

MIDTOWN CROSSINGS PROJECT

FRANKLIN AVE OPEN HOUSE

Public Feedback Summary

September 2024

Prepared for:

City of Bend



CITY OF BEND

Prepared by:

JLA Public Involvement



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OVERVIEW

The Franklin Avenue open house informed the Bend community about the corridor between Harriman Street and Fifth Street, presented three design options for making improvements, and introduced considerations for changing each of the intersections. The event received feedback from community members who use Franklin Avenue regularly. It allowed the project team to hear other considerations and build trust with nearby residents and businesses. This project will improve access for all users on the roadway and sidewalk on both the east and west sides of the undercrossing.

Franklin Avenue Improvements is part of the Midtown Crossings Project, which focuses on developing safer travel for all users on four key corridors in the city of Bend: Greenwood Avenue, Franklin Avenue, Hawthorne Avenue, and Second Street.

Outreach Activities

Outreach activities for this phase of the project included:

- **August 22 - September 5** – Online open house
- **August 22** – In-person open house at The Newberry Hotel Bend (located on Franklin Avenue)

The online and in-person open houses were available in English and Spanish. No responses were received online in Spanish, and no participants attended in person requesting a Spanish language interpreter.

Promotion

To promote the project and the open house, the following outreach was completed:

- **Postcard:** mailed to the project area of 2,969 addresses
- **Email:** sent to the project mailing list of 1,398 subscribers with a 48% open rate
- **Website update**
- **Press release:** submitted on August 19, 2024
- **Social media posts:** on August 19 and September 3
 - **Instagram** 638 reach, 9 reactions – 2.8k reach, 49 reactions
 - **Facebook** 786 reach, 1 reaction – 7.8k reach, 40 reactions, 39 comments, 10 shares

Participation

The project team hosted an open house event at The Newberry Hotel Bend on August 22, 2024, from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. Approximately **80 people attended**, and 42 submitted a comment form. The online open house was posted on the project website from August 22 through September 5, 2024. **154 people** submitted the online survey.

All information and questions provided at the in-person event were replicated in the online event. Overall, 234 people participated, with **196 responses submitted**.

Key Takeaways

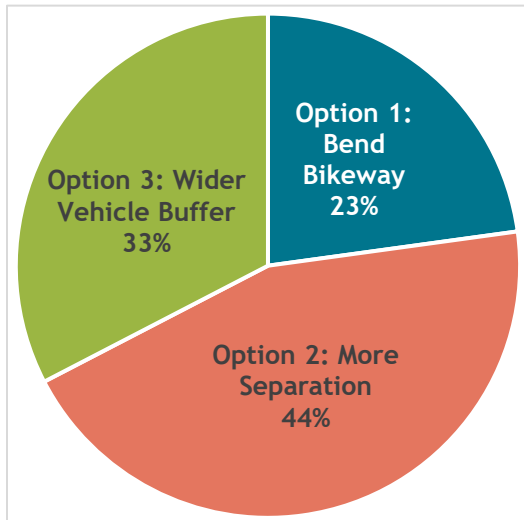
Both the in-person and online open house for Franklin Avenue received a majority preference for **Option 2: More separation** among Bend community participants. Some reoccurring topics include addressing “right hooks”, improving visibility for drivers to see bicyclists on the roadway, and additional measures to protect people walking and biking at intersections.

Recurring comments that emerged:

- 44% of respondents prefer **Option 2: More separation**.
 - Some respondents said they would prefer Option 3 over Option 2 if trees were allowed in the curbside planting strip.
- There were safety concerns mentioned for all of the intersections along this corridor plus adjacent blocks (Wall, Harriman, Hill, First, Second, Third, and Fourth Streets). Several added that the Safeway driveway near Fourth Street acts as an additional intersection since it gets so much traffic, and should receive similar treatments as an intersection. Third Street was called out many times as being a particularly scary intersection for those on bikes.
- Many comments addressed bikes and vehicles having to cross each other’s dedicated lanes and visibility concerns between drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians.
- Many participants prioritized trees, landscaping, and visibility between drivers and cyclists in their comments, while some acknowledged the reality of added vegetation detracting from visibility.
- The confidence level was mainly split between “unsure” and yes” when asked whether the project team considered everything needed in drafting the options for biking and walking improvements.
- Respondents shared that a physical barrier, median or planter is needed at one-way turns to enforce traffic rules.
- Many respondents mentioned disappointment about the underpass, and that it would need to be more fully addressed for Franklin Avenue to be considered a safe route for biking and walking.
- Many respondents suggested speed-reducing measures, including speed bumps and narrower vehicle lanes.



FEEDBACK SUMMARY



Which design option do you prefer? (184 responses)

- Option 1: Bend Bikeway (42, 23%)
- **Option 2: More separation (82, 44%)**
- Option 3: Wider Vehicle Buffer (60, 33%)

16 respondents left this question blank or wrote none.

Respondents were more closely tied between Option 3 and Option 2. Some said they would prefer Option 3 over Option 2 if trees were allowed in the curbside planting strip.

Option 1 supporting comments:

- Sometimes, the safest plan is the simplest plan. Don't hide the bike rider behind trees, buffers, and other traffic furniture.
- Cyclists need to be seen by traffic, not hidden behind trees and buffers. Drivers need to see cyclists when they turn into the side street or driveway.
- Option 1 is the most familiar to motorists—i.e., it is the safest. The design should consider the growth of e-bikes, essentially silent motorcycles. Thus, it makes sense to push bikes toward vehicles and protect pedestrians.

Option 2 supporting comments:

- Most aesthetically appealing option.
- Best option for vegetation.

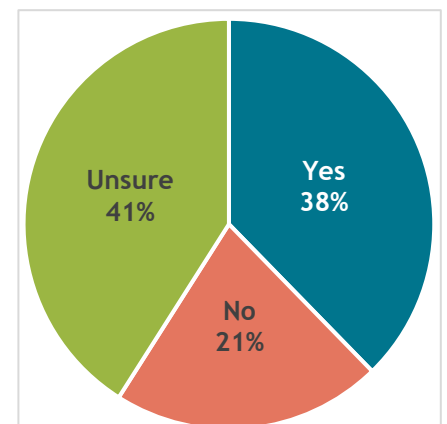
Option 3 supporting comments:

- Needs trees, this option would be preferable to some who selected option 2, if trees were allowed.
- Likely less intuitive to drivers.
- This option seems better for snow plowing not blocking the bike lane with snow.

Do you feel the project team considered everything needed in drafting the options for biking and walking improvements? (183 responses)

- Yes (69, 38%)
- No (39, 21%)
- Unsure (75, 41%)

10 respondents left this question blank or followed up to say, "Not quite," and shared their concerns and suggestions.



Comments

Rather than organizing comments under the question for which they were written, in this summary we have compiled them by topic since there was a lot of cross-over between question responses. The distribution of comments was as follows.

- **What considerations would you add or change?** (119 comments)
- **Is there something else you want us to know about turning at intersections or other access through this area?** (83 comments)
- **Do you have any other comments or questions? Is there anything else you want to share with us?** (77 comments)
- **Map comments** (7 comments)

A total of 286 comments were made through this open house.

Priorities and added considerations for the corridor

Many people brought up an appreciation for the protected and separated space for people to bike and walk.

Additional physical barriers or medians to enforce traffic rules:

- At intersections with right-in/out only, physical barriers are needed to prevent vehicles from making left turns illegally.
- Physical barriers between cars and bicycles/pedestrians are vital. Green paint wears away within a year and is covered in the smallest snowstorms.
- Bollards at corners could help slow drivers when they turn.
- The buffer between cars and bikes is seen as more important than the one between bikes and peds.

Traffic calming measures:

Several people commented on the high vehicle speeds in this corridor which makes it less safe for people walking or riding bikes, especially at intersections. 25 mph was suggested as an ideal speed, especially west of the undercrossing.

- Even though the bike lane is separated, people walking and riding **across** Franklin (at Harriman, Second, Third, and Fourth at a minimum) also need protection. Vehicle traffic faster than 25 mph makes crossing more difficult and dangerous.
- Some participants shared that the traffic lanes, including the center turn lane, are very wide and will encourage faster traffic. It was suggested to trim vehicle lanes to 10 feet, giving more space for plants and people and helping cars drive at safer speeds.

“Narrow streets are slow streets. Slow streets are safe streets.”

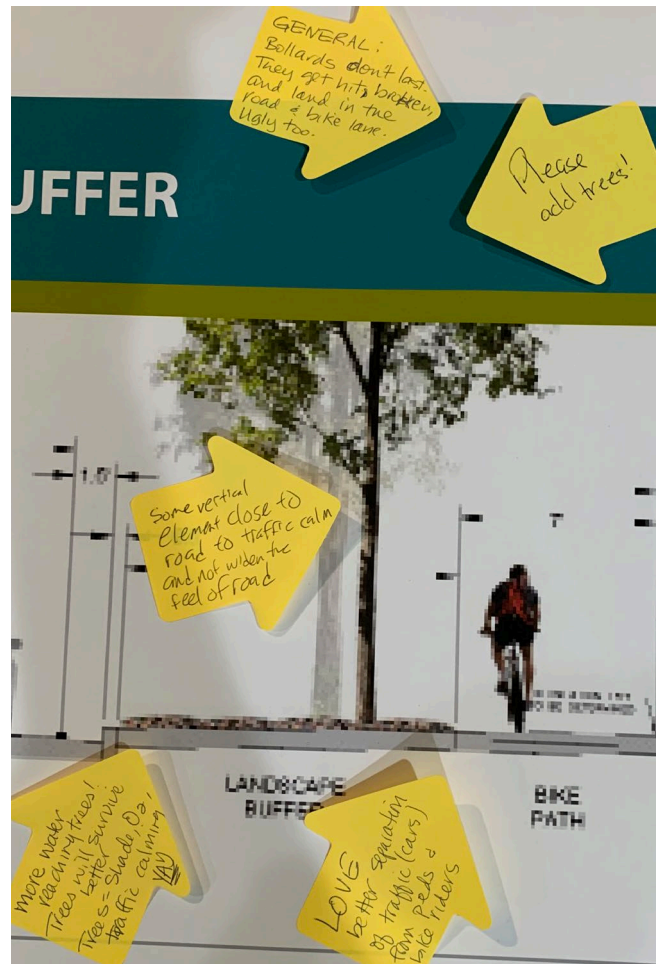
- The continuous left turn lane east of the underpass should be reconfigured to have a raised median except where left turns are needed, which should not include the driveways. Allowing left turns into driveways on such a busy street creates too much chaos and needs to be controlled.

Trees are important:

Many participants brought up the idea that trees are a valuable part of the design and should be prioritized to make walking and biking safer (as a physical barrier and also traffic calming) and more comfortable (through shaded sidewalks and bike lanes).

- They provide shade, habitat for birds, and address the urban heat island effect.
- Increasing the urban tree canopy increases the area's attractiveness as well as providing a more pleasant experience for those traveling.
- Tree health and survival should be prioritized.
- Concern that mature trees may be removed for this project?
- Consider planters as more vertical separation between cars and bike lanes.
- A participant shared that east of the undercrossing feels more desolate and industrial due to the lack of street trees.

"Would love to see the incorporation of trees and water-wise plants, and not just rock-scaping, as long as visibility is maintained. Grade separation does improve comfort and safety, but landscape buffers are safer and more comfortable."



Visibility is vital for safety:

- Making sure any vegetation doesn't block people in the bike lane or sidewalk at intersections is crucial.
- Given that cyclists will be merging with traffic to get through the tunnel, cyclists need to be visible at all times and not appear as if from out of nowhere to motorists during the merge.

Intersections and location specific concerns

Right hooks

Right-hooks at intersections was a major concern brought up by many participants as an issue that did not seem fully addressed in the three designs. Participants had some ideas on ways this could be mitigated.

- Green bike boxes at intersections. At Third Street especially the right turn lane merging with the bike lane is very problematic for people on bikes.
- Some participants cite the intersection at Wilson as a great example of bike improvement.
- Flashing beacons at all pedestrian crossings, although some feel this is inadequate because many drivers ignore these signals.

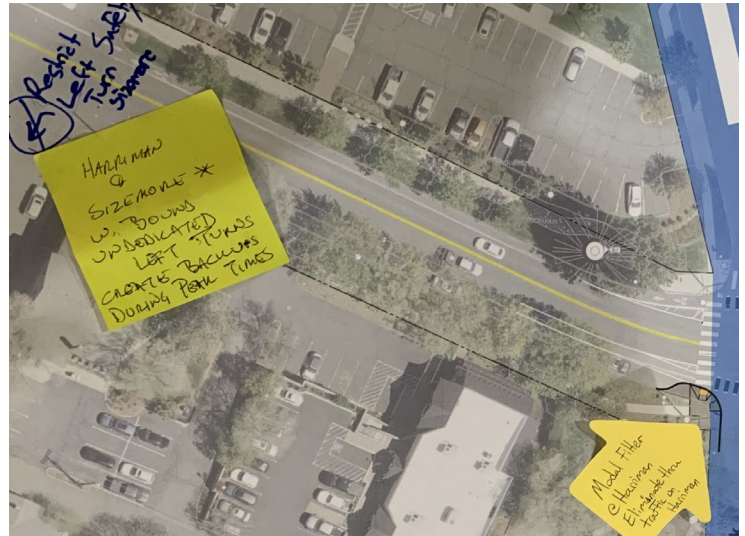
- Keeping the bike/ped lanes raised through intersections was brought up a few times. The reasoning behind this is that this forces cars to enter the “bike space” and be more cognizant of that, rather than bikes constantly crossing over into the vehicle space.
- Modal filters for Harriman, First, Second, and Fourth Streets.

West of Harriman (beyond project limits)

- Franklin should have a continuous bike lane through downtown, to Broadway Street/Riverside.
“Delaware Ave is not a substitute.”

Harriman Street

- Raised crosswalk to slow traffic speed.
- Pedestrian activated flashing lights.
- Modal filter.
- One person asked whether Harriman could be turned into a roundabout?

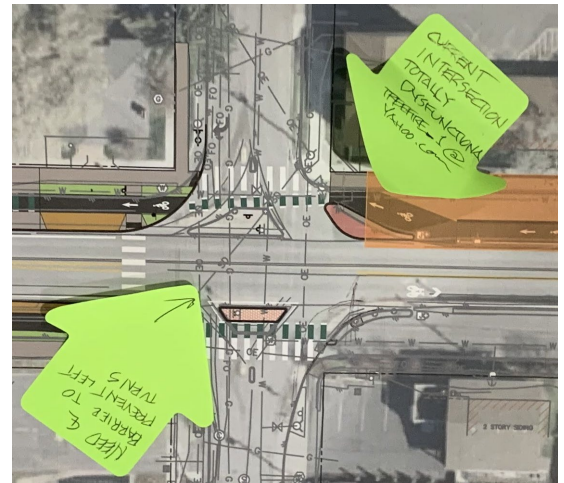


Hill Street

Visibility at this intersection is very limited with the tunnel and slope of the road nearby. Some participants suggested traffic calming measures as a way to improve safety here.

- Crossing is very dangerous because cars traveling west can't see the intersection or people crossing until the last second.
- Re-align/straighten the intersection, so that cars have to make a sharper turn, increasing bike/ped visibility.
- Median or jersey barrier to prevent right turns.

“Franklin/Hill is a nightmare for drivers and cyclists!”



Undercrossing

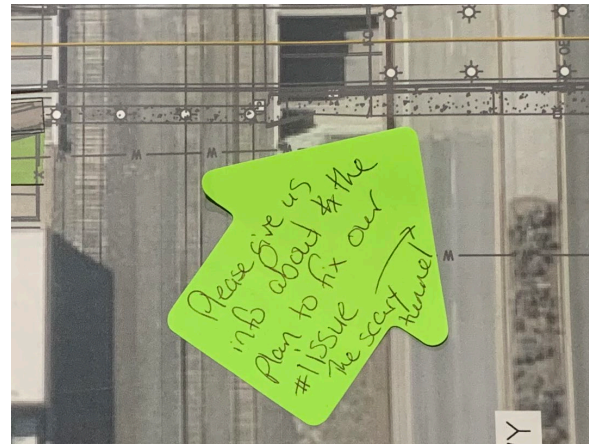
The limited undercrossing improvements felt unsatisfactory to many participants. While better lighting will be appreciated, it may not be sufficient to keep it clear of campers blocking access and preventing bikes from crossing. Several participants also expressed concerns about bikes needing to merge into traffic before the undercrossing, especially given the speeds many vehicles travel here. Slower riders do not feel comfortable or safe doing this.

- Considering that people on bikes will still need to merge with vehicle traffic through the undercrossing (which is currently very difficult to do), design for this to be more obvious/less confusing to vehicles, and safer for those biking.

Some ideas to help with this transition:

- Reduce the speed limit to 20 mph.
- Adding green paint at the merge point.
- Additional signs or extra sharrows.
- A low-speed bump to slow cars.
- Adding a "bike light" for cars to know when a bike is in the tunnel.
- Signs making it clear whether bikes belong on the street or sidewalk.

"The climbing lanes are good but still not a design for 8-year-olds. I'd rather have a bigger sidewalk and be able to widen the [tunnel] in the future."



Safety and hygiene continue to be major concerns for the undercrossing. Many requested making this a priority and expressed the need for dedicated City funds to maintain this space.

- More lighting and drainage are needed.
- Anti-graffiti coating on the walls.
- Security cameras might help discourage trash and urination in the tunnel.

"It is always a roll of the dice to ride through the tunnels. Making it safer and less appealing as a place to loiter would be great."

"I understand the tunnels cannot be widened, but this is a future Bend problem that needs to be addressed."

First Street

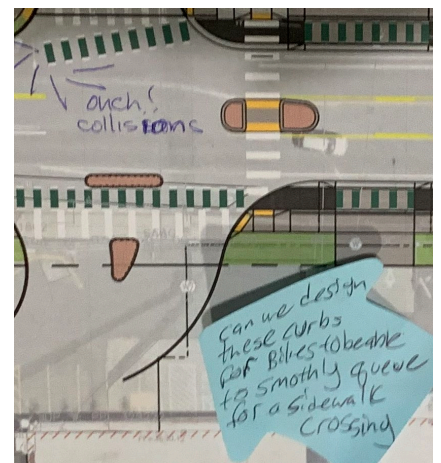
Turning left onto Franklin from First feels very dangerous due to sight distance limitations caused by the undercrossing. Drivers then need to pull further into the street to be able to see oncoming traffic. This causes problems for people traveling on Franklin in the bike lane or sidewalk.

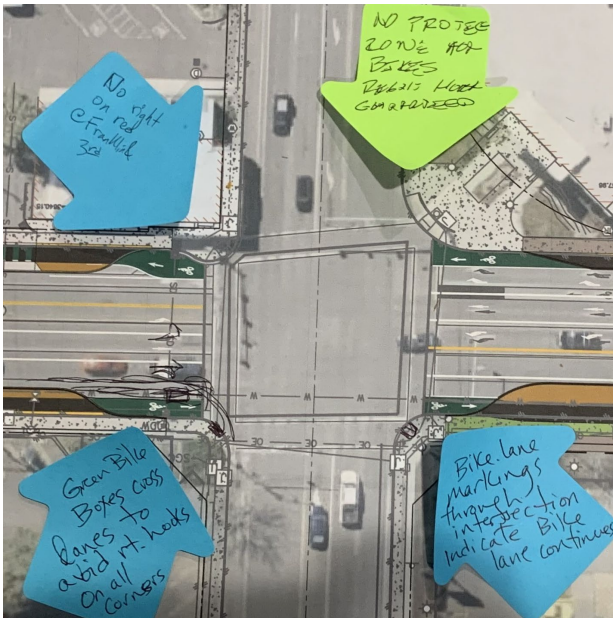
- Eliminating left turns here would help.

Second Street

Participants shared that this crossing has become very dangerous to walk and nearly impossible to drive and make turns with many people crossing Franklin Avenue at Second Street. Some also shared that many times vehicles will use the bike lane between Second and Third as a right turn lane.

- A pedestrian crossing with flashing lights at this intersection could improve the situation. It would need to be timed with the light at Third.
- Possible modal filter, keep Second for bikes, cars on Third.





Third Street

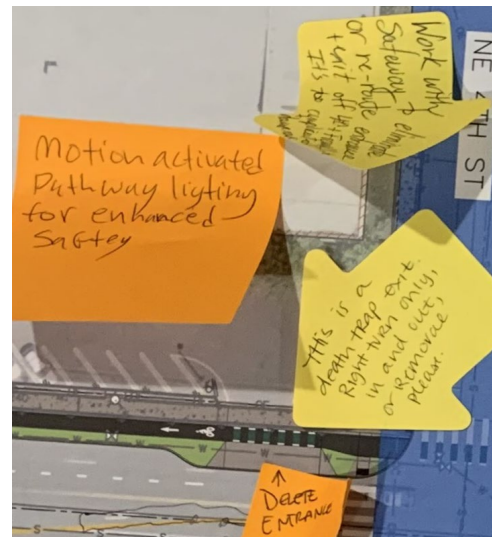
A lot of concern was expressed for the conditions of the Third Street intersection at Franklin as well as other Third crossings. This intersection is a high-stress source for many cyclists on the east-west commute and many felt that not improving safety here would undermine the goals of the entire project. It feels dangerous enough that it becomes a deterrent to choosing to bike over drive, "a biking deal breaker".

A few suggested improvements include:

- Add "No right on red" signs.
- Narrower vehicle lanes to slow down drivers.
- The new intersection at Wilson and Third was brought up as a preference (one person mentioned not liking the Wilson/Third option).

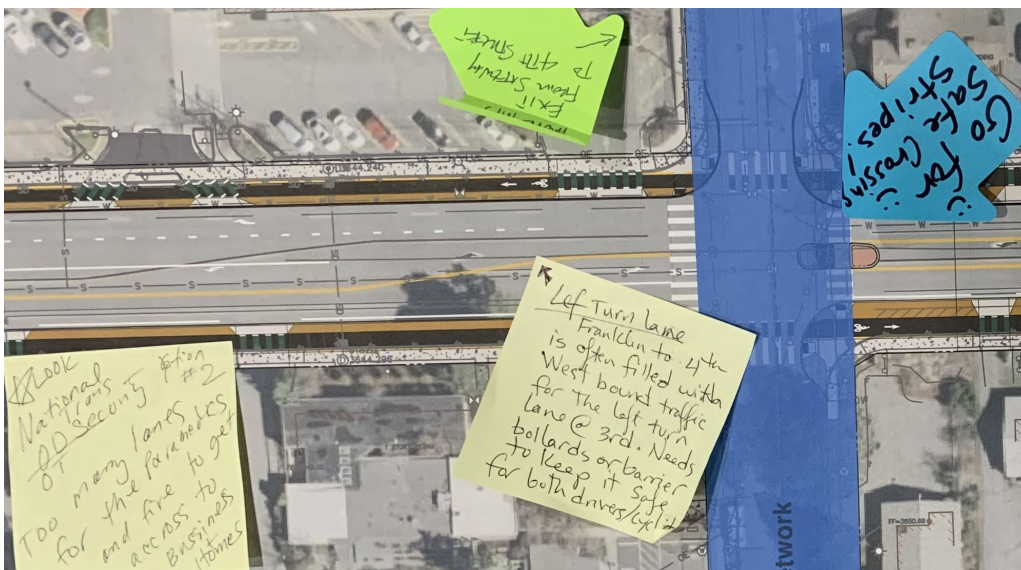
Safeway Driveway

Many participants shared that Fourth Street and Franklin Ave operate like a 5-way intersection when considering Safeway's entrance and exit near the corner. Participants witnessed "close calls" between drivers and pedestrians. This driveway, entrance and exit, should be re-examined to explore alternatives for Safeway that better accommodate safety for all.



Fourth Street

- A participant shared that there are "way too many" traffic pattern changes to keep track of in this area. Turning left by bike at Fourth can be very difficult. Is the intention for bikes to make left turns in the vehicle lane?



- Clearer signage on the roadway and the side of the road would help educate the public (drivers and bikers alike).

Additional comments, questions, or concerns

- Support for removing the parkway access ramp.
- Businesses should be offered the option to close any excess driveways/access points. This would make the project safer for all users.
- Plans should make getting from Franklin Ave to Hawthorne Bridge as easy as possible and connect to all transportation possibilities.
- Need minimal ADA disruption.
- Paramedics need clear access to serve.
- There needs to be a visual delineation between the sidewalk and bike lanes.
- Please use concrete for cycle lanes as people ride with dogs and asphalt gets deadly hot in summer.
- Lighting for the bike lane would be appreciated (as long as its dark sky compliant).
- One bike rider supports limited bike infrastructure and better integration of biking in the vehicle lanes.

"I'm comfortable on a bike in traffic, but in my opinion, bike protection often gets too much priority. Visibility is, of course, critical. A reduction in vehicle speeds top. No one should be charging the tunnel at 35-40 mph to make the light at Third street, often to waiting at the light. As a dedicated and experienced bicycle commuter, I don't like when excess protection restricts my flexibility as a rider. The more we can flow with traffic, the more likely we will be considered a legitimate mode of traffic."

- Make sure bikes can easily access crosswalk buttons without having to dismount. Also, make sure islands are wide enough for bikes to fit.
- A few people shared that they don't think this project should be a priority.

Overall support

"The information was presented well, and it was great to have staff to answer questions!"

"All three options are a big improvement!" "Please be mindful of the houseless community."

"As a long time resident of Bend (1996) and a daily walk/bike commuter from the East to the West side, this improvement is much appreciated."

Neighborhoods (121 responses)

Respondents shared they live or work in the following neighborhoods:

Neighborhoods	Number of respondents
Larkspur	36
Orchard District	19
Old Bend	16
Midtown	10
River West	7
Mountain View	5
Old Farm District	4
Century West	4
Awbrey Butte	4
Southeast Bend	4
West Bend/Hills/side	4

Additional neighborhoods or areas selected just once or twice: Central Business District, Boyd Acres, Summit West, Lava Ridge, Northwest Bend, Southwest Bend.