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**DCHC**

METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

PLANNING TOMORROW'S TRANSPORTATION

# **US 70 East Corridor Study Public Engagement Summary – Round 2**

**DCHC MPO Technical Committee**

**May 14, 2024**

# Public Engagement – Round 2

## In-person and Online Meetings:

- August 21 – Virtual Meeting
- August 26 and 31 – In-person at the P.O.O.F. Community Center
- September 7 – All-day drop in at the Bethesda Ruritan Club facility

**Community Engagement Ambassadors** were used to extend outreach to minority and low-income community stakeholders to ensure equitable community engagement.



Feedback was requested on the design features of each alternative. Participants were requested to submit their thoughts to the **online survey** at each meeting so that all comments could be properly attributed to the right intersection and alternative.

- 81 people attended the in-person meetings
- 73 people attended the virtual meeting
- 195 survey responses received



## **Public Engagement Round 1**

49 businesses were contacted via phone along the corridor with e-mail follow up to those willing to share contact information for owners, managers, and key staff with very low response received



## **Public Engagement Round 2**

During the second round of outreach, in-person visits were made to local businesses with paper surveys and an invitation to the upcoming public meetings.



11 partially completed paper surveys from businesses were included in the second survey, with some businesses attending the September 7 in-person session.



# Alternative 1 – 4 Lane Boulevard Feedback

## Top 5 Responses to Design Features of Alternative 1

Participants expressed support for:

1. The future grade separated paved greenway connection to Briar Creek / East Fork Creek.
2. The 5 new crosswalks with pedestrian refuge at the signalized U-Turn intersection at future Angier Road Extension.
3. 4 proposed crosswalks and multi-use path connections to US 70.
4. Crosswalks at Page Road and Future Page Road Extension.
5. 12% of the respondents indicated no need to do any of the proposed design enhancements.



# Alternative 2 – 4 Lane Blvd Parallel Road Feedback

## Top 5 Responses to Design Features of Alternative 2

Participants expressed support for:

1. The future bridged paved greenway connection to Lick Creek Trail and trail connection at Briar Creek / East Fork Creek.
2. 3,170 feet of additional sidewalk / multi-use path.
3. Diversion of local trips on parallel roads.
4. Closure of 50 driveways on US 70 to improve safety and flow of vehicles and provide businesses fronting US 70 alternative bidirectional access via parallel roads.
5. 9.5 ft grass strip buffer along parallel travel lanes for bicyclist and pedestrian comfort and can provide opportunities for future transit service along parallel roads.



## Additional Comments Shared:

- More than 1/3 of comments were supportive of infrastructure that supports bicycle, pedestrian, and public transit along the corridor.
- 22% are still interested in seeing the corridor converted to a freeway; a portion of these respondents stated that the parallel roads were a positive addition to the Alternative 2 concept.
- Although participants were not asked for a preference of either conceptual design, 15% of respondents expressed a preference for Alternative 2 in comments.
- Comments reflected a tension between wanting to address traffic congestion and wanting to prioritize safety for other modes of travel.
- Future plans for this corridor should consider regional connectivity needs, and not just local needs.

## Demographics of Respondents:

- **19%** of respondents are people of color; 1/3 of these respondents were contacted by the Engagement Ambassadors
- **15%** of respondents have someone in the household that lives with a disability
- **44%** of respondents live in zip code 27703 (the study area)
- **22%** of respondents do not use public transit
- **10%** of respondents reported household incomes at or below \$50,000

# Public Engagement – Round 2 Key Takeaways

- **Minimizing contact between bicyclists, pedestrians and cars was prevalent** for reasons of safety and making the experience of all travelers more pleasant.
- The concept's ability to **create greenway connections** was prevalent.
- **Concern that U-turns throughout the concept leads to longer travel times** and will not sufficiently address congestion.
- **More than 1/3 of comments were supportive of infrastructure that supports bicycle, pedestrian, and public transit along the corridor.**
- **22% are still interested in seeing the corridor converted to a freeway;** a portion of these respondents stated that the **parallel roads were a positive addition to the Alternative 2 concept.**

