

# MARLBOROUGH

A community portrait prepared by  
Active Neighbourhoods Canada.



## Active Neighbourhoods Canada

How can the design of our communities contribute to public health, well-being and safety? Respond to traffic congestion? Stimulate the economy? Work towards the overall sustainability of our city?

These are questions that inspired the development of Active Neighbourhoods Canada, a collaboration between Sustainable Calgary, the Montreal Urban Ecology Centre and the Toronto Centre for Active Transportation. Funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada's "Healthy Weights" program, Active Neighbourhoods supports walking, cycling and vibrant streets. Our philosophy is that people will walk more if they have destinations nearby to go to,

and great pathways – safe, accessible, beautiful – to get there with.

Sustainable Calgary is working alongside 4 communities in Calgary and Alberta over 4 years, with Marlborough as our third community. We help neighbourhoods identify strengths and weaknesses in their neighbourhoods, explore design solutions with professionals, and work towards the implementation of at least one design change within 2 years. These experiences are shared with professionals, decision-makers and community organizations over the course of the project to contribute to best practices in participatory planning and sustainable urban design.

## Active Neighbourhoods in Marlborough

Active Neighbourhoods has been partnering with the Marlborough Community Association (ACA) since June 2015 to find out the good, the bad, and the "meh" of Marlborough's public spaces. Engaged in this project are local residents, Safer Calgary, various City of Calgary departments, the Ward 10 office, Spinal Cord Injury Alberta, NHTV University (Breda, Netherlands), and more.

The approach in Marlborough was to spring-board off of the City of Calgary's This Is My Neighbourhood initiative, which documented resident priorities for improving the neighbourhood. These included: improving back lane safety, catwalk rehabilitation, installing more 'urban furniture' such as garbage cans, and revitalizing the neighbourhood with public art. Sustainable Calgary decided to pick up the baton by developing a better understanding of resident priorities spatially – where were common walking routes? Gathering spaces? Where should interventions focus? SCS would also try to connect with harder-to-reach residents.

Since then, we've been collecting information through community bike rides and walks, door-to-door surveys, community mapping, location observations, accessibility and emotional walk audits, photo surveys and short interviews. We've attended the local Stampede BBQ, dropped in on local recreational groups, chatted with local business owners, collaborated with the Calgary Immigrant Women's Association and local religious organizations. We have been supported by teachers and students in developing tools to communicate with people learning English as a second language. In July of 2016, we were fortunate to be joined by two students from NHTV University (Breda) who took a lead role in

gathering information on the neighbourhood, and provided preliminary design recommendations. They took their work back to fellow students in the Netherlands, and spent six months developing detailed design recommendations for Marlborough. The Spinal Cord Injury Association also teamed up with us in July for an accessibility walk audit, providing illuminating observations on the built environment from the perspective of sight, hearing and mobility impairments.

This Community Portrait aims to distill the information we collected, and provide a snapshot of Marlborough – what does it look like, physically and socially? How do residents feel about walking, biking and hanging out in their community? What changes would they like to see?

This information feeds into the 2017 Urban Design Invitational, where designers and decision-makers develop a series of "design schemes" for Marlborough and evaluate their feasibility. Design schemes go back to residents for feedback at the Design Selection Kiosk.



## Population and Dwellings

### Population

Total Population  
**8,989** Marlborough  
**1,195,194** Calgary

### Median Age

**40** Marlborough  
**36** Calgary

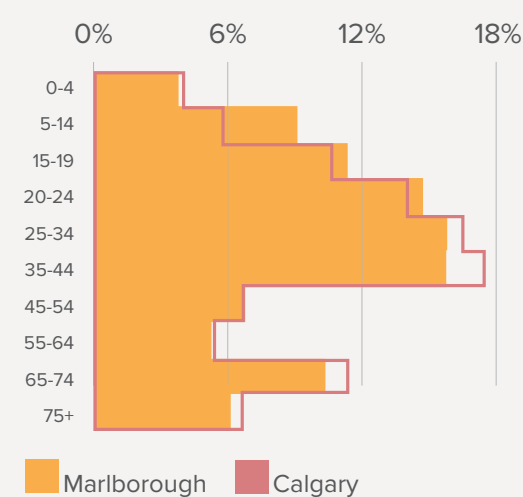
### Living Alone

**7%** Marlborough  
**10%** Calgary

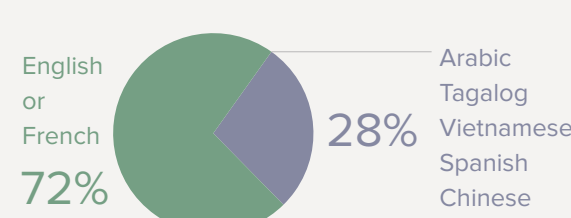
### Percent Immigrants

**35%** Marlborough  
**28%** Calgary

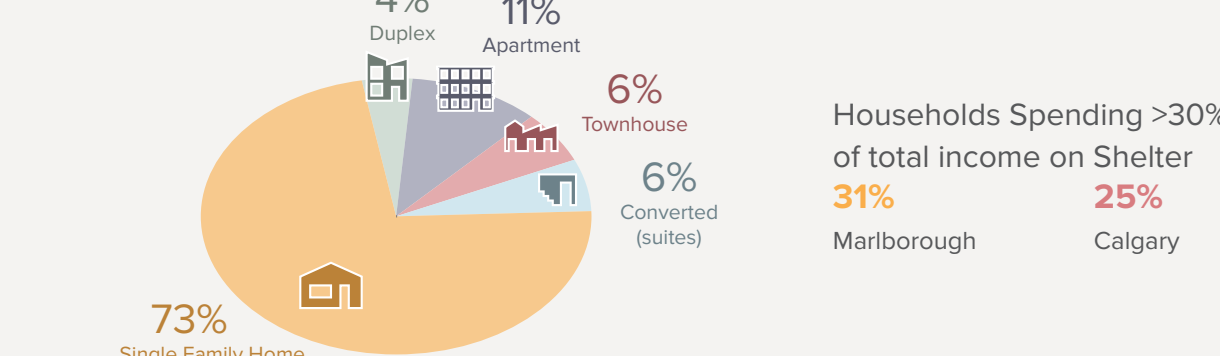
### Age Distribution



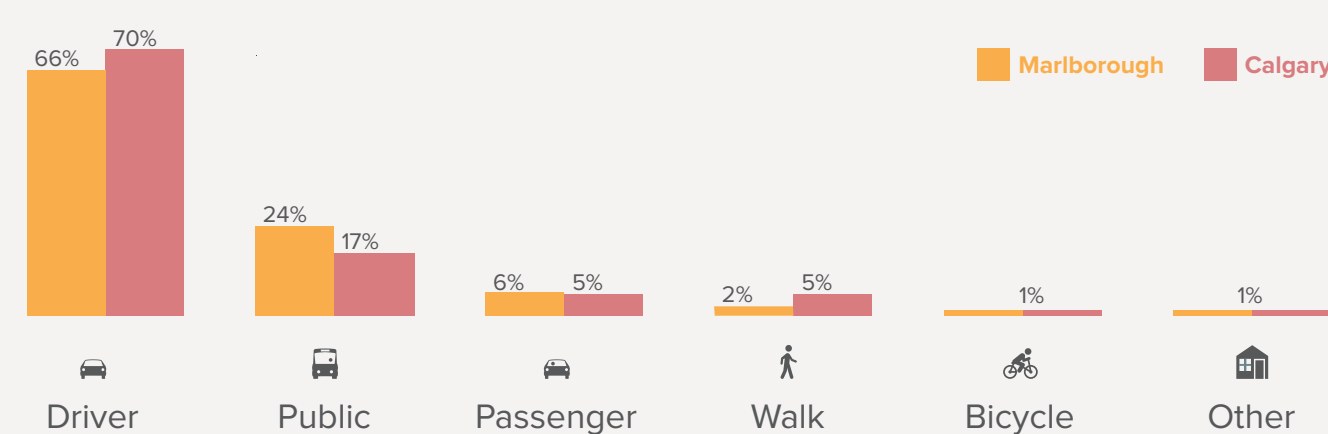
### Language Spoken Most Often at Home



### Housing



### Mode of Transport



## Activity Surveys

### Activity Profile

Marlborough residents were surveyed by Active Neighbourhoods. Here's what they had to say:

Why they might choose not to walk:

- Weather 52%
- Personal Security 19%
- Health/Disability 19%
- Distance & Time 19%

Why they might choose not to bike:

- Weather 32%
- Health/Disability 29%
- Traffic Safety 16%

### Social Connectivity

**68%** of respondents said the **sense of community** in Marlborough is strong or very strong.

**87%** of respondents said that the neighbourhood is a **safe place to live**.

**84%** of respondents said they could **count on people in their neighbourhood** in an emergency.

**94%** of respondents would like to **stay in their neighbourhood for many years to come**.

### Motivation

According to residents, **Incentives (equip. subsidies)** **Design of streets** **Improved safety** would encourage them to walk or bike more.

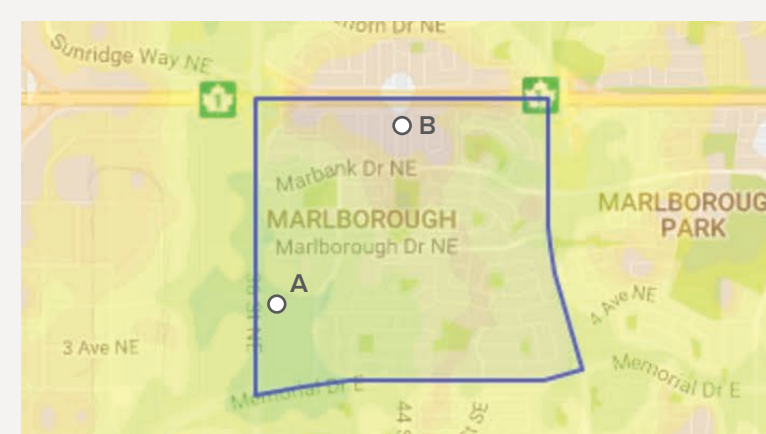


### Walkscore

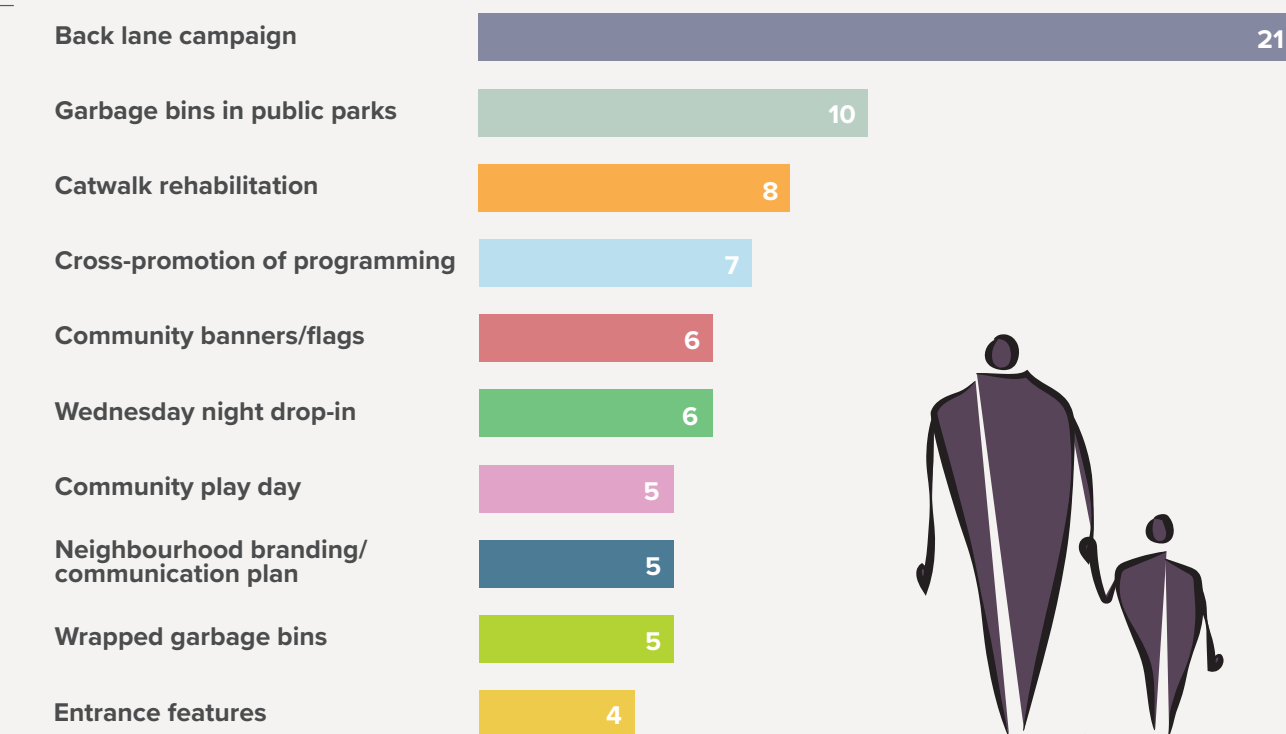
According to walkscore.com, Marlborough has the following scores:

**Location A**  
**90** Walkability  
**68** Transit

**Location B**  
**65** Walkability  
**58** Transit



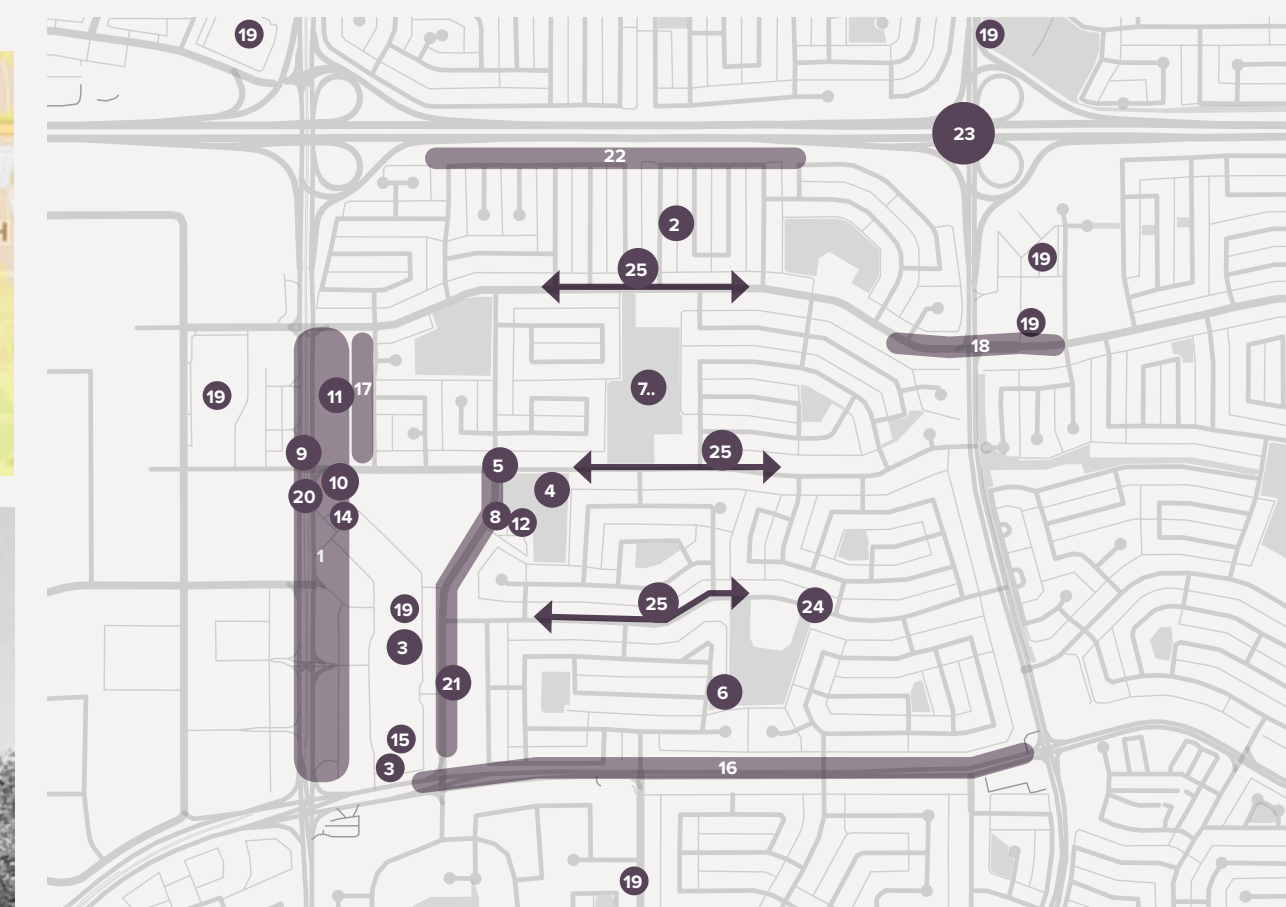
## Improvement Preferences



Data from City of Calgary survey conducted in 2016.



## Hotspots



- Narrow sidewalks; scary place to bike or walk.
- ALL CATWALKS: Catwalks are popular; green/overgrown catwalks even more positively received in the daytime; lighting, maintenance and bike access are significant issues.
- Social hub.
- Walking track requested by local seniors' group; great place to put a skating rink; are fences necessary?
- Lots of vehicle and pedestrian traffic here, challenging parking capacity; Canada Post mailboxes near sidewalk; potential for outdoor seating?
- South end of park considered sketchy. Suggestions to add programming or change zoning for development.
- ALL PARKS: No access for wheelchairs; mosquitoes intense in the summer in the grass; not well used; trees, pathways (tying into a pathway system) and natural greenery suggested.
- Unofficial phone charging station.
- Challenging intersection for pedestrians, cyclist and vehicles.
- Narrow/crowded bus pick-up zone; limited and hidden bicycle parking.
- Business owners report most customers as pedestrians; unsure of effect of urban design on business.
- The Marlborough Community Association is well-used and well-appreciated, including by seniors groups, young men's basketball, religious groups and more. Exterior appearance identified as needing attention, colour, vibrancy.
- Scary place to walk or bike; major destinations for pedestrians and drivers; requires traffic calming.
- High-traffic area for vehicles and pedestrians, speeding/aggressive driving; no drop-off zone; no dedicated pedestrian paths.
- Popular destination for some, unpopular for others, especially as relates to stray shopping carts; provides some sense of security because it is open late.
- Narrow sidewalks and high speed traffic.
- Interface between strip mall and townhouses in need of aesthetic improvement.
- Pedestrian routes to the church would be lovely.
- Walking destination.
- Feels narrow and crowded; high-traffic C-train station; inconvenient for people with strollers; would be great to mimic NW C-Train stations in Marlborough.
- Bus stops should be sheltered; at this bus stop, mall is too far away to wait inside during inclement weather.
- Great place to walk! Concerns about lighting and safety.
- Make more pedestrian-friendly, particularly with consideration for children and youth; most direct way to get to Village Square Library; residents say it's easier to drive than walk.
- Road design in school zones does not lend itself to driving at 30km/hour.
- Community cut-throughs.

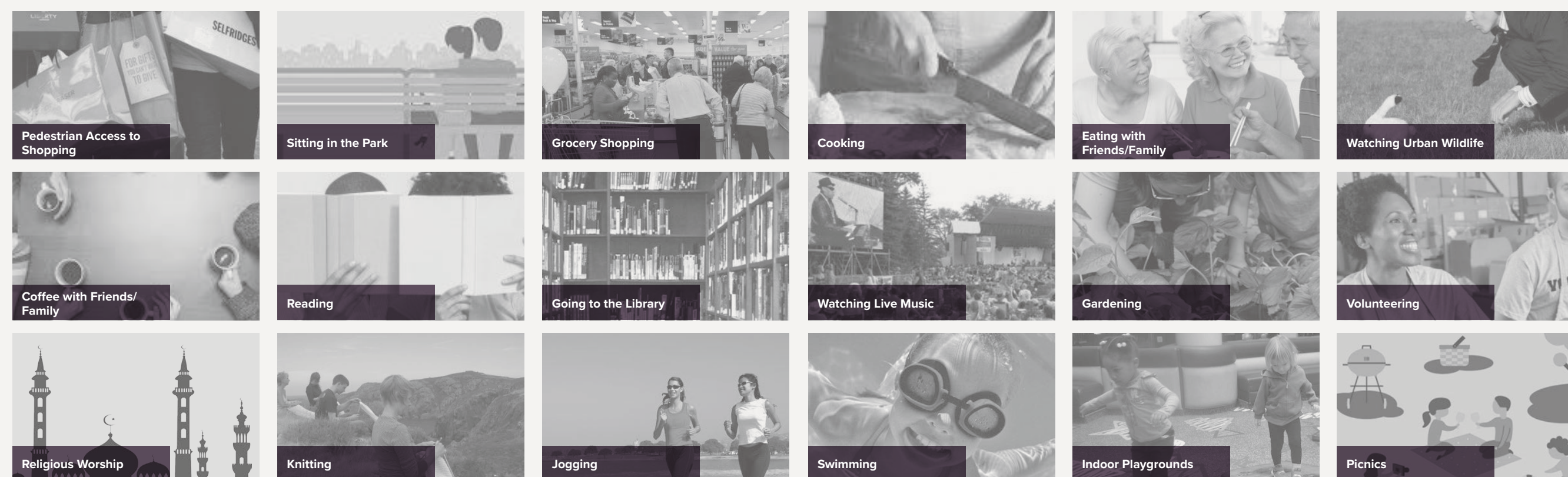
## What Would You Like To Do in Your Neighbourhood?

We asked citizens in Marlborough and surrounding area what they want to do in their neighbourhoods, in order to help the community plan and design accordingly. Popular activities are noted to the right.

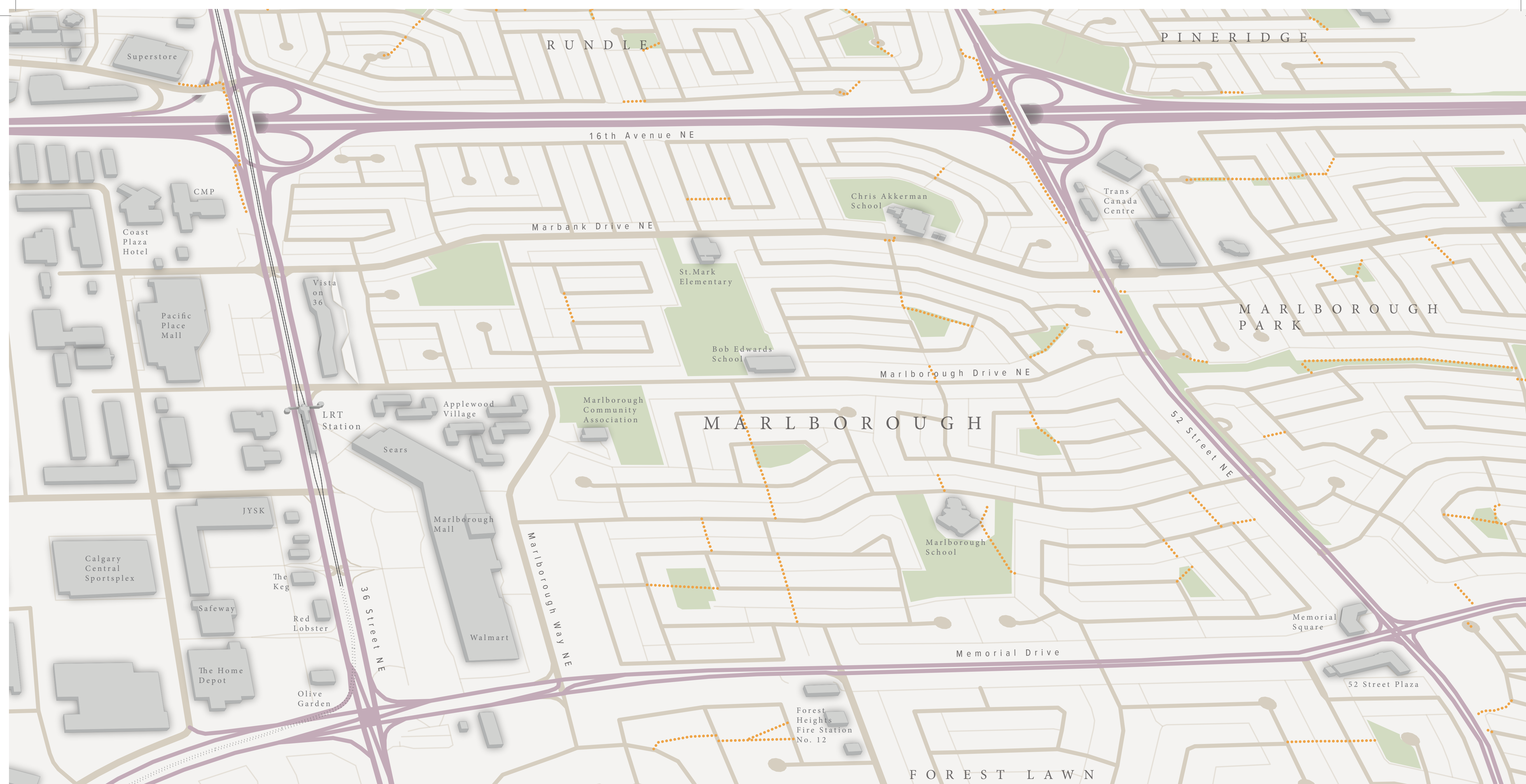
Consultation revealed varying access to activities based on availability and proximity. Parks, recreational facilities, and libraries were particularly

in demand, but not always within reach. Limitations were often due to a lack of safe and enjoyable pathways to their destinations, particularly for women with more than one child.

Marlborough currently contains a large number of parks. There are promising opportunities to develop better connections between park spaces, and to intensify park events and facilities.







### Resident Priorities:

- Bus Shelter Suitability
- Catwalk Maintenance
- LRT / Mall Interface
- Park Programming
- Absentee Landlords
- Winter Walking in Calgary
- Speed / Street Design
- Park Fencing
- Access to Shopping
- Usable/Paved Laneways
- Sidewalk Width
- Healthy, well-connected green spaces

### Neighbourhood Overview

Marlborough is many places to many people: home to non-profits, international restaurants, shopping destinations, a transit node and just under 9000 residents. The neighbourhood boasts ample green space, proximity to downtown, a strong sense of belonging, and has built an active community association and community centre with a variety of recreational programs.

Marlborough is primarily residential, with commercial along its edges. Its edge streets have been noted as barriers to pedestrians, particularly 36th Avenue, through which runs the LRT, and the northeast corner of Marlborough, which lacks pedestrian infrastructure altogether.

Marlborough houses several malls that face onto major streets, but turn their backs (or loading zones) to the local community, providing little access along this edge. This has been identified as an opportunity to create a "softer" back edge that provide pedestrian access and a more vibrant streetscape.

Marlborough is one of just a few neighbourhoods that have "catwalks", which form a network of pedestrian pathways between schools and parks. Enjoyed by residents, they also reveal challenges when it comes to wheelchair and bike accessibility, lighting and feelings of safety at night. They also raise questions of jurisdiction: while these spaces are public spaces, they are maintained by local residents, and lighting, if desired, must be paid for by local residents.

By bicycle, Marlborough is a relatively short distance from the downtown core, and current plans to install bicycle lanes are likely to improve access to riverside bicycle pathways.

Marlborough Mall has emerged as an important gathering space for the neighbourhood and region: part of a transit node, close to services and amenities, and one of just a few places where people can comfortably gather year-round – which some have been doing regularly over the course of decades. Some residents note that the mall serves the function of outdoor plazas they have frequented in warmer climates. Marlborough is also a community of youth, with significantly more 5-14 year-olds than the Calgary average. Together with Marlborough's role as a transit hub, this emphasizes the importance of creating quality pedestrian spaces in the neighbourhood.

Additional urban design opportunities that have emerged include: enhancing feelings of personal security (eg. lighting and sightlines); addressing traffic safety and pedestrian mobility around the LRT station; revitalizing underused green space; and improving the distribution and quality of gathering spaces.

