

MIDTOWN PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE CROSSINGS

ONLINE AND IN-PERSON OPEN HOUSE SUMMARY



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INTRODUCTION

The City of Bend conducted online and in-person outreach between June 13 and July 17, 2022, to gather feedback on preliminary designs from the Midtown Pedestrian and Bicycle Crossing Feasibility Study and priorities for future work.

The Study will identify safer walking and biking connections between east and west Bend and potentially construct one or more improved crossings of U.S. 97 (Bend Parkway) and Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) railroad at the following corridors:

- Greenwood Avenue existing undercrossing
- Hawthorne Avenue crossing
- Franklin Avenue existing undercrossing



OVERALL PARTICIPATION AND NOTIFICATION

The project team developed **online and in-person events** to gather community input on preliminary designs and priorities for future investments. Participants could also give general comments about the project. Overall, **224 people gave feedback** during this outreach period.

The in-person open house on June 22, 2022, was designed as an informal “drop in” format with the same information as the online open house. Overall, about **80 people attended** the in-person open house and 73 people signed in; **18 Latinx community members participated** in two Latinx focused outreach events. Participants were provided a paper version of the survey questions; the events did not include a formal presentation. Survey questions were provided in English and Spanish.

Two language options were made available for the online open house: English and Spanish. The English-language online open house was open from June 13 to July 5, 2022, and **123 people participated**. The Spanish-language survey was open through July 17, 2022, and **three people participated**.

Community members were informed about the online open house through the following:

- Postcard mailed to 678 addresses in the project area
- Flyers distributed directly to businesses and organizations in the project area
- Project website
- Earned media on local television, radio, print and digital media outlets

- Social media posts
- City of Bend’s events calendar with a “Midtown event” tag; email notifications were sent to people who signed up to receive updates for Midtown events

ADDITIONAL LATINX COMMUNITY OUTREACH

City of Bend staff and an equity-focused consultant, Libre Strategies LLC, conducted targeted outreach to Bend’s Latinx community members. Overall, 18 people gave feedback and participants were offered stipends (\$15 gas cards or gift cards to Colima Market) at two focused events including an outreach event in front of Colima Market, a traditional Mexican market, on July 14 and at the Alpenglow Grand Opening Celebration on July 15, 2022. Participants were guided through the survey questions and open house materials by staff in either English or Spanish, depending on each participant’s preference. Survey questions were provided in both English and Spanish. Feedback from this outreach effort is in the [Latinx Community Feedback Summary](#) section.

FEEDBACK RECEIVED BY EMAIL

The project team also received **six comments through the official project email**, midtowncrossingscontacts@bendoregon.gov. Feedback included general concerns, comments on designs and designs created by community members outside of the project team. Feedback received by email is incorporated into the general Feedback Summary section; review all individual comments in Appendix F.

STATISTICAL RELEVANCE

The number of participants in the online and in-person events is comparable to other outreach efforts made by the City and other regional jurisdictions. Results, however, are not statically valid and not a true subsampling of the project area’s population. Therefore, this feedback summary is only representative of those who participated in outreach efforts and not representative of the wider community’s views. In addition, participants were not asked to give demographic information, though some chose to self-identify in the comments. This information is omitted from this summary for privacy and consistency; the project team will follow up with those participants when appropriate.

KEY THEMES AND TAKEAWAYS

This section provides a high-level overview of feedback received through the online and in-person open houses, as well as by email.

Overall, participants that gave feedback showed a minor preference for **Construct new Hawthorne Avenue crossing (40%)** as the corridor participants would like to see it worked on first. This was followed by Improve existing Franklin Avenue undercrossing (32%) and Improve existing Greenwood Avenue undercrossing (28%).



- **Greenwood Avenue**
 - When combining online and in-person responses, results were split and no clear preference on alternatives emerged. However, most in-person participants preferred Concept 2.
- **Hawthorne Avenue**
 - Overall, there is excitement for a new Hawthorne Avenue Crossing, and many felt that it will elevate Bend to a “new level as a sustainable, healthy, and people-forward city.”
 - Most participants prefer **Concept 1: Straight Bridge and Approach Ramps (65%)**.
 - Strong concern about elevators with most participants *except* for people with disabilities.
 - Strong concern about slope grade, *particularly* for community members with disabilities.
- **Franklin Avenue**
 - Strong preference for **Concept 2: Full Rebuild & Widening (81%)**.
 - There is a strong desire for **protected bike lanes** that are separated from traffic by bollards or railing.
 - Concerns and questions about **ongoing maintenance of future improvements** due to historic lack of maintenance on all three project corridors. This includes weather-related maintenance related to flooding in undercrossings and snow and debris clearing on overcrossings, as well as concerns about houseless people.
 - Many participants showed a high understanding of the project and the GO Bond, and expected more information such as funding estimates, traffic counts and “road diet” impacts.
 - Some want to fix what they can now, and some want to wait and “go big.”

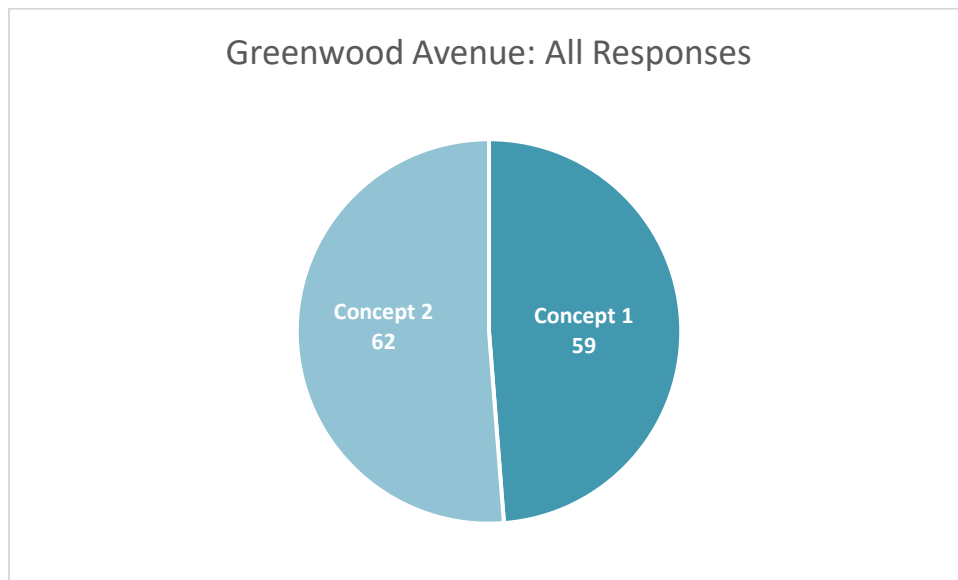
FEEDBACK SUMMARY

These sections summarize the feedback received about Greenwood Avenue, Hawthorne Avenue and Franklin Avenue designs from the online and in-person open houses, as well as by email.

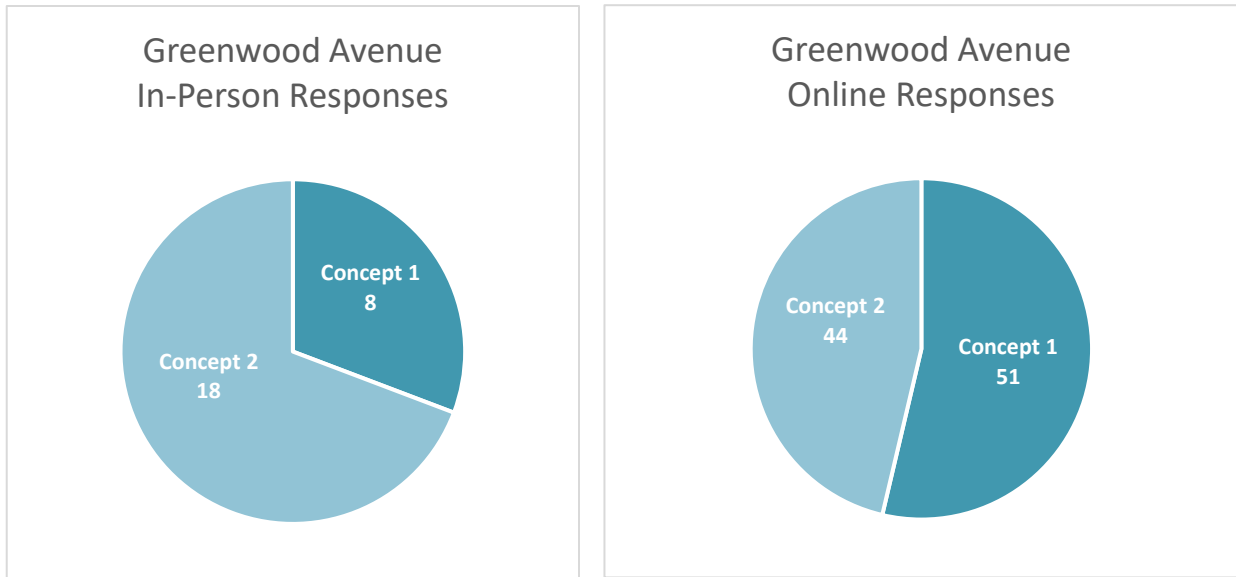
GREENWOOD AVENUE

Which alternative design concept for the Greenwood Avenue undercrossing do you prefer?

There were **121 responses** to this question — 95 responses online and 26 in-person. Combined participants were **almost evenly split** between **Concept 1: Shared-Use Path Improvements (49%)** and **Concept 2: Lower & Widen Sidewalks (51%)**.



However, there were differences between the online and in-person participants. For online participants, more than half (53%) preferred Concept 1, while 43% preferred (53%) to Concept 2. For in-person participants, most (69%) preferred Concept 2, and 31% favored Concept 1.



Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about the design concepts?

There were 79 responses to the open-ended question about the Greenwood Avenue design alternative concepts — 63 responses online and 16 in-person. Review all individual unedited comments in Appendix A.

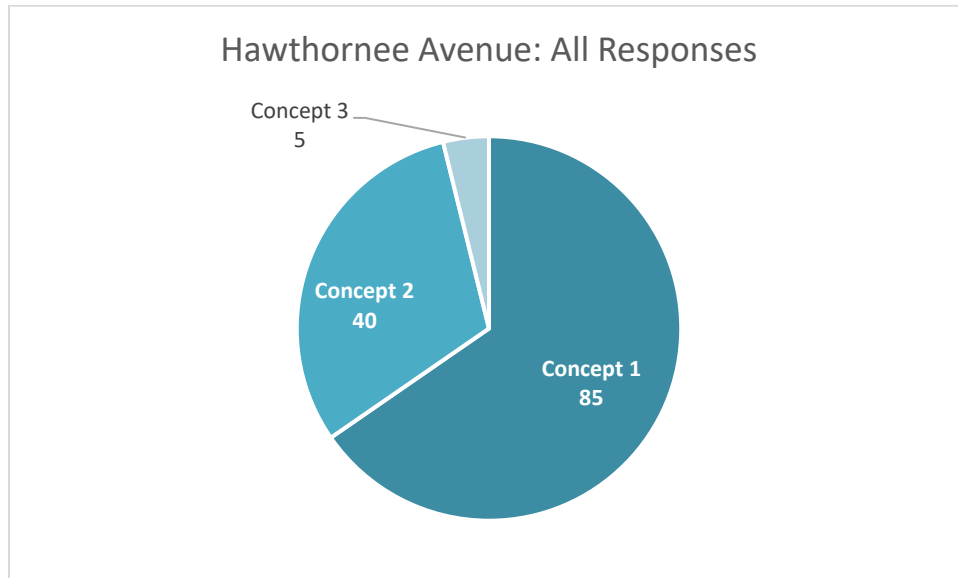
The following is a summary of open-ended comments:

- Most participants want protected bicycle lanes that are physically separated from traffic with barriers, railings or retractable bollards.
- Many also want a higher raised bike path or shared path.
- Of those who like the Greenwood Avenue designs, many feel Concept 1 is the fastest and most cost-effective design.
- Others feel that the designs do not have enough improvements to be worth the cost and want different improvements, or to focus solely on the Hawthorne Avenue Crossing design.
- Some are concerned about safety, lighting and sharing the road with frustrated drivers if traffic lanes are removed.
- Participants also want bike and shared use paths cleared of snow and debris.

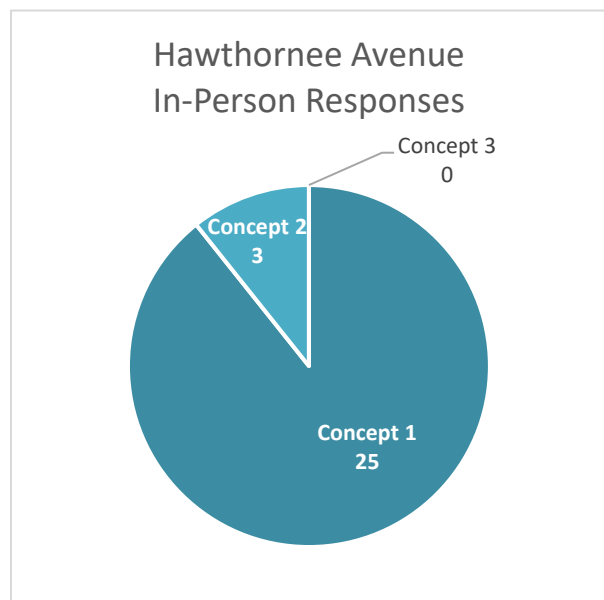
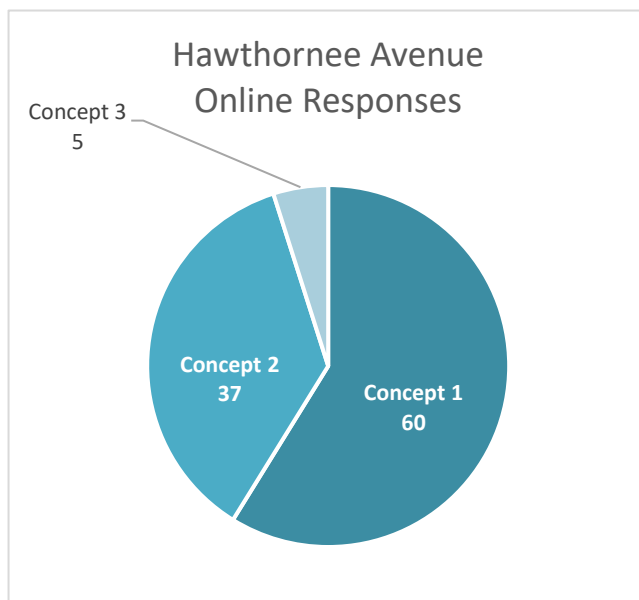
HAWTHORNE AVENUE

Which Hawthorne Avenue Crossing design alternative do you prefer?

There were **130 responses** to this question — 102 responses online and 28 in-person. Most participants preferred **Concept 1: Straight Bridge and Approach Ramps (65%)**, followed by Concept 2: Bridge with Switchback Ramps (36%) and Concept 3: Bridge with Stairs and Elevator Access (No Ramps) (4%).



While participants from both event preferred Concept 1, almost all (89%) participants at the in-person open house preferred Concept 1. No in-person participants preferred Concept 3.



Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about the design concepts?

There were 93 responses to the open-ended question about the Hawthorne Avenue Crossing design alternative concepts — 70 responses online and 23 in-person. Review all individual comments in Appendix B.

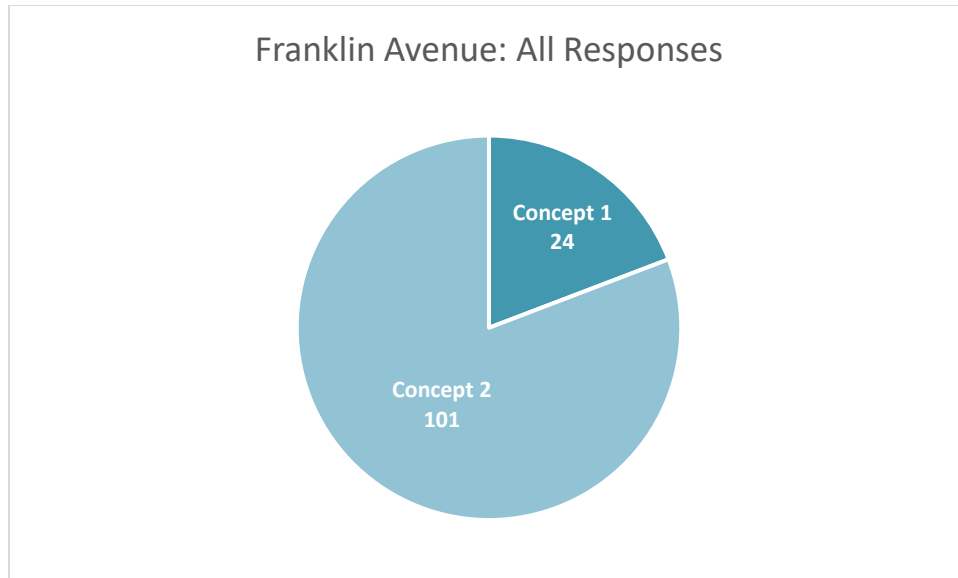
The following is a summary of open-ended comments:

- Many are excited by the designs and felt Hawthorne Avenue Crossing should be the focus of the project, though a few people mentioned wanting to improve existing infrastructure before building anything new.
- Of the three concepts, most mentioned Concept 1 or 2 as what they felt would be best for the area. Many enjoyed the straight design of Concept 1 and hoped the bridge would be wide and aesthetically pleasing.
- There is a lot of concern about the grade and some respondents wanted additional outreach to those with disabilities to ensure the ADA grades were easily navigable. Many hope the grade could be reduced.
- Most respondents do not like the idea of an elevator and feel the maintenance will be costly and the elevator could be misused or unsafe. They also felt that people biking would not want to dismount to use it.
- Many expressed liking switchbacks but wanted a curved or spiral design.
- There was also concern about ramps and stairs during snow and ice. Several respondents wanted to eliminate parking or reduce traffic in the area.
- There was also a general desire for more multimodal connectivity to the downtown area.
- Overall, there is excitement for the concept, and many felt that it would elevate Bend.

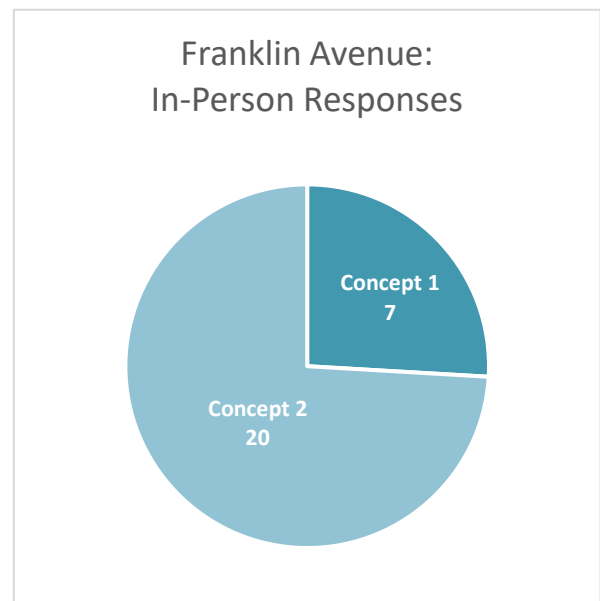
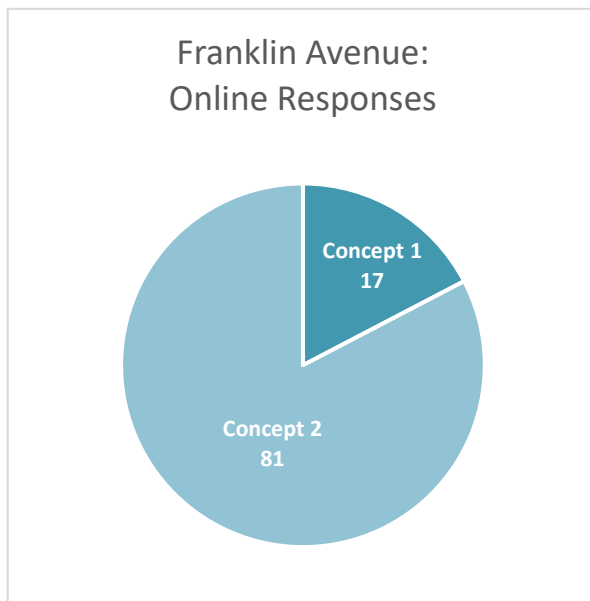
FRANKLIN AVENUE

Which Franklin Avenue design alternative do you prefer?

There were **125 responses** to this question — 98 responses online and 27 in-person. Most participants preferred **Concept 2: Full rebuild & Widening (81%)**, and 19% preferred Concept 1: Widen & Level East Access Only.



About the same number of participants **preferred Concept 2: Full rebuild & Widening** at each event — 82% online and 81% at the in-person open house.



Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about the design concepts?

There were 93 responses to the open-ended question about the Franklin Avenue Crossing designs — 70 responses online and 23 in-person. Review all individual comments in Appendix C.

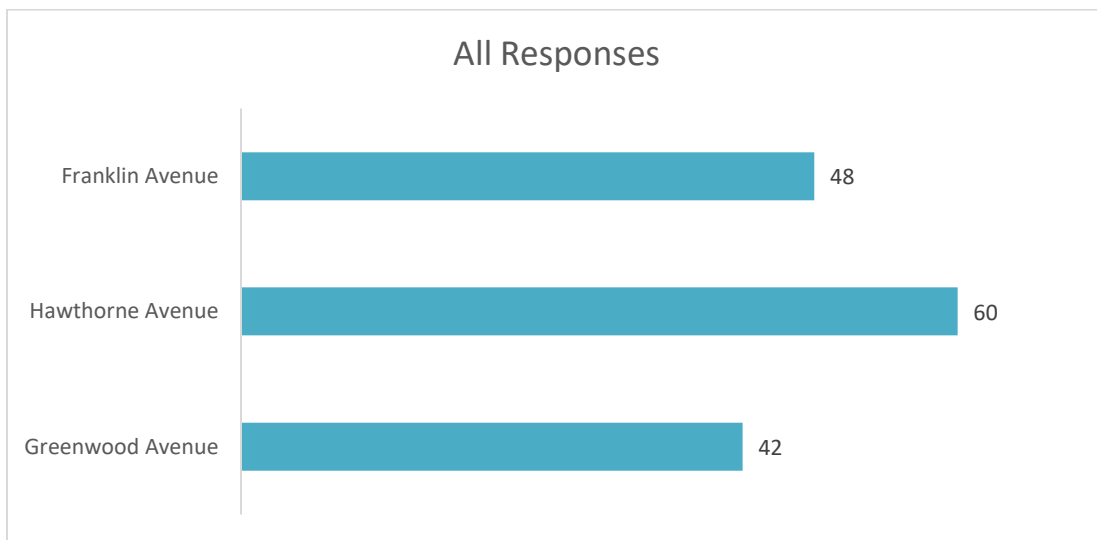
- Most participants want protected bicycle lanes that are physically separated from traffic with barriers or railings.

- Many mentioned that the Franklin tunnel has current drainage issues which need to be addressed.
- Better lighting, visibility and safety were mentioned by many participants.
- Several participants want a raised bike path and sidewalks.
- Many felt that Concept 1 did not have enough improvements and wanted to wait for funding for Concept 2 or focus on a different design.
- Several participants mentioned the Franklin Concept having the most cost-effective outcome.
- Others stated that Franklin was the most used corridor and should be the first focus of improvements.
- A few participants felt that Franklin should be one way, with traffic on one side and the shared lane on the other.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

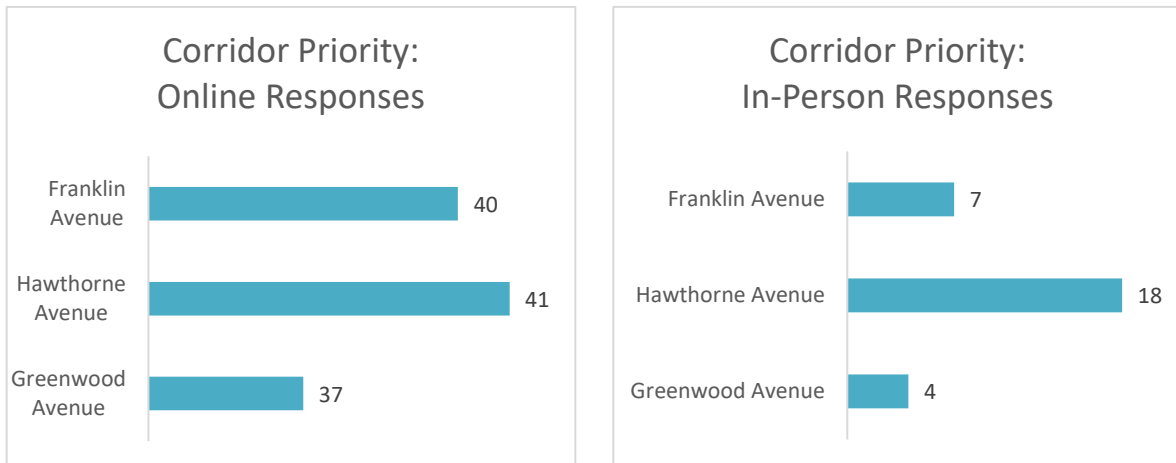
Which Midtown pedestrian and bicycle crossing corridor should we work on first?

There were **147 responses** to this question — 118 online, 29 in-person and three by email. A slim majority of participants selected **Construct new Hawthorne Avenue crossing (40%)** as the corridor they would like to see worked on first, followed by Improve existing Franklin Avenue undercrossing (32%), and Improve existing Greenwood Avenue undercrossing (28%).



While all participants from both events prioritized Construct New Hawthorne Avenue Crossing, responses from online participants were more evenly split across the three options. However, there was a stronger preference for Construct New Hawthorne Avenue Crossing from participants at the in-person open house at 61%.

This could suggest that additional conversation or the opportunity to ask clarifying questions with project staff may have changed participants' preferences. This could also suggest that more folks who would benefit from the Hawthorne Crossing participated in the in-person open house.



Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about the design concepts or your vision for the future of Midtown Pedestrian and Bicycle Crossings project?

There were 97 responses to the general open-ended question — 80 responses online and 17 in-person. Review all individual comments in Appendix D.

The feedback summary below also includes general feedback received through email.

- There is a strong desire for protected bike lanes that are separated from traffic by bollards or railing.
- Concerns and questions about ongoing maintenance of future improvements due to historic lack of maintenance on all three project corridors. This includes weather-related maintenance related to flooding in underpasses and snow and debris clearing on overpasses, as well as the houseless community.
- Many participants showed a high understanding of the project and the GO Bond, and expected more information such as funding estimates, traffic counts and “road diet” impacts.
- Some want to fix what they can now, and some want to wait and “go big.”
- Many are excited by the designs and felt Hawthorne Avenue should be the focus of the project, though a few people mentioned wanting to improve existing infrastructure before building anything new.

LATINX COMMUNITY FEEDBACK SUMMARY

ONLINE SURVEY FEEDBACK

Three participants gave feedback through the Spanish-language online survey. All three participants prefer **Greenwood Avenue Concept 1: Shared-Use Path Improvements and Franklin Avenue Concept 1: Widen & Level East Access Only**. Two participants prefer **Hawthorne Avenue Concept 1: Straight Bridge and Approach Ramps** and one preferred **Concept 3: Bridge with Stairs and Elevator Access (No Ramps)**.

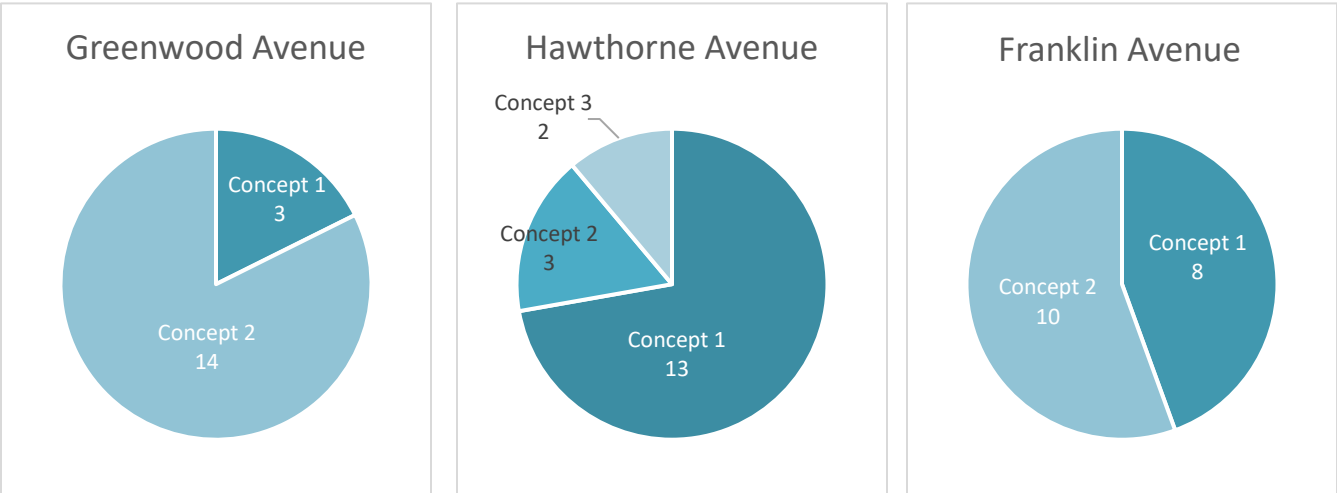
Two participants would like to see **Construct new Hawthorne Avenue crossing** as the corridor participants would like to see it worked on first. One participant selected Greenwood Avenue.

There were no responses to open-ended questions.

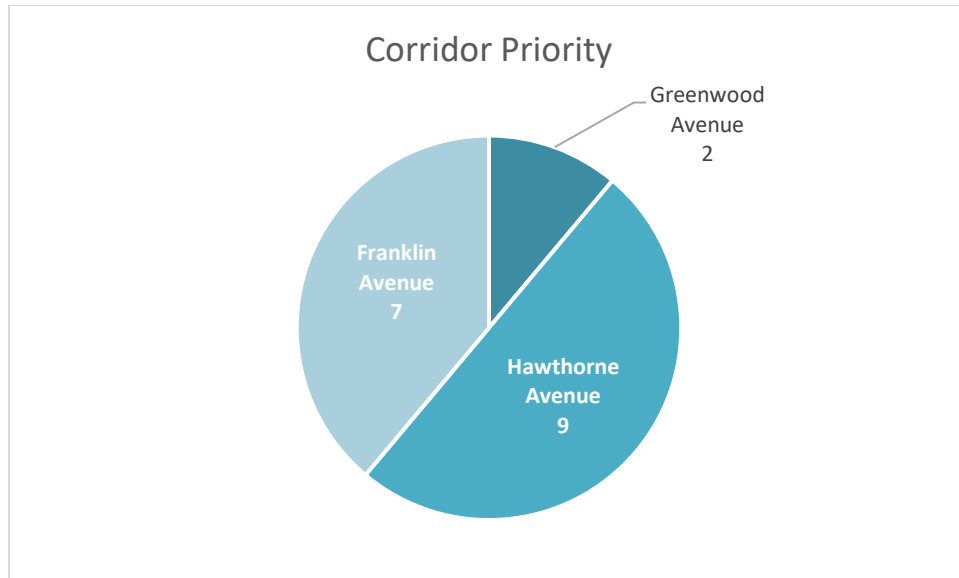
IN-PERSON EVENTS FEEDBACK

Eighteen people gave feedback at two equity-focused Latinx community outreach events. Survey questions were provided in English and Spanish, and a member of the project team was available to verbally explain the project information and questions in either English or Spanish.

Overall, most participants prefer **Greenwood Avenue Concept 2: Lower & Widen Sidewalks (81%)**, **Hawthorne Avenue Concept 1: Straight Bridge and Approach Ramps (72%)**, and **Franklin Avenue Concept 2: Full rebuild & Widening (56%)**.



Half of the participants would like to see **Construct new Hawthorne Avenue crossing (50%)** as the corridor participants would like to see it worked on first.



The following is a summary of verbal feedback received:

- Many noted a preference for Hawthorne Avenue because it was a new connection.
- Several people were adamant about Franklin Avenue needing immediate fixes because it is the most used and worst to travel.
- There wasn't a huge difference for folks between Greenwood Concept 1 and Concept 2. However, many participants liked that Concept 2 separates biking, because it reduces conflict and concerns about passing a family with a stroller, for example.
- Many people would love to see Concept 2 for Franklin Avenue but understood the financial limitations. Some felt like Concept 1 could be enough, especially with improved lighting.

Review all individual comments in Appendix E.