

Routes: Trade & Commerce

Project Overview

Over the next 10 years, Manitoba will be recognized as a national transportation hub, linking east to west, north to south and enabling strong economic activity within and across our borders to: enhance transportation mobility and connectivity; ensure safety and reliability across the highway network; enable industry expansion that leverages Manitoba's diverse economy; and build climate resiliency.

International, interprovincial, and regional goods movement is an integral part of Manitoba's economy and the province's highway network plays a vital role in enabling market access. Allowing heavier loads on our highways supports Manitoba businesses by requiring fewer trips/shipments to transport goods from one location to another. However, this requires greater investment to build the roads, bridges, and culverts that form these routes – it is not economical for all provincial highways to support the heaviest allowable loads.

The proposed Routes: Trade & Commerce grid builds on the existing network of highways that support Manitoba's heaviest highway loading (truck weight limits) to ensure Manitobans have a reliable connection to highways that support the movement of goods. The proposed expanded grid consists of key north-south and east-west routes for trade (interprovincial and international goods movement) and commerce (regional goods movement) that support Manitoba's economy by improving access for Manitoba goods to reach diverse markets.

The goal of this project is to inform the public, municipalities, and industry and get their input on planning and prioritizing highway projects in Manitoba so we can continue to build and maintain a robust highway network that supports the economy through access to interprovincial and international markets.

Engagement Overview

This engagement asked the public and industry for feedback on the proposed grid of trade and commerce routes, including the routes within the grid that are proposed for upgrading to allow heavier highway loading.

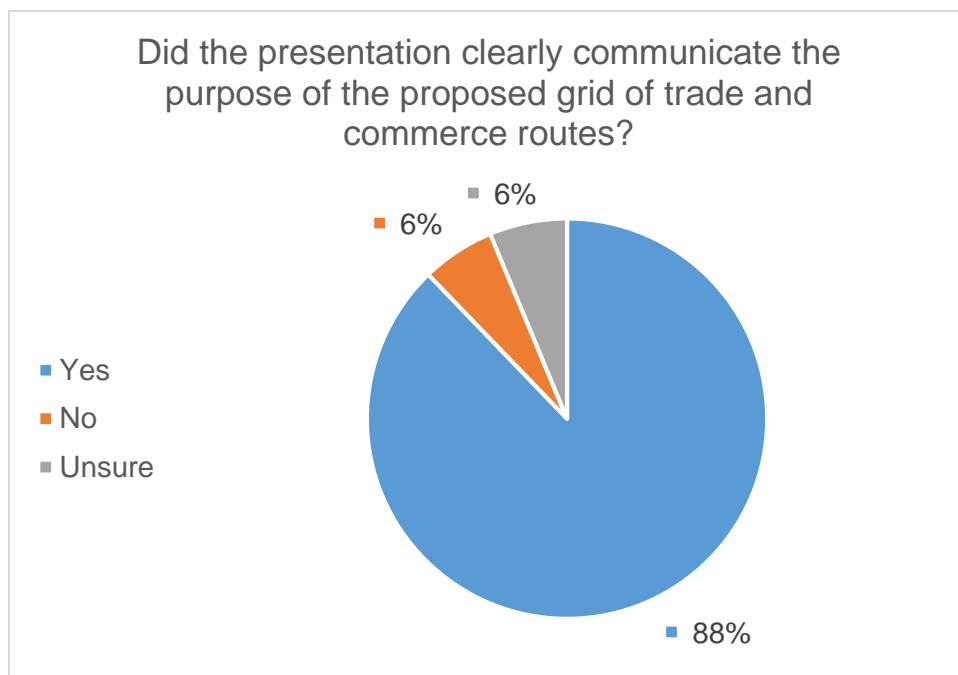
A presentation for the proposed Routes: Trade & Commerce grid was available to review on EngageMB and then respondents were asked to complete a questionnaire that was open for feedback from May 21 to June 11, 2021. In addition to the May 21, 2021 news release, the engagement was advertised through letters to industry associations, outreach to the Association of Manitoba Municipalities, and through social media.

The presentation outlined why a grid of trade and commerce routes is necessary and provided an overview of the recommended loading upgrades. The survey invited feedback on eight regions of Manitoba, as well as on the project plan overall.

What We Heard

The EngageMB project site was visited by 578 people and the survey was completed by 287 people. Additionally, email responses were received from industry stakeholders (Manitoba Trucking Association and Keystone Agricultural Producers) and local government stakeholders (the Councils of Swan Lake First Nation and the Rural Municipalities of Louise, Lorne, North Norfolk, Victoria, Stuartburn, and Emerson-Franklin).

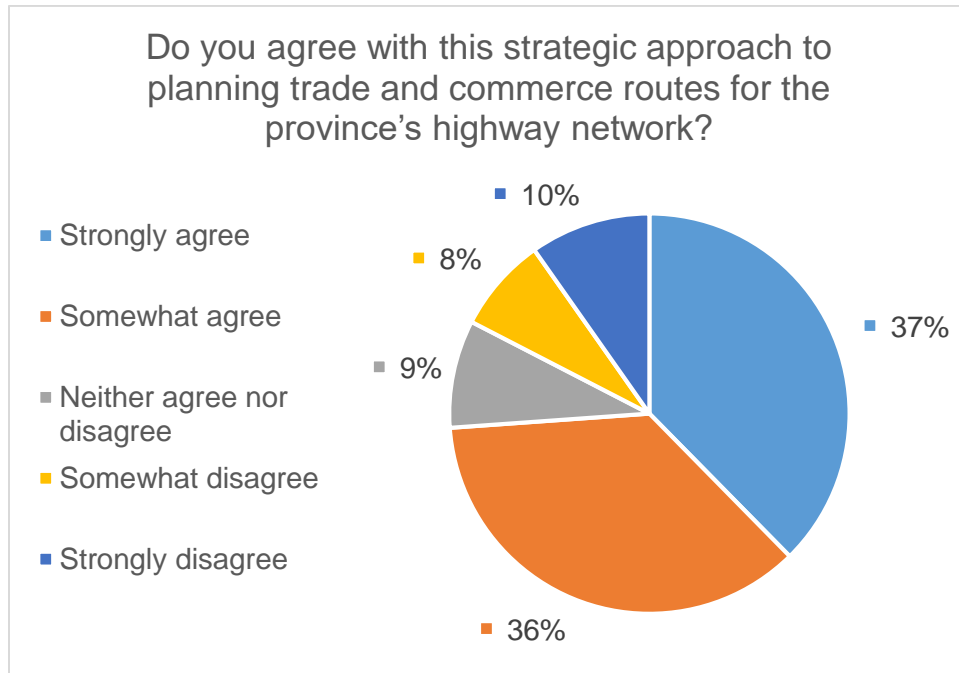
Among survey respondents, 88 per cent (252 respondents) indicated that the public presentation material clearly communicated the purpose of the proposed grid of trade and commerce routes, 6 per cent (17 respondents) did not find the materials clear and 6 per cent (18 respondents) were unsure.



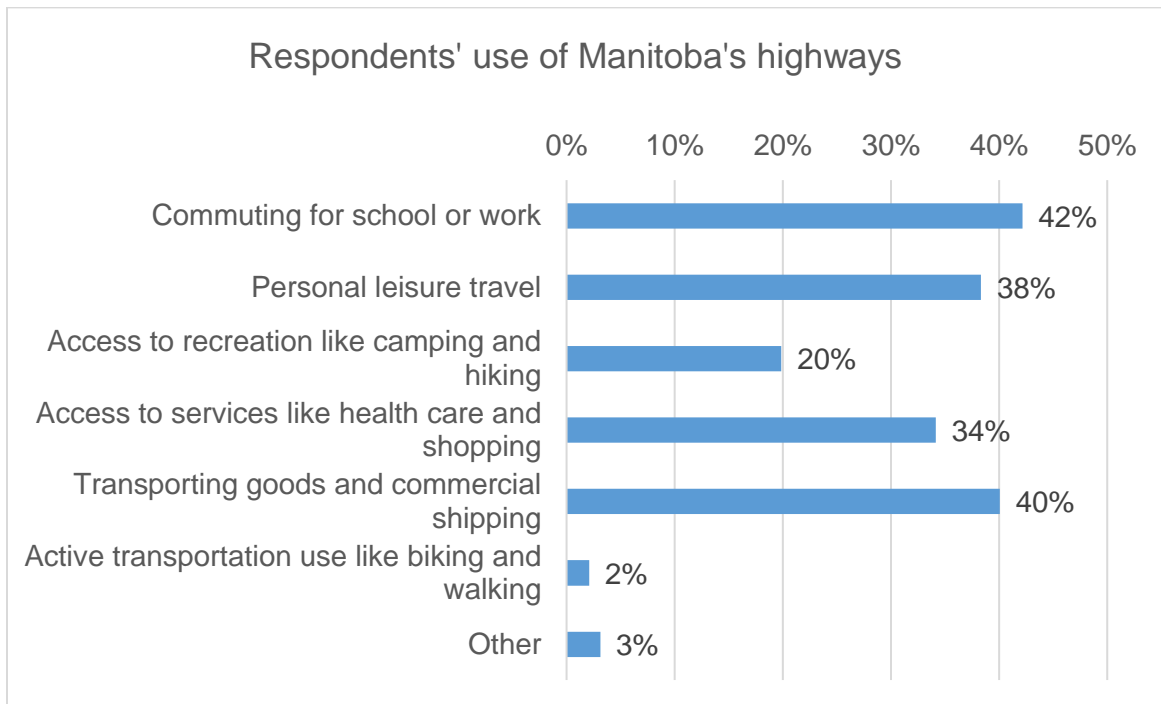
Some respondents who answered “no” or “unsure” provided further details on why they were unsure or did not feel the materials were clear. Many listed more than one reason, did not provide any feedback, or expressed specific concerns with the project plan. Key themes identified by these 35 respondents were:

- Advocating for upgrading a specific highway
- More details were needed on various project aspects
- Better supporting data is required
- Did not view presentation material

Respondents were asked to what extent they agree with this strategic approach to planning trade and commerce routes for the provincial highway network. Among respondents, 73 per cent (212 respondents) indicated they somewhat or strongly agree with this approach, 9 per cent indicated they neither agree or disagree, 8 per cent indicated they somewhat disagree, and 10 per cent indicated they disagree to this approach to planning trade and commerce routes.



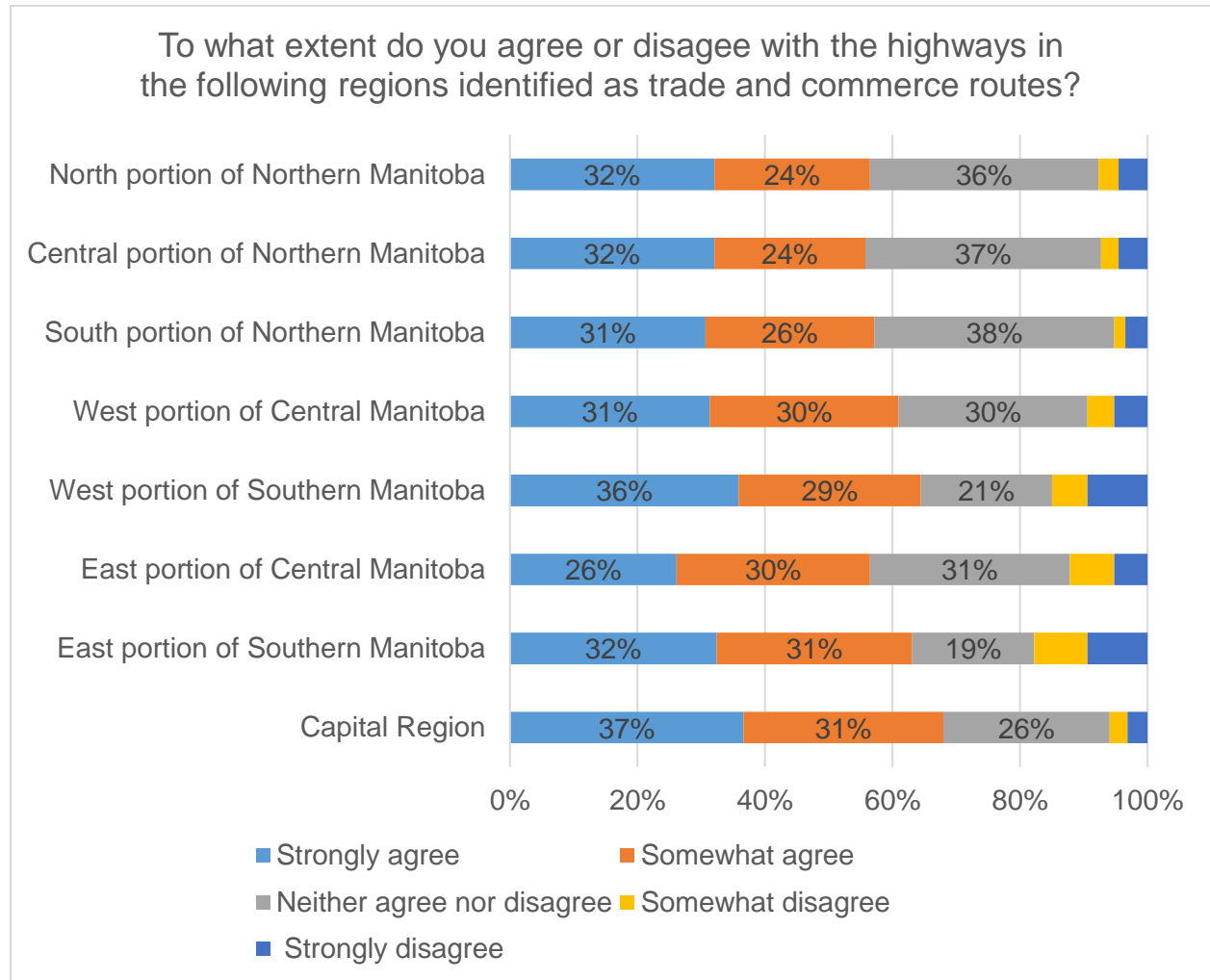
Many respondents, 42 per cent, indicated that they use Manitoba's highways for commuting to school or work, 40 per cent use Manitoba's highways for transporting goods and commercial shipping, and 38 per cent use Manitoba's highways for personal leisure travel. Other responses indicated that participants use Manitoba's highways for access to services like health care and shopping (34 per cent), access to recreation like camping and hiking (20 per cent), and active transportation use like biking and walking (2 per cent). Respondents were invited to select up to two options.



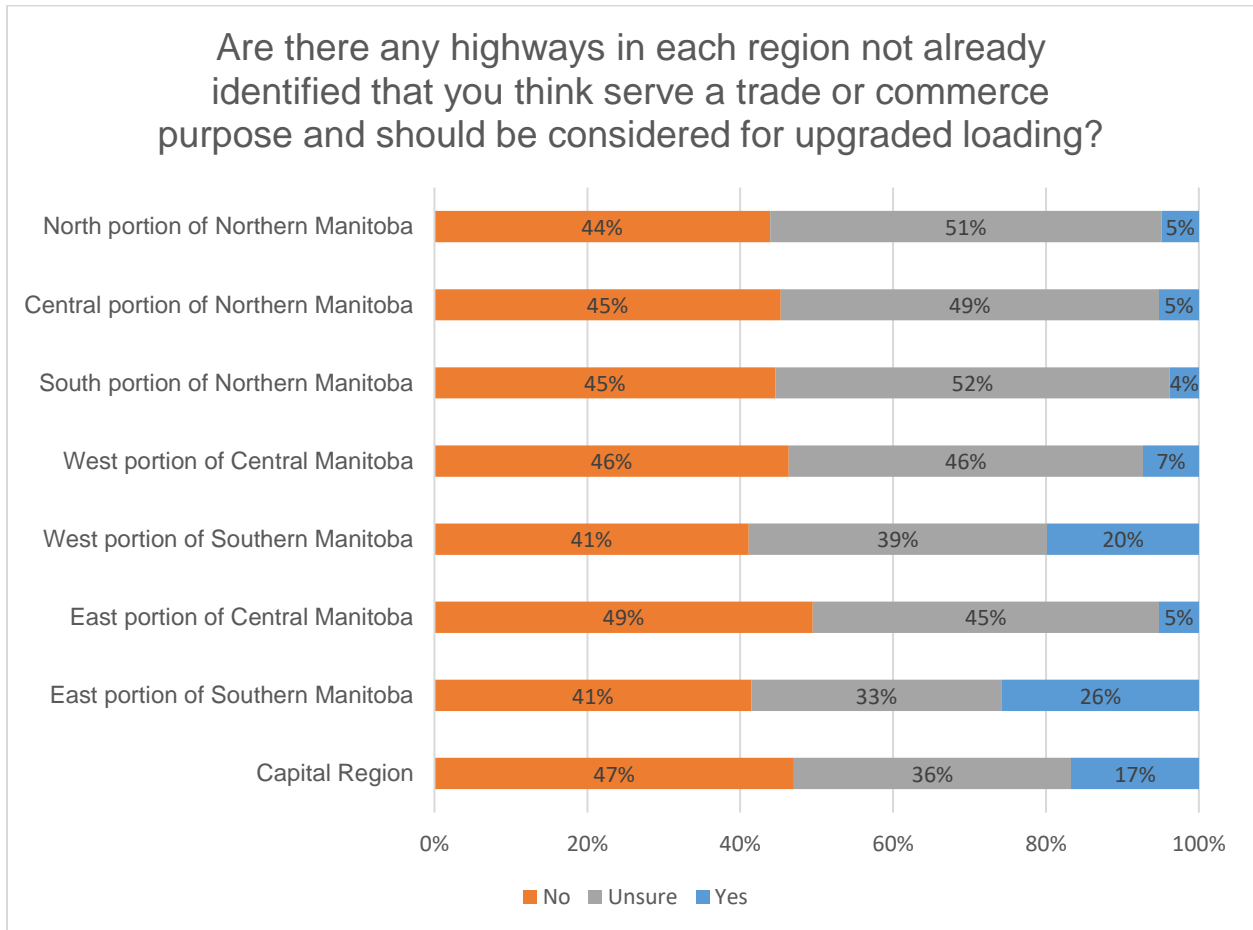
Respondents who indicated "other" (9) were invited to specify their interest in the project area. Responses included:

- Work-related travel
- Moving agricultural equipment or goods
- Commercial trade

The proposed grid of trade and commerce routes was divided into eight regions. For each region, respondents were asked to rate the extent to which they agree or disagree with the highways identified as trade and commerce routes. Respondents indicated they strongly or somewhat agreed with the trade and commerce routes identified at a rate of 56 to 68 per cent for the eight regions.



For each of the eight regions, respondents were asked if there were any highways not already identified that they think serve a trade or commerce purpose and should be considered for upgrade to Manitoba's heaviest loading.

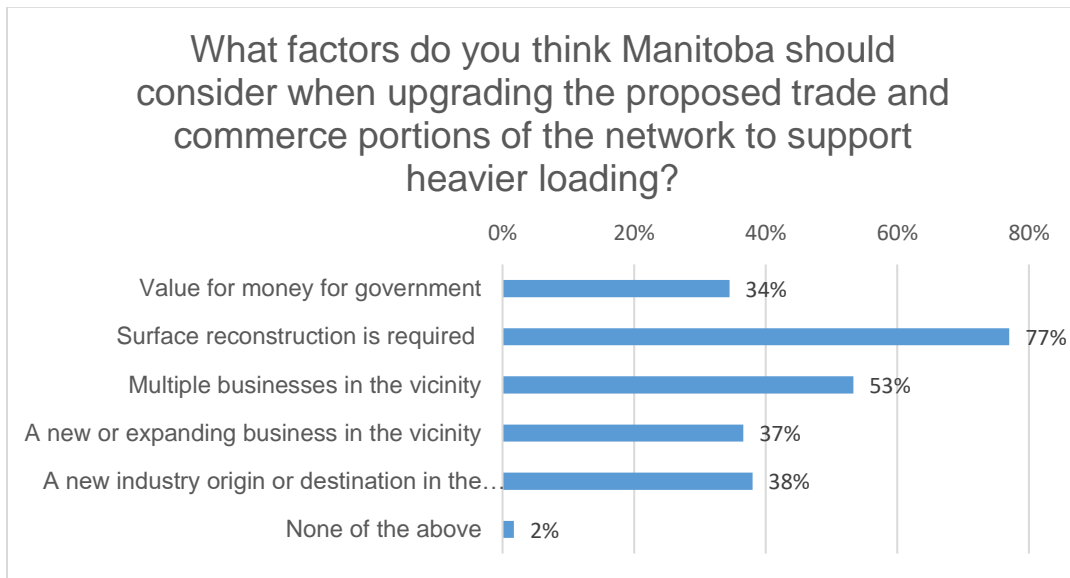


Respondents who answered “yes” had the opportunity to comment on the highway(s) they felt should be added to the trade and commerce network. A total of 168 responses were received, including 159 through the engagement survey and 9 responses received from industry and local government stakeholders. Feedback was analyzed by region, with many responses noting more than one highway. Highways are presented in order of responses received, with highways that received the most responses at the top. Highways that were identified in 2 instances or fewer not reported.

Respondents wrote in suggestions to include the following provincial highways (or sections of the highways) in the grid of trade and commerce routes:

Region	Highways identified and/or affirmed
Capital Region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PTH 15 • PR 311 • PTH 75 • PTH 26 • PR 248
East portion of southern Manitoba	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PR 201 • PR 302 • PR 305 • PTH 12 • PR 206 • PR 210 • PR 403 • PTH 23 • PTH 59 • PR 200 • PR 317
East portion of central Manitoba	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PR 304
West portion of southern Manitoba	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PTH 34 • PTH 23 • PTH 5 • PTH 3 • PTH 18 • PTH 21 • PTH 24 • PTH 83 • PR 256
West portion of central Manitoba	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PTH 45
South portion of northern Manitoba	No highways in the south portion of northern Manitoba were identified or affirmed three or more times.
Central portion of northern Manitoba	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PR 283 • PR 287
North portion of northern Manitoba	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PR 280 • PR 391

Respondents were also asked to identify up to three factors Manitoba should consider when upgrading the proposed trade and commerce portions of the network to support heavier loading.



Respondents were provided the opportunity to provide general comments and feedback. Feedback was analyzed and grouped according to key themes that emerged, with many responses including more than one theme. Responses that were mentioned in 5 instances or fewer are not reported.

Instances	Key Themes
70	Advocating for a specific highway's inclusion in the Routes: Trade & Commerce grid <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PTH 34 • PR 201 • PR 283 • PTH 5
24	Comments that noted need for surface repair on existing highways
17	General support for the project
9	Suggestions for how to prioritize upgrades <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritize north-south loading upgrades • Evaluate potential upgrades based on return on investment with respect to Manitoba's GDP • Transfer less-used highways to local government
8	Comments about trade and commerce routes having potential to benefit tourism
7	Notes regarding highway safety, including active transportation requirements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggestion to pave shoulders on trade and commerce routes
6	Suggestions for funding/cost considerations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider type of traffic • Evaluate impact to businesses • Charge commercial users of the highway system by weight/route

Next Steps

Moving forward, we will:

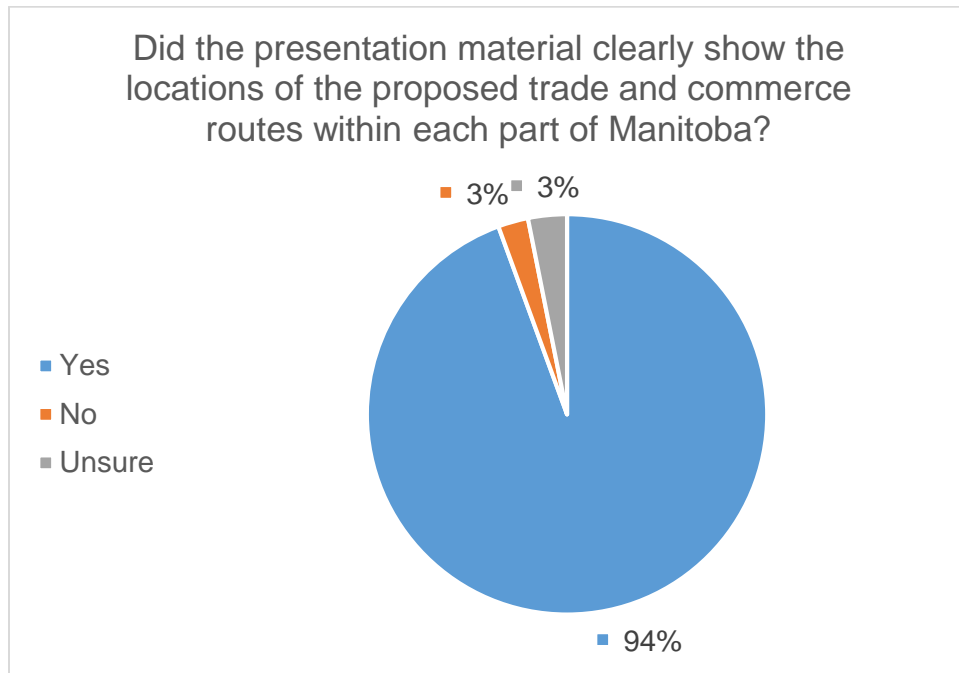
- Review public input for the trade and commerce routes
- Work with the provincial interdepartmental working group to finalize the Routes: Trade & Commerce grid
- Continue to prioritize upgrades to the trade and commerce routes in future capital plans to complete and maintain this network

Questions?

Please contact cms-ipam@gov.mb.ca.

Additional Results

Respondents were asked if the presentation material clearly showed the locations of the proposed trade and commerce routes within each part of Manitoba. Among respondents, 94 per cent (271 respondents) indicated that the public presentation material clearly showed the locations of the proposed trade and commerce routes within each part of Manitoba, 3 per cent (7 respondents) did not find the locations clear, and 3 per cent (9 respondents) were unsure.



Respondents were also asked to comment on their interest in Manitoba’s highway network. Respondents could select multiple answers.

