



**2026 BIENNIAL
CONFERENCE**
PLANNING AT THE SPEED OF CHANGE

From Controversy to Consensus:
*Crafting Effective Multimodal
Transportation Planning Studies*



Introductions



Bill Swiatek, AICP
Principal Planner



Grant Handley
Assistant Town Administrator



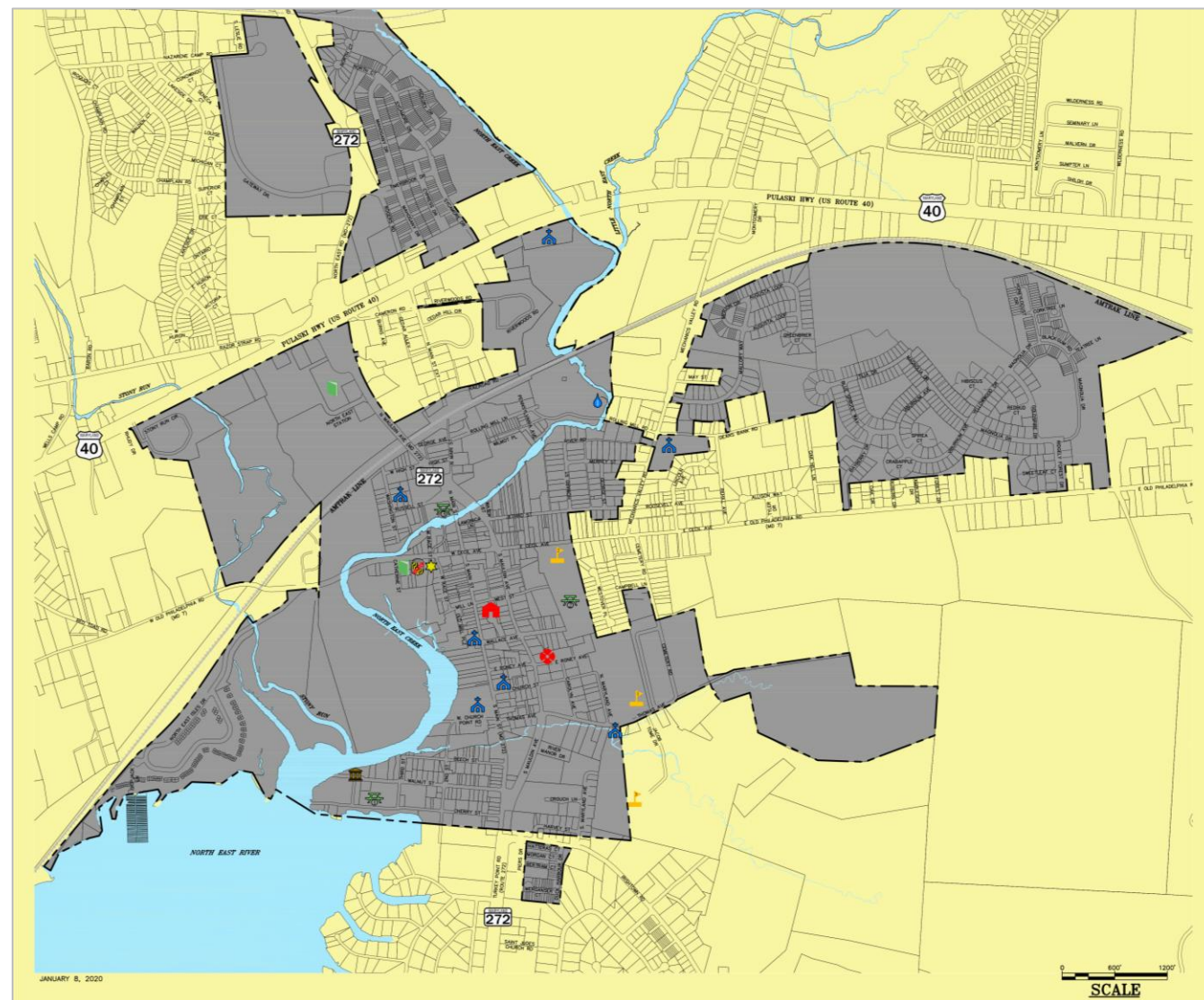
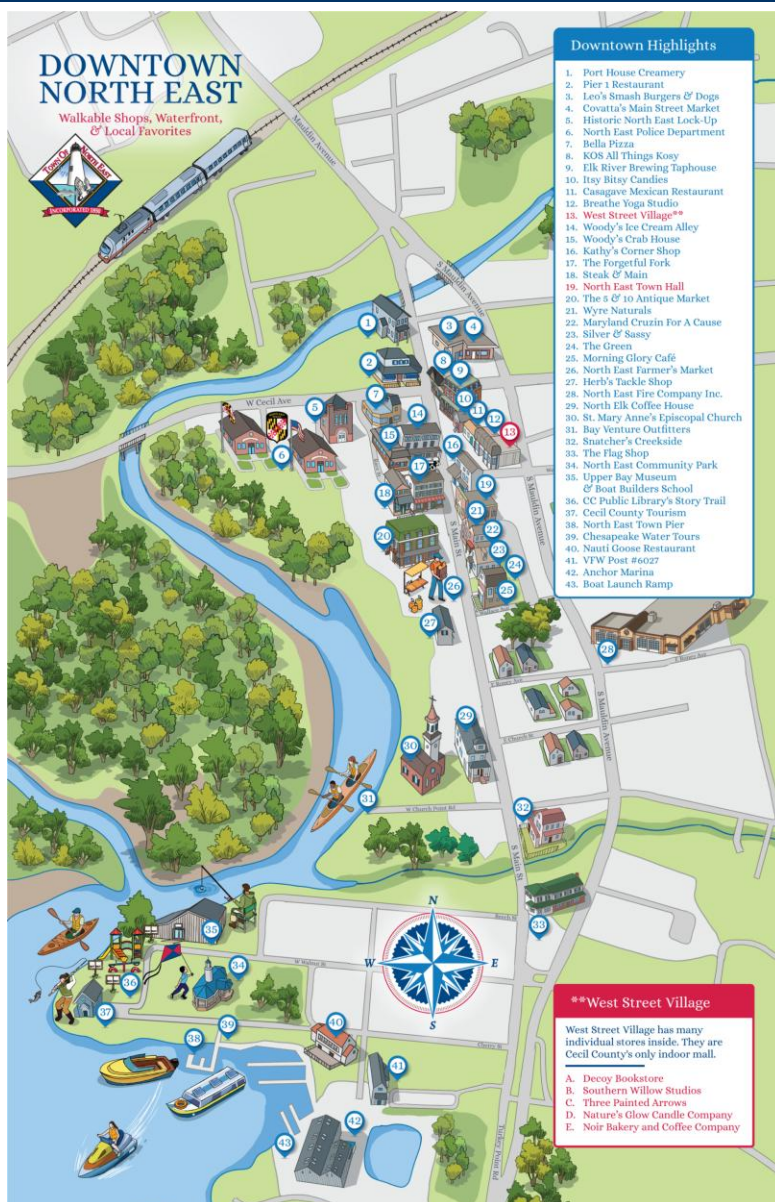
Wayne Martin, PE
Senior Project Manager



The image features a horizontal blue bar that spans the width of the frame. A yellow rectangular box is positioned on top of this bar, slightly offset to the right. The text "Building the Vision" is centered within the yellow box. The background consists of light gray, wavy, abstract shapes that create a sense of movement and depth.

Building the Vision

Town of North East – Geography



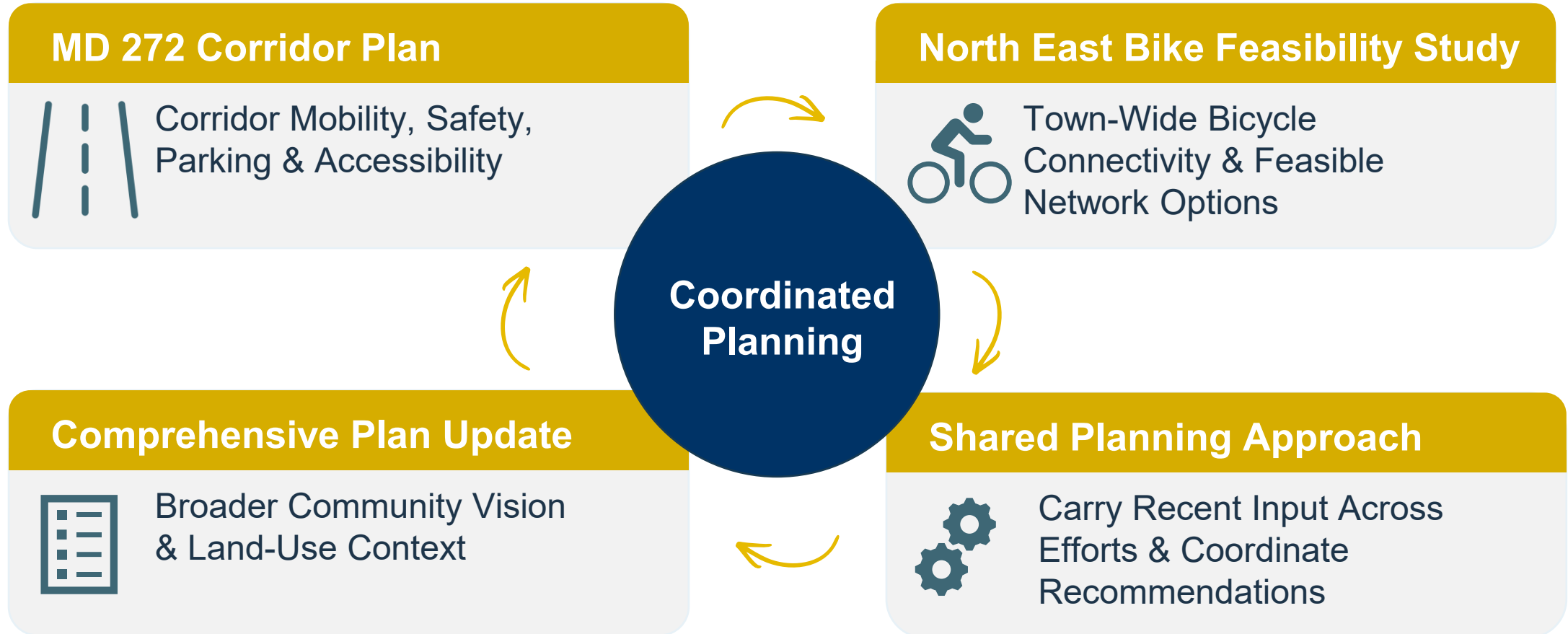
The Town of North East



- **Regional Transportation Crossroads**
 - MD 272 Links I-95, US 40, Downtown North East & Southern Communities
- **MD 272 – Three Distinct Corridor Contexts**
 - Commercial/Industrial, Downtown Mixed-Use, Rural/Recreational
- **Multiple Transportation Functions**
 - Regional Mobility, Local Access, Freight, Tourism & Recreation
- **Competing Community Priorities**
 - Safety, Parking, Business Access & Multimodal Connectivity



Coordinating the Planning Efforts



Planning in the Town of North East



MD 272 Corridor Plan Begins

August 2024

- Examine Transportation Needs Along North East's Primary Corridor
- Build a Community-Driven Vision for Connectivity, Safety, Accessibility, & Mobility

North East Bike Feasibility Study Begins

January 2025

- Expand the Multimodal Lens beyond MD 272
- Explore Town-Wide Connections to Neighborhoods, Schools, Parks, Businesses, Trails & Waterfront Destinations

Planning Efforts Advance Together

- MD 272 Coordinated with the Bike Study & Comprehensive Plan Update
- Community Input Initiatives Informed Both Efforts

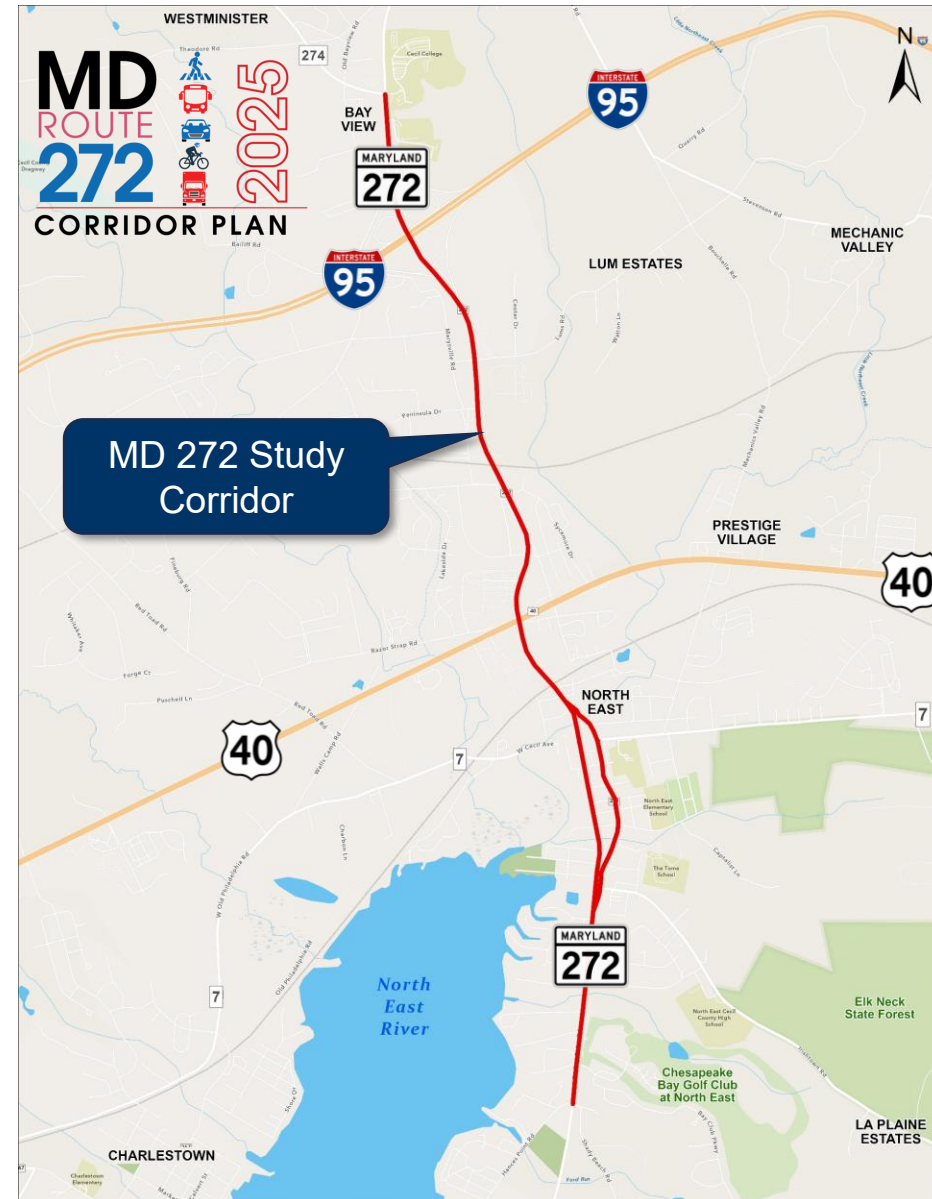
From Planning to Implementation

- Identify Preferred Concepts
- Prioritize Projects, Funding Opportunities & Follow-up Studies

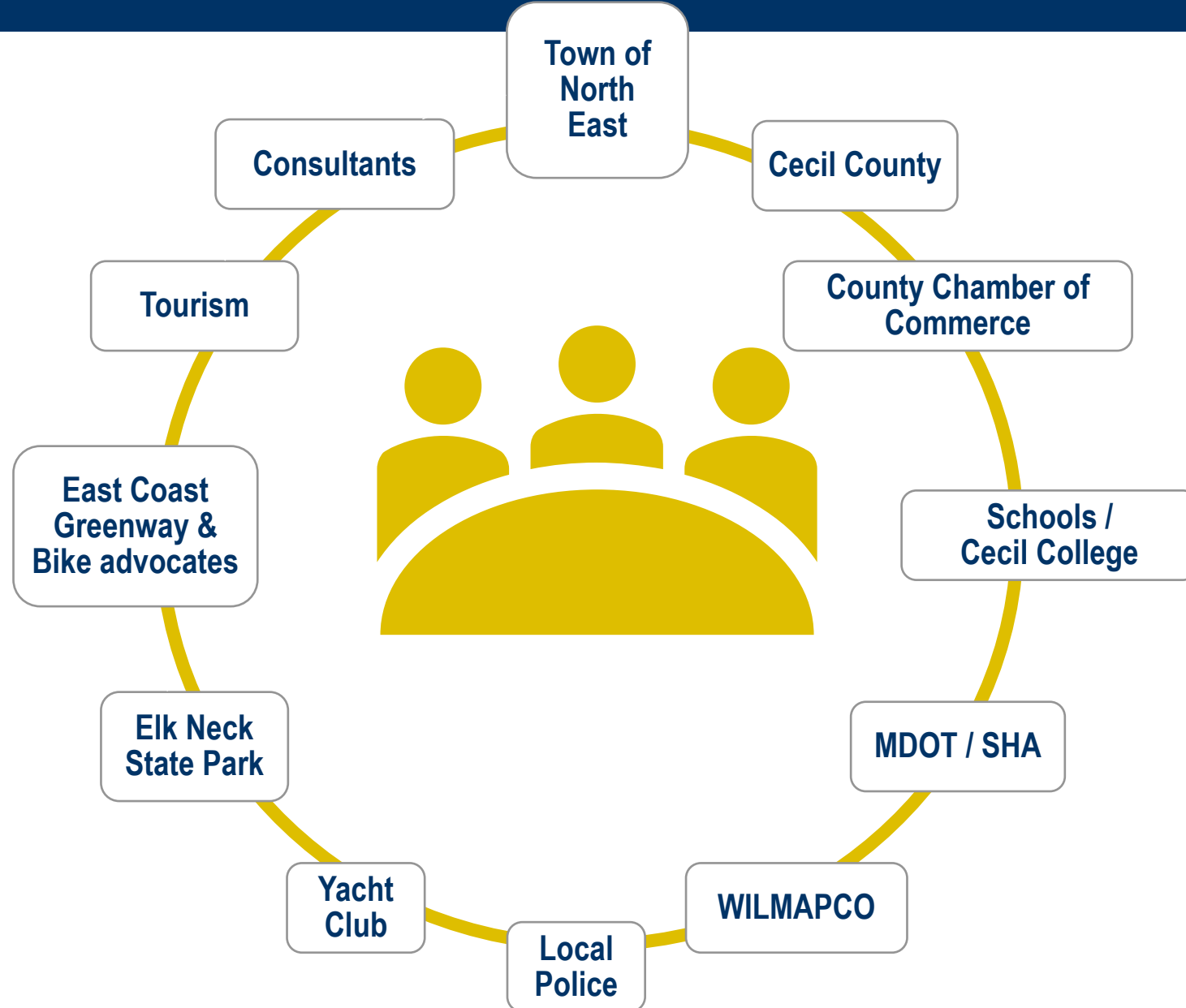
MD 272 Corridor Study: Where the Process Began



- **4.5-Mile Multimodal Corridor Study**
 - Evaluated Transportation, Land Use & Development Conditions
 - Focused on Connectivity, Safety, Accessibility & Mobility
- **Community-Driven, Implementation-Focused Plan**
 - Public/Stakeholder Engagement Informed Preferred Alternatives
 - Identified Priority Improvements, Partners, Costs & Funding Strategies



MD 272 Steering Committee



MD 272 Planning Process



Existing Conditions

- Traffic
- Land Use



Visioning

- Survey 1
- Workshop 1
- Youth outreach 1



Draft Recommendations

- Workshop 2
- Survey 2
- Youth outreach 2



Select Recommendations

- Workshop 3
- Draft plan review



Implementation

- Monitoring Committee
- Traffic Analysis



Existing Conditions & Key Transportation Needs



- **Safety Concerns**

- 127 Crashes in 2023; 42 Involved Injuries

- **Speed & Congestion**

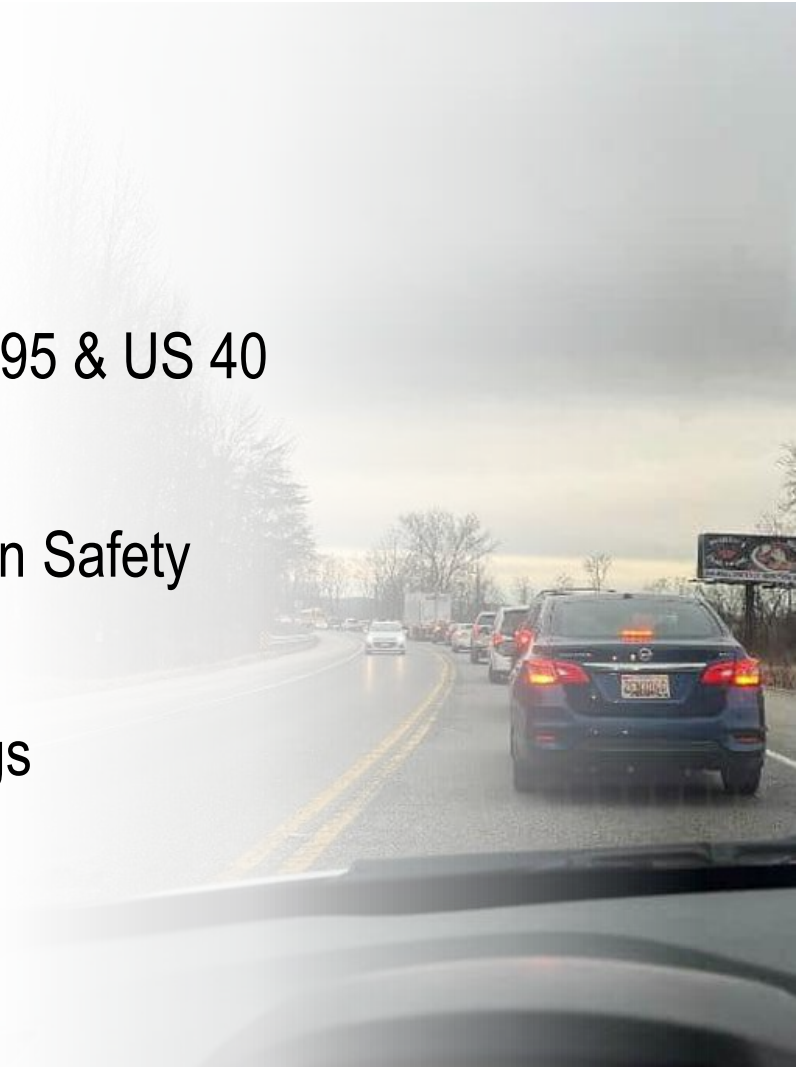
- Frequent Speeding & Highest Volumes between I-95 & US 40

- **Downtown Tradeoffs**

- Parking, Circulation, Business Access & Pedestrian Safety

- **Multimodal Gaps**

- Missing Sidewalks, Bike Facilities & Safe Crossings



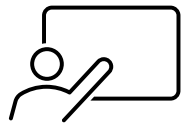


Developing & Determining Preferred Concepts

Public Engagement: MD 272 Corridor Plan



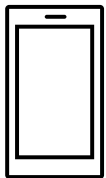
Participants



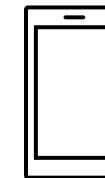
41 Workshop 1



105 Workshop 2



183 Survey 1



225 Survey 2

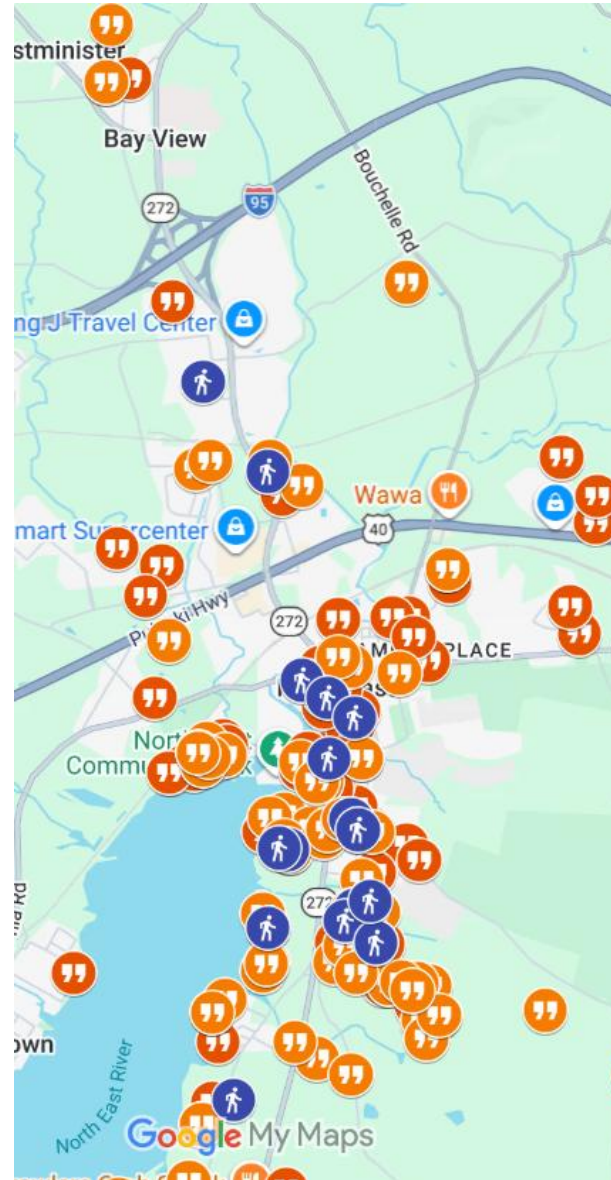
This plan was actively coordinated with the North East Bike Feasibility Study and the public outreach obtained from the Town of North East's Comprehensive Plan Update.

Public Engagement: MD 272 Corridor Plan



Participants

-  Workshop 1
-  Survey 1
-  Survey 2

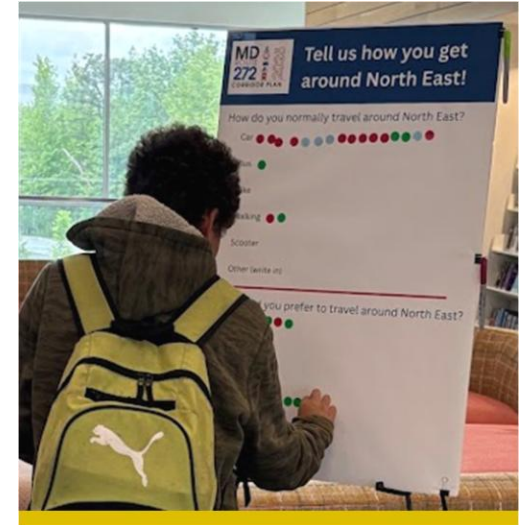
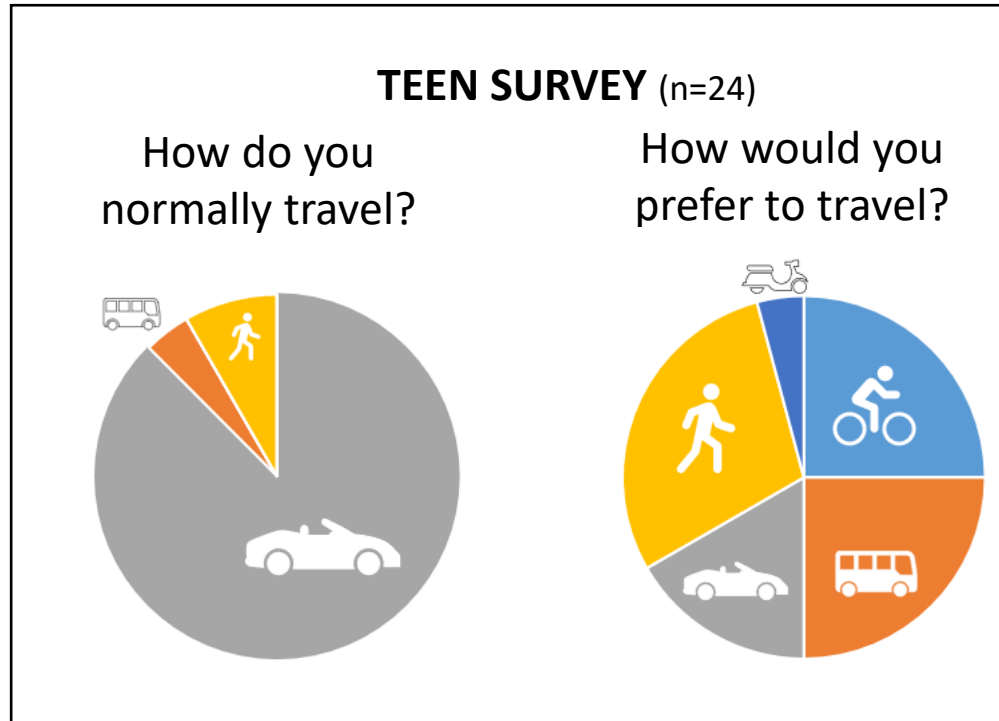


- **Track Participation**
- **More Targeted Outreach**
 - Postcards/NextDoor Ads
 - Underrepresented Survey Areas
 - Lower-Income/Housing Cost & Low-Computer/Internet Access Areas (“Tech Deserts”)

Additional Engagement



■ Two “Teen Lounge” Pop-Ups



Additional Engagement



- **Downtown Stakeholders**
 - Main Street Shop Owners
 - Residents of Maudlin Avenue
- **Workshop 3**



Themes Heard from Public Feedback



Idea for a bypass
to pull traffic off of
MD272

Dualization
between US 40
and I-95

Heavy traffic
along corridor -
congestion

Pedestrian and
bicycle safety
concerns

Trucks park along
Lums Road when
they aren't
supposed to

Speeds should be
lowered

Need more
pedestrian
crossings

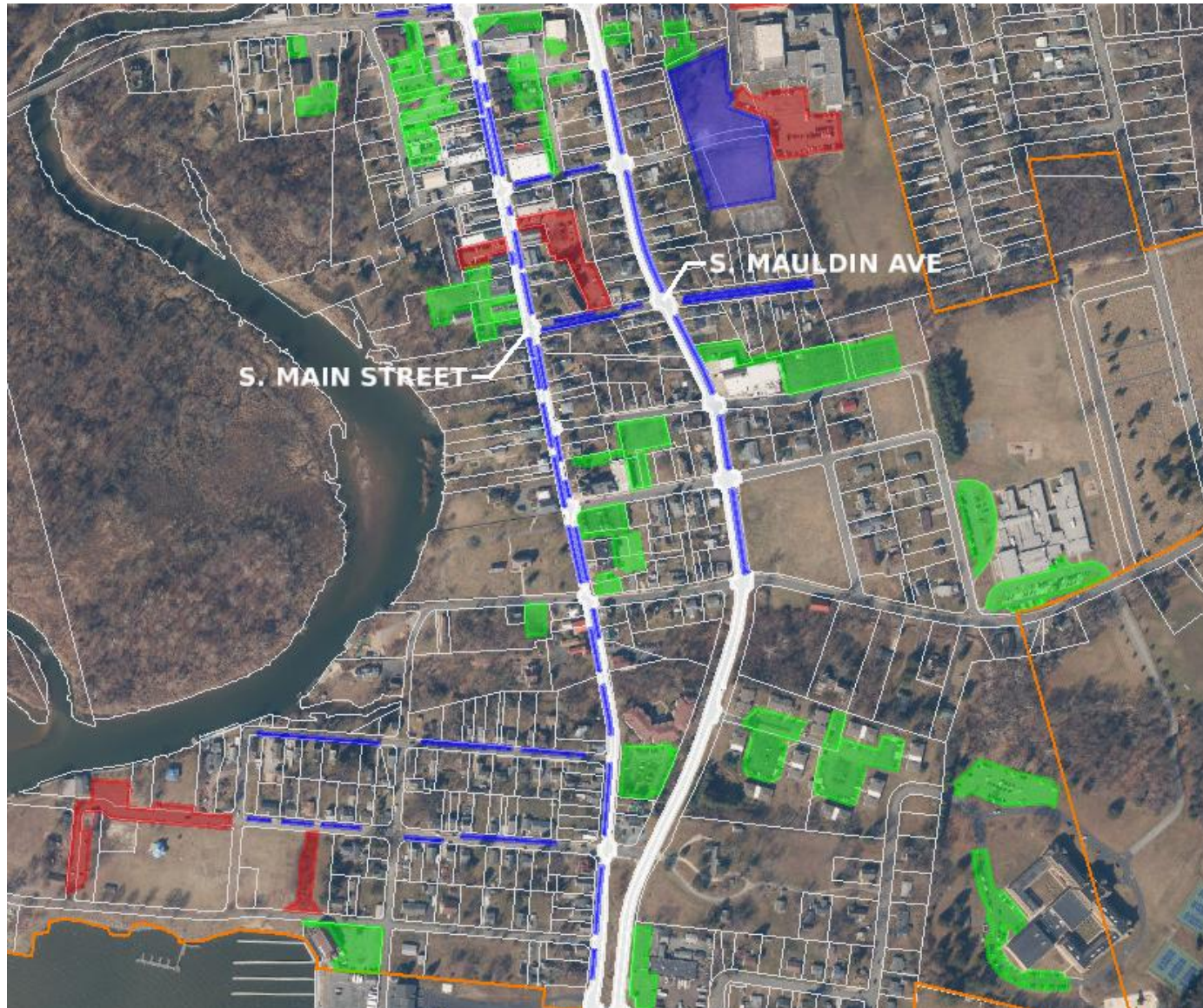
Traffic light
synchronization

Overpass at the
CSX railroad
needs replaced

Unsafe crossings
at US40

Emergency
Vehicle
Preemption

Parking Concerns



From Feedback to Alternatives



Understand Existing Conditions

Identify Issues,
Opportunities &
Constraints



Gather Community Input

Surveys, Workshops,
Stakeholder Meetings &
Youth Outreach



Develop & Test Alternatives

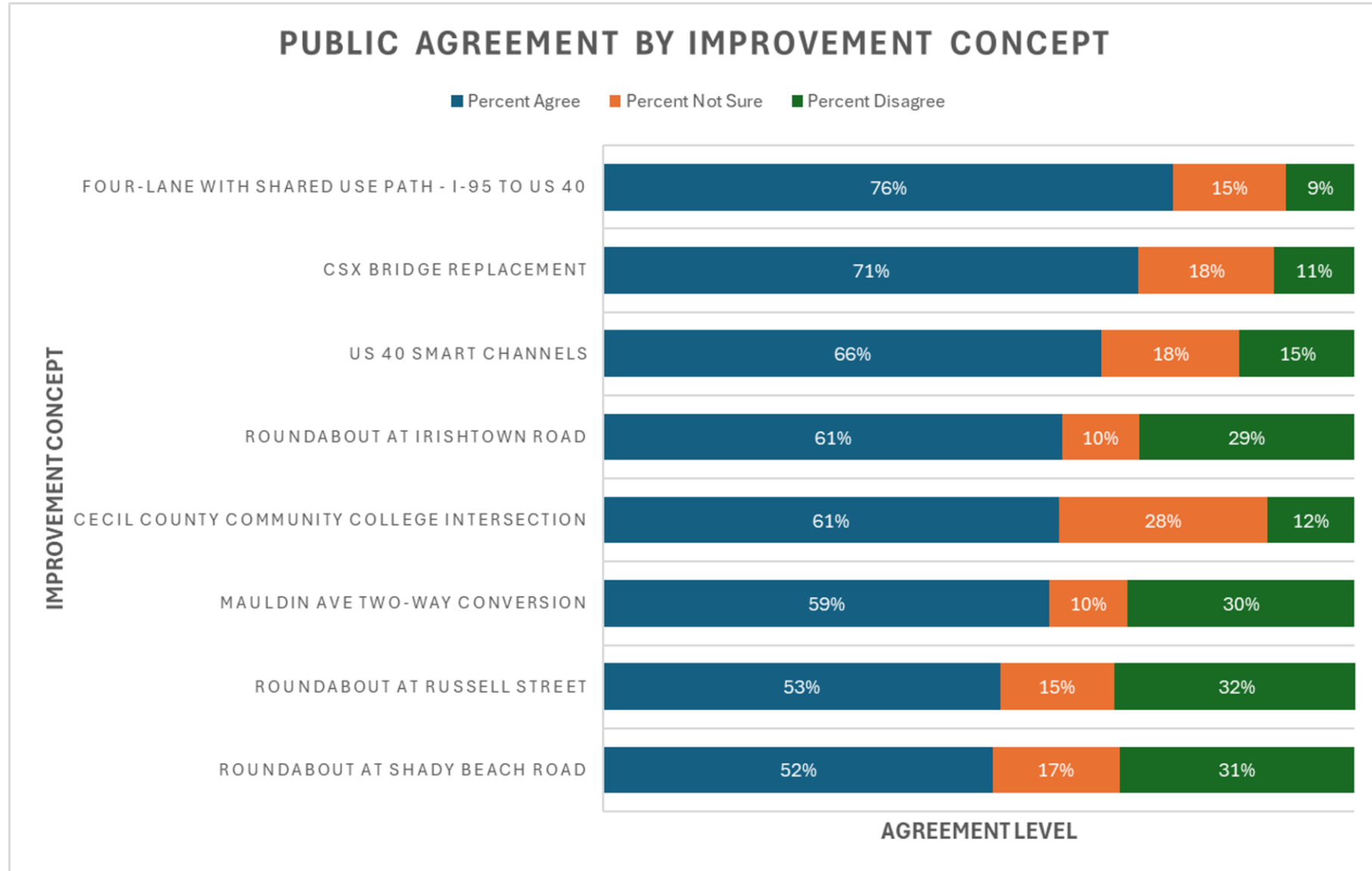
Evaluate Safety,
Operations, Feasibility &
Impacts



Refine & Select

Identify Preferred
Concepts, Costs & Next
Steps

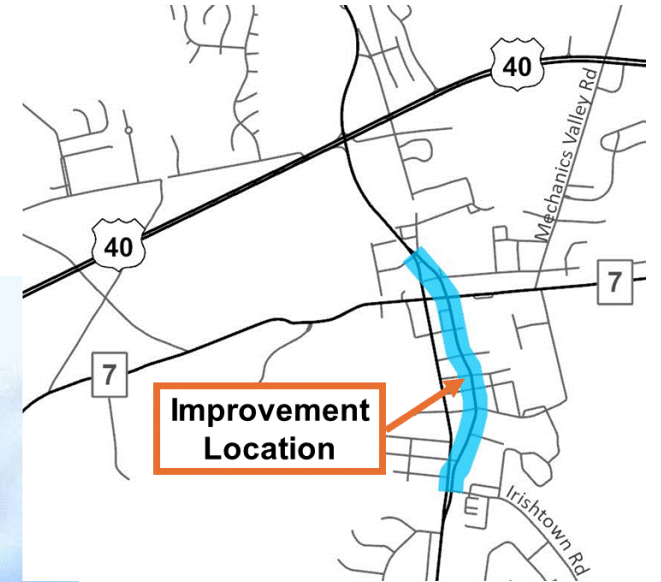
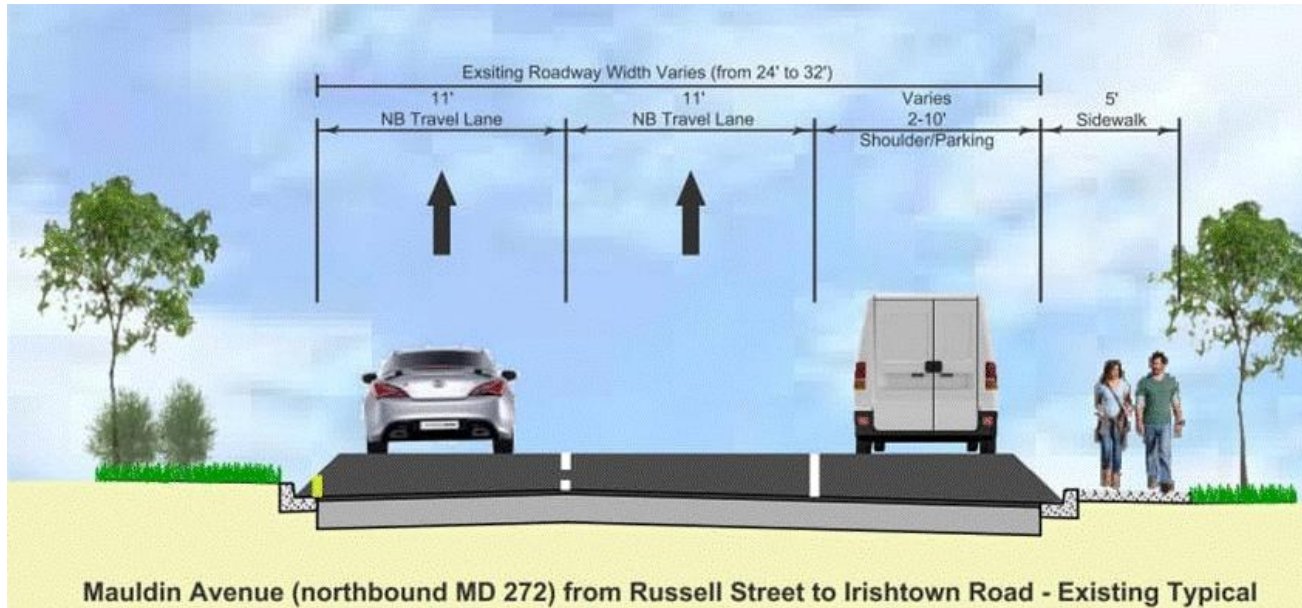
Survey Feedback on Alternatives



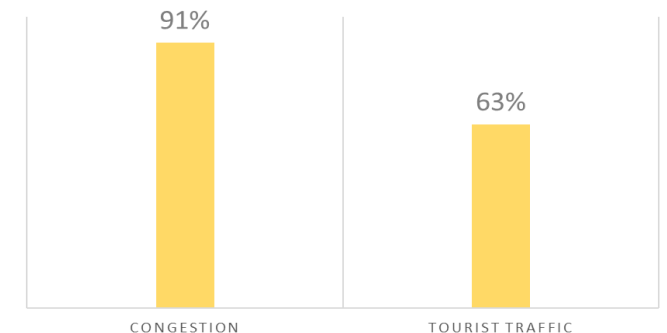
Case Study: Russell Street to Irishtown Road



Existing



Top Mobility Concerns Downtown (Survey 1)

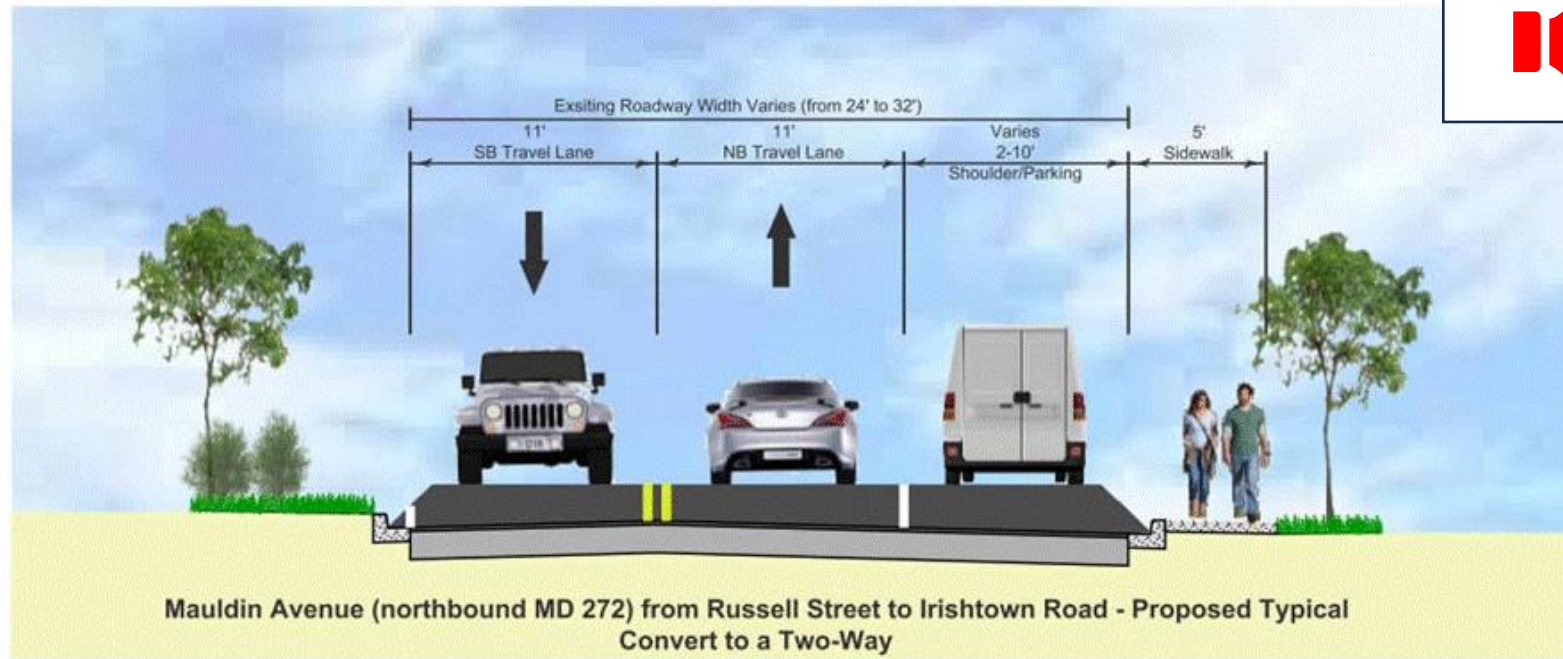


Case Study: Russell Street to Irishtown Road



Two-Way Mauldin Avenue Additional Analysis

Proposed



👍 59%

👤 10%

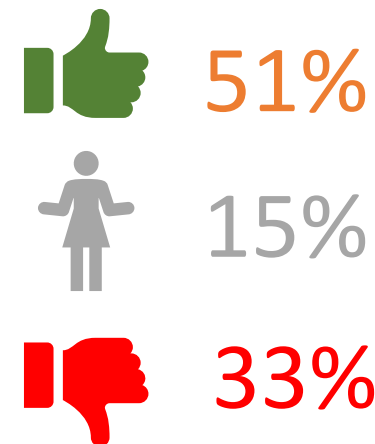
👎 30%

Case Study: Russell Street to Irishtown Road



Russell Street Roundabout

Proposed

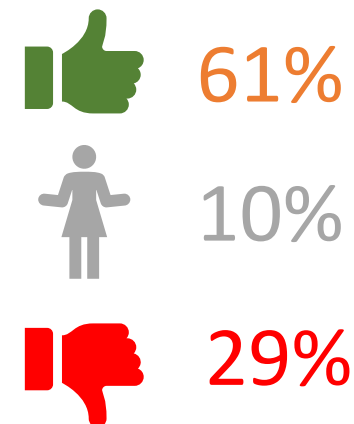


Case Study: Russell Street to Irishtown Road

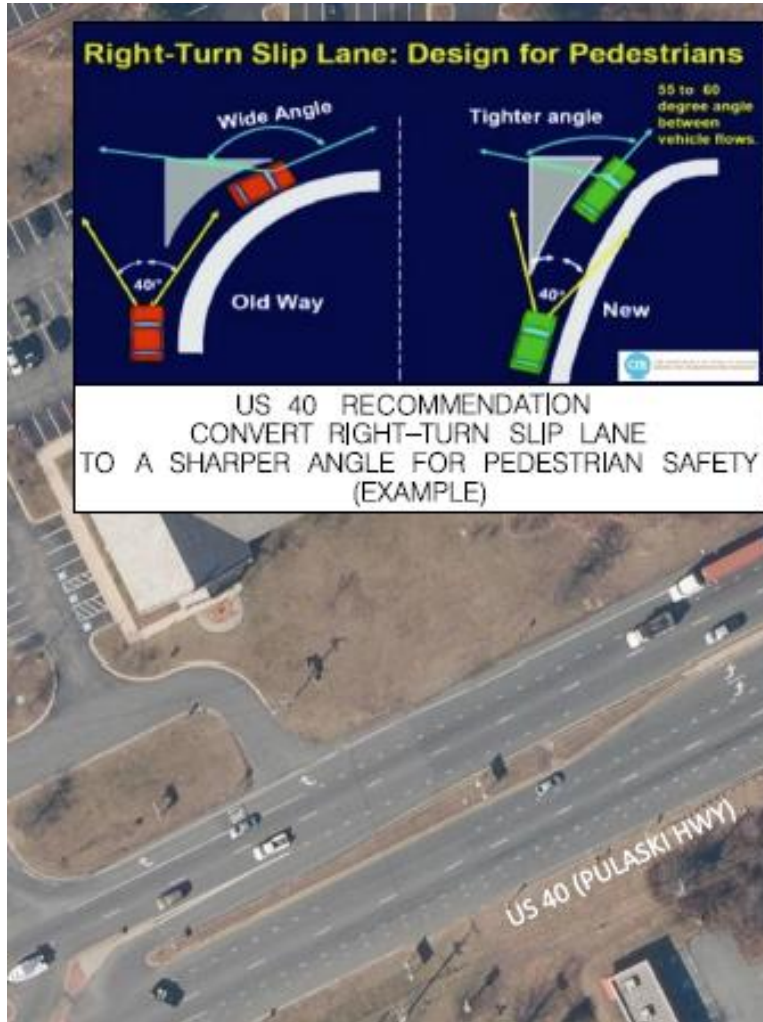
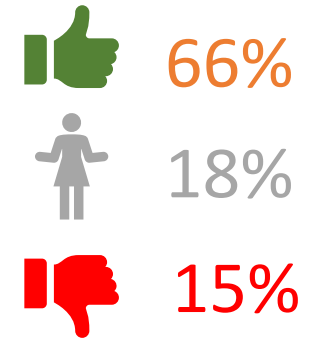


Irishtown Road Roundabout

Proposed



Many Additional Recommendations



Many Additional Recommendations



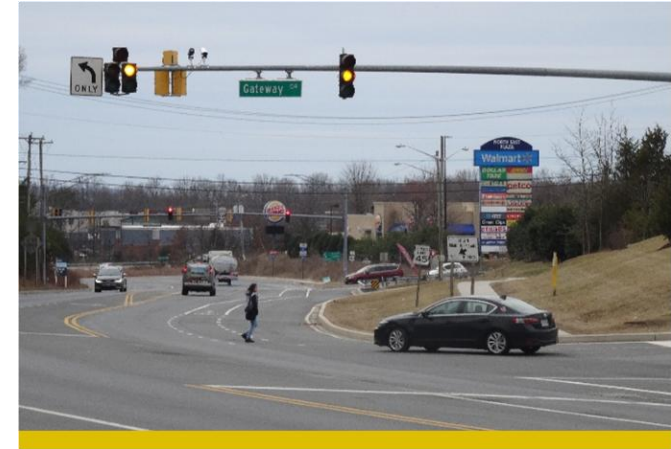
Quick Action Maintenance

26 issues with signage, worn crossings & infrastructure, lighting, excess vegetation, etc.



Traffic Signal Optimization

Individual recommendations for 9 signals



Downtown Parking

Study recommended (consider shared use lots; parking requirement adjustments; demand management)



Multimodal Connections

Study recommended for bypass routes/connectivity

Quick Action – Maintenance Items



- **26 Recommendations**
 - Signage
 - Crosswalks & Markings
 - Lighting
 - Excess Vegetation
 - Abandoned Transformers
 - Damaged Barriers



North East Bike Study: Developing the Network



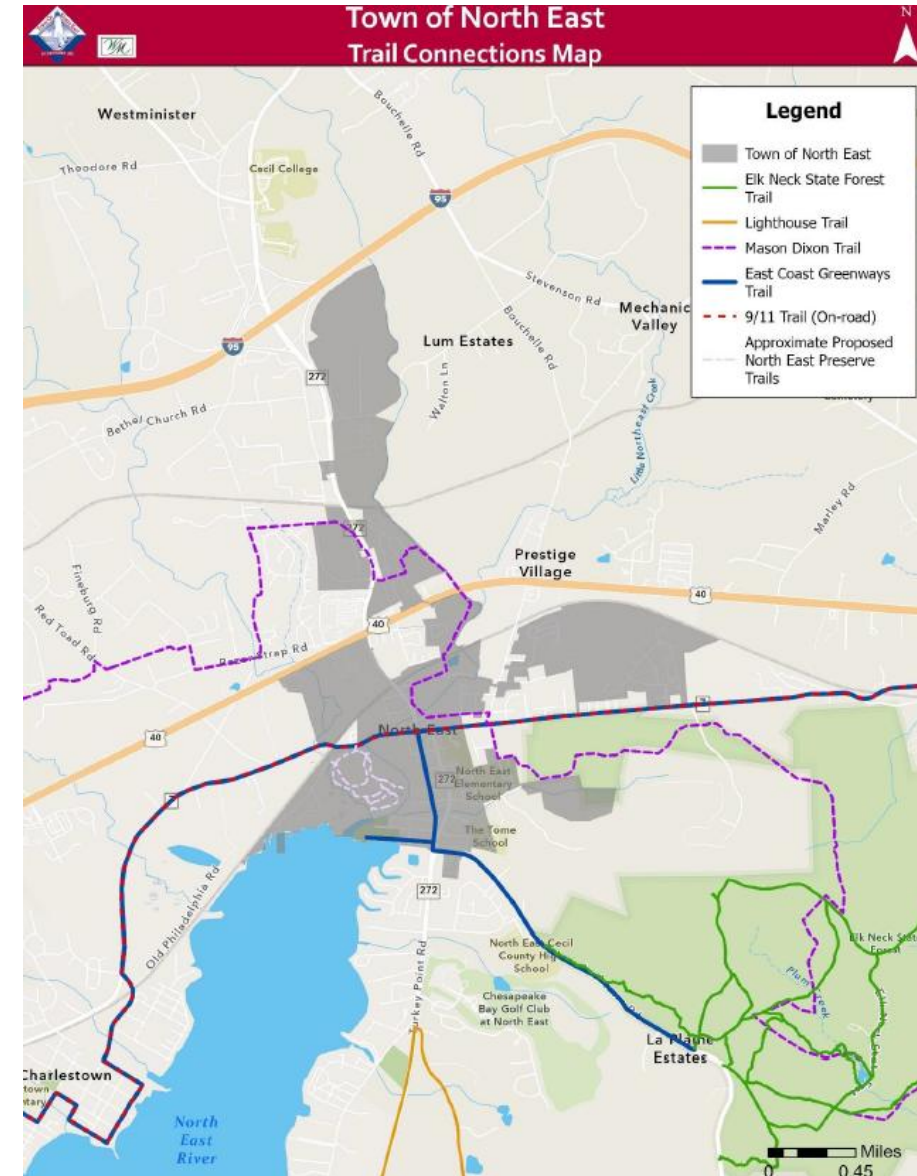
- **Connect Key Destinations**
 - Schools, Parks, Downtown, Trails, Waterfront & Neighborhoods



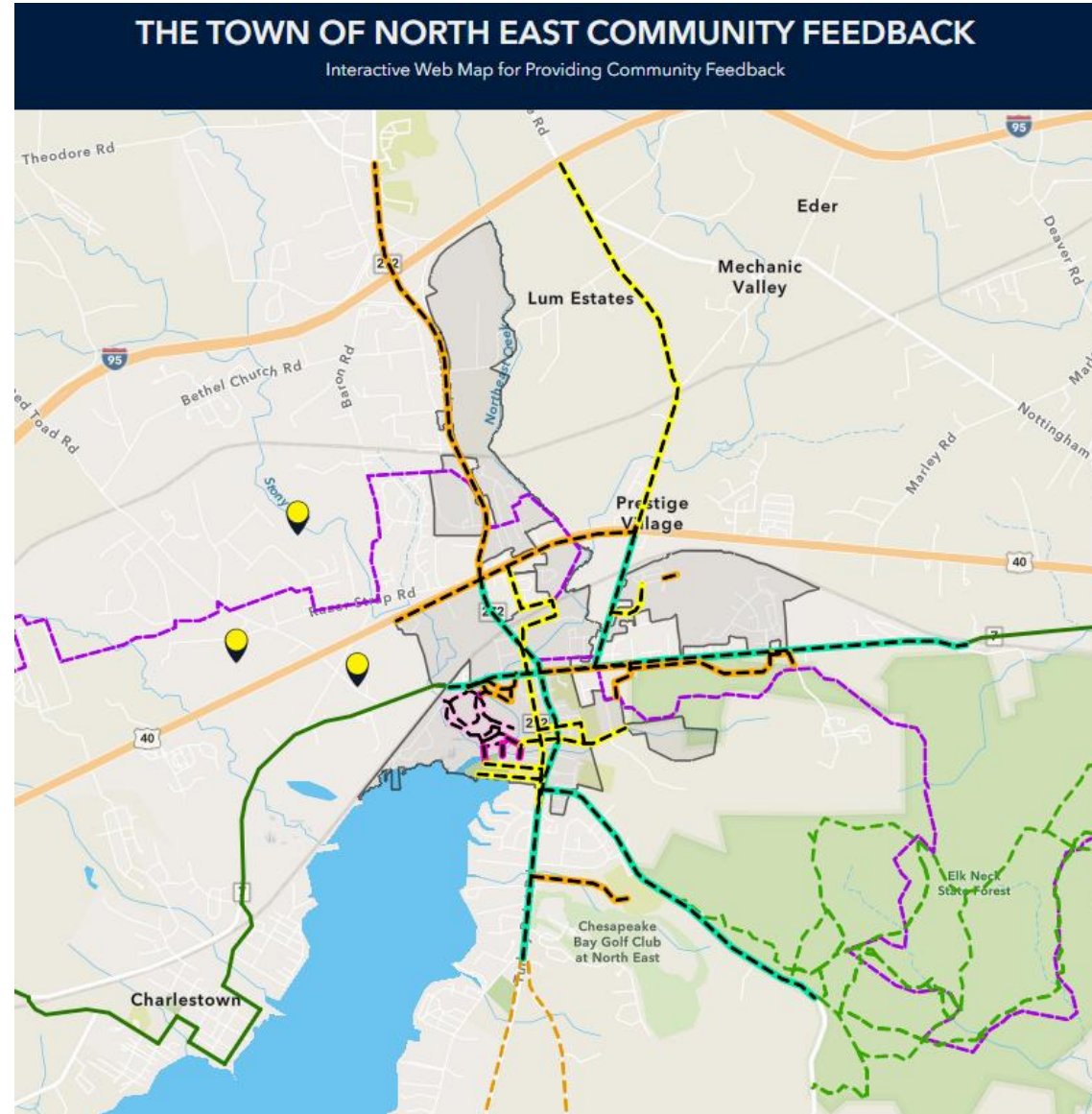
North East Bike Study: Developing the Network



- **Look Beyond Traditional Bike Lanes**
 - Off-Street Trails, Waterfront Paths & Green Corridors
- **Use Existing Assets Creatively**
 - Existing Streets & Underutilized Spaces
- **Balance Transportation & Recreation**
 - Practical Connections that Reflect Community Character



North East Bicycle Feasibility Study



North East Bike Study: Evaluating What Is Feasible



Bikeway Selection Matrix

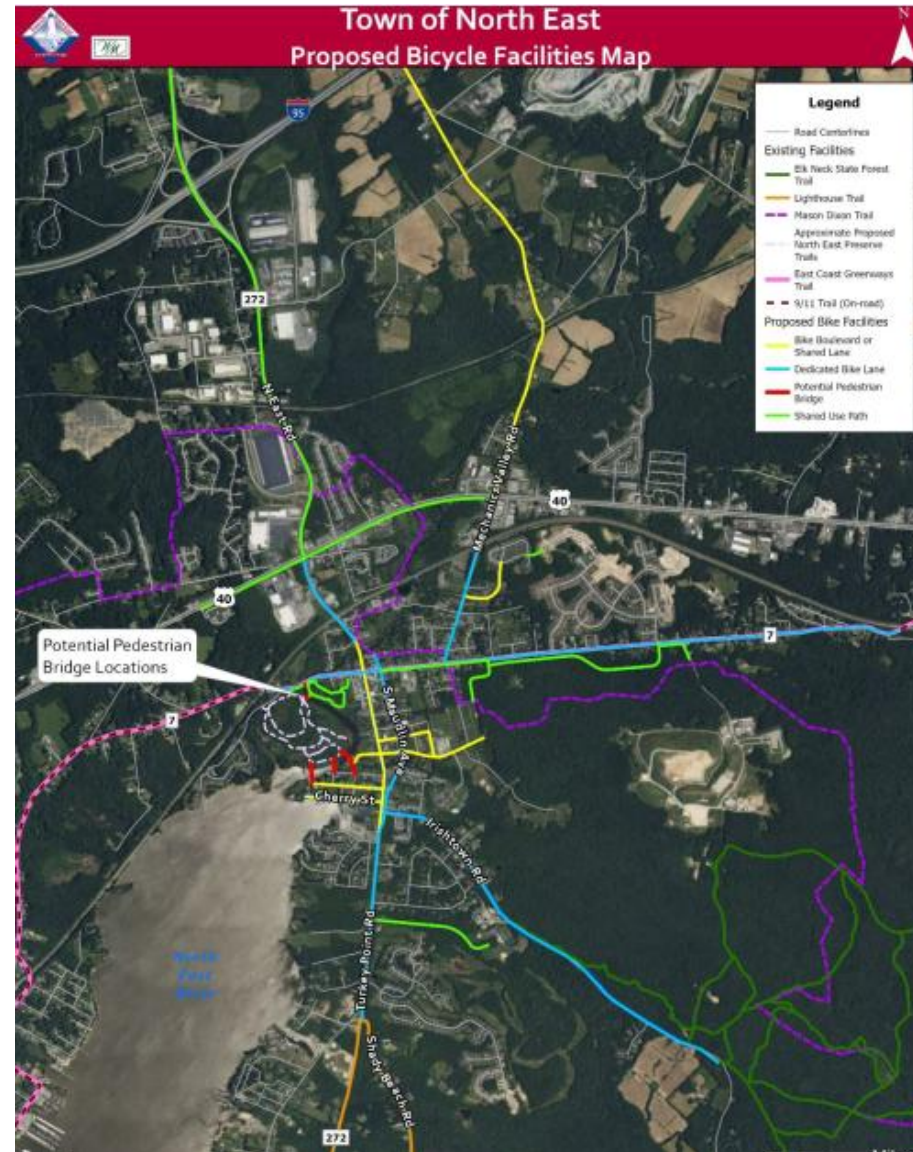
Roadway		US-40 (Pulaski Highway)	MD-272 (S. Mauldin Ave)	MD-7 (E. Cecil Ave) S. Main St. to Mechanics Valley Rd.	Irishtown Road from MD-272 to School	Cherry Street
Speed (MPH)		55	30	25	25	15
Traffic Volume (Vehicles per Day)		>20,000	>8,000	<5000	>5,000	<2000
Functional Classification		Principal Arterial	Minor Arterial	Major Collector	Local	Local
Maintenance Responsibility		SHA	SHA	SHA	Cecil County	Town of North East
Bicycle Level of Stress (LTS)		4	2	2	1	1
Existing Bicycle Facilities		Y - Bike Lane	N	N	N	N
Part of a Designated Bicycle Route		Y - SHA, County	Y-County	Y-Local	N	N
Existing Trail Designation		N	N	East Coast Greenway, 911 Memorial Trail	East Coast Greenway	East Coast Greenway
Points of Interest		N	Turner Park, North East Fire Company	North East Middle School	North East High School	Community Park, Nature Preserve
Typical Existing Lane Configuration		Two Way separated	One-way (NB)	Two way	Two way	Two way
Rural Roadways	Shared Lane					
	5-ft Shoulder					
	8-ft Shoulder					
	10-ft Shoulder					
Urban Roadways	Bike Boulevard					
	Shared Lane					
	Bike Lane (Buffered Preferred)					
	One-Way Separated Bike Lane					
	Two-Way Separated Bike Lane					
	Shared Use Path					

- **Town-Wide Evaluation**
 - All Study Roadways Evaluated
 - Considered Speed, Traffic Volume, Bicycle Stress & Connectivity
 - Identified Appropriate Bicycle Facility Types

LEGEND	
	Preferred Facility (Typically Appropriate)
	Possibly Appropriate
	Possibly Appropriate with Reduction of Traffic volumes and/or Speeds
	Rarely Appropriate
	Not Applicable

Source: [Bikeway Selection Guide](#)
 Bikeway Selection Guide. Report No. FHWA-SA-18-077. Washington, DC: Federal Highway Administration, Office of Safety, 2019

North East Bicycle Feasibility Study



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Advancing Priorities

Monitoring & Implementation Committees



- **Guide & Support Plan Implementation**
- **Additional Planning**
- **Additional Outreach**



Local Project Prioritization Process



- **To Get a Sense of Priorities Based on a Locally-Developed Technical Scoring System**
- **Results Are Not Binding**

Scoring Factors and Weights

- Walking Circulation (4 points)
- Bicycle Circulation (4 points)
- Transportation Safety (6 points)
 - Traffic Speeds (4 points)
 - Bus Circulation (4 points)
- Economic Opportunities (EO) neighborhoods (4 points)
- Mobility Challenged (MC) Neighborhoods (2 points)

Local Project Prioritization Process



PROJECT	SCORE
MD 272 Pedestrian Crossing Upgrades	18
Traffic Signal Retiming	17
Additional recommendations to Segment 2	14
MD 272 (Mauldin Ave) at MD 7 Intersection Recommendations	13
MD 272 wide edge lines and rumble strips	12
MD 272 (Main St) at MD 7 Intersection Recommendations	11
Traffic Operations and Feasibility Study for Conversion from One-Way to Two-Way on Mauldin Ave (MD 272) with Intersection Control Evaluations at Russell St and Irishtown Rd	9
Evaluate possible roadway and multimodal connections East of Mauldin to close gaps in transportation network	9
MD 272 (Turkey Point Rd) at Irishtown Rd Intersection Recommendations	9
Remove or replace existing signage along MD 272	8
Additional recommendations to Segment 3	8
Replace broken or knocked down signage along MD 272 (reference Appendix B)	7
Parking Study of North East	7
Close slip lane of Hance Point Rd at Shady Beach Rd	3

Mauldin Two-Way Conversion Study



- **Funded by WILMAPCO**
- **Found the Conversion Was Feasible**
- **Very Aggressive Future Conditions Modeled**

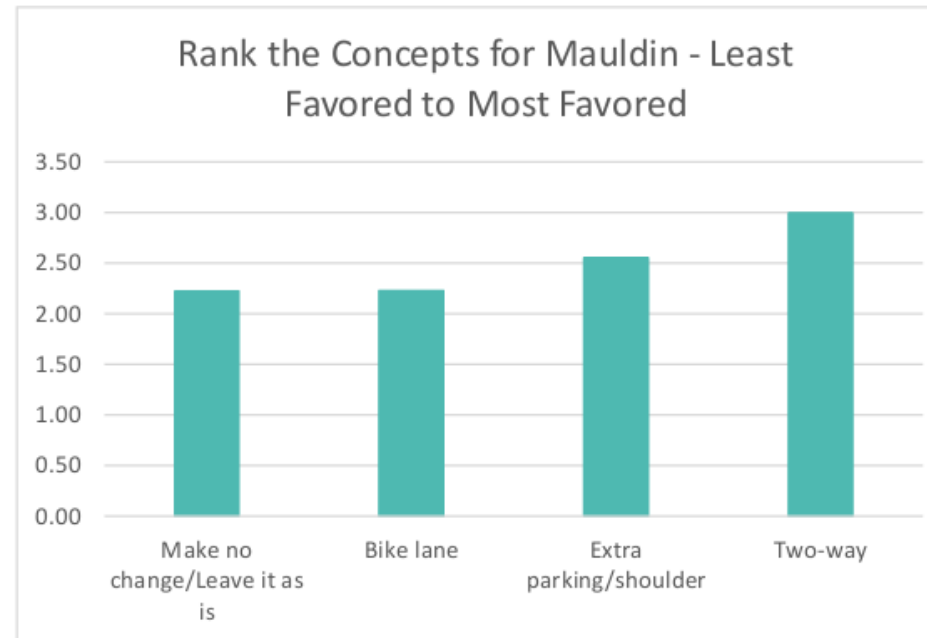
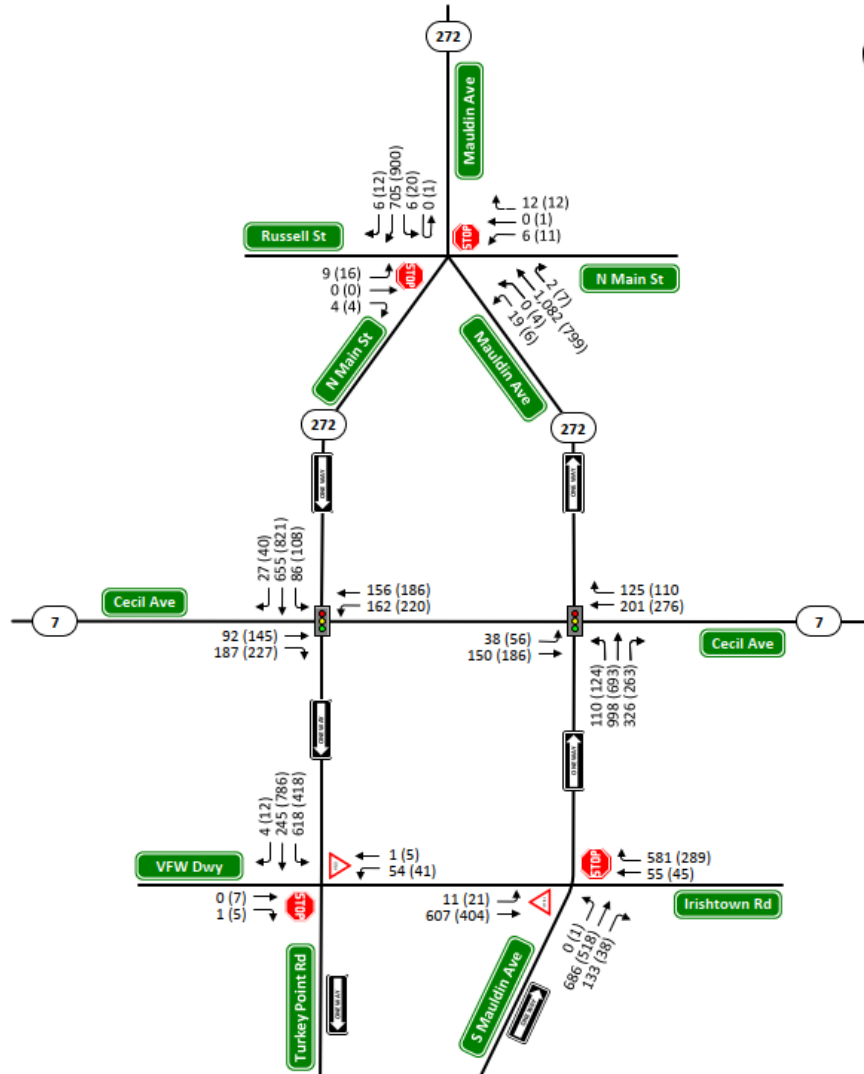
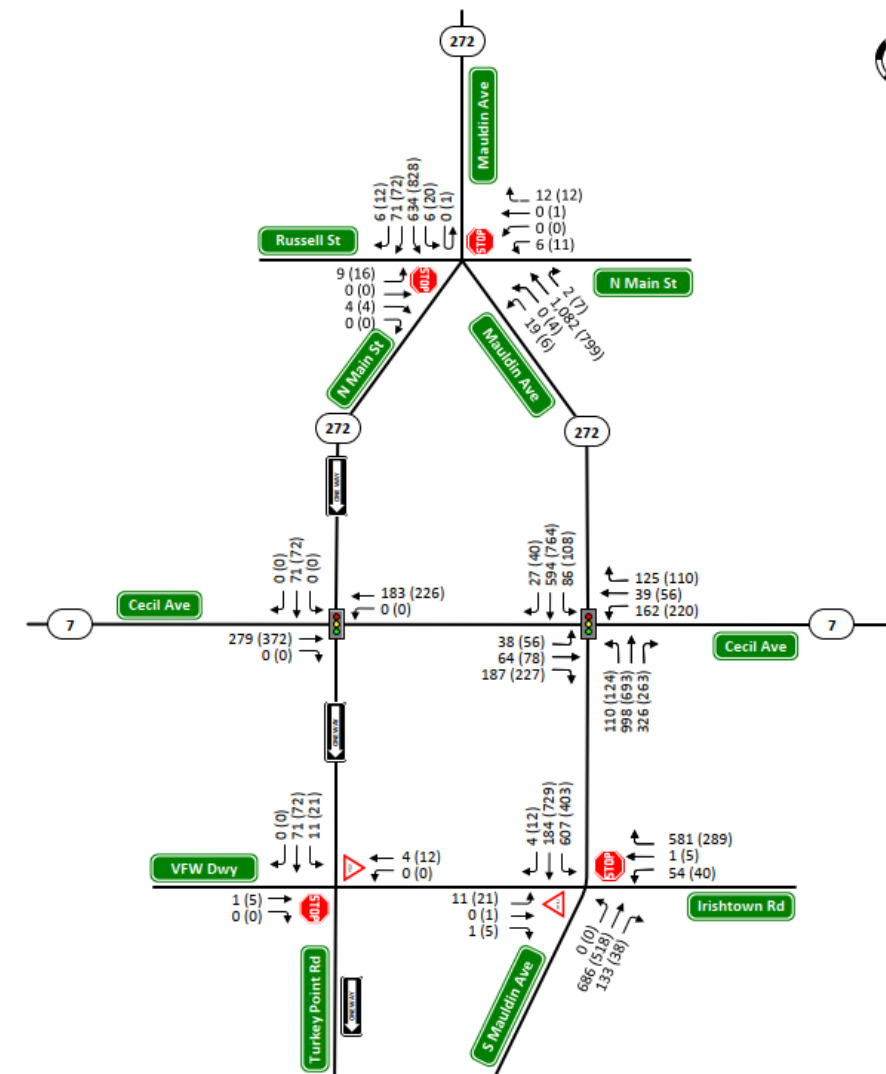


Figure 6.4: Mauldin Ave Public Preference

Mauldin Two-Way Conversion Study



2040 Traffic Volumes – No Build

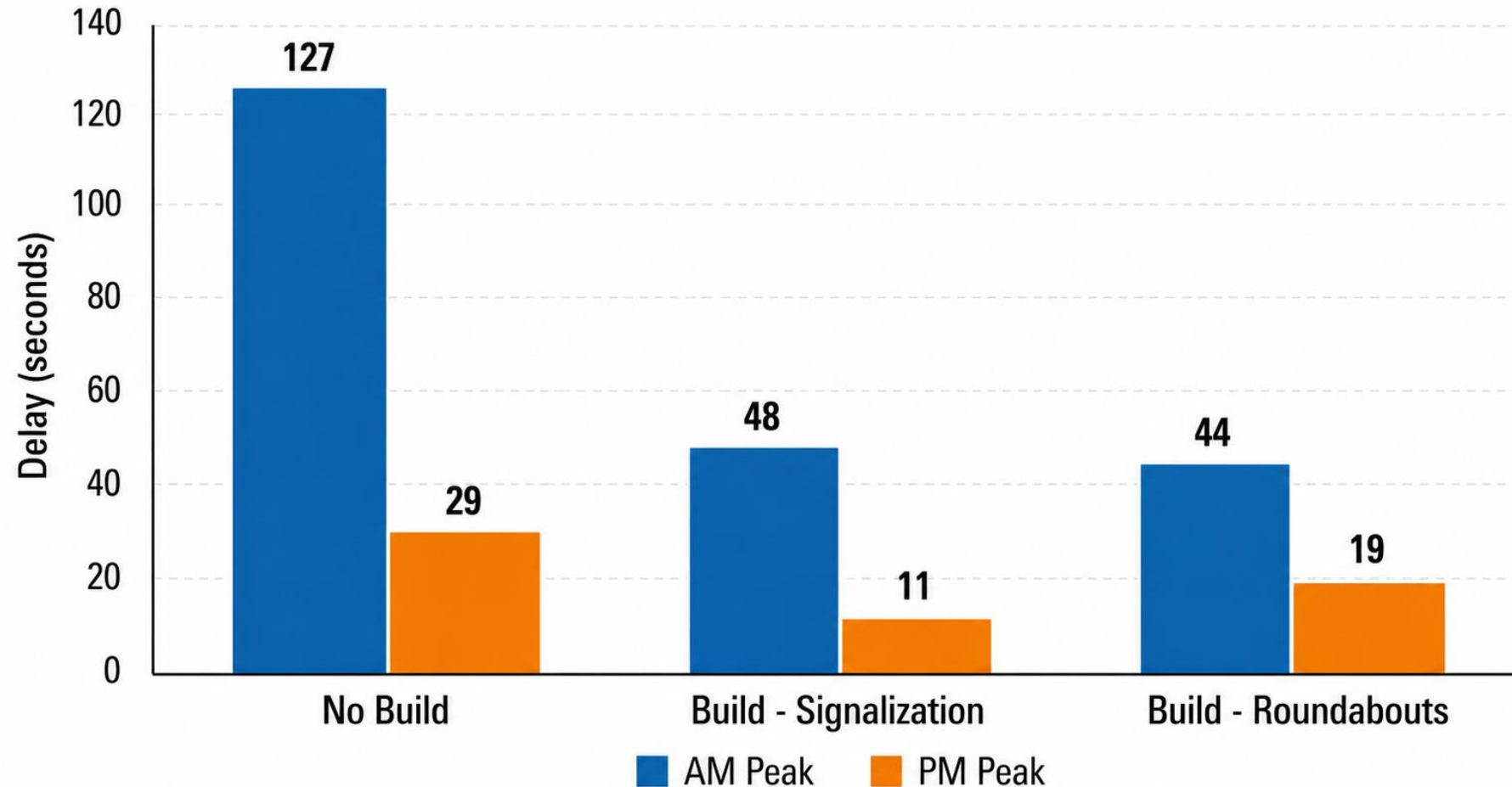


2040 Traffic Volumes – Build

Mauldin Two-Way Conversion Study at Irishtown Road



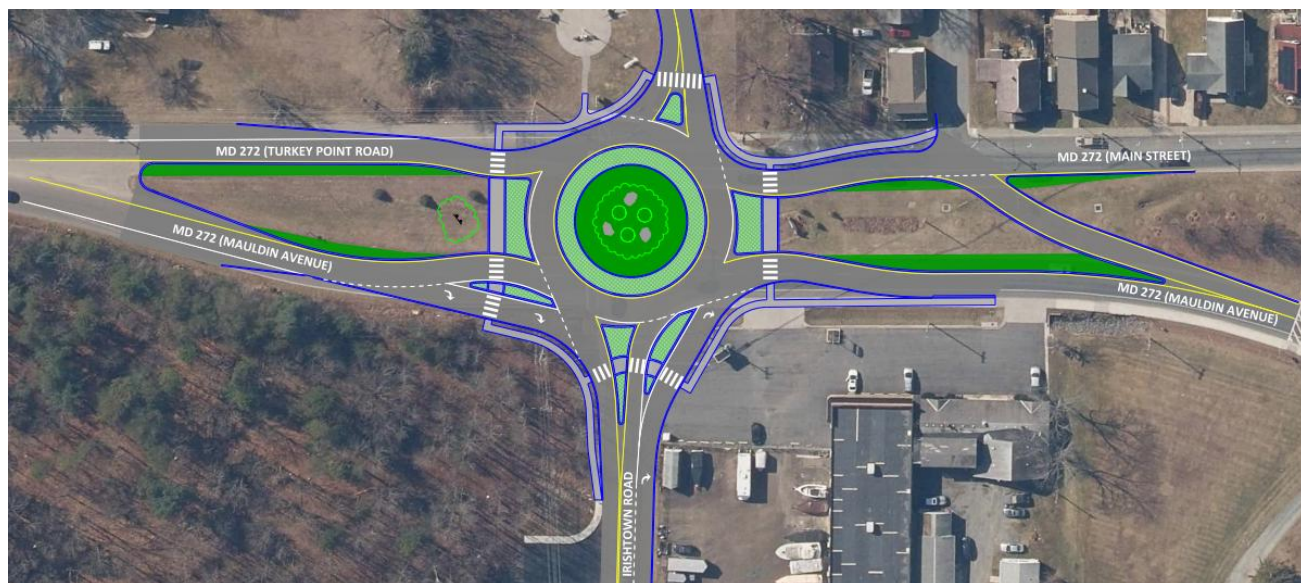
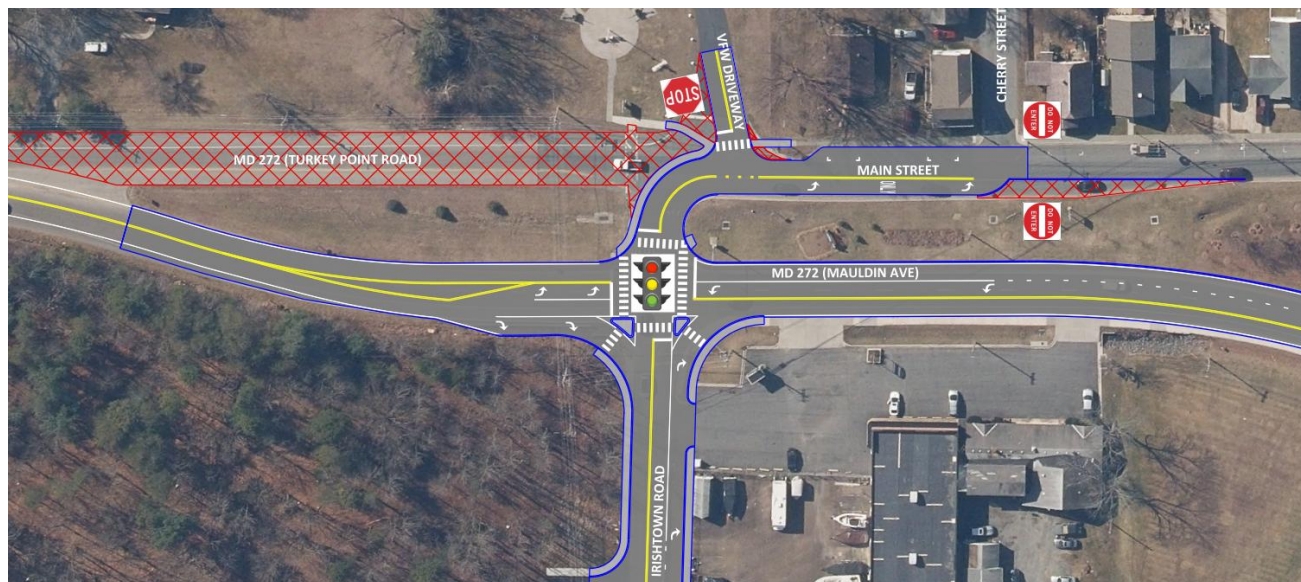
Overall Aggressive 2040 Intersection Delay (in seconds)



Mauldin Two-Way Conversion Study



Irishtown Road Intersection



Bikeways & Beyond – Next Steps



- **Awarded \$200K MDOT Kim Lamphier Bikeways Grant – Pursue Design**
- **Comprehensive Plan Public Hearing October/November**
 - Mayor & Commissioners to Vote on Final Approval
- **Working with SHA on 272 Monitoring Committee**
 - Seeking to Improve Nearby Traffic Corridors



Lessons Learned & Audience Discussion

Lessons Learned: Town Perspective



- **Maintain Momentum**
 - Move Recommendations Toward Funding & Implementation
- **Balance Vision With Feasibility**
 - Keep Recommendations Ambitious but Implementable
- **Be Transparent**
 - Maximize Public Input but Recognize Full Consensus is Not Realistic



Lessons Learned: Regional Planning Perspective



- **Have Early, Continuous, and Flexible Engagement**
 - Plan with the Community & be Responsive to Unexpected Needs
- **Use Multiple Engagement Methods**
 - Workshops, Surveys, Videos, Targeted Meetings & Youth Outreach
- **Seek General & Defensible Public Consensus**
 - Use Surveys to Reach Beyond the “Usual Suspects”
- **Pursue Implementation**
 - Prioritization, Grants & Follow-up Studies



Lessons Learned: Consultant Perspective



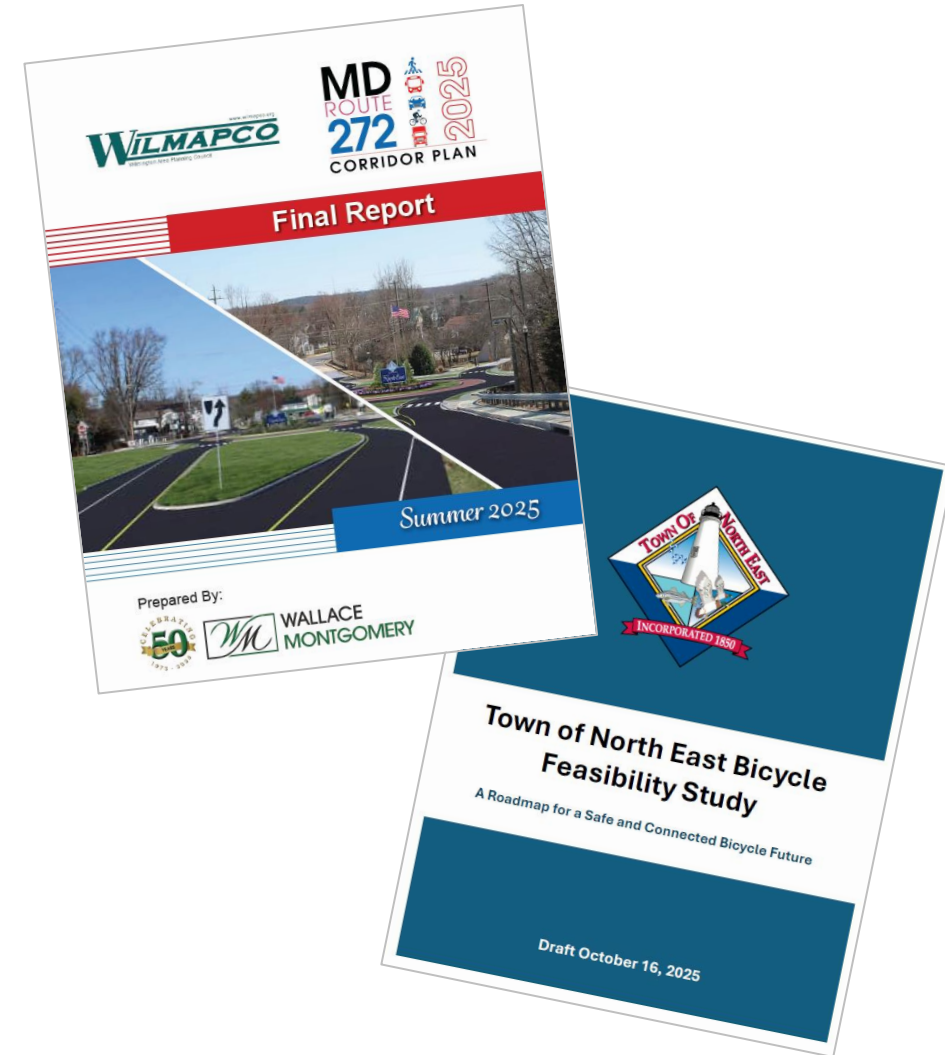
- **Design for Context**
 - Different Settings Require Different Solutions
 - Build Flexibility into the Planning Process
- **Test Perceptions with Data / Be Willing to Challenge Assumptions**
 - Parking, Traffic, Safety & Operations
- **Visualize the Change**
 - Help Stakeholders Understand Proposed Concepts
- **Plan for Implementation**
 - Costs, Partners, Funding & Next Steps



Coordinating Multiple Planning Efforts



- **Avoid Planning in Silos**
 - Related Studies Should Inform One Another
- **Reuse Recent Public Input**
 - Reduce Duplication & Engagement Fatigue
- **Keep Each Study Focused**
 - Corridor Needs vs. Town-Wide Bicycle Connectivity
- **Carry Coordination Forward**
 - Align Recommendations, Funding & Implementation





2026 BIENNIAL CONFERENCE

PLANNING AT THE SPEED OF CHANGE



Thank you for listening!
Questions?



More Information / Contacts



www.wilmapco.org/272



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