

Bridge over the Red River on PR 305

Project Overview

The bridge over the Red River on provincial road (PR) 305 (Louis Riel Bridge) in Ste. Agathe, Manitoba, was constructed in 1959. PR 305 at this location is a vital east-west link over the Red River connecting businesses and agricultural land to provincial trunk highway (PTH) 75. The bridge requires action to maintain serviceability over the next 40 years. A preliminary design study was initiated to develop and investigate alternatives.

Bridge Alternative #1

The first bridge alternative proposes the replacement of the entire bridge deck and railings, slightly wider lanes and sidewalk, and a higher load carrying capacity of the bridge. This alternative, which includes a sidewalk separated from traffic, is estimated to cost \$20-25 million and will require full replacement in approximately 40 years. This option would require single lane closures and two eight-week bridge closures over the one and a half year construction period.

Bridge Alternative #2

The second bridge alternative proposes the replacement of the entire bridge deck, girders and railings and a higher load carrying capacity of the bridge. This alternative includes a wider total roadway width and a new separated sidewalk. The estimated cost of this alternative is \$25-30 million and will require full replacement in approximately 60 years. This option would require approximately two years to construct but there would be a minimum of one lane open at all times.

Engagement Overview

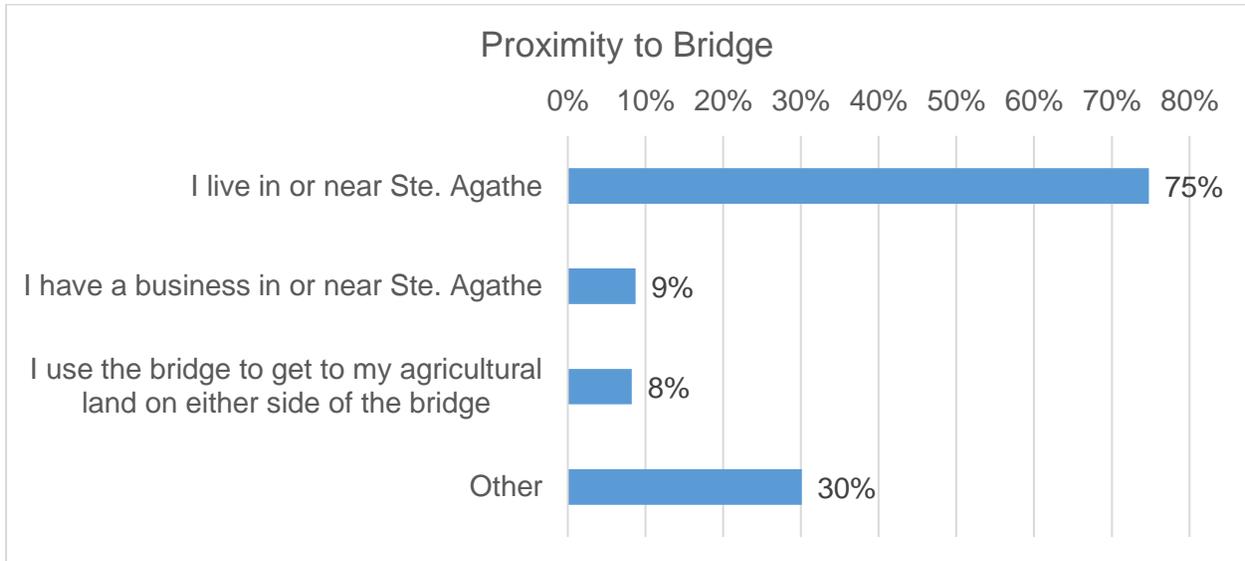
Public engagement consisted of a Virtual Open House and questionnaire on EngageMB, which was open for feedback from April 29, 2021 to May 13, 2021. Advertising for the Virtual Open House targeted residents of Ste. Agathe and surrounding communities through a local community paper and online rural community and news websites. The Manitoba government provided a link on their website to direct people to the public online engagement.

The Virtual Open House presented two design alternatives and traffic management strategies. An online questionnaire requested feedback from the public on the two alternatives. The results of the questionnaire will be combined with the results of the stakeholder engagement and used in the evaluation of the options to determine the preferred design alternative.

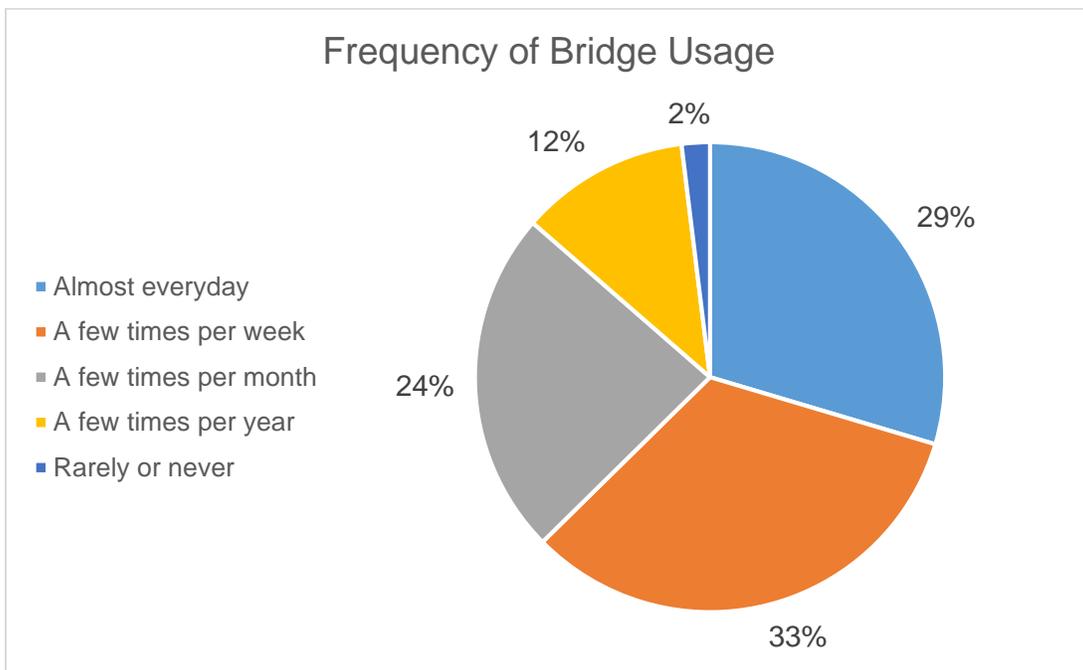
What We Heard

A total of 205 responses were received to the questionnaire.

Respondents were asked about their connection to the area as either residents, business owners or landowners. Respondents could select more than one option to describe their connection to the area. Of the responses received, 75 per cent indicated they lived in or near Ste. Agathe, 9 per cent identified as business owners in the area and 8 per cent indicated they were agricultural landowners in the area. Of the 30 per cent that selected “other”, the majority indicated that they travel across the bridge either regularly or on occasion.



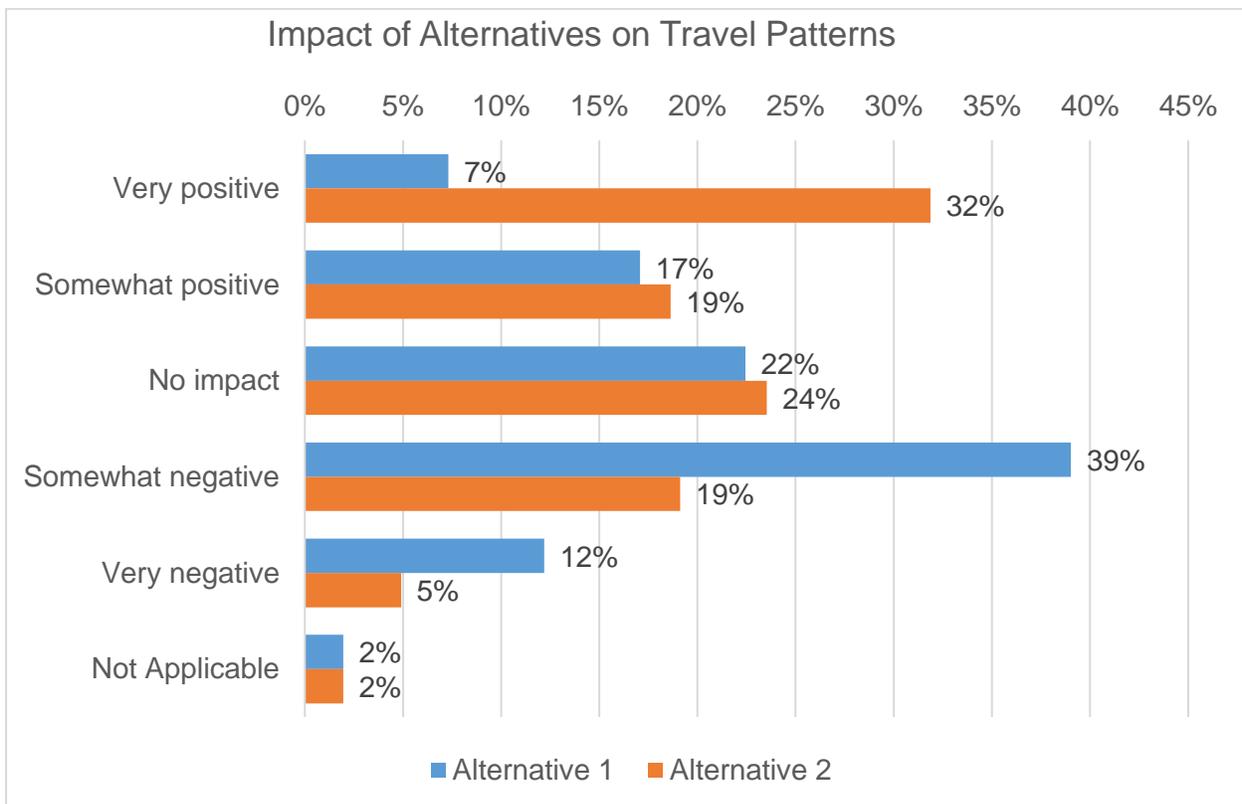
Most respondents (62 per cent) use the bridge regularly - almost everyday or a few times per week. The remaining participants use the bridge less frequently.



Respondents indicated that they mostly use the bridge to access work (40 per cent) and to access services in neighboring communities or in Ste. Agathe (42 per cent). Based on their personal experience, each participant compared the impact that each alternative would have on specific areas of their lives, such as: personal travel patterns; business in the area; personal property; road safety in the area; and pedestrian or cyclist safety.

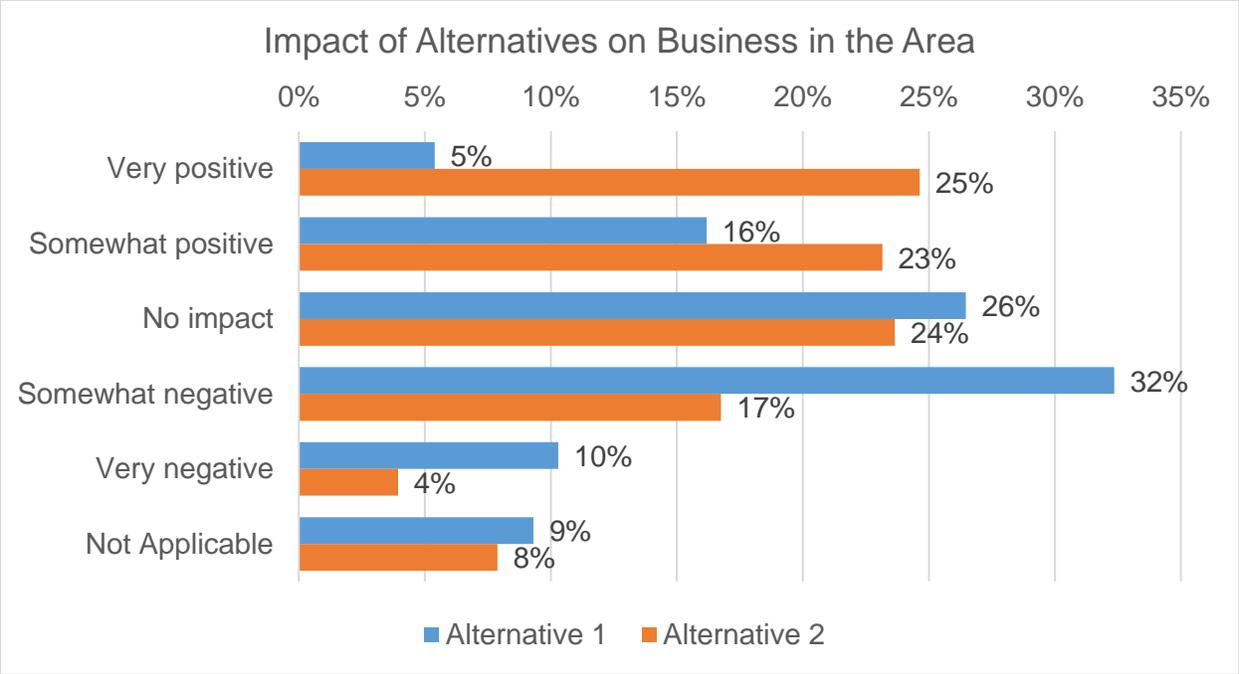
Impact of Alternatives on Your Personal Travel Patterns

Generally, respondents indicated that Alternative 1 would have a very to somewhat negative impact on their travel patterns (51 per cent). The responses were more favourable for Alternative 2 as only 24 per cent of participants would experience a negative impact. Similarly, only 24 per cent of respondents indicated that Alternative 1 would have a very to somewhat positive impact on their travel patterns while 51 per cent indicated that Alternative 2 would have a positive impact.



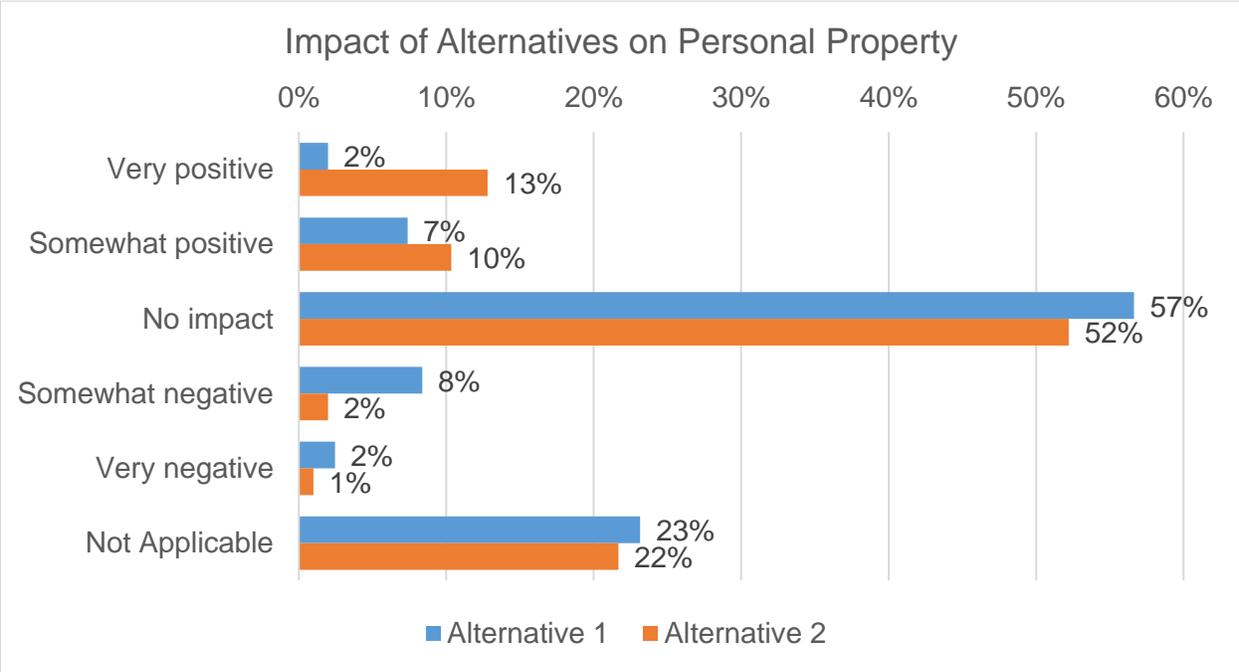
Impact of Alternatives on Business in the Area

A nearly equal number of respondents indicated that there would be no difference in impact on businesses in the area with either alternative. However, twice as many respondents (42 per cent compared to 21 per cent) specified there would be a somewhat to very negative impact if Alternative 1 is chosen. Just over twice as many respondents (48 per cent compared to 21 per cent) felt that Alternative 2 had a positive impact.



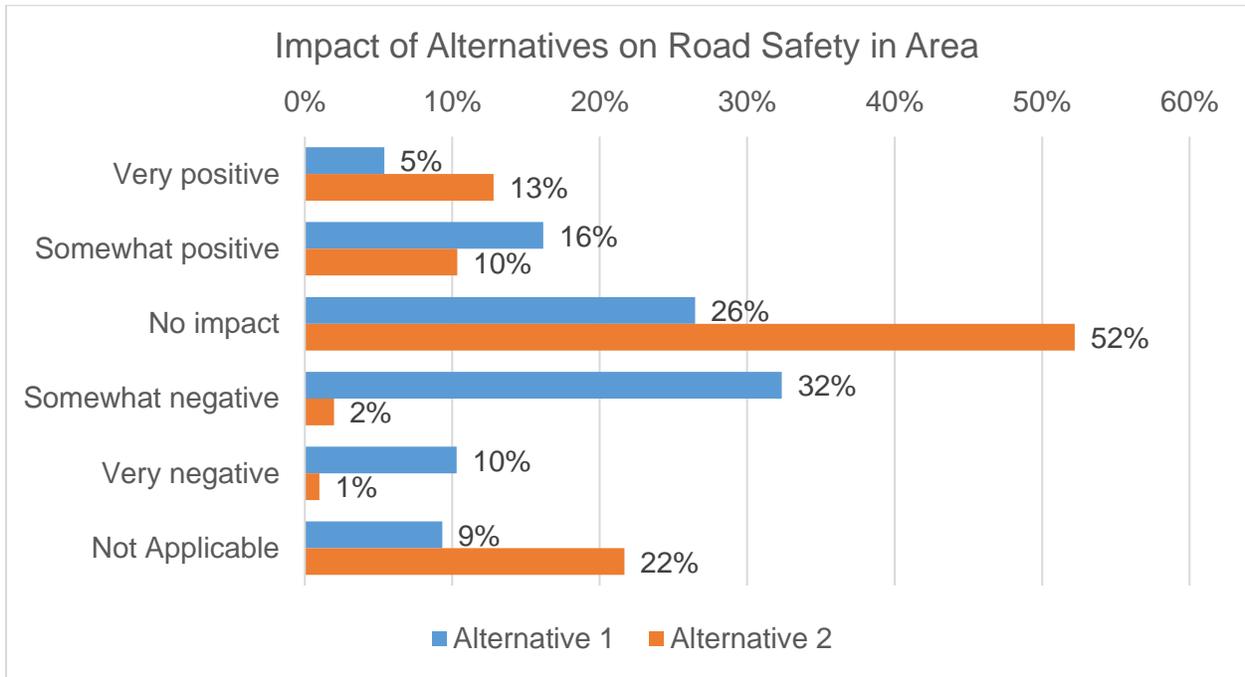
Impact of Alternatives on Your Personal Property

Over half of all respondents indicated there would be no impact to their personal property with either alternative and nearly an equal amount stated that this was not applicable to them. Based on the feedback, both alternatives will have little impact on personal property.



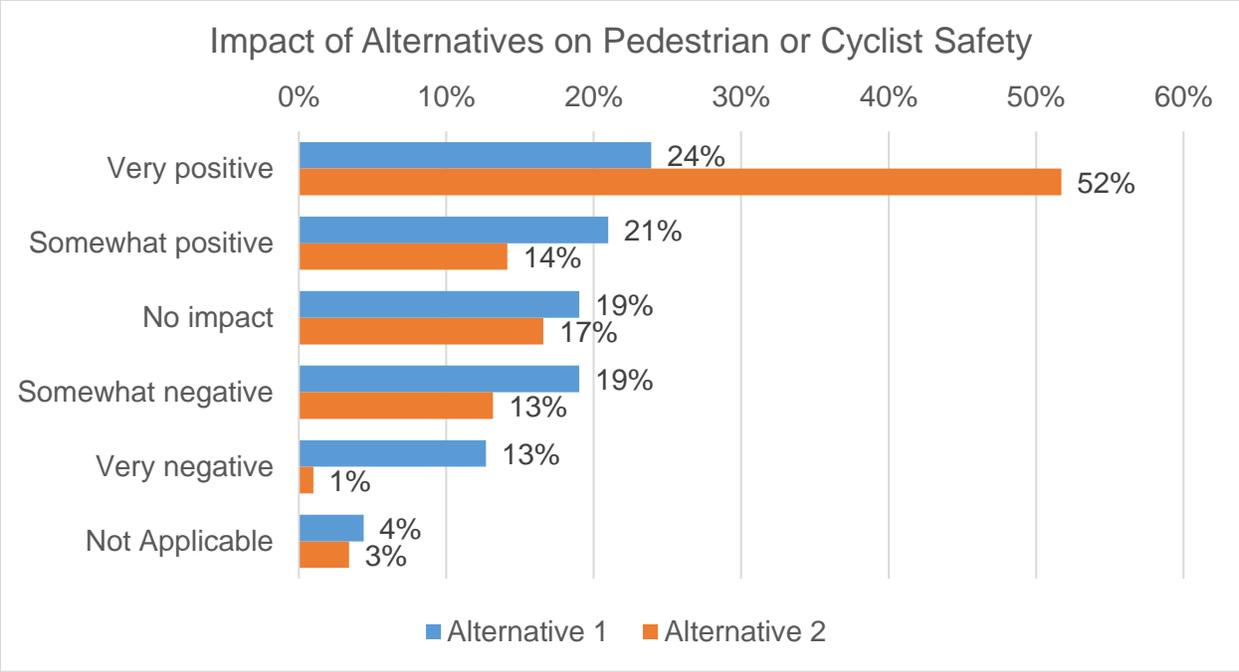
Impact of Alternatives on Road Safety in the Area

Alternative 1 would have a much more negative impact on road safety than Alternative 2. However, if Alternative 2 is chosen, the majority feel that there would be no impact to road safety.



Impacts of Alternatives on Pedestrian or Cyclist Safety

Alternative 1 would have a much more negative impact on pedestrian and cyclist safety than Alternative 2. The proposed wider sidewalk and traffic lanes for Alternative 2 resulted in respondents indicating by over 50 per cent that the impact would be very positive.



Timing of Bridge Closure for Alternative 1

Alternative 1 requires a bridge closure for eight weeks from June to August 2023 and again for another eight weeks from September to November 2023. Overall, the majority of respondents did not have a concern about the potential bridge closure. However, of the 32 per cent that did cite concern, the increased commute to work and/or school was the main reason for their concern, followed by the increased difficulty to obtain services or recreational uses in nearby towns, and the negative impact on agriculture and potential inability to move large agricultural equipment across the bridge during harvest.

Additional Comments

All respondents were provided the opportunity to supply additional comments about the overall project. The comments may be categorized as follows:

- 43 per cent prefer Alternative 2;
- 20 per cent expressed additional concerns about safety – for pedestrians and cyclists as well as speed limits;
- 8 per cent would prefer the bridge to be constructed at PR 311 to provide Niverville residents direct access to PTH 75;
- 6 per cent stated that the bridge is in dire need of repairs without specifying an Alternative Design preference; and
- 2 per cent prefer Alternative 1.

Next Steps

The preferred alternative will be presented to stakeholders and the public in Winter 2021/2022.

Questions?

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