Prince Edward Island
CANADA

Department of Transportation and Infrastructure

Pathways to Highway Safety

WHAT WE HEARD REPORT

2025

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Executive Summary

The *Pathways to Highway Safety* survey, conducted by the Prince Edward Island Department of Transportation and Infrastructure, gathered public input to inform the development of a new 10-year highway safety strategy (2026-2036). Over 1,700 responses were received, providing insights into transportation habits, perceptions of safety, and priorities for improving road safety. The feedback collected through the survey is one component of a broader engagement process that will include further consultations with stakeholders and partners involved in road safety. Together, these insights will inform the development of the *Pathways to Highway Safety* Strategy, ensuring that it is evidence-based, responsive to community needs and aligned with best practices.

Who Responded:

Most survey respondents identified as female, were between ages 35 and 65, and live in Queens County. Additional demographic questions asked whether participants identified as a person with a disability, a newcomer to Canada or a member of an underrepresented group. Of those who responded, 12% (n=155) identified as a person with a disability, 4% (n=52) identified as a newcomer to Canada and 10% (n=139) identified as a member of an underrepresented group.

Key Findings Among Respondents:

- **Transportation Habits:** Personal vehicles dominate travel, with walking and cycling also common.
- **Perceptions of Safety:** 66% of respondents rated roads as “somewhat safe,” but concerns were raised about impaired and distracted driving, aggressive driving and speeding.
- **Rule Compliance:** Respondents rated themselves highest in compliance; younger drivers were perceived as least compliant.
- **Dangerous Behaviours:** Driving under the influence of drugs, riding with an impaired driver, texting while driving and driving after consuming two or more drinks of alcohol were viewed as the most dangerous driving behaviours.
- **Trends:** Most respondents believe dangerous driving behaviours have increased over the past five years, especially aggressive driving, texting while driving and cannabis-impaired driving.
- **Awareness & Communication:** Just over half of respondents recalled a road safety campaign in the past year and indicated that their preferred communication channels were social media and radio.

Public Priorities:

Open-ended responses were analyzed thematically and then organized using the Vision Zero Framework, an internationally recognized approach to road safety that aims to eliminate traffic fatalities and serious injuries. This framework helped structure the diverse suggestions into five areas for continuous focus and improvement:

- **Safer Roads:** Respondents highlighted the need for well-maintained infrastructure and improvements that make travel safe for all road users.
- **Safer Road Users:** Survey feedback emphasized education and awareness initiatives, along with practical options that encourage responsible choices.
- **Safer Speeds:** Respondents expressed support for strategies that curb excessive speeds and reduce high-risk driving behaviours.
- **Safer Vehicles:** Comments pointed to the importance of vehicles meeting safety standards and being equipped with modern safety features.
- **Post-Crash Response:** Respondents recognized the value of strong emergency systems to minimize harm and improve outcomes.

Next Steps:

These findings will guide consultations and priority-setting for the *Pathways to Highway Safety Strategy*, supporting the Department's commitment to reducing dangerous driving behaviours and creating safer roads for all.

1.0 Purpose & Context

In the Spring of 2025, the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure (hereafter "the Department") began work on a new 10-year *Pathways to Highway Safety Strategy*. This strategy will guide efforts to reduce dangerous driving behaviours and create safer roads for all road users. Highway safety affects everyone, drivers, cyclists, pedestrians and communities and the Department recognizes that meaningful input from the public is essential to shaping effective solutions.

To support this work, the Department launched an online survey to gather feedback from residents of PEI with respect to road use and driving behaviours across the province. The survey aimed to capture public perceptions, concerns, and priorities related to highway safety. Understanding these perspectives help ensure that the strategy reflects the realities of daily life on Island roads and addresses the issues that matter most to residents.

The feedback collected through the survey is one component of a broader engagement process that includes consultations with stakeholders and partners involved in road safety. Together, these insights will help inform the development of the *Pathways to Highway Safety Strategy*, ensuring that it is evidence-based, responsive to community needs and aligned with best practices.

2.0 How We Analyzed the Feedback

Quantitative survey responses were analyzed using Microsoft Excel to identify trends and summary statistics.

Open-ended qualitative responses were reviewed and analyzed thematically using a qualitative coding approach. Initial coding was inductive, identifying recurring concepts and patterns across more than 750 responses. To support interpretation and ensure alignment with evidence-based road safety principles, these themes were then organized using the Vision Zero Framework, an internationally recognized approach that aims to eliminate traffic fatalities and serious injuries through a systems-based strategy.

Applying this framework during analysis allowed the Department to structure diverse public feedback into clear, actionable themes while integrating best practices in road safety planning.

3.0 Who Participated in the Survey

The *Pathways to Highway Safety* survey received a total of 1,753 responses (1,722 in English and 31 in French) which includes 407 attempted responses (398 in English and 9 in French.

To better understand the demographic profile of the *Pathways to Highway Safety* survey respondents, several *voluntary* survey questions related to demographic information (i.e., location, age, education level, gender) were included. A total of 1,309 (1,290 in English and 19 in French) respondents answered the demographic questions, which is 74% of the total responses. Therefore, the information presented in this section pertains only to those who choose to respond to the demographic questions, and not necessarily to the entire survey respondent population.

Among those who answered the demographic questions, most identified as female (48%, n=650), were between the age of 35 to 65 (59%, n=791), live in Queens County (66%, n=882) and had completed post-secondary education (77%, n=1039).

Additional optional questions asked whether participants identified as a person with a disability, a newcomer to Canada or a member of an underrepresented group. Of those who responded, 12% (n=155) identified as a person with a disability, 4% (n=52) identified as a newcomer to Canada and 10% (n=139) identified as a member of an underrepresented group.

4.0 Transportation Habits

4.1 Types of Transportation

To better understand the modes of transportation used by survey participants, respondents were asked what types of transportation they commonly use.

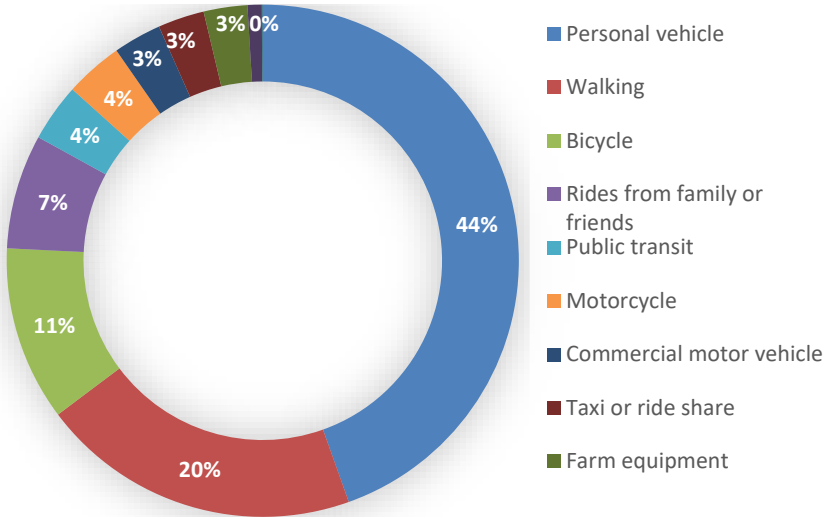

Figure 1: Types of transportation most commonly used by survey respondents.

Personal vehicles were the most frequently used mode, with 52% of respondents reporting weekly use. Walking was the next most common, with 23% using it weekly and 22% monthly. Rides from family or friends (10% monthly, 6% weekly) and cycling (9% monthly, 7% weekly) were also notable.

4.2 Frequency of Use

To better understand how often transportation modes are used, survey participants were asked which modes they use at least once a week and at least once a month.

Among respondents, 52% (n=1,578) reported using a personal vehicle at least once a week, making it the most frequently used mode. Walking was also common, with 23% (n=700) using it weekly and 22% (n=816) monthly. Cycling was used weekly by 7% (n=218) and monthly by 9% (n=338) of respondents.

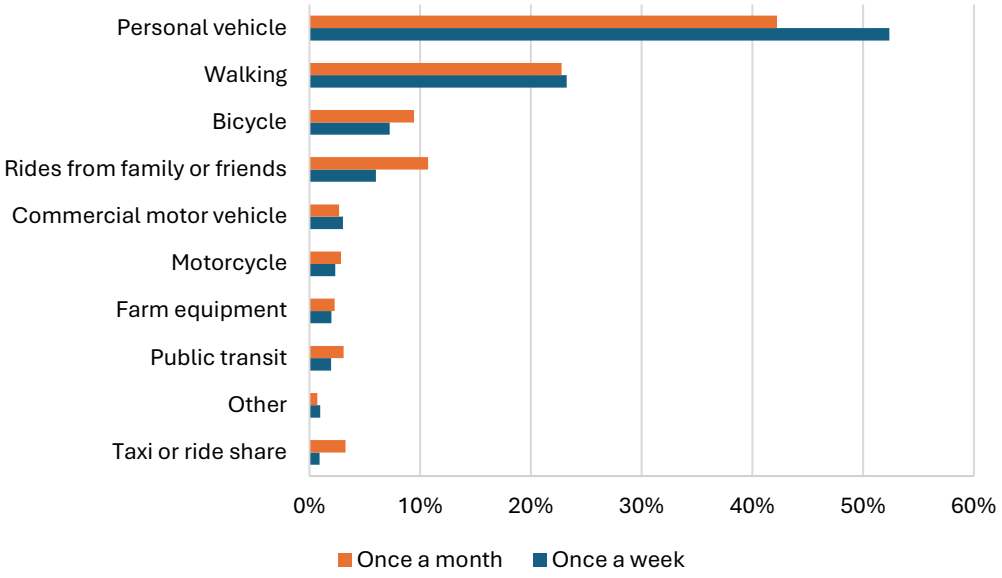

Figure 2: Frequency of transportation use by survey respondents (weekly and monthly).

5.0 Perceptions of Road Safety

Survey respondents generally perceived road safety in their county as "somewhat safe." Drivers of personal vehicles were viewed as the safest road users, while bicyclists were considered the least safe.

To better understand perceptions of public safety and dangerous driving behaviors in PEI, survey respondents were asked to rate the level of road safety in their county using a fixed Likert-type scale with the option of selecting "very safe", "somewhat safe", "not at all safe" or "do not know."

Of all survey respondents who answered the question about road safety, 66% (n=1,030) indicated that the level of road safety in their county was "*somewhat safe*" while 26% (n=412) responded "*not at all safe*" (Figure 3).

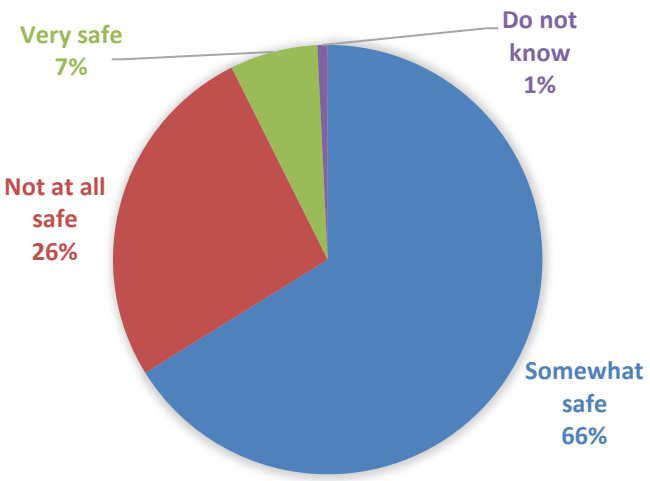

Figure 3: Survey respondents' rating of road safety in their county.

Responses were consistent across counties, with the majority selecting "somewhat safe" in each region:

- **Kings County:** 61% (n=86) responded "somewhat safe" and 28% (n=40) responded "not at all safe"
- **Queens County:** 66% (n=586) responded "somewhat safe" and 27% (n=239) responded "not at all safe"
- **Prince County:** 67% (n=191) responded "somewhat safe" and 26% (n=76) responded "not at all safe"

To understand respondents' perceptions of safety for specific types of road users, participants were asked how safe they feel about different road users on PEI roads. Most respondents indicated 'somewhat safe' for all categories, though perceptions varied by group.

Drivers of personal vehicles were perceived as the safest, with 65% of respondents indicating "somewhat safe" and 26% indicating "not at all safe." Bicyclists were perceived as the least safe, with 44% indicating "somewhat safe" and 43% indicating "not at all safe."

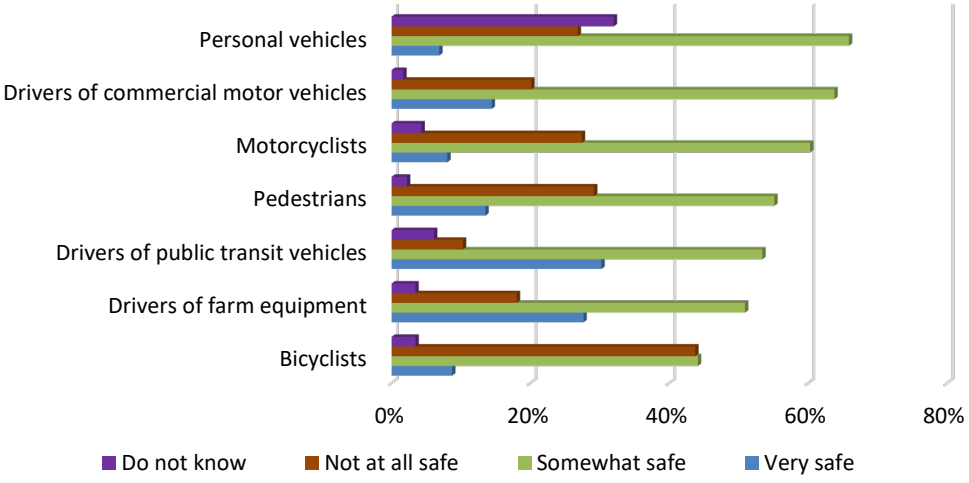

Figure 4: Respondents perceived safety of different road users on PEI Roads

6.0 Observations on Rule Compliance

Respondents rated themselves as the most compliant with road rules (91% gave themselves a high score), while younger drivers were perceived as the least compliant, followed by bicyclists and older drivers.

To understand public perceptions of road safety and dangerous driving behavior, survey participants were asked to rate how well different categories of road users follow the rules of the road. Categories included drivers of various vehicle types, pedestrians, motorcyclists, bicyclists, drivers aged 16-24, drivers over 65 years of age and 'you' as a driver.

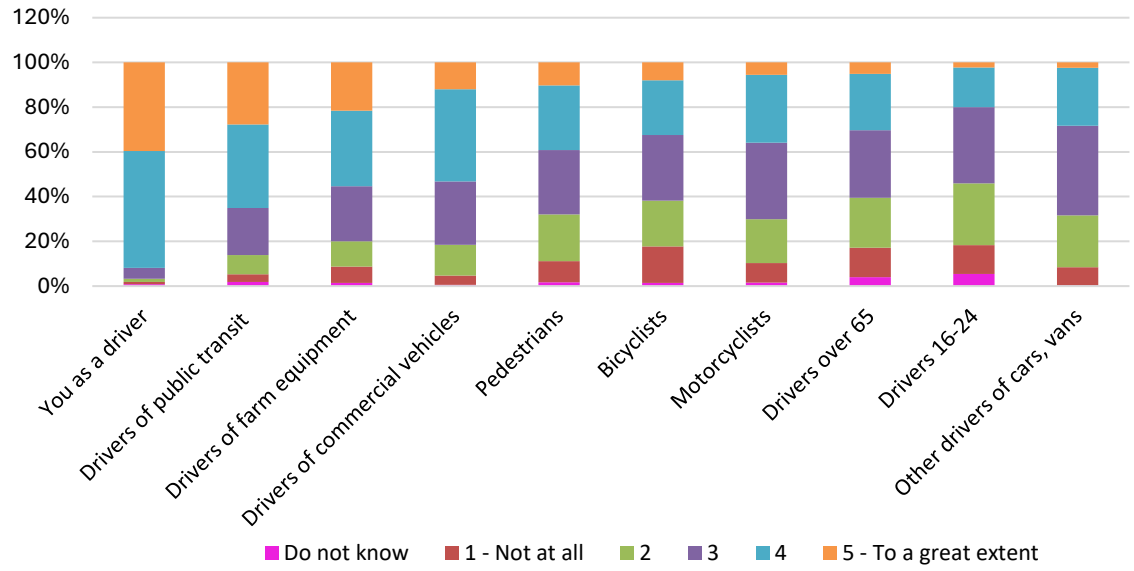

Figure 5: Survey respondents' views on how well road users follow traffic rules.

Survey respondents generally indicated most drivers follow the rules of the road to a moderate or great extent. Respondents rated themselves highest in compliance, with 91% (n=1,268) selecting a rating of 4 or 5 on a five-point scale.

Drivers aged 16-24 were perceived as least compliant with 40% (n=530) of respondents selecting a rating of 1 ("not at all") or 2. This was higher than the proportion of respondents who selected 1 or 2 for other road users, including bicyclists (36%, n=493) and drivers over 65 years of age (35%, n=461).

7.0 Perceptions of Dangerous Driving Behaviours

Impaired and distracted driving behaviours were viewed as the most dangerous by respondents. Driving under the influence of drugs ranked highest, followed by riding with an impaired driver and texting while driving. Fatigue and minor speeding were seen as less dangerous.

To understand public perceptions of dangerous driving behavior, survey participants were asked to rate how dangerous they believe specific types of driving behaviours are. The question used a five-point likert scale, where a rating of 5 indicated “very dangerous” and 1 indicated “not at all dangerous.”

Respondents overwhelmingly identified impaired and distracted driving behaviours as the most dangerous. The highest-rated dangerous driving behaviour was driving under the influence of drugs such as cocaine or methamphetamines, with 92% (n=1,264) of respondents selecting “very dangerous.” This was followed by being a passenger with a driver who has consumed alcohol or drugs (86%, n=1,182) and texting while driving (81%, n=1,125).

Driving after consuming two or more alcoholic drinks was rated “very dangerous” by 79% (n=1090) of respondents, slightly lower than other impaired driving behaviours.

Behaviours such as driving while tired (34%, n=452) and exceeding the speed limit by 10km/h or more (26%, n=363) received comparatively fewer “very dangerous” ratings from respondents.

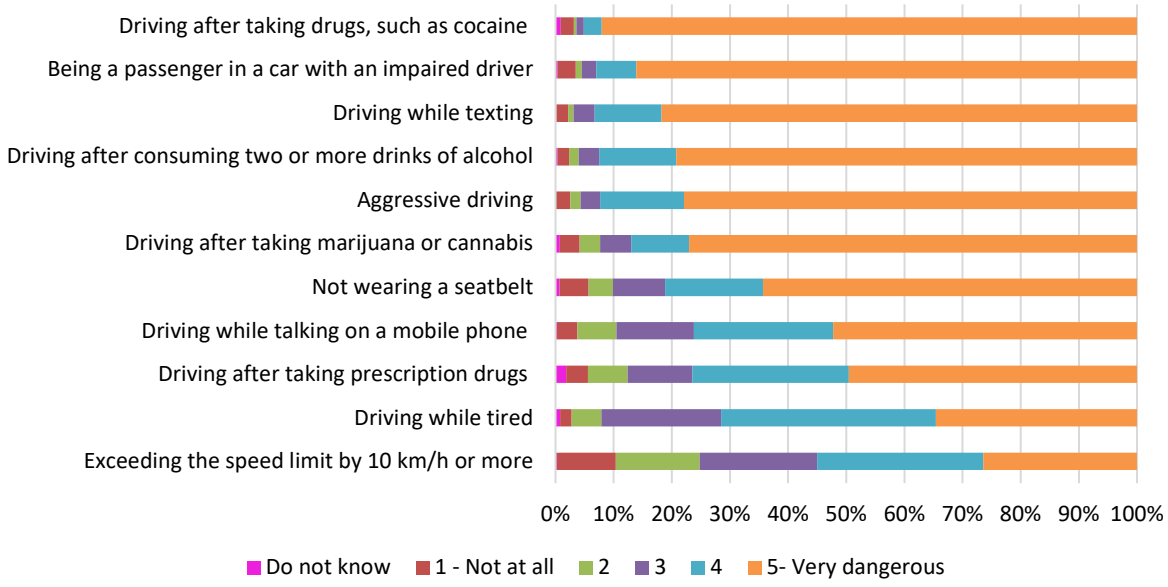

Figure 6: Survey respondents’ views on the perceived danger of various driving behaviours.

8.0 Perceived Changes in Dangerous Driving Behaviors

Most respondents believed dangerous driving behaviours have increased over the past five years, especially aggressive driving and texting while driving. Cannabis-impaired driving was also seen as rising significantly.

To better understand public perception of changes in dangerous driving behaviours, survey participants were asked whether they believed certain dangerous driving behaviors have increased, decreased or remained the same in PEI over the past five years.

Among those who responded to this question, many reported perceived increases in several high-risk driving behaviours:

- Aggressive driving was identified as having increased by 78% (n=1,038) of respondents.
- Driving while texting was reported to have increased by 66% (n=922) of respondents.
- Driving after consuming marijuana or cannabis was similarly reported to have increased by 66% (n=917) of respondents.

Exceeding the speed limit, which was previously less frequently rated as "very dangerous," was still perceived to have increased by 63% (n=807) of respondents.

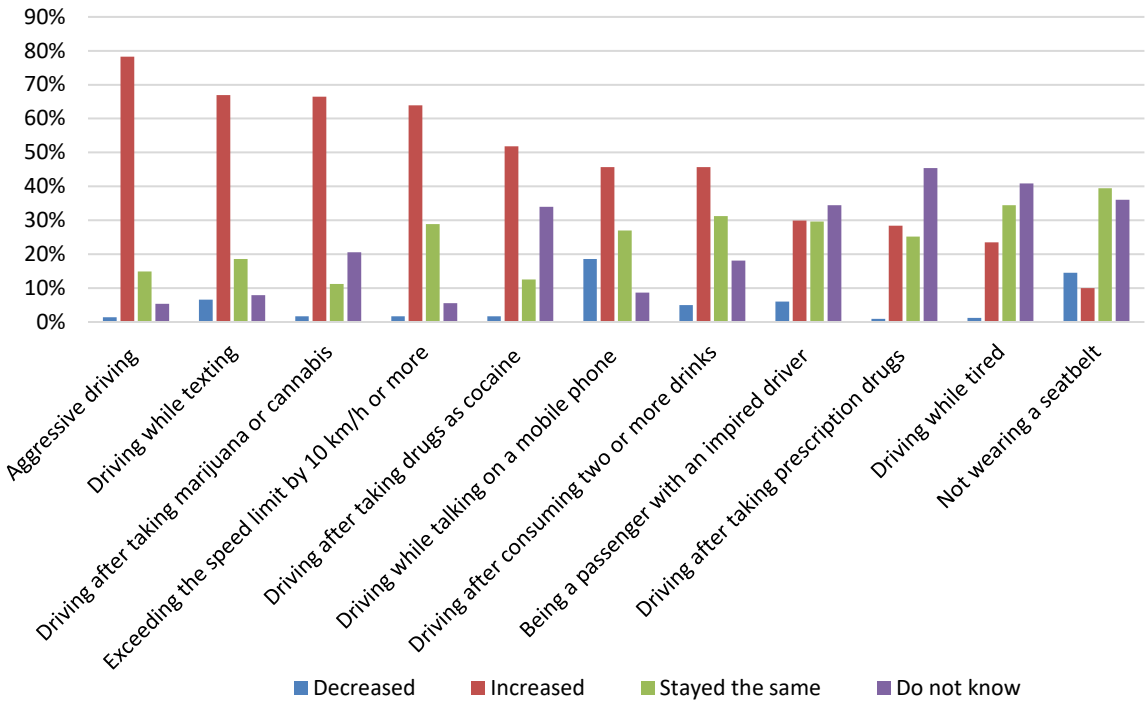

Figure 7: Changes in perceived frequency of dangerous driving behaviours over the past five years.

9.0 Awareness and Communication Preferences

Just over half of respondents recalled seeing a road safety campaign in the past year, but fewer than half of respondents could remember its content.

To better understand respondents' road safety-related communication preferences, survey respondents were asked whether they had heard or seen any advertising campaigns about road safety in PEI over the past 12 months.

Among those who responded, 51% (n= 711) reported having seen or heard a road safety campaign in the past year. Of those, 37% (n= 496) were able to recall the specific content of the campaign.

To gain insight into how the public prefers to receive information about road safety and driving initiatives, survey participants were asked about their preferred communications from the Government of PEI.

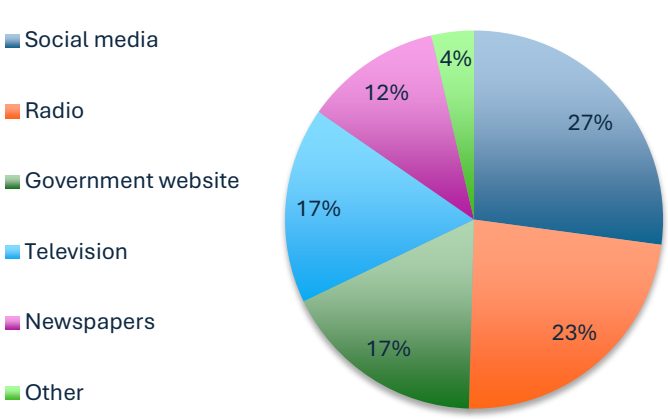

Figure 8: Preferred communication channels for road safety and driving initiatives.

Social media was the most commonly preferred method selected by 27% (n= 1094) of respondents. Radio followed at 23% (n=923).

10.0 Public Suggestions for Improving Road Safety

As part of the public engagement process for the development of PEI's new *Pathways to Highway Safety* Strategy, survey respondents were asked: "In addition to increased enforcement, what actions to improve road safety would you like to see?"

This open-ended question invited survey respondents to share their ideas, concerns, and priorities for improving safety on the province's roads. The responses reflected a wide range of lived experiences and perspectives and provided valuable insight into the public's expectations for a safer transportation system.

To analyze the breadth of feedback received, a qualitative thematic approach was used. Initial coding identified recurring concepts and keywords across more than 750 responses. To help structure these diverse suggestions and align with recognized best practices, the analysis was organized using the Vision Zero Framework.

10.1 What is Vision Zero

Vision Zero is an internationally recognized approach to road safety that aims to eliminate traffic fatalities and serious injuries. It is based on the principle that no loss of life on our roads is acceptable and emphasizes a systems-based approach to safety. The framework organizes under five core pillars: Safer Roads, Safer Road Users, Safer Speeds, Safer Vehicles and Post-Crash Response.

The Vision Zero pillars were applied as an organizing lens during analysis, helping to group the wide range of public suggestions into clear themes. Respondents shared ideas freely, and these were lager categorized under one or more of the five pillars for clarity and consistency. Representative examples were selected to illustrate the types of feedback received.

10.2 Safer Roads

The Safer Roads pillar focuses on designing and maintaining road infrastructure to reduce the risk of collisions and protect all road users. Well-designed roads can prevent errors and mitigate the consequences of crashes. Responses aligned with this pillar were the most frequently mentioned, with 761 responses referencing interest in opportunities to enhance transportation-related infrastructure. Feedback highlighted:

- Improved lane markings and reflective paint.
- Wider shoulders and dedicated bike lanes.
- Safer intersection design, including roundabouts and turning lanes.

10.3 Safer Road Users

This pillar focuses on education, training and behaviour changes to promote safe interactions among all road users. Supporting safe choices and improving knowledge of road rules can significantly reduce risky behaviours and improve overall safety. There were 558 responses focused on the behaviour and education of road users. Respondents emphasized the importance of:

- Safer crossings, better signage, lighting and education for pedestrians.
- Bike lanes and education for cyclists.
- Exploring requirements for periodic driver retesting.
- Expanded and more reliable public transit options.

10.4 Safer Speeds

Managing speed is critical to reducing the likelihood and severity of collisions. Lower speeds improve reaction times and reduce the impact of crashes. There were 311 responses focused on speed management. While some called for stricter enforcement of speed limits, others suggested adjusting speed limits to better reflect road design and traffic flow. Common suggestions included:

- Incorporating more passing lanes.
- Installation of speed radar signs and photo radar.
- Use of traffic calming measures such as speed bumps.
- Addressing tailgating and aggressive driving.

- Clearer signate in school zones and residential areas.

10.5 Safer Vehicles

Safer Vehicles aims to reduce harm by improving vehicle design, maintenance and safety features. Ensuring vehicles are roadworthy and equipped with modern safety features helps protect both drivers and vulnerable road users. There were 268 responses that addressed vehicle-related safety concerns. Respondents highlighted the need for:

- Enforcement of vehicle equipment standards.
- Restrictions on farm equipment and commercial vehicles on highways.
- Improved visibility and maintenance of vehicles.

10.6 Post-Crash Response

Post-Crash Response focuses on timely and effective emergency care and incident management to reduce the consequences of road traffic industries. A strong post-crash system ensures that when collisions occur, their impact is minimized through rapid and coordinated action by multiple partners. Although this pillar traditionally emphasizes emergency response and victim support, public feedback (63 responses) did focus more on penalties and deterrence rather than emergency coordination. Suggestions included:

- Stricter fines, longer license suspensions and vehicle impoundment.
- Increased police presence and roadside suspensions.
- Provide ongoing support for victims and families affected by collisions.

11.0 Summary and Next Steps

The *Pathways to Highway Safety* survey provided valuable insights into how respondents perceive road safety, transportation habits, and opportunities for improvement across the province. With over 1,700 responses, the survey captured a broad range of perspectives from residents of all counties and demographic backgrounds.

Respondents reported frequent use of personal vehicles, with walking and cycling also playing important roles. While most participants rated road safety in their county as “somewhat safe,” concerns were raised about specific road users and behaviours, particularly impaired and distracted driving, aggressive driving, and speeding.

The survey also revealed strong public interest in infrastructure improvements, education and enforcement. Using the Vision Zero Framework, open-ended responses were categorized into five key themes: Safer Roads, Safer Speeds, Safer Vehicles, Safer Road Users and Post-Crash

Response. These themes reflect a systems-based approach to eliminating serious injuries and fatalities on PEI roads.

Preferences for receiving road safety information included social media and radio, highlighting the importance of accessible and engaging public communication.

These findings will serve as one line of evidence in the development of the *Pathways to Highway Safety* Strategy. The Department of Transportation and Infrastructure will continue to engage with the public and stakeholders to build a safer, more inclusive transportation system for people in Island roads. These insights will directly inform priority-setting and to shape consultations with stakeholders as the Department moves into the next phase of strategy development.


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