

Public Involvement Summary Report

Project Overview

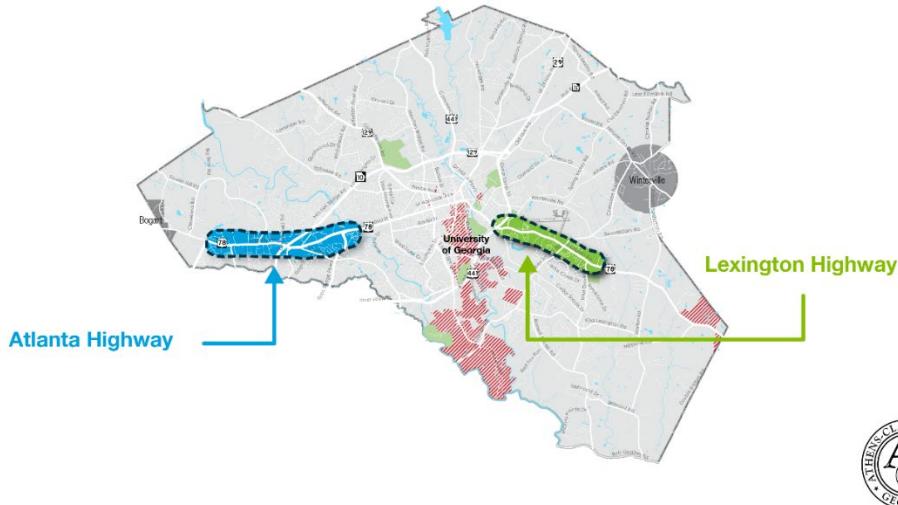
On November 7, 2017, Athens-Clarke County (ACC) citizens approved the Transportation Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (TSPLOST) 2018 Program Referendum, which included the Atlanta Highway and Lexington Highway Corridor Improvements projects. These projects are comprised of a variety of infrastructure improvements to help improve traffic, pedestrian access, and bicycle facilities along each corridor.

Atlanta Highway

The Atlanta Highway corridor is 4.7 miles long, from Monroe Highway to the Middle Oconee River. State Route 10 Loop bisects the corridor, which substantially increases the volume of traffic along this corridor. There are 26 separate TSPLOST projects split into three categories recommended for this corridor: Bus/Transit Stop Improvements, Roadway Improvements, and Bike/Pedestrian Improvements.

Lexington Highway

The Lexington Highway corridor is 2.7 miles long, from Johnson Road (east of the Athens Loop) to Southeast Clarke Park. There are 22 separate TSPLOST projects split into four categories recommended for this corridor: Airport Improvements, Bus/Transit Stop Improvements, Roadway Improvements, and Bike/Pedestrian Improvements.



Outreach Strategy

The Athens-Clarke County Unified Government requested feedback from the community on plans to improve access and mobility along two corridors, Lexington Highway and Atlanta Highway, from February through April. A project website was created for each corridor with maps, images, and descriptions for each project. A separate survey was included for each project category along with individual project comment forms to allow the community to rank and rate each project. The project team conducted public outreach to maximize community input via the website and at four public meetings.

Advertisement

Prior to Engagement Events

The project team created and distributed flyers with the public meeting dates and the project website to more than 40 separate locations. Additionally, the project team created and distributed window clings with QR codes to direct the public to the survey. These were distributed to ACC office locations and ACC transit to be added to bus windows. The project team also created a website banner that linked to the direct project page on the TSPL website for online visibility. And, the project team created signage that was placed in prominent locations along and in proximity to both corridors, as well as at ACC-identified locations; this signage featured QR codes and information to direct the public to the survey and to advertise the public meetings.

ACC Communications also issued a press release to advertise the online survey and public meetings.

Prior to Survey Close

In addition to the above described advertisements, reminder emails were sent to various email distribution lists managed and maintained by ACC Communications and SPLOST offices and multiple social media posts were made on ACC's Instagram and Facebook webpages during the last week to ensure maximum exposure ahead of the survey closing.

Engagement Events

In person pop-up events and public meetings were scheduled along both corridors, with two pop-up events and two public meetings along or in close proximity to each corridor. These meetings and events took place in March 2021.

At each event, project corridor maps, flyers with details about the survey, and project binders were provided for the public to learn about the proposed projects as well as to provide informed feedback.

Pop-Up Events

To reach as many citizens as possible, the project team set up four pop-up events outside of businesses with information about the proposed plans. The team observed CDC guidelines by wearing masks, practicing 6 feet of social distancing, providing hand sanitizer, and performing regular and frequent cleaning and disposal of materials.

The four pop-up events took place on the following dates:

Date	Location	# of Interactions
Saturday, March 13	Athens Farmers Market	25
Saturday, March 13	Lowe's Home Improvement on Lexington Highway	20
Saturday, March 20	Downtown Athens Open Streets	20
Saturday, March 20	Cofers Home and Garden Showplace off Atlanta Highway	15



Figure 1: Athens Farmers Market Pop-Up Event – March 13, 2021



Figure 2: Downtown Athens Pop-Up Event – March 20, 2021

Public Information Open House

To complement online input via the survey, four Public Information Open Houses (PIOHs), two for each corridor, took place on the following dates:

Date	Location	# of Attendees
Monday, March 22	Ben-Epps Athens Airport	4
Wednesday, March 24	Athens-Clarke County Co-Op Extension	2
Thursday, March 25	Athens-Clarke County Co-Op Extension	9
Saturday, March 27	Ben-Epps Athens Airport	6

Spanish Language translators were available at the March 24 and March 27 events to provide translation services. These services were provided at meetings for each corridor and were advertised on meeting collateral.

In addition to the educational materials included at the pop-up events, iPads and paper copies of the surveys were available for participants to provide immediate input at the PIOHs.



Figure 3: PIOH - Athens Co-op Extension – March 24, 2021



Figure 4: PIOH - Airport – March 27, 2021

Survey Results

Surveys for both corridors were available acgov.com/AtlantaHighway and acgov.com/LexingtonHighway. The website was live until April 18 and access to the surveys was provided at the PIOHs.

Approximately 387 unique respondents either provided input via the survey or an individual project comment form, resulting in almost 1,400 individual responses.

Atlanta Highway

An estimated 307 individuals either responded to the survey or provided a comment for more than 950 responses on the Atlanta Highway Corridor projects. Only 14% of all Atlanta Highway respondents provided a zip code. Of the individuals who provided a zip code, almost 80% reside in the 30606 zip code.

Bus/Transit Stops

The proposed Bus/Transit Stop projects for Atlanta Highway provide improvements to existing bus stop locations. They consist of improvements to provide ADA-compliant sidewalks (wheelchair accessible sidewalks and ramps) and improved connectivity to nearby roads and sidewalks. The eight proposed projects are:

- A1 - SunTrust/BB&T Bank and Budget Host Hotel
- A2 - Hook & Reel Restaurant and Publix
- A3 - Former Fire Station #2 and Aldi
- A4 - Barnes & Noble Bookstore
- A5 - Velox Insurance and Athens Vineyard Church
- A6 - Robins Financial and Heyward Allen GMC
- A7 - Bernstein Funeral Home
- A8 - Krispy Kreme

Results

Respondents were asked to rank each project in order of priority and the projects were given weighted scores for each ranked vote. For example, a first-place vote received the maximum eight points, a second-place vote received seven points, etc. Projects A3, A5, and A4 received the highest prioritization scores.

The priority ranking results are shown in Figure 5.



Figure 5: Atlanta Highway Bus/Transit Stop Prioritization Results

Participants also were able to provide a star rating for each individual project, if they chose to provide input on a specific project. The star rating for each project was weighted (5 stars received 5 points, 4 stars received 4 points, etc.) and then averaged; projects A3, A4, and A2 received the highest star ratings. The average star rating for all Atlanta Highway Bus/Transit projects was 3.02.

The combined results (priority ranking and star rating) are shown in **Figure 6**.

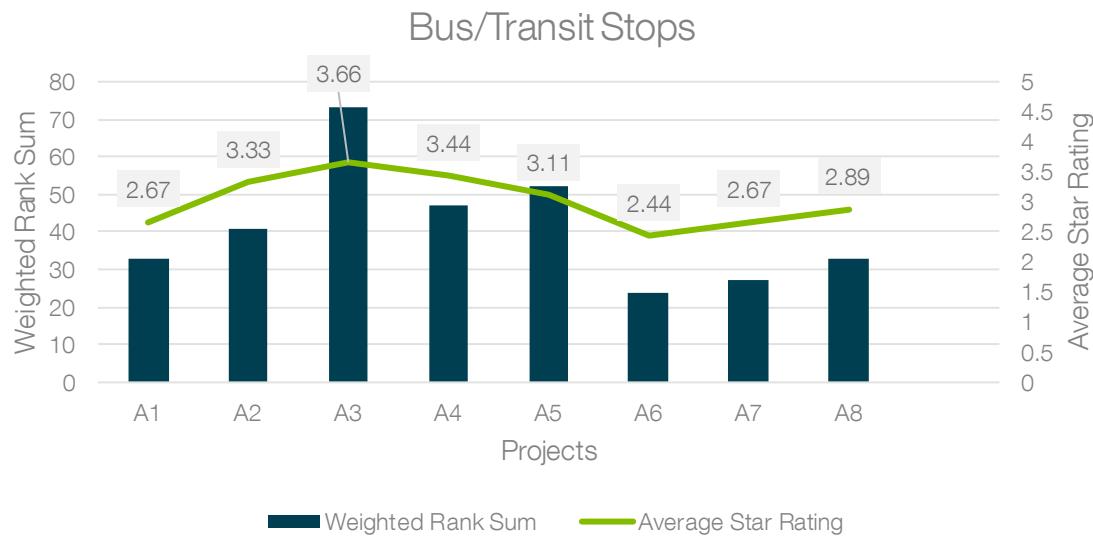


Figure 6: Atlanta Highway Bus/Transit Stop Survey Results

Comments

Respondents were given the opportunity to provide comments on the survey or on an individual project via a separate project comment form. This comment form also asked a multiple-choice question to best characterize the comment. Results for this question are shown in **Figure 7**.

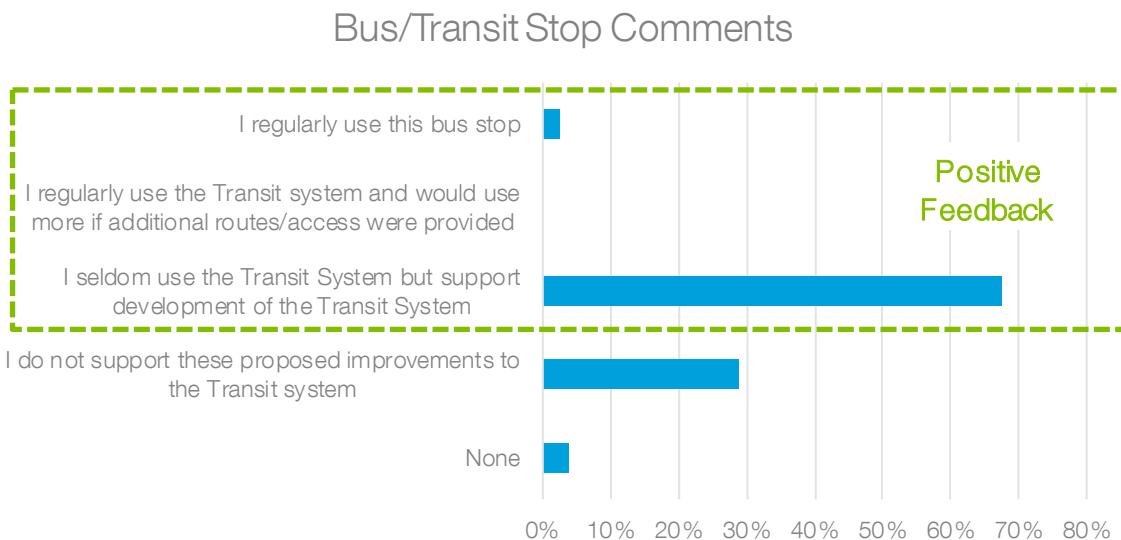


Figure 7: Atlanta Highway Bus/Transit Stop Comment Results

For Atlanta Highway Bus/Transit projects, approximately two-thirds of comments were supportive/positive and one-third were not supportive/negative with many comments in support of complementary sidewalk projects. Comments received included:

- Safety/Comfort
 - Stated support of stops that provide protection from inclement weather
 - Indicated not in support of utilizing funds to upgrade a stop that already has a covered bench when others do not have any shelter
- Access/Connectivity
 - Indicated it was important to combine with sidewalk installation
 - Stated Bus Stop locations should be near crosswalks to prevent unsafe highway crossing
- Land Use Supportive
 - Requested to prioritize the stops with high ridership and near amenities
 - Suggested to not use funds to improve a bus stop on/near parcels likely to redevelop

Roadway Improvements

The proposed Roadway Improvements projects for Atlanta Highway are a combination of intersection improvements, median installations, and roadway extensions. The six proposed projects are:

- A9 - Remove US Highway 78/SR10 to Atlanta Highway Slip Lane at Pepsi Plant
- A10 - Realignment of Atlanta Highway and Mitchell Bridge Road/Timothy Road
- A11 - GA Square Mall to Cleveland Road
- A12 - Cleveland Road to Florence Drive
- A14 - Heyward Allen Road Extension
- A15 - Jennings Mill Parkway Extension

Results

Respondents were asked to rank each project in order of priority and the projects were given weighted scores for each ranked vote. For example, a first-place vote received the maximum six points, a second-place vote received five points, etc. Projects A10 and A11 received the highest prioritization scores.

The priority ranking results are shown in **Figure 8**.

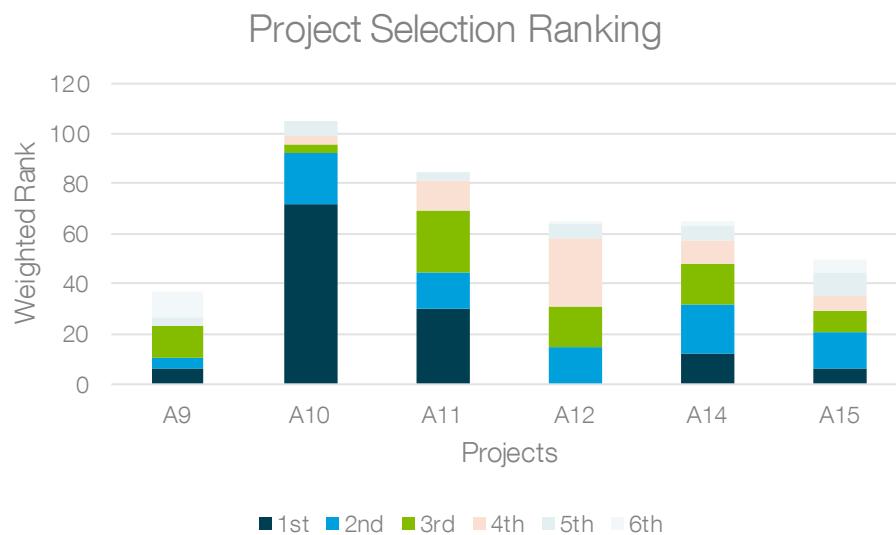


Figure 8: Atlanta Highway Roadway Prioritization Results

The star rating for each project was weighted (5 stars received 5 points, 4 stars received 4 points, etc.) and then averaged; projects A10, A11, and A12 received the highest star ratings. The average star rating for all Atlanta Highway Roadway projects was 2.92.

The combined results (priority ranking and star rating) are shown in **Figure 9**.

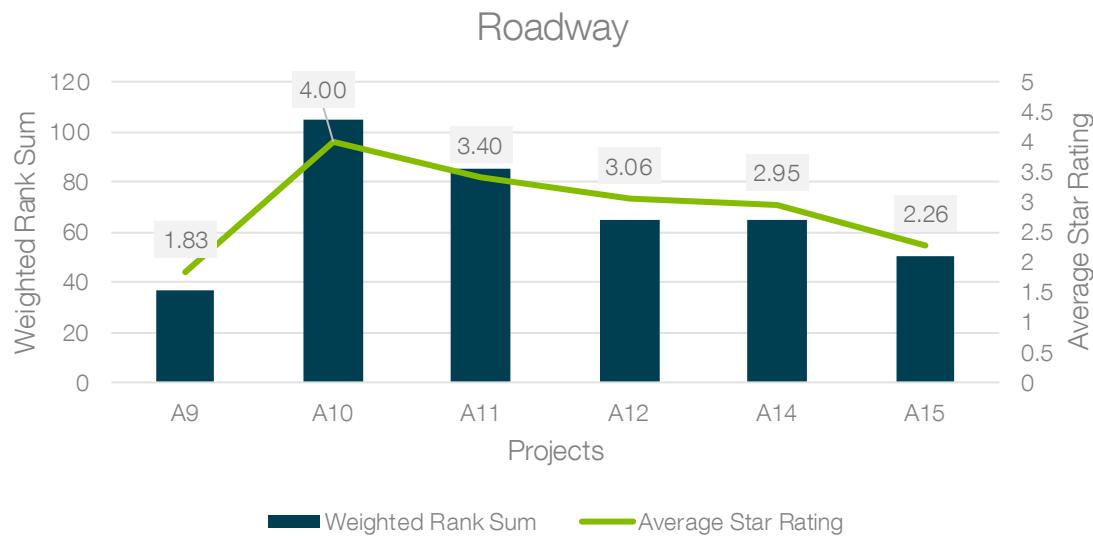


Figure 9: Atlanta Highway Roadway Survey Results

Comments

Respondents were given the opportunity to provide comments on the survey or on an individual project via a separate project comment form. This comment form also asked a multiple-choice question to best characterize the comment. Results for this question are shown in **Figure 10**.

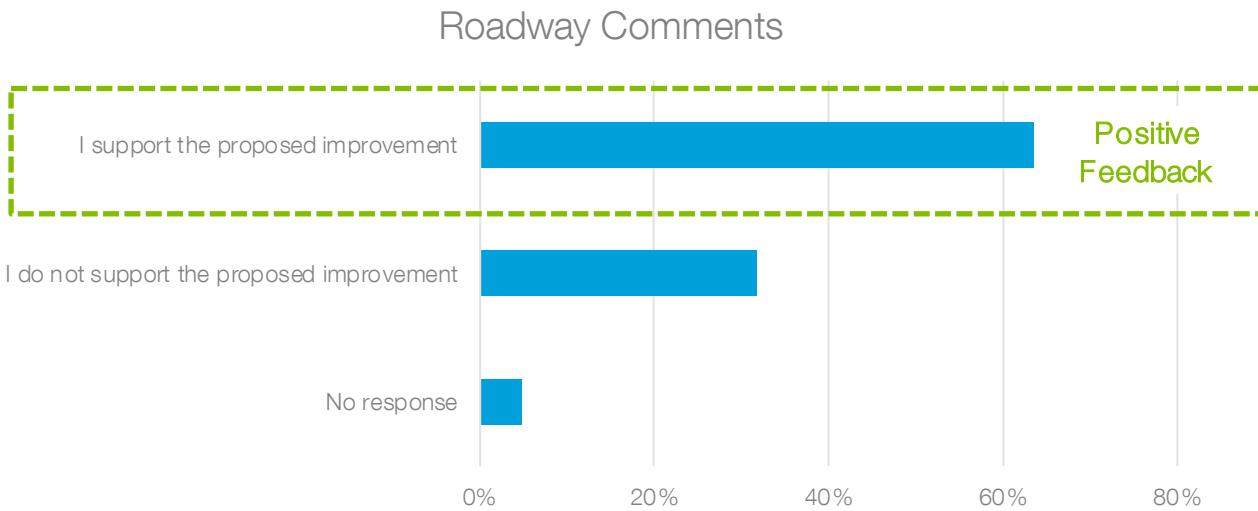


Figure 10: Atlanta Highway Roadway Comment Results

For Atlanta Highway Roadway Improvements projects, approximately two-thirds of comments were supportive/positive and one-third were not supportive/negative or recommended including complete streets/pedestrian/bicycle infrastructure. Comments received included:

- Safety
 - Proposed that intersection improvements will improve safety and access
 - Stated safety is a major concern
- Access
 - Expressed concern about traffic shifting to other roads/cut-through traffic
- Beautification
 - Shared support for corridor beautification (landscaping, landscaped medians, signage, etc.)
- Non-vehicular
 - Indicated would rather see non-roadway projects (bike/pedestrian) funded
 - Requested that bike/pedestrian improvements are incorporated into roadway projects

Bike/Pedestrian

The proposed Bike/Pedestrian Improvements projects for Atlanta Highway include a new bridge, sidewalk installation where gaps currently exist, and either sidewalk or trail extensions. The 12 proposed projects for Atlanta Highway are:

- A13 - Mitchell Bridge Road Pedestrian Bridge
- A16 - Atlanta Highway Sidewalk Connectivity from GA Square Mall to Cleveland Road
- A17 - Atlanta Highway Sidewalk Connectivity from Cleveland Road to New Jimmie Daniel Road
- A18 - Atlanta Highway Sidewalk Connectivity from New Jimmie Daniel Road to Monroe Highway
- A19 - Mitchell Bridge from State Route 10 to Middle Oconee River (sidewalk)
- A20 - Mitchell Bridge from Middle Oconee River to West Chester Drive (sidewalk)
- A21 - Timothy Road from Epps Bridge Parkway to State Route 10 Loop On-ramp (sidewalk)
- A22 - Timothy Road from State Route 10 Loop/On-ramp to Old Macon Highway (sidewalk)
- A23 - Mitchell Bridge from State Route 10 Loop to Middle Oconee River (multi-use trail)
- A24 - Mitchell Bridge from Middle Oconee River to West Chester Drive (multi-use trail)
- A25 - Timothy Road from Epps Bridge Parkway to State Route 10 Loop On-ramp (trail)
- A26 - Timothy Road from State Route 10 Loop/On-ramp to Old Macon Highway (trail)

Projects A19 through A26 propose two options, either a five-foot-wide sidewalk or a ten-foot-wide trail for four different sections of roadway. Therefore, both A19 and A23 would provide access to the same road, with different infrastructure types, as shown in the below table.

Project Segment	Sidewalk 5' Improvement	Trail 10' Improvement
Mitchell Bridge from State Route 10 to Middle Oconee River	A19	A23
Mitchell Bridge from Middle Oconee River to West Chester Drive	A20	A24
Timothy Road from Epps Bridge Parkway to State Route 10 Loop On-ramp	A21	A25
Timothy Road from State Route 10 Loop/On-ramp to Old Macon Highway	A22	A26

Results

Respondents were asked to rank each project in order of priority and the projects were given weighted scores for each ranked vote. For example, a first-place vote received the maximum 12 points, a second-place vote received 11 points, etc. Projects A21, A22, and A25 received the highest prioritization scores; it should be noted that A21 and A25 are projects for the same location. For these eight projects, all sidewalk projects (A19 through A22) scored higher than their respective trail projects. Excluding the trail projects, A21, A22, and A19 received the highest prioritization scores.

The priority ranking results are shown in **Figure 11**.



Figure 11: Atlanta Highway Bike/Pedestrian Prioritization Results

The star rating for each project was weighted (5 stars received 5 points, 4 stars received 4 points, etc.) and then averaged; projects A21, A22, and A12 received the highest star ratings. The average star rating for all Atlanta Bike/Pedestrian projects was 3.42. If the trail projects were removed from the analysis—because the sidewalk projects were preferred—the average project star rating was 3.24.

The combined results are shown in **Figure 12**.



Figure 12: Atlanta Highway Bike/Pedestrian Survey Results

Comments

Respondents were given the opportunity to provide comments on the survey or on an individual project via a separate project comment form. This comment form also asked a multiple-choice question to best characterize the comment. Results for this question are shown in **Figure 13**.

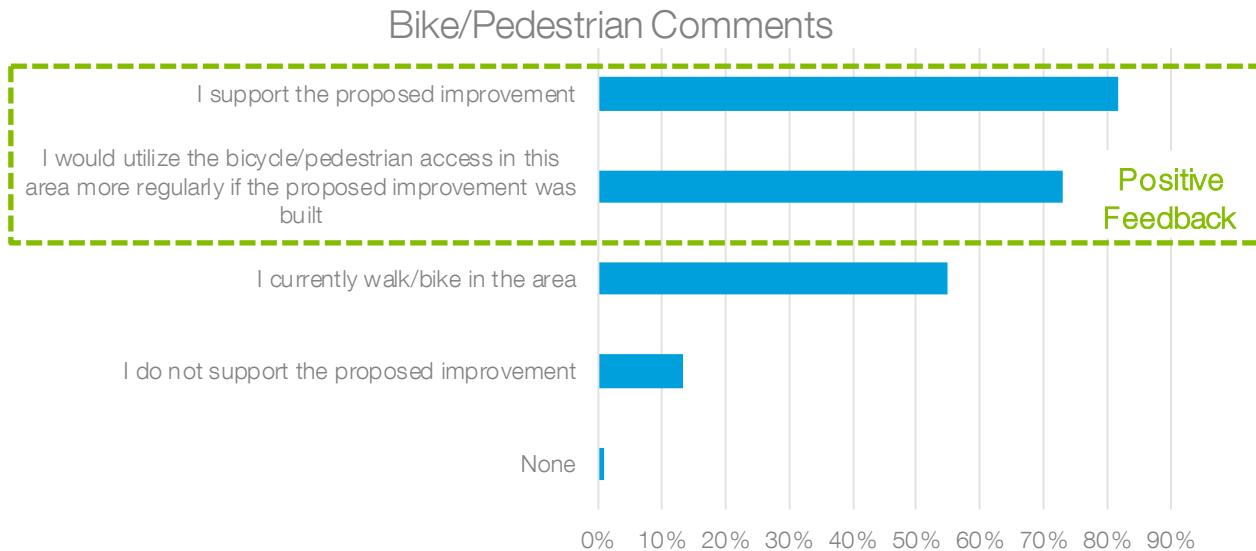


Figure 13: Atlanta Highway Bike/Pedestrian Comment Results

For Atlanta Highway Bike/Pedestrian projects, approximately 80% of comments were supportive/positive and 20% were not supportive/negative. Comments received included:

- Safety/Connectivity
 - Stated that Timothy Road is in desperate need of sidewalks to increase connectivity in the area
 - Expressed that better sidewalks will encourage more transit usage and make it safer for those already using transit
- Bicycle v. Pedestrian
 - Requested that multi-use paths are considered whenever possible
 - Considered that new sidewalks in areas where they currently do not exist are the top priority
- Development
 - Shared concern about whether sidewalks should be built in existing neighborhoods or in developing areas

Lexington Highway

An estimated 98 individuals either responded to the survey or provided a comment for almost 450 responses. Only 22% of all Lexington Highway respondents provided a zip code. Of the individuals who provided a zip code, almost 70% reside in the 30605 zip code.

Airport

The proposed Airport projects for Lexington Highway are:

- L1 - New Airport Monument Sign
- L2 - New Airport Entry Road

Results

Respondents were asked to rank each project in order of priority and the projects were given weighted scores for each ranked vote. For example, a first-place vote received the maximum two points, a second-place vote received one point. Project L2 received the highest prioritization score.

The priority ranking results are shown in **Figure 14**.

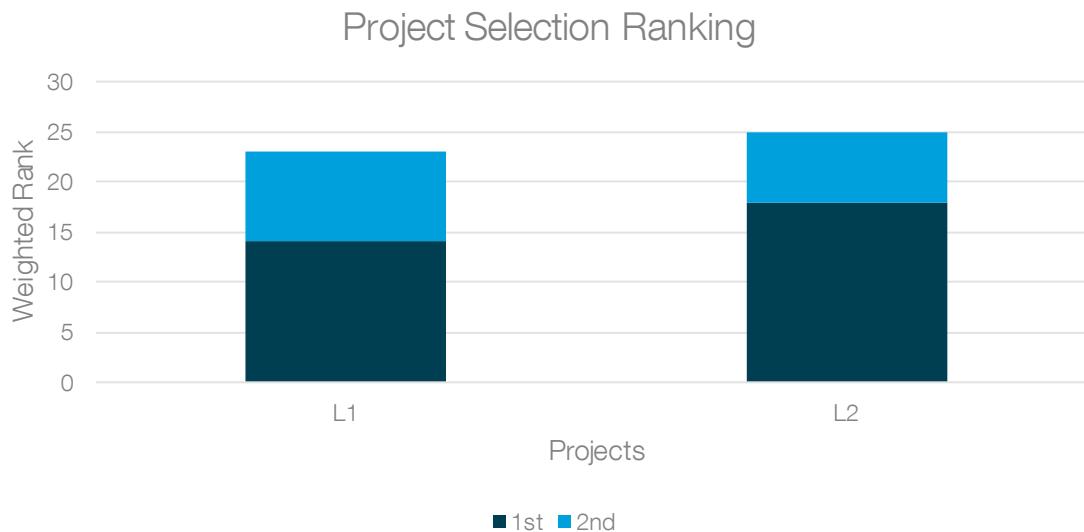


Figure 14: Lexington Highway Airport Prioritization Results

The star rating for each project was weighted (5 stars received 5 points, 4 stars received 4 points, etc.) and then averaged; project L2 received the highest star rating of 3.10. The average star rating for all Lexington Highway Airport projects was 2.82.

The combined results (priority ranking and star rating) are shown in **Figure 15**.

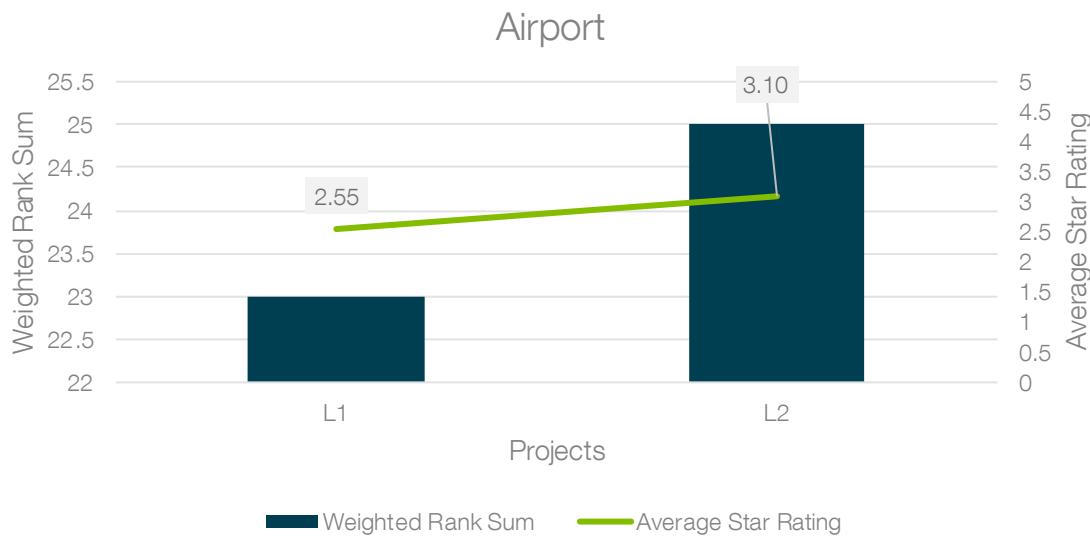


Figure 15: Lexington Highway Airport Survey Results

Comments

Respondents were given the opportunity to provide comments on the survey or on an individual project via a separate project comment form. This comment form also asked a multiple-choice question to best characterize the comment. Results for this question are shown in **Figure 16**.

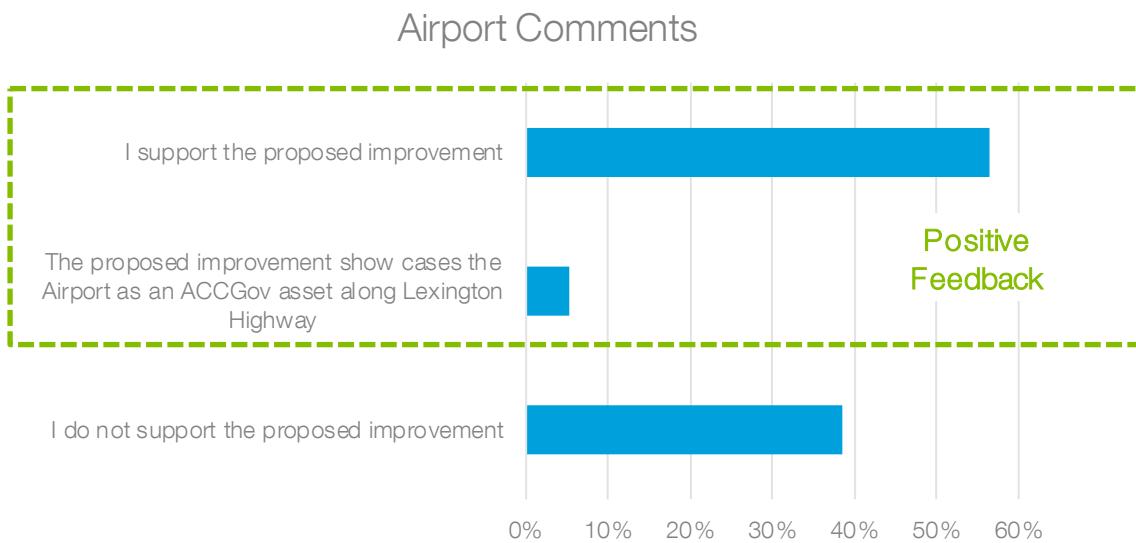


Figure 16: Lexington Highway Airport Comment Results

For Lexington Highway Airport projects, approximately 60% of comments were supportive/positive and 40% were not supportive/negative. Comments received included:

- Monument Sign
 - Stated that the monument sign will enhance wayfinding
 - Believed the projects would increase awareness of the airport
 - Expressed that the cost doesn't justify the means
- Airport Road
 - Stated that the projects lack benefit to the community
 - Expressed that they did not trust in the "if you build it, they will come" mentality
 - Indicated that this project category should be a low priority when compared to other projects, such as bike/pedestrian and bus/transit

Bus/Transit Stops

The proposed Bus/Transit Stop projects for Lexington Highway provide improvements to existing bus stop locations. They consist of improvements to provide ADA-compliant sidewalks (wheelchair accessible sidewalks and ramps) and improved connectivity to nearby roads and sidewalks. The seven proposed projects are:

- L3 - Joy Beauty & America Home
- L4 - Thornton's Pizza
- L5 - Georgian Park Offices
- L6 - Across from Mahindra Tractor
- L7 - Chevron Gas Station
- L8 - Across from Living Hope Church
- L9 - Sunset Finance & Top Dog Auto Repair

Results

Respondents were asked to rank each project in order of priority and the projects were given weighted scores for each ranked vote. For example, a first-place vote received the maximum seven points, a second-place vote received six points, etc. Projects L3, L6, and L7 received the highest prioritization scores.

The priority ranking results are shown in **Figure 17**.



Figure 17: Lexington Highway Bus/Transit Stops Prioritization Results

The star rating for each project was weighted (5 stars received 5 points, 4 stars received 4 points, etc.) and then averaged; projects L4, L3, and L7 received the highest star ratings. The average star rating for all Lexington Highway Bus/Transit projects was 3.75.

The combined results are shown in **Figure 18**.

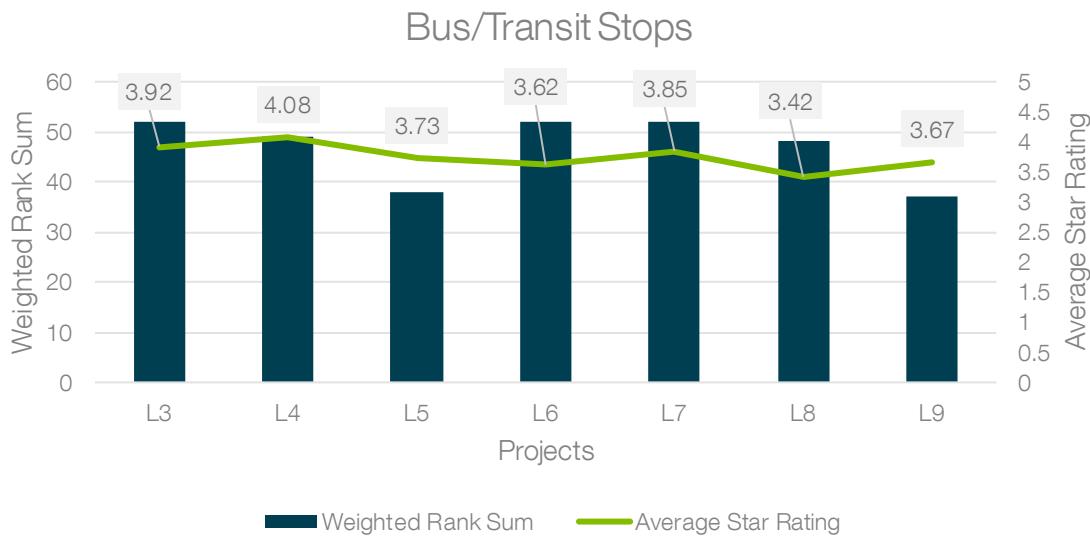


Figure 18: Lexington Highway Bus/Transit Stops Survey Results

Comments

Respondents were given the opportunity to provide comments on the survey or on an individual project via a separate project comment form. This comment form also asked a multiple-choice question to best characterize the comment. Results for this question are shown in **Figure 19**.

Bus/Transit Stops Comments

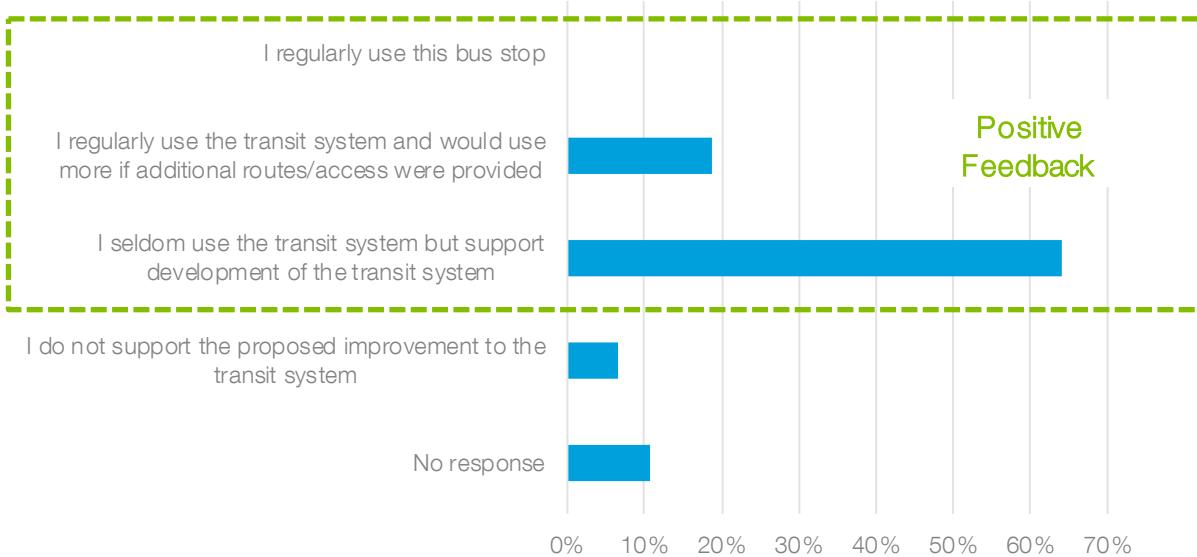


Figure 19: Lexington Highway Bus/Transit Stops Comment Results

For Lexington Highway Bus/Transit Stops projects, approximately 85% of comments were supportive/positive and 15% were not supportive/negative. Comments received included:

- Bus Stop Condition
 - Expressed that good bus stop/shelter is critical to provide a quality experience
- Location
 - Requested that safe and secure placement of the shelter was ensured
 - Indicated that consideration should be made to placing back further from the roadway
- Size
 - Requested an increase in the size of the proposed shelters

Roadway Improvements

The proposed Roadway Improvements projects for Lexington Highway are four proposed intersection improvements:

- L10 - County Farm Road and Jail Road
- L11 - Cooper Road and Lexington Road
- L12 - Gaines School Road/Cherokee Road and Lexington Road Intersection
- L13 - Whit Davis Road and Lexington Road

Results

Respondents were asked to rank each project in order of priority and the projects were given weighted scores for each ranked vote. For example, a first-place vote received the maximum four points, a second-place vote received three points, etc. Projects L12 and L13 received the highest prioritization scores. while the priority ranking individual results are shown in **Figure 20**.



Figure 20: Lexington Highway Roadway Prioritization Results

The star rating for each project was weighted (5 stars received 5 points, 4 stars received 4 points, etc.) and then averaged; projects L12 and L13 received the highest star ratings The average star rating for all Lexington Highway Roadway projects was 3.64.

The combined results are shown in **Figure 21**.



Figure 21: Lexington Highway Roadway Survey Results

Comments

Respondents were given the opportunity to provide comments on the survey or on an individual project via a separate project comment form. This comment form also asked a multiple-choice question to best characterize the comment. Results for this question are shown in Figure 22.

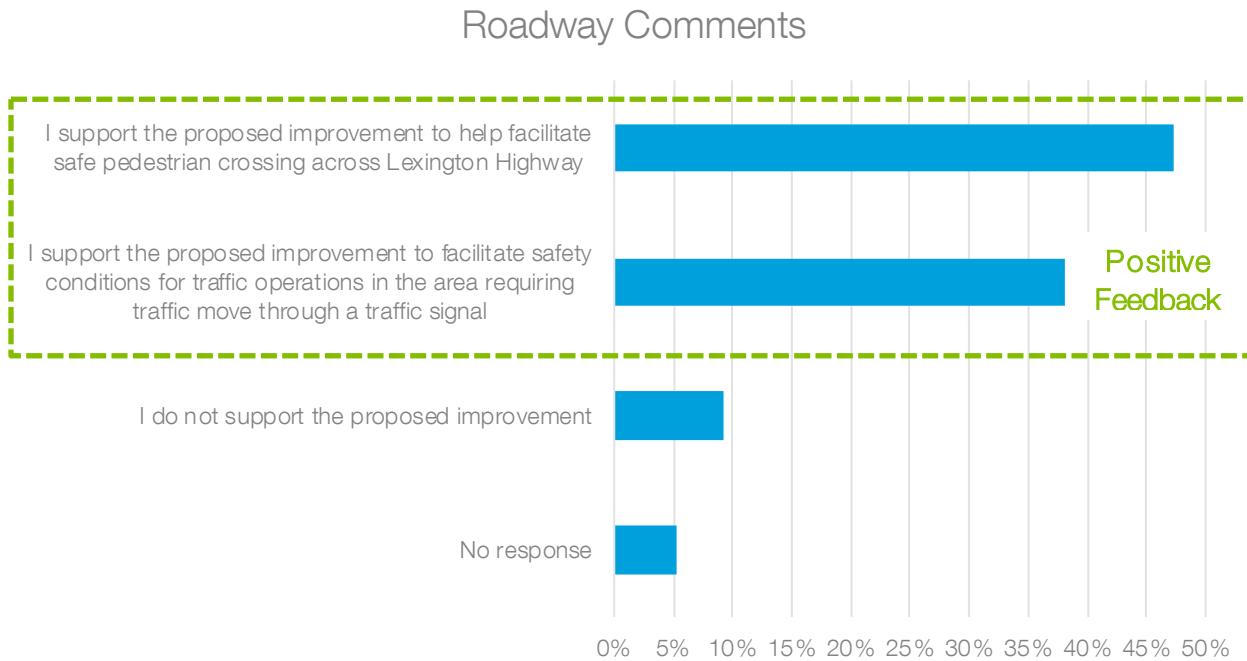


Figure 22: Lexington Highway Roadway Comment Results

For Lexington Highway Roadway projects, approximately 85% of comments were supportive/positive and 15% not supportive/negative. Comments received included:

- Pedestrian Safety/Access
 - Stated that pedestrian safety is very important
 - Indicated these projects will help pedestrians safely cross the street
 - Expressed that right-turn slip lanes are dangerous for pedestrians
 - Requested that a redesign of the corridor is considered, with multimodal options such as 30 mph design speed, protected bike lanes, protected bike intersections, and continuous sidewalks with great bus stops
- Vehicular Movement
 - Stated that signals help with turning movements
 - Believed signals will cause congestion
 - Requested that roundabouts are considered
- Financing
 - Suggested that large, big-box stores should fund the improvements

Bike/Pedestrian

The proposed Bike/Pedestrian Improvements projects for Lexington Highway include sidewalk installations or extensions and trail installations. The nine proposed Bike/Pedestrian projects for Lexington Highway are:

- L14 - Johnson Drive to Indiana Avenue (south side of Lexington Highway)
- L15 - Indiana Avenue to Lexington Heights (south side of Lexington Highway)
- L16 - Lexington Heights to Shadybrook Drive (south side of Lexington Highway)
- L17 - Shadybrook Drive to Seagraves Drive (south side of Lexington Highway)
- L18 - Seagraves Drive to Mimosa Drive (south side of Lexington Highway)
- L19 - Diversion Center to Police Department (north side of Lexington Highway)
- L20 - Satterfield Park to Southeast Clarke Park
- L21 - Satterfield Park Partial Trail: Phase 1 Only
- L22 - Satterfield Park Full Trail: Phases 1, 2, and 3

Results

Respondents were asked to rank each project in order of priority and the projects were given weighted scores for each ranked vote. For example, a first-place vote received the maximum nine points, a second-place vote received eight points, etc. Projects L17, L14, L15, L18 and L20 received the highest prioritization scores.

The priority ranking results are shown in **Figure 23**.



Figure 23: Lexington Highway Bike/Pedestrian Prioritization Results

The star rating for each project was weighted (5 stars received 5 points, 4 stars received 4 points, etc.) and then averaged; projects L17, L15, and L18 received the highest star ratings. The average star rating for all Lexington Highway Bike/Pedestrian projects was 3.42.

The combined results (priority ranking and star rating) are shown in **Figure 24**.

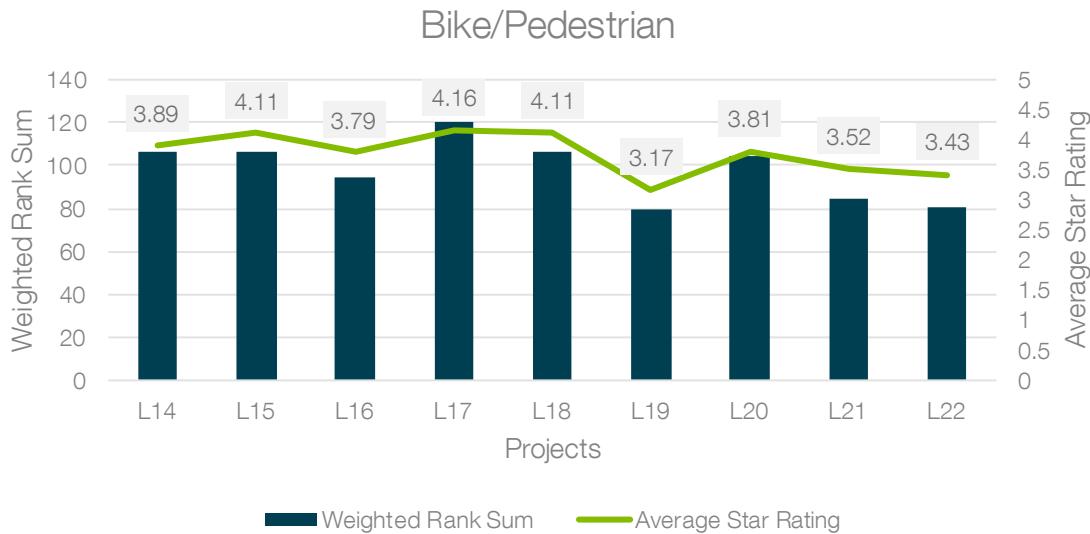


Figure 24: Lexington Highway Bike/Pedestrian Survey Results

Comments

Respondents were given the opportunity to provide comments on the survey or on an individual project via a separate project comment form. This comment form also asked a multiple-choice question to best characterize the comment. Results for this question are shown in **Figure 25**.

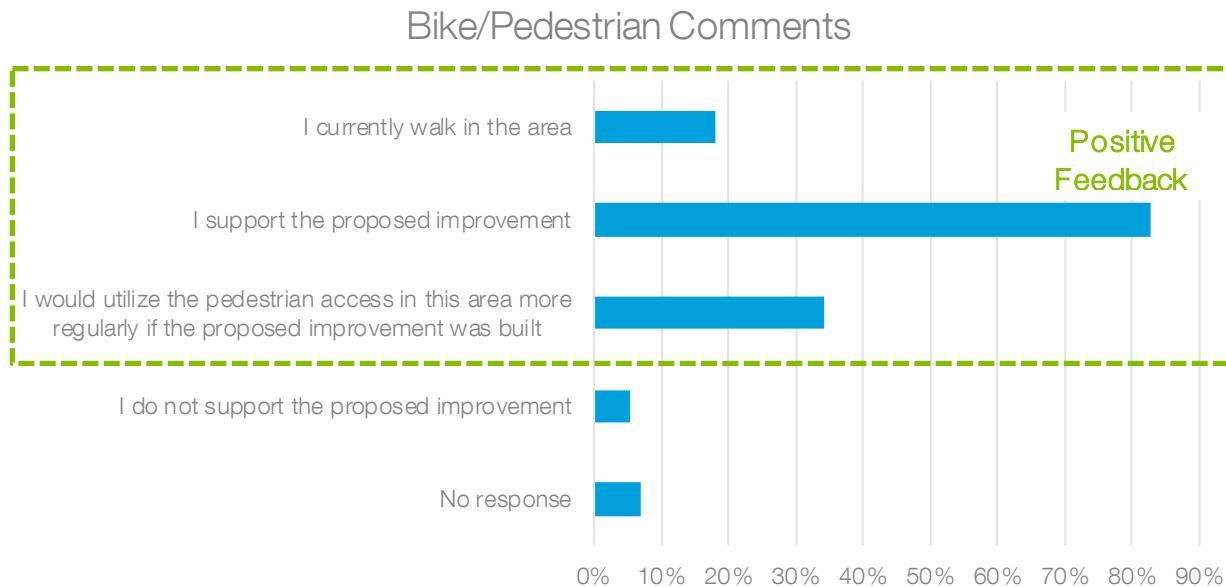


Figure 25: Lexington Highway Bike/Pedestrian Comment Results

For Lexington Highway Bike/Pedestrian projects, approximately 90% were supportive/positive and 10% were not supportive/negative. Comments received included:

- Safety/Connectivity
 - Explained that better sidewalks will encourage more transit usage and make it safer for those already using transit
- Bicycle vs. Pedestrian
 - Requested that multiuse paths are considered whenever possible
 - Stated that new sidewalks in areas where they currently do not exist are the top priority

Conclusion

Public outreach efforts resulted in nearly 400 respondents completing the online survey or a project comment form. Those respondents provided input that resulted in ranked projects by category.

Additionally, the average star ratings provided on individual projects by category aligns with the project rankings, as shown in the below table.

Categories by Average Star Rating		
Rank	Category	Average Star Rating
1st	Lexington Highway Bus/Transit Stops	3.75
2nd	Lexington Highway Roadway	3.64
3rd	Lexington Highway Bike/Pedestrian	3.42
4th	Atlanta Highway Bike/Pedestrian	3.24
5th	Atlanta Highway Bus/Transit Stops	3.02
6th	Atlanta Highway Roadway	2.92
7th	Lexington Highway Airport	2.82

The average star rating may also be used for comparison of projects across categories, although it should be noted that the sample pool of star ratings is smaller than the priority ranking by category sample pool.

Although the sample pool is small, it is worth noting that the highest star-rated projects across all project categories were sidewalk or trail improvements, with the top four highest-rated projects being proposed along Timothy Road. Due to redundancy in projects A21, A22, A25, and A26, it is recommended that the weighted rank sum is used for further prioritization—the weighted rank sum indicated a preference for sidewalks over trails.

Top 5 Highest Rated Projects		
Project ID	Project Description	Average Star Rating
A21	Timothy Road from Epps Bridge Parkway to State Route 10 Loop On-ramp (sidewalk)	4.45
A26	Timothy Road from State Route 10 Loop/On-ramp to Old Macon Highway (trail)	4.41
A22	Timothy Road from State Route 10 Loop/On-ramp to Old Macon Highway (sidewalk)	4.26
A25	Timothy Road from Epps Bridge Parkway to State Route 10 Loop On-ramp (trail)	4.25
L17	Shadybrook Drive to Seagraves Drive (south side of Lexington Highway)	4.16