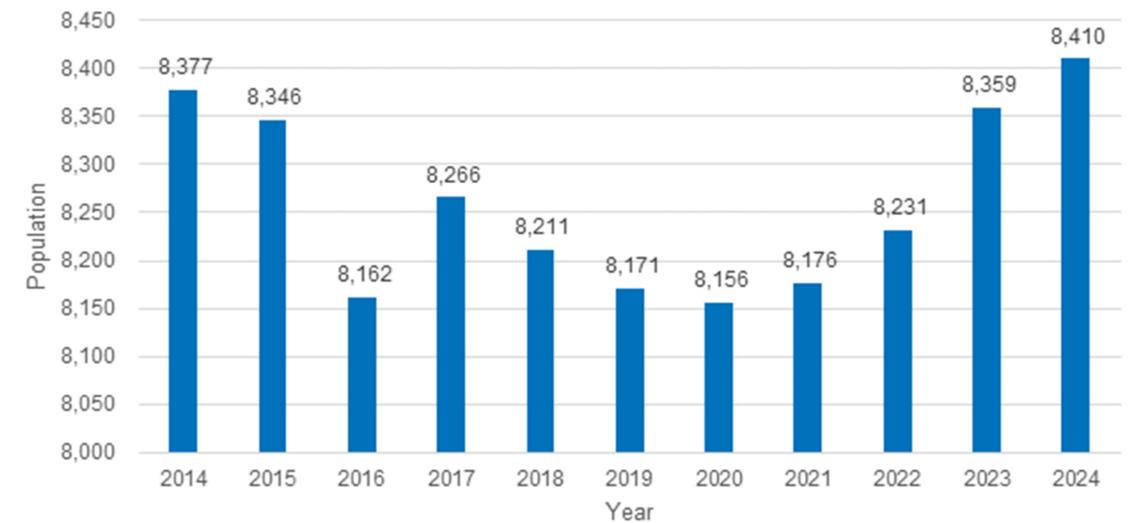
# DRUMHELLER TRANSIT FEASIBILITY STUDY

## POPULATION DISTRIBUTION & CHARACTERISTICS



The Town's geography is mostly built around one long road with population density, shopping, and services concentrated in Downtown. For people living in East Coulee, getting to Downtown can be hard without a car.

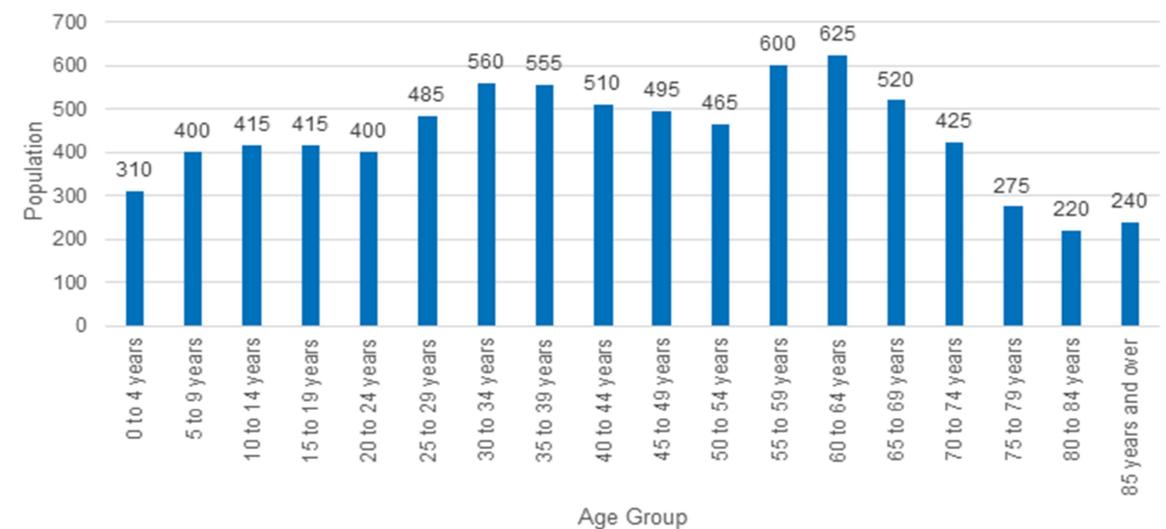
## Overview of Drumheller's Population



Source: Office of Statistics and Information, Alberta Treasury Board and Finance, 2025

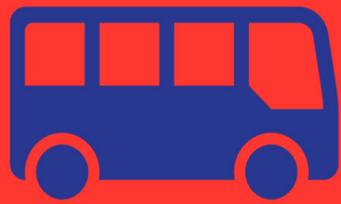
Since 2020, Drumheller's population has grown steadily. Planning for transit now can help manage future traffic growth and support the town's big seasonal tourism demand, as well.

## Drumheller's Age Distribution



Source: Statistics Canada, 2021

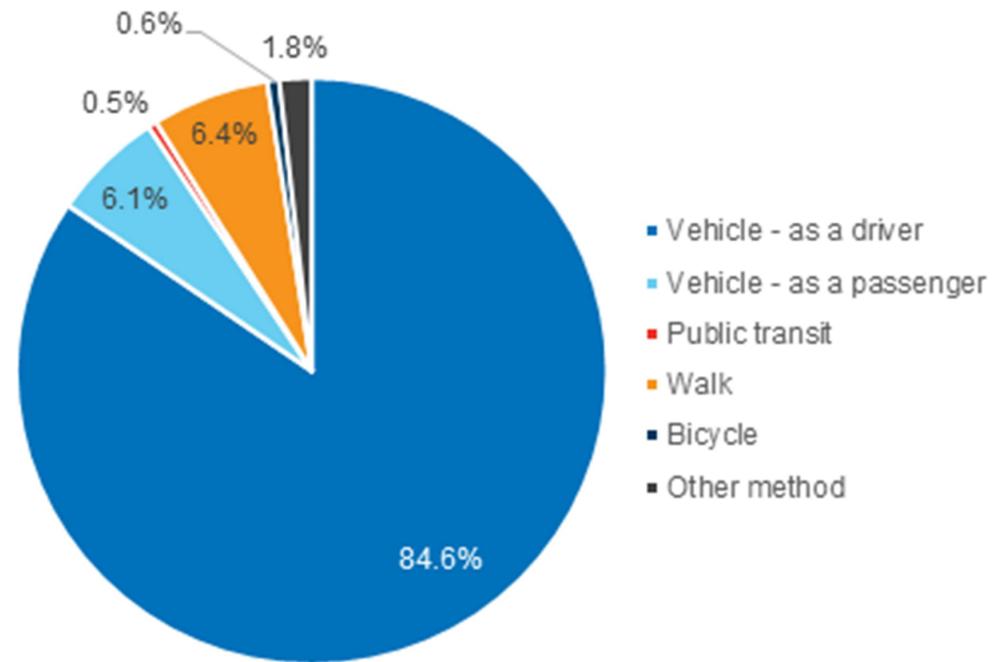
Approximately half of Drumheller's population is either under 20 or over 60, representing age groups that often benefit from expanded transportation options.



# DRUMHELLER TRANSIT FEASIBILITY STUDY

## EXISTING TRANSPORTATION CONDITIONS

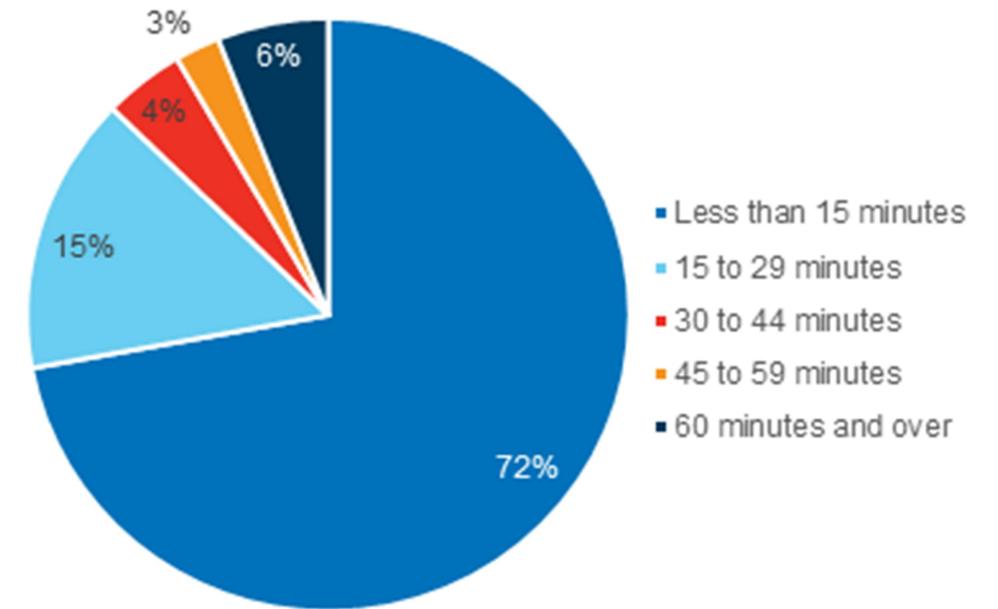
### Overview of How People Commute



Source: Statistics Canada, 2021

The breakdown of how people commute above highlights the relatively limited role of alternative transportation modes and suggest an opportunity to grow non-auto mode shares.

### Overview of Commute Times



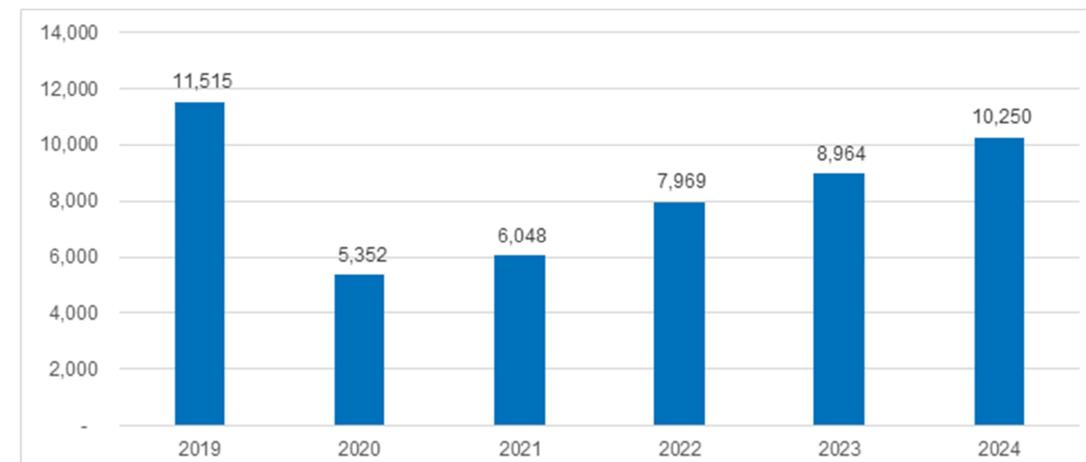
Source: Statistics Canada, 2021

Drumheller resident commute trips are relatively short. This suggests that many trips could be viable candidates for alternative modes such as transit.

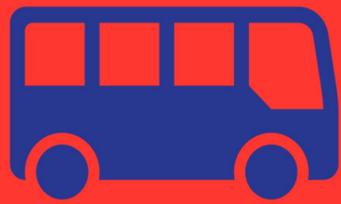
## EXISTING TRANSIT OPTIONS

The Valley Bus, which has been in operation since 1984, provides accessible transportation for senior citizens and persons with disabilities. Their historical ridership shows a growing demand year over year since 2020.

### Valley Bus Ridership



Source: Town of Drumheller Committee of the Whole Council Meeting, November 12, 2024.



# DRUMHELLER TRANSIT FEASIBILITY STUDY

## WHAT COULD TRANSIT SERVICE OPTIONS COULD LOOK LIKE?

### Fixed Route Services



- Bus runs on a fixed route with published schedules
- May have limited coverage area
- Uses fixed stops with defined start/stop locations
- Predictable timing provides reliable service
- Best for areas where population and destinations are organized in a line

Coverage: **LOW**  
Reliability: **HIGH**

### Flex Route Service



- Bus follows set timed stops but can go off route within a defined area (usually a few blocks)
- Operates on a defined route unless riders request changes
- Uses fixed or flagged (user requested) stops, with defined stop/start locations
- Moderate reliability, especially near timing points
- Best for areas with dispersed population and targeted destinations or timed connections

Coverage: **MODERATE**  
Reliability: **MODERATE**

### On-Demand Service



- No fixed-route; routing determined by driver or app
- Direct door-to-door service
- Best suited for areas with dispersed populations and destinations
- Reliability can be poor due to unpredictable demand

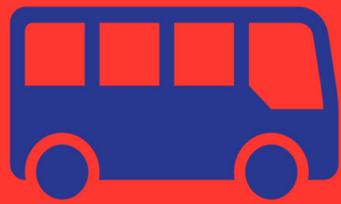
Coverage: **HIGH**  
Reliability: **LOW**

### Community Partnerships



- Partner with a local service organization that has access to a vehicle
- Paid driver and relevant insurance considerations assumed to be provided by the Municipality
- Service to be provided based on partner vehicle availability
- Significant risk of service disruption due to planned or unplanned maintenance

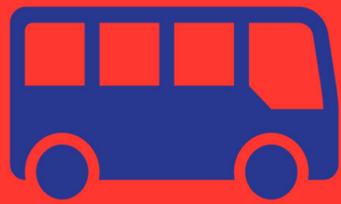
Coverage: **HIGH**  
Reliability: **LOW**



# DRUMHELLER TRANSIT FEASIBILITY STUDY

## WHAT ARE OTHER TOWNS DOING TO MEET THEIR TRANSIT NEEDS?

Community	Service Area Population	Service Area Size (km2)	Service Type	Service Availability	Time of Operation	Vehicle (# and Type)	Cost per Single Trip
<b>Drumheller</b>	<b>8,410</b>						
<b>Hinton, AB</b>	12,000	-	Fixed Route (1 route)	6 days (Monday – Saturday)	Daytime + Evening	3x big buses	\$3.00
<b>Fort Saskatchewan, AB</b>	19,000	48.1	Fixed Route (3 route)	5 days (Monday – Friday)	Daytime	3x big buses	\$3.25
<b>Kitimat, BC</b>	7,727	-	Fixed Route (5 route)	Everyday	Daytime + Evening	5x buses	Local: \$2.00 Region Connector \$4.00
<b>Dawson Creek, BC</b>	11,382	-	Fixed Route (2 routes)	5 days (Monday – Friday)	Daytime	3x big buses	\$2.25
<b>Wawa, ON</b>	2,700	3.5	OnDemand	5 days (Monday – Friday)	Midday only	1x small bus	\$5.00
<b>Clearview, ON</b>	4,500	10	Fixed Route (1 route)	Everyday	Daytime + Weekday Evening	1x big bus	\$2.00
<b>Prince Edward County, ON</b>	7,000	50	Fixed Route (1 route)	5 days (Monday – Friday)	Daytime	1x big bus	Less than 5km: \$3.50 5km-19km: \$5.00 20km+: \$10

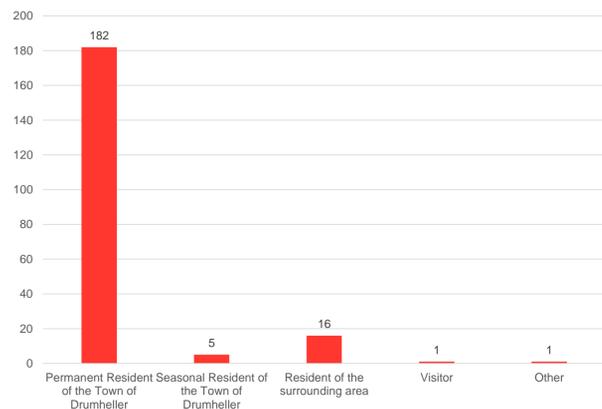


# DRUMHELLER TRANSIT FEASIBILITY STUDY

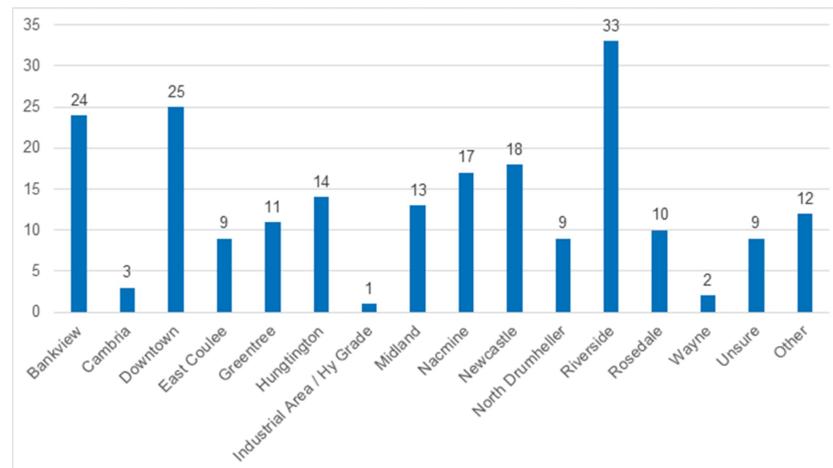
## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

A community survey was conducted in Fall 2025. Surveys were available both online and in hardcopy to ensure broad participation. A total of 213 responses were received. A sampling of the findings is shared here. The complete results are provided on the table as a handout.

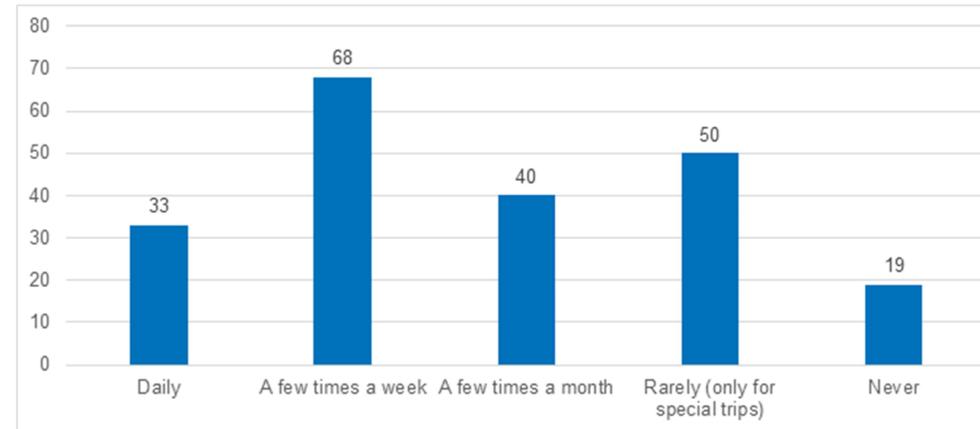
### Who completed the survey?



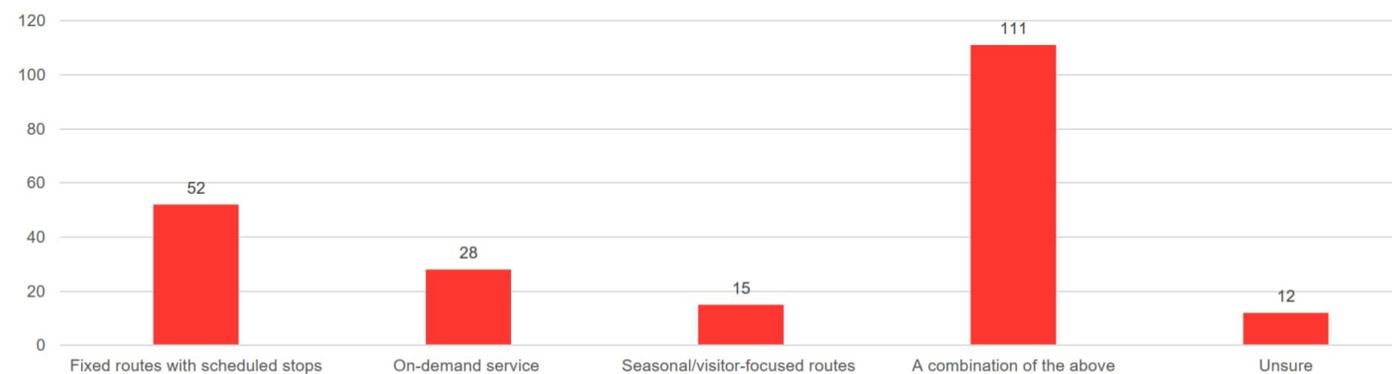
### Where Community Respondents Reside in Drumheller



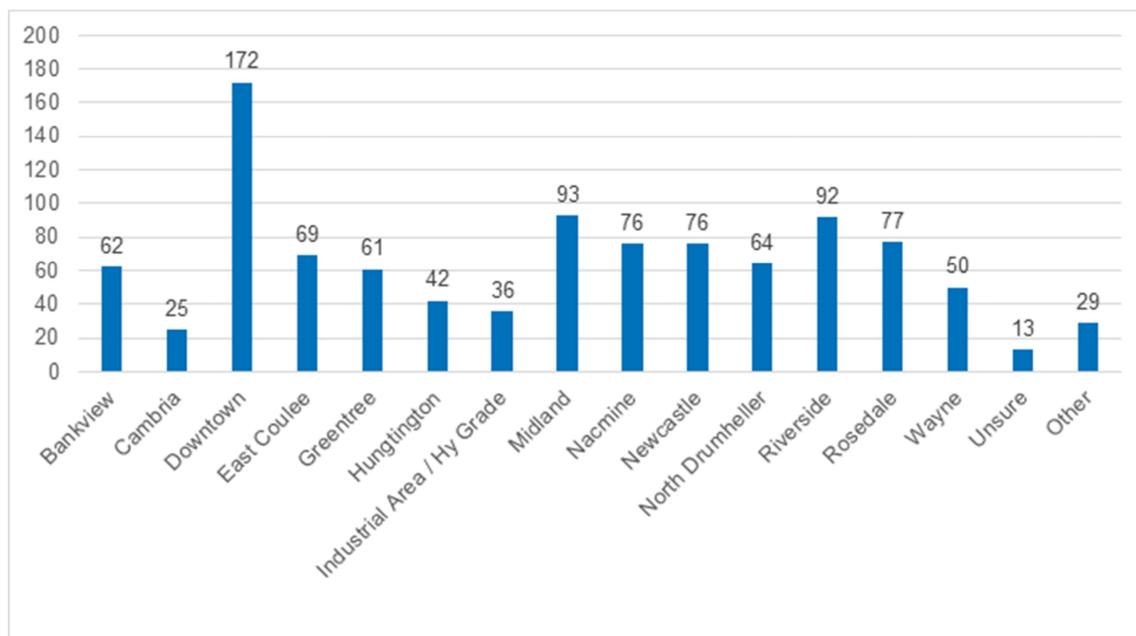
### How Often Respondents Said They Would Use Public Transit



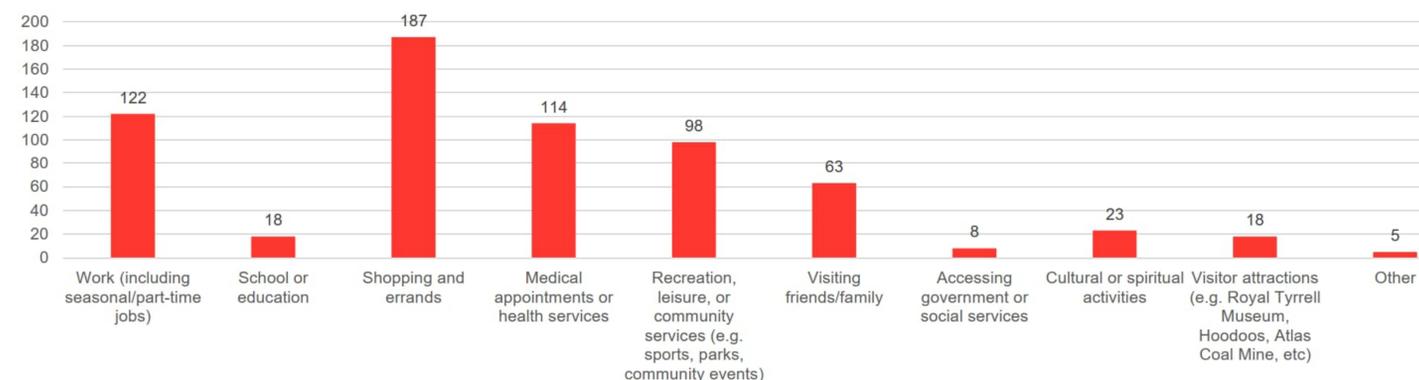
### What type of service do you think would work best in Drumheller?



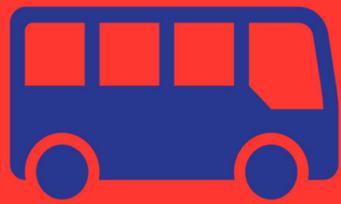
### What Communities Respondents Would Like to Access by Transit



### What are your main trip purposes within the Town of Drumheller?







# DRUMHELLER TRANSIT FEASIBILITY STUDY

## Route Option #2: Fixed Route – Central Drumheller + Intercommunity

### Key locations directly serviced include:

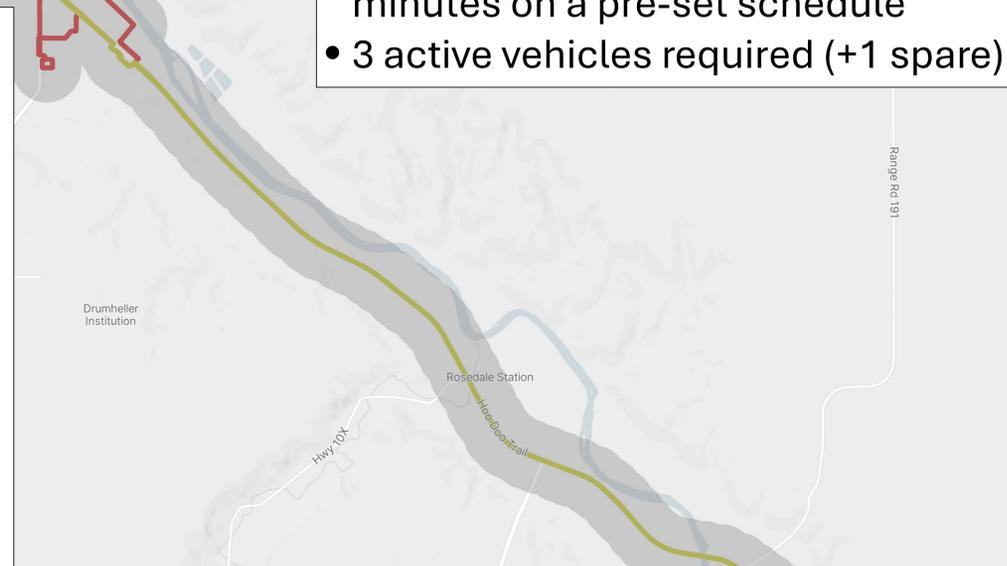
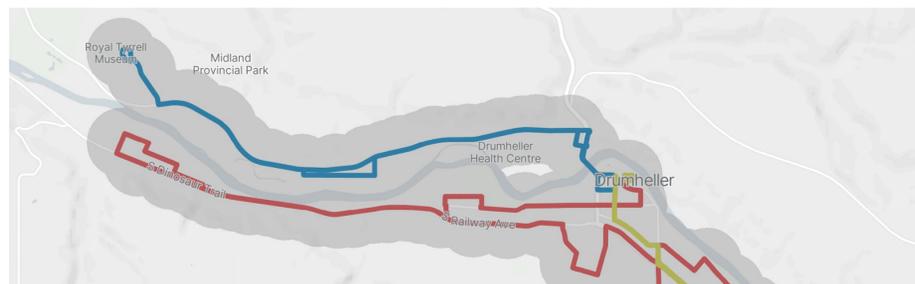
- Drumheller Health Centre
- Badlands Community Facility
- Attractions: Royal Tyrrell Museum, World's Largest Dinosaur, Newcastle Rec Area and Beach
- Grocery stores: Walmart, Nofrills, Freson Bros
- Downtown shopping
- Nacmine and all Eastern neighborhoods

### Potential service changes possible:

- Switch to a flex route service
- Make intercommunity routes seasonal

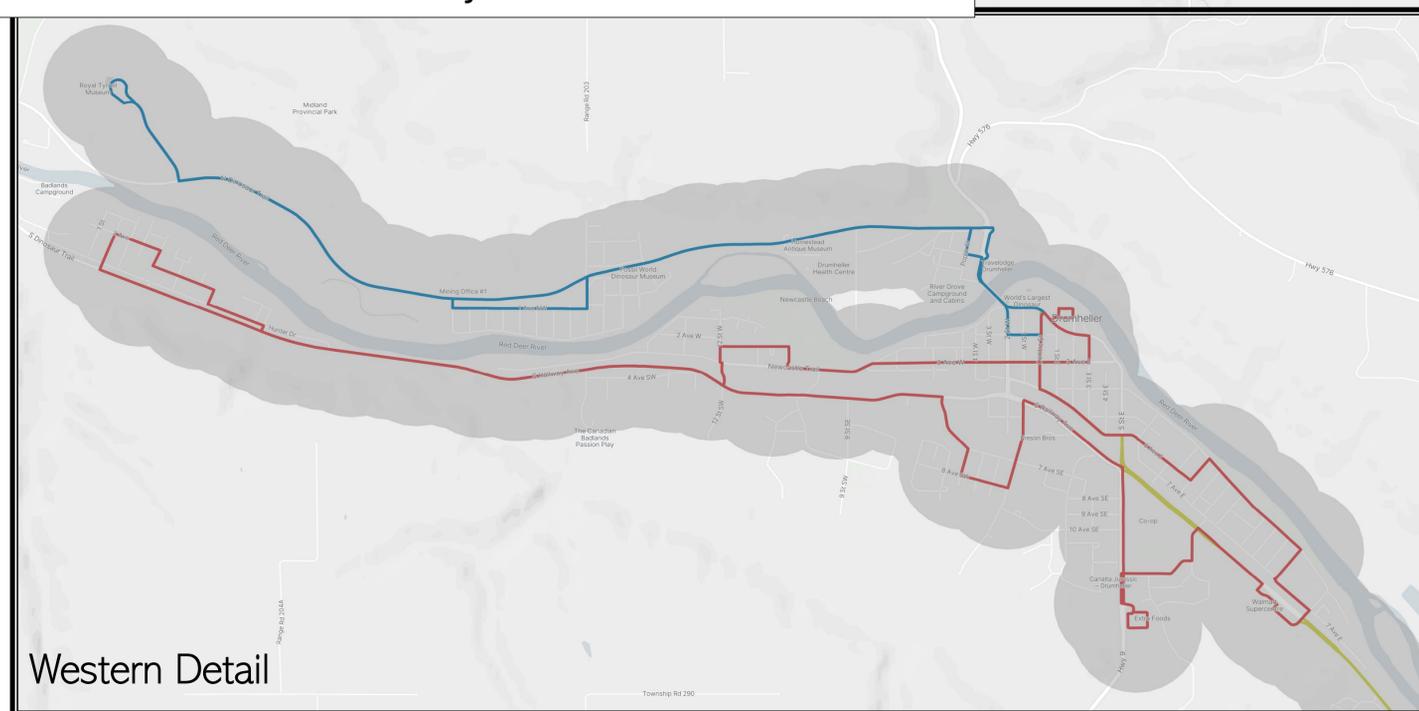
### Routing characteristics:

- 3 fixed bus routes with bus stops between Royal Tyrrell Museum and East Coulee
- Trips are provided every 60-90 minutes on a pre-set schedule
- 3 active vehicles required (+1 spare)

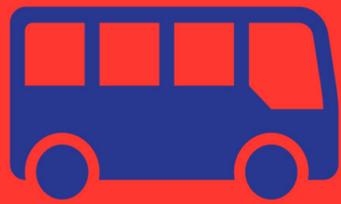


Eastern Detail

Buffered area = a 5-minute walk from bus route



Western Detail

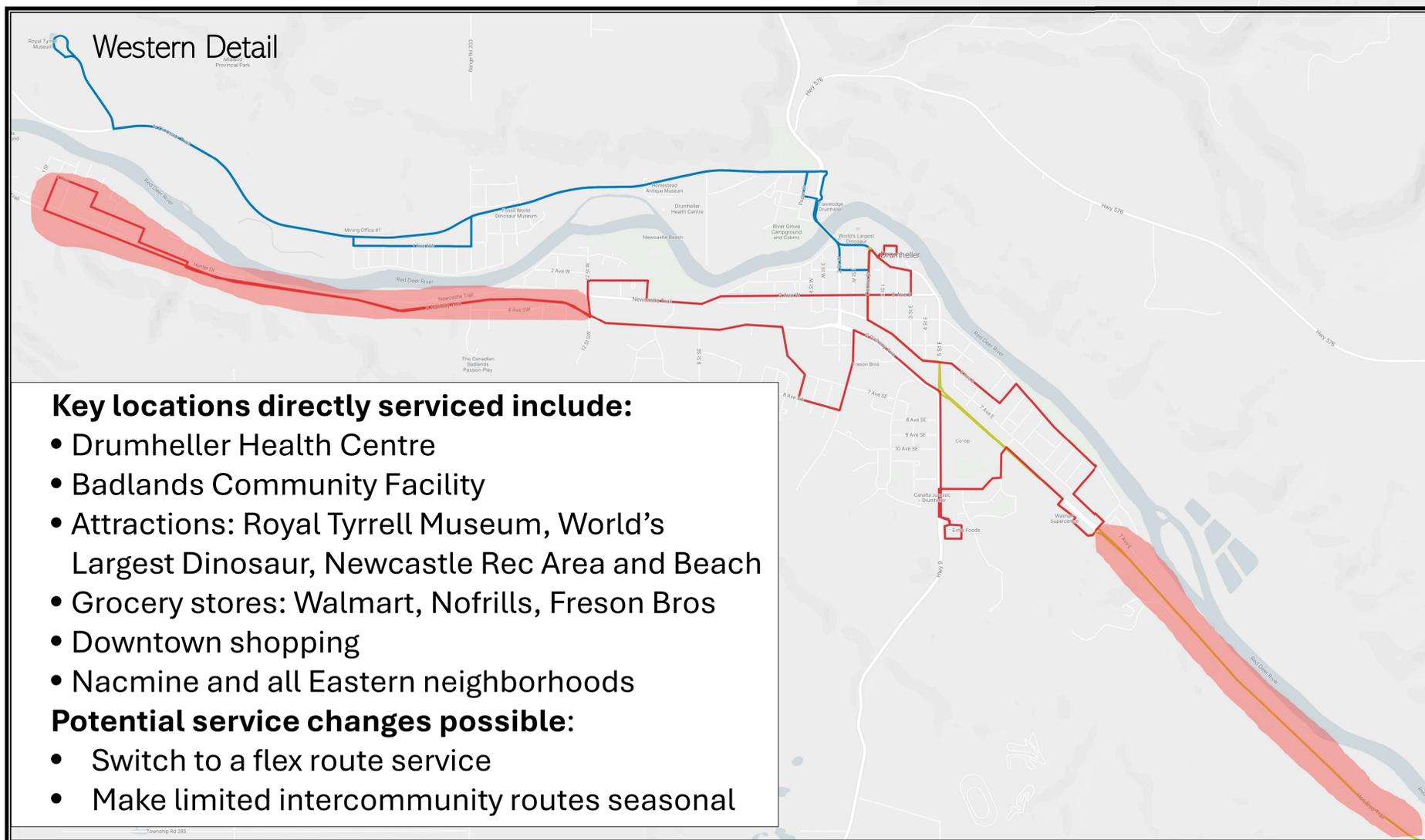
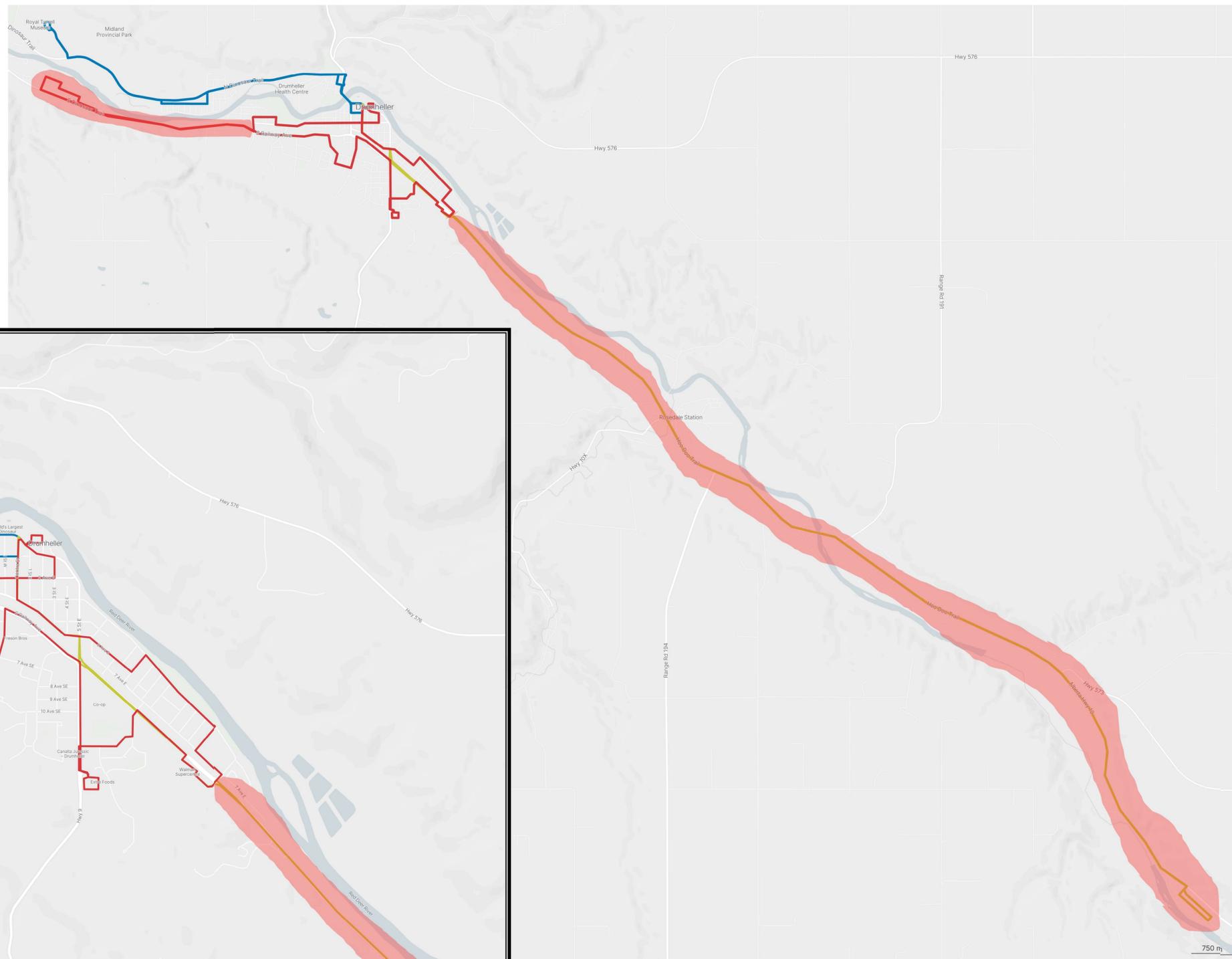


# DRUMHELLER TRANSIT FEASIBILITY STUDY

## Route Option #3: Fixed Route – Central Drumheller + Limited Intercommunity

### Routing characteristics:

- Routes highlighted in orange represent limited service (not all day)
- 3 fixed bus route with bus stops between Royal Tyrrell and East Coulee
- Trips are provided every 60-90 minutes on a pre-set schedule
- 2 active vehicles required (+1 spare)

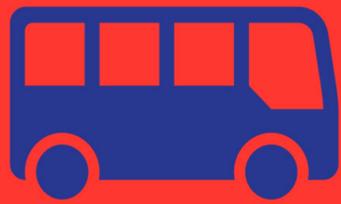


### Key locations directly serviced include:

- Drumheller Health Centre
- Badlands Community Facility
- Attractions: Royal Tyrrell Museum, World's Largest Dinosaur, Newcastle Rec Area and Beach
- Grocery stores: Walmart, Nofrills, Freson Bros
- Downtown shopping
- Nacmine and all Eastern neighborhoods

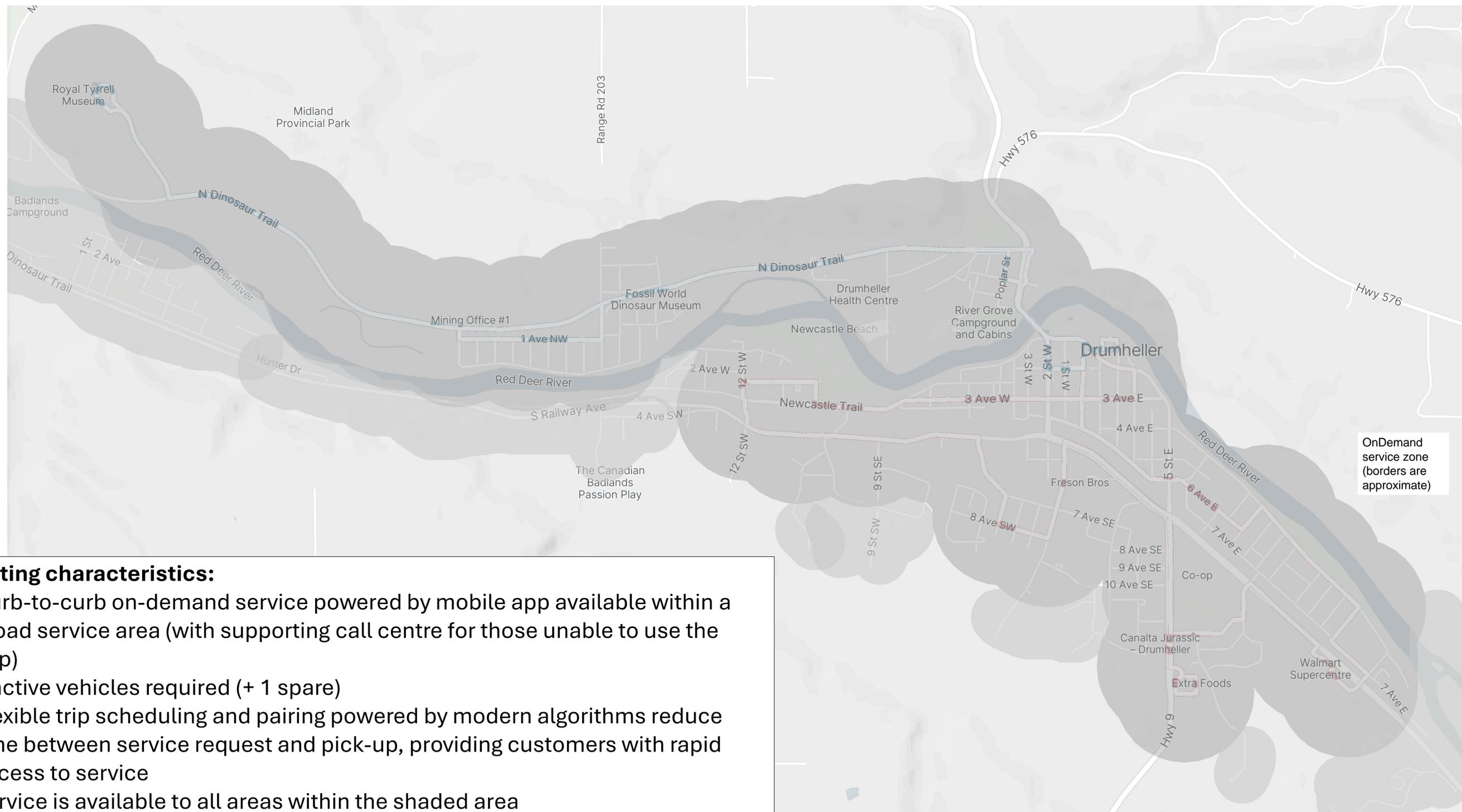
### Potential service changes possible:

- Switch to a flex route service
- Make limited intercommunity routes seasonal



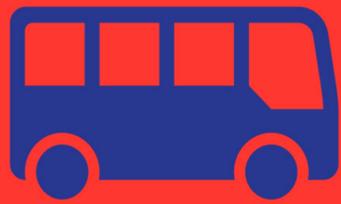
# DRUMHELLER TRANSIT FEASIBILITY STUDY

## Route Option #4: On Demand Transit



### Routing characteristics:

- Curb-to-curb on-demand service powered by mobile app available within a broad service area (with supporting call centre for those unable to use the app)
- 2 active vehicles required (+ 1 spare)
- Flexible trip scheduling and pairing powered by modern algorithms reduce time between service request and pick-up, providing customers with rapid access to service
- Service is available to all areas within the shaded area
- Routing and travel times will vary depending on demand each day

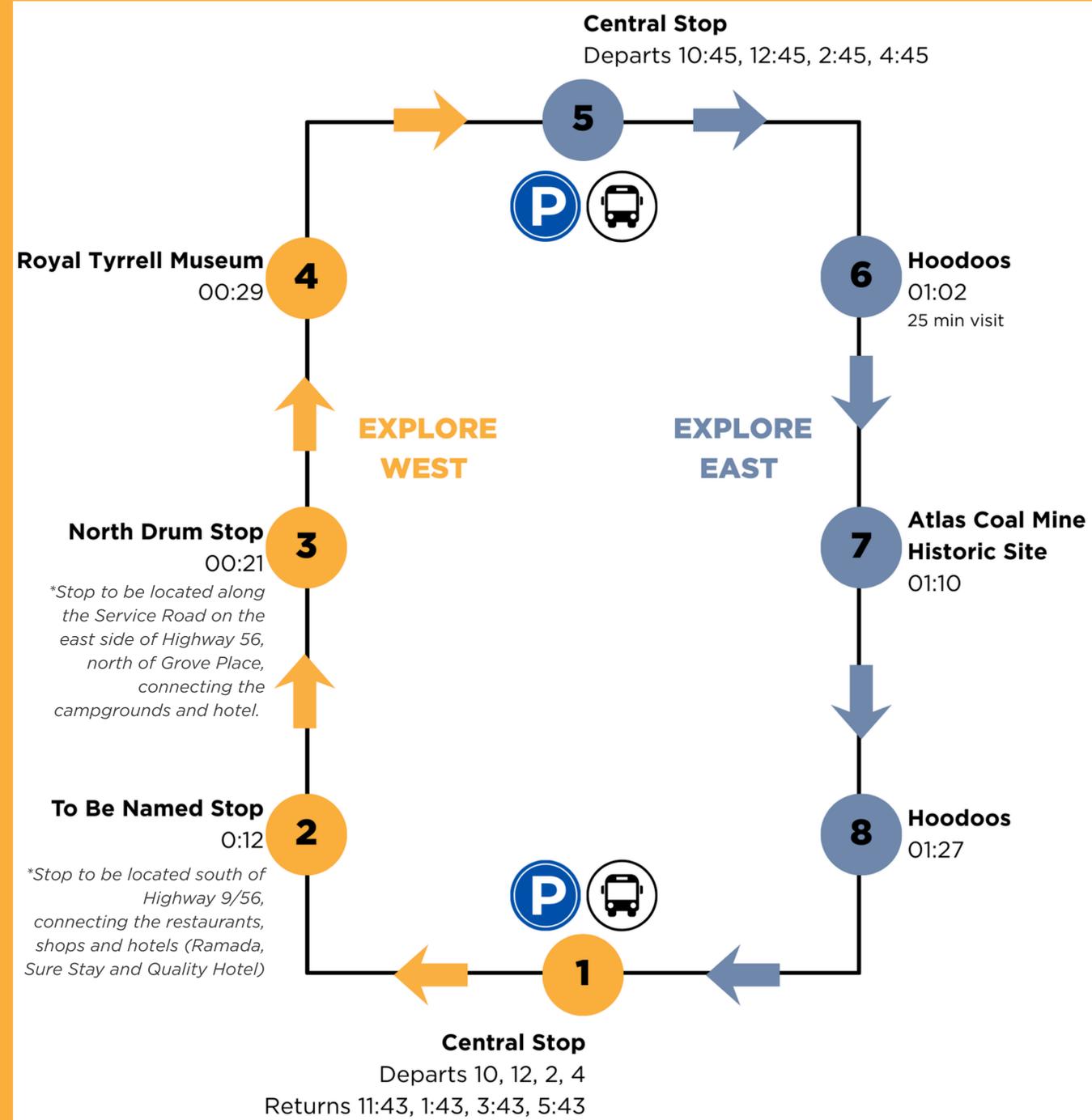


# DRUMHELLER TRANSIT FEASIBILITY STUDY

## Route Options Overview

	Transit Option Packages				
Option	1: Fixed Route – Central Drumheller	2: Fixed Route – Central Drumheller + Intercommunity	3: Fixed Route – Central Drumheller + Limited Intercommunity	4: OnDemand Transit	5: Community Partnership
Service Structure	Fixed route connecting Royal Tyrrell and central Drumheller (Riverside – Newcastle)	Central fixed route + intercommunity route from Nacmine to East Coulee	Central fixed route + limited intercommunity route from Nacmine to East Coulee	On-demand rides available within Central Drumheller	Partner with community service orgs to leverage existing vehicles in community for a set number of days a week
Potential Service Structure Changes	Switch to a flex route service	Switch to a flex route service, make intercommunity routes seasonal	Switch to a flex route service, make limited intercommunity routes seasonal	-	-
Frequency	Bus every 60-90 mins	Bus every 60-90 mins	Central Drumheller bus every 60-90 mins, Further community: limited service	Based on availability	Based on availability
Period of Operation	Potential for weekday mid day, weekday all day, or weekday + weekend service				Periodic / Based on Availability

## Route and Timetable



*\*Do you have a name for stops 2 and 3? Stop descriptions are provided to share where these stops are, and is not planned to be included on the final route map*

### The Bus



- The shuttle can carry **10–25 passengers** (depending on the vehicle).
- The service will be run by a professional transportation company chosen through a competitive RFP process. This helps ensure the pilot is **safe, reliable, and well run.**

# Summer Shuttle

## Bus Pilot

Both locals and visitors are welcome to ride the **FREE hop-on, hop-off shuttle bus** to get around the Drumheller valley this summer. This is a pilot project, which means we are testing the service to learn and improve.

### When the Shuttle Bus Runs

- The shuttle runs on **Fridays and Saturdays**
- From **late June to late August**
- A total of **20 service days** over 10 weeks in the summer

### About the Route

The shuttle route:

- Connects **six key destinations**
- Serves both the **west and east ends** of the valley
- Runs from **10:00 a.m. to 5:45 p.m.**
- Comes by **every two hours**, making **four trips per day**

### Route Design

The route was created with help from the Destination Development Plan Steering Committee. This group includes representatives from local government, business, tourism, and community throughout Drumheller, Kneehill, Wheatland, and Starland.

The route was designed using these key factors:

- Staying **within the Town of Drumheller** boundary
- What we learned from the **2024 Summer Visitor Survey**, including where visitors arrive, go and stay.
- No stop serves only one private business
- **Travel time and distance** between stops
- Enough **time for riders to explore** each stop and nearby areas
- The **funding available** for this pilot

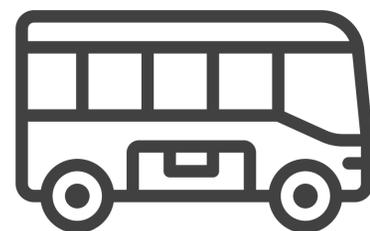
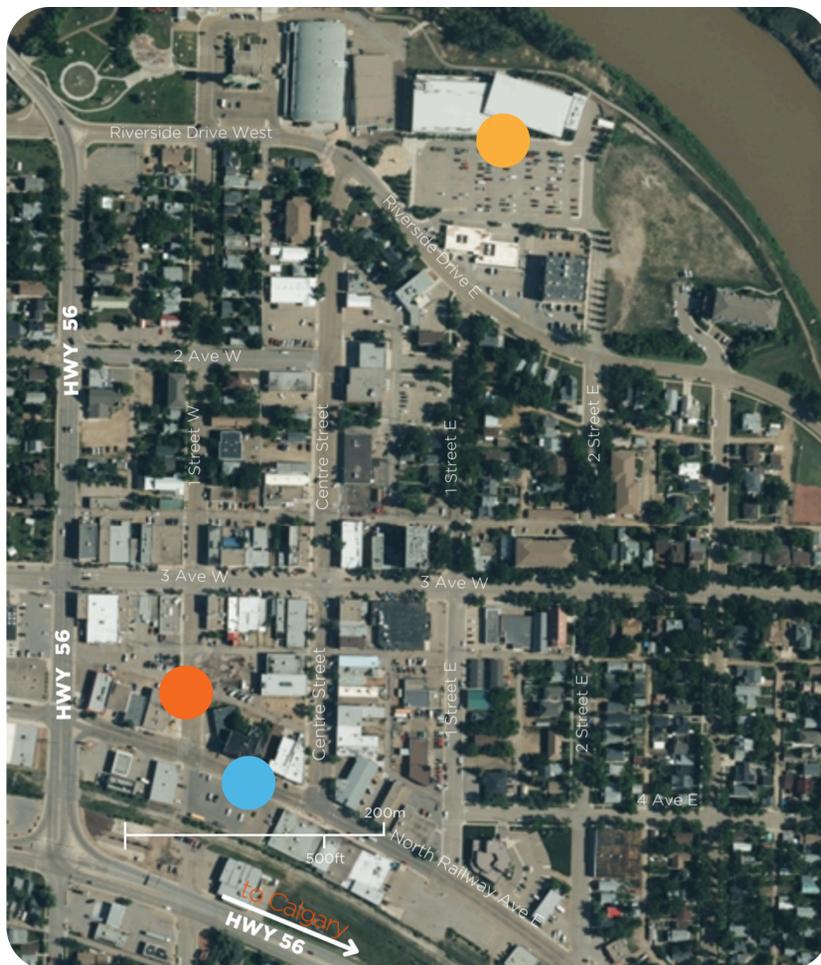
# Central Bus Stop

The central stop is the main hub for the hop-on, hop-off bus. The bus stops here at the **start, middle, and end of each route**. It will also **connect** the local shuttle with the **Calgary intercity bus** in the works for this summer.

## You get to help choose the central stop

The community is being asked to select from **three possible locations** shown on this panel. All three options meet the basic needs for **safety, access, and operations**. The table shows some factors to consider. Each option has **pros and cons**.

As you review the options, think about what would **best serve the community** as a starting point for a central bus stop. The location can change in the future as we learn from this pilot.



**Bus Length**  
 Coach Bus  
 13.7 m (45 ft)  
 Mini Bus  
 6.4 - 8.5 m (21 - 28 ft)



Factors:	BCF	Downtown Plaza	Railway Ave
<b>Proximity to Public Washrooms</b>	inside	adjacent	at the plaza ~ 120 m
<b>Proximity to Shade</b>	inside	adjacent	none
<b>Proximity to Pathways</b>	~50 m, located behind the BCF	~120 m, Rails to Trails	~50 m, Rails to Trails
<b>Proximity to Downtown Shops</b>	~500 m	downtown	downtown
<b>Proximity to Visitor Information</b>	~200 m	~ 500 m	~ 620 m
<b>Parking Availability</b> for folks taking the bus to Calgary (if needed)	available off-street, paid for by some	available off-street, free	available off-street, free
<b>On-Street Parking Impact</b>	none	~3 stalls for the coach bus	~3 stalls for the coach bus
<b>And ....</b>	other factors that you might consider		
<b>Special Notes</b>	Access to the library and gym	Summer in the Plaza events	

# Why run a pilot?

A pilot is a **small test** of an idea before making it bigger. It helps us:

- Try something new on a **small scale**
- **Learn what works** and what doesn't
- **Reduce risk** before making long-term decisions
- Gather **real data and community feedback**



This summer shuttle bus pilot is a **starting point**. We don't expect it to be perfect. The goal is to learn, improve, and grow from here.

## Measuring Success

The pilot will be considered successful if:

- People **use the shuttle**
- It helps people **get around the valley more easily**
- We gather **useful data and feedback** to guide future transportation planning

During the pilot, we will track:

- **How many people ride the bus**
- **Feedback** from riders, drivers, and the community
- **What works well** and what could be improved

Results from the pilot will be **shared with the community in the fall**. We'll look at ridership, feedback, and lessons learned, and compare them with experiences from other communities to help guide next steps.

## Stay Connected & Get Involved

You can stay connected and take part by:

- Visiting the project webpage at [traveldrumheller.com/destination-drumheller](http://traveldrumheller.com/destination-drumheller)
- Signing up for the **Destination Drumheller e-newsletter**
- Sharing with your neighbours, friends, colleagues, and visitors how they can hop-on and hop-off to explore this summer
- **Riding the bus**
- Sharing your **feedback and ideas** as the pilot runs
- **Posting routes and schedules** at your workplace (materials available this spring from Travel Drumheller)

**Thank you for taking the time to learn more and share your thoughts**

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