



Chapter Two

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community Input

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2 Community Engagement

The plan effort included a significant amount of community engagement, including surveys, visioning meetings, and discussions with area stakeholders. The community’s input was incorporated in several ways, from the creation of an overall vision for the future of the community to the specific selection of transportation recommendations. Other sections of this report will clarify how community input was directly used as part of the planning process, while this chapter summarizes the engagement process itself.

Community Input

The public played a direct role in the creation of the plan and its recommendations, through the use of a survey instrument, ongoing communication with the study team, and various community meetings.

Community Survey

At the onset of the study process, a community survey was administered through the City of Brookhaven website to help guide the overall planning process. This survey – available in both English and Spanish - asked respondents a variety of questions regarding their use, desire, and overall opinions regarding investments in pedestrian, bicycle, and trail facilities. Over the course of the study, a total of 394 responses were received, over 90 percent who indicated they were residents of Brookhaven. This section summarizes the major themes associated with the survey results, while the responses to all survey questions can be viewed in **Appendix A**.



The community survey was conducted on the City's website

In regards to general support for bicycle, pedestrian, and trail facilities, respondents indicated the following:

- 91 percent of respondents believe Brookhaven needs more pedestrian facilities
- 85 percent of respondents believe Brookhaven needs more bicycling facilities

Additionally, as shown in **Table 2.1** and the corresponding image below, respondents were asked to indicate what part of Brookhaven they resided, in an effort to understand how well the survey represented a cross-section of the community.



Table 2.1
Survey Responses

	Percentage of City Residents (2010 Census)	Percentage of All Survey Respondents
1	17%	20%
2	14%	16%
3	11%	19%
4	44%	34%
5	14%	2%

Respondents were asked a series of questions about what types of trips they currently (or would like to) take through either walking or biking. These questions heavily suggested that respondents did not see walking or biking as a viable commuting option for primary work trips. Rather, respondents primarily saw the advantages of walking and biking for either recreational purposes or to run errands in short-distance trips near their homes.

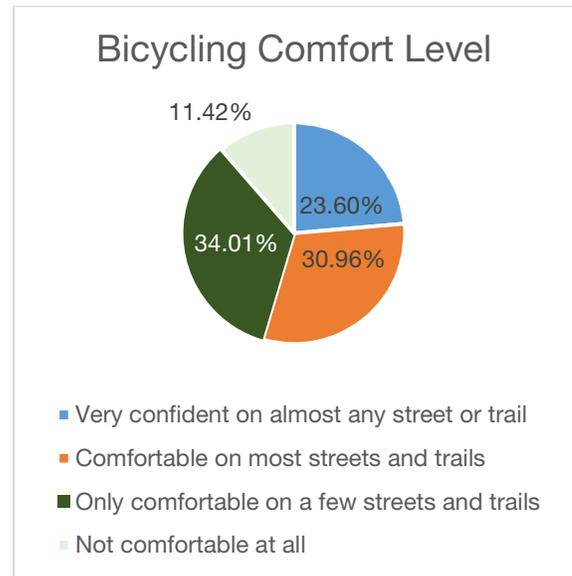
On that note, respondents were asked what they believed were the major obstacles to walking and biking, as indicated in **Table 2.2**.

Table 2.2
Top Indicated Obstacles to Walking & Biking

Top Obstacles to Walking	%
1. There is nowhere to walk along the streets I would take (missing sidewalks)	60%
2. Walking along the streets I would take is uncomfortable because of the amount of traffic on them	56%
3. Where I want to go is too far to walk	41%
4. Lack of storefronts, restaurants, and other activities	34%
5. It is difficult to cross streets safely	34%
Top Obstacles to Biking	%
1. Biking on the streets I would take is uncomfortable because of the amount of traffic on them	75%
2. I do not have anywhere to safely store my bike at work, shops, or other places I travel to	24%
3. Even though where I want to go is nearby, there is no direct route and I have to bike far out of my way	21%
4. Lack of storefronts, restaurants, and other activity	19%
5. I do not own a bike	16%

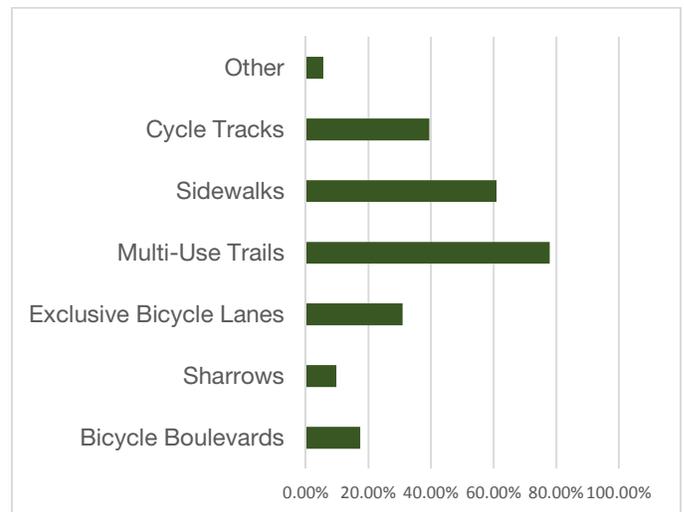
The community survey was valuable to understanding the preferred treatments for bicycle and pedestrian travel.

Respondents were additionally asked their comfort level with riding a bicycle as indicated in the graphic below, in an effort to determine how many respondents were regular on-road cyclists.



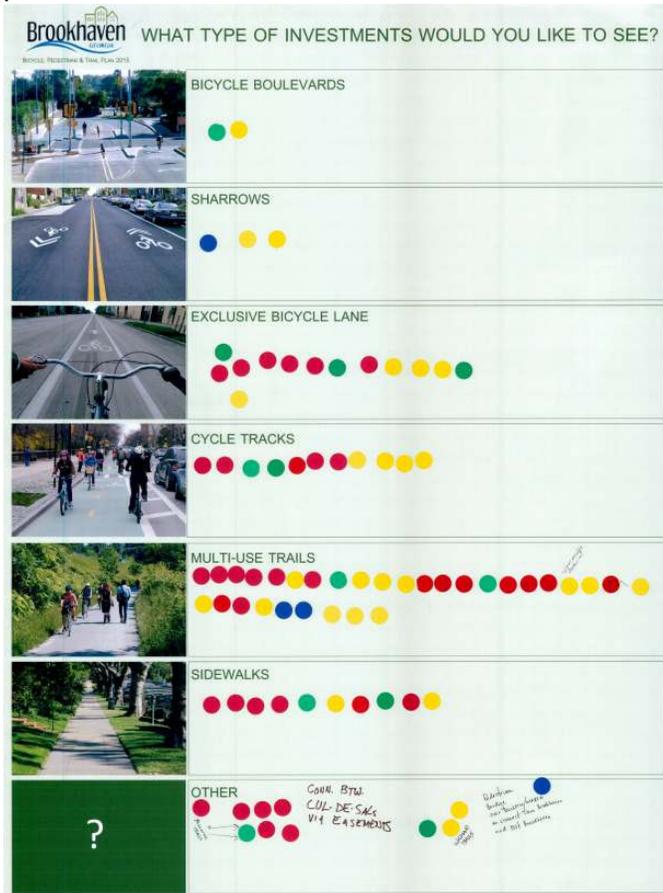
Finally, to help guide the process of what type of biking and pedestrian facilities should be considered, respondents were asked to indicate their preferences for different improvements and treatments. As indicated in the graphic below, responses showed a clear preference for multi-use trails that could be utilized by both pedestrians and bicyclists.

Preferred Types of Investments



Community Meeting #1

The first community meeting was also held at the onset of the study. Held at the Lynwood Recreation Center in Lynwood Park on Tuesday, May 19, 2015, attendance at the meeting was strong with over 70 attendees signing in. As community members arrived, they were presented with an open house format in which they were asked to indicate their preferences on several items. Participants were asked the same question indicated on the survey regarding preferred types of investments, also indicating a strong preference for multi-use trails.



Participants were also asked to mark a variety of maps of the community to indicate destinations in and around Brookhaven they would want to travel by walking or biking. Many locations were indicated with commonly

avored clusters indicated around the Brookhaven MARTA station, Town Brookhaven, Brookhaven Village, and the area near Blackburn Park.



Following a formal presentation in which the study team and planning process was introduced, attendees broke into six groups and participated in a table top exercise to help establish an overall vision for the plan. Initially, participants were asked popular locations for travel, followed by identifying primary routes they use to get to those locations currently. Based on this network, the participants were asked to create a vision for a walking and biking network in the community. Following the completion of this exercise, each group presented their vision to the other groups.

Consistently emerging from this process, was the concept that eventually became known as “the spine” in which a north-south axis of pedestrian and biking facilities would connect the various points of interest in the community, complimented by a series of “loops” that would feed into this major system. A diagram of this concept is provided in **Figure 2.1**.

A detailed summary of this meeting is provided in **Appendix B**.

The community’s work resulted in the conceptual vision for bicycle and pedestrian connectivity.

Figure 2.1

Conceptual Vision



Community Meeting #2

The second community meeting was also held at the Lynwood Recreation Center in Lynwood Park, taking place on Wednesday, September 30, 2015. At this point in the planning process, the study team had utilized a technical process to develop a map of ‘candidate corridors’ for bicycle, pedestrian, and/or trail improvements.

The initial part of the meeting took the form of an open house in which these ‘candidate corridors’ were on display and attendees could discuss their thoughts and feelings on the study team’s findings with study team members one on one. Subsequent to a formal presentation in which the technical process to develop those ‘candidate corridors’ was shared, meeting attendees broke out into three groups to discuss the benefits of the various corridors indicated. In concluding the meeting, each group was asked to collectively determine the most desired corridors for investment, as shown in **Table 2.3**.

A detailed summary of this meeting is provided in **Appendix C**.

Table 2.3
Top Indicated Corridors by Group

Corridor	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
Connection across Peachtree Road	o	o	o
Ashford-Dunwoody Road between Blackburn and Murphey Candler Parks	o	o	o
Peachtree Road	o	o	o
Druid Hills Road		o	o
Dresden Road	o		o
Connection to Keswick Park	o	o	
Lenox Park Boulevard	o		
Caldwell Road	o		
Nancy Creek Trail		o	o
Osborne Road			o
Peachtree Creek Trail			o
Clairmont Road			o



Community Meeting #3

The third and final community meeting was held at Brookhaven City Hall on Tuesday, December 8, 2015. The entire meeting was an open format where the study team displayed the various recommendations of the plan to solicit any final comment or thoughts before finalizing the plan.

Materials and comments received at this meeting are provided in **Appendix D**.



Other Outreach Events

The study team attended several other events which provided opportunities for the community to contribute to the plan.

Brookhaven Bolt

On May 16, 2015, the Brookhaven Bolt Community Association held its annual 5k race to support Ashford Park Elementary School. Over 1,700 runners were registered for the race and the “Post Race Family and Fun Festival”. Among the various sponsors and vendors at the festival was an information tent where study team members were available to discuss the plan and bring attention to the then-upcoming first Community Meeting. Flyers advertising that meeting were distributed and attendees were asked to indicate their favorite Brookhaven travel destinations on an available map.



Town Hall Meeting

On May 28, 2015, the study team participated in a Mayor and City Council Town Hall. A brief summary of the planning process was provided with an orientation to expectations of the plan and the schedule. A 'question & answer' session with a study team member followed.

City Council Workshop

On November 17, 2015, the study team presented the study process and initial findings to the Mayor and City Council at one of their workshops. A 'question & answer' session with the study team followed.

General Communication

Additionally, an e-mail address (bikepedtrailplan@brookhavenga.gov) was created where citizens could make recommendations and provide comments directly to the study team. The study team periodically reviewed these comments and where appropriate, responded with follow up discussion.

The comments received are provided in **Appendix E**.



Stakeholder Committee

The plan was also benefitted by the creation of a Stakeholder Committee, comprising City Council appointments of interested residents, business owners, and community leaders. This committee worked with the study team to provide more in-depth conversation of specific planning initiatives and to vet draft recommendations.

The committee met three times:

- July 28, 2015
- September 17, 2015
- November 19, 2015

At the first stakeholder meeting, an initial series of 'candidate corridors' had been developed based on the visioning exercise conducted with the general public at the first community meeting. During the course of this meeting, the stakeholder committee was briefed on a variety of research and findings that had been conducted to that point, including summaries of the first community meeting and the community survey. Additionally, the study team and committee reviewed through the selected corridors using aerial and street photography to discuss their applicability and the possible infrastructure treatments that could be considered.

At the second stakeholder meeting, the study team briefed the committee on a feasibility review that had been conducted on the 'candidate corridors' and resulting initial recommendations for treatments to consider. The majority of the meeting focused on the overall nature of the recommendations being made and a discussion of balancing a grand vision with an incremental and pragmatic approach to implementation. Similar to what was asked of the general public at Community Meeting #2, the committee was also asked to indicate the corridors they felt were most important to implement. Finally, a discussion was held on policies that could be applicable to

bicycle and pedestrian issues in the community.



At the third and final stakeholder meeting, the study team had prepared refined recommendations based on the second stakeholder meeting and information collected during Community Meeting #2. These recommendations also included consideration of implementation phasing, prioritization, and costing and discussion revolved around any additional refinements that would be appropriate. Other topics included typical sections of select corridors that were presented for discussion and a follow-up conversation on applicable policies for the community to consider.

Summaries of these meetings are provided in **Appendix F**.

Working with the stakeholder committee allowed the study team to dig in deeply to project recommendations and policies, expanding the value of the information gained from the general public. This allowed the study team to detail and complete the concept vision into plan recommendations and prioritization.

