



Higgins Avenue Corridor Plan: Brooks to Broadway Preferred Concept Engagement



Public Works Committee
February 1, 2022

Project Timeline

- ▶ 2009 & 2018 Downtown Master Plan
- ▶ 2012, 2016 & 2020 LRTP
- ▶ *Higgins Corridor Study*



Primary Circulation Diagram

Public Outreach

- ▶ >700 survey responses
- ▶ Hundreds of in-person direct engagement points
- ▶ Over 50 business-specific conversations
- ▶ Florence Bldg engagement
- ▶ Hip Strip Society
- ▶ Missoula Economic Partnership & Missoula Downtown Association support
- ▶ Role of public input
- ▶ Continued opportunity for late-comers

BROOKS to BROADWAY

Summer 2021

BUSINESS OWNER ENGAGEMENT

77 BUSINESSES
were engaged through door-to-door canvassing of the Higgins Corridor.

64 BUSINESS OWNERS
were invited to participate in small group or one-on-one meetings.

42 CONVERSATIONS
with business owners and employees through canvassing efforts.

5 IN-PERSON MEETINGS
were held with area businesses and organizations.

Higgins Parking

- ▶ Maximum 20 spaces lost (depending on final design)
- ▶ One of the primary concerns of businesses we engaged with
- ▶ Parking preservation was a priority
- ▶ Management of on-street parking a bigger issue, especially Hip Strip



Operational analysis

- ▶ Left turns
- ▶ Access to destinations, not just through-put
- ▶ Reduce re-circulation traffic
- ▶ Reduce the need for/ amount of right turns

Economic impact

- ▶ quality-of-life and placemaking most important
- ▶ Avoid parking removal
- ▶ Nearly all studies showed net positive or marginal benefit of 4-to-3 lane
- ▶ Missoula Economic Partnership & Missoula Downtown Association support

Projects Involving Travel Lane Reductions but No Parking Reductions

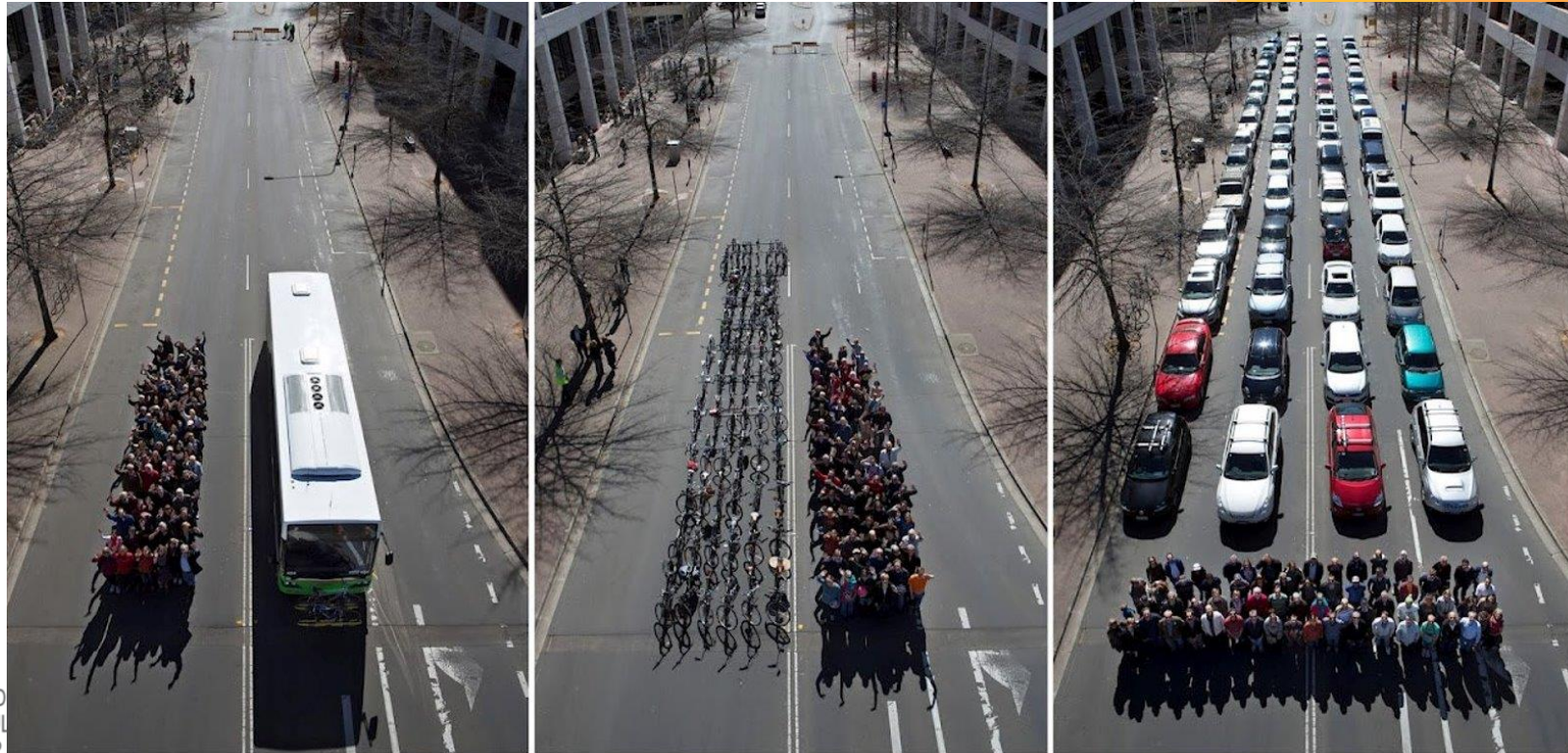


Downtown mobility, housing & development



Why multi-modal transportation

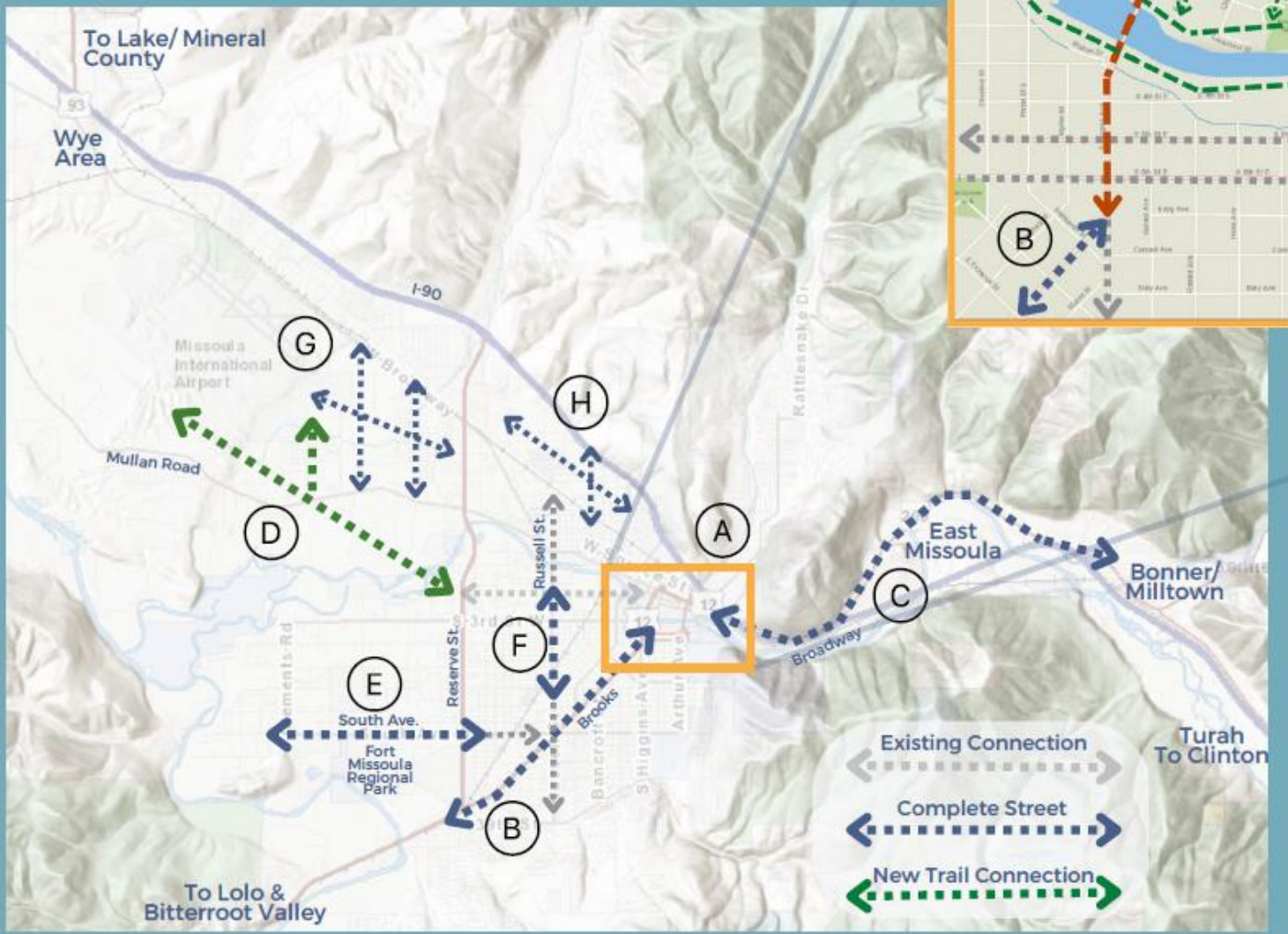
- ▶ 14,000 new households = 120,000 trips
 - ▶ 4 new Reserve Streets if all SOV
- ▶ Increased capacity needs to be network-wide
- ▶ Multi-modal is more efficient





Priority Projects & Opportunities

Downtown Mobility



Action today & timeline:

- ▶ Motion to support and direct staff to move forward with the Preferred Concept, or direct as necessary
- ▶ Grant application resolution – Feb 15th
- ▶ Continued design and engineering; business continuity planning; construction details, etc

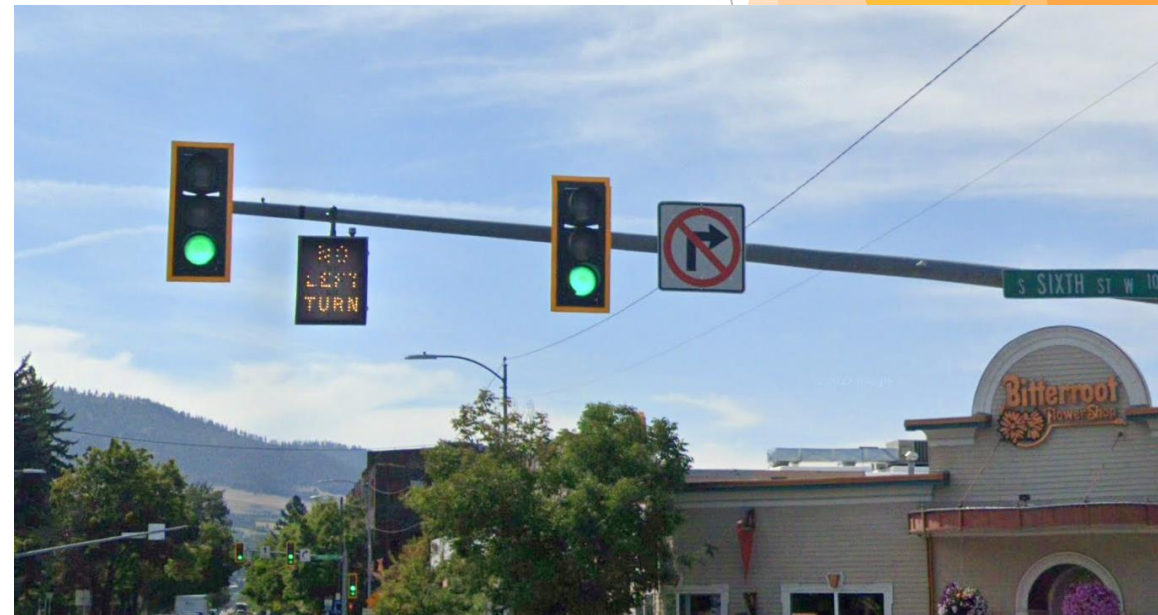
Policy Goals

- ▶ Vision Zero
- ▶ Complete Streets
- ▶ Downtown Master Plan
- ▶ Long-Range Transportation Plan
- ▶ Sustainability
- ▶ Equity



Project Goals

- ▶ Safety
- ▶ Increased multi-modal connections & operations
- ▶ Business access/parking
- ▶ Downtown access



North Side Preferred Concept



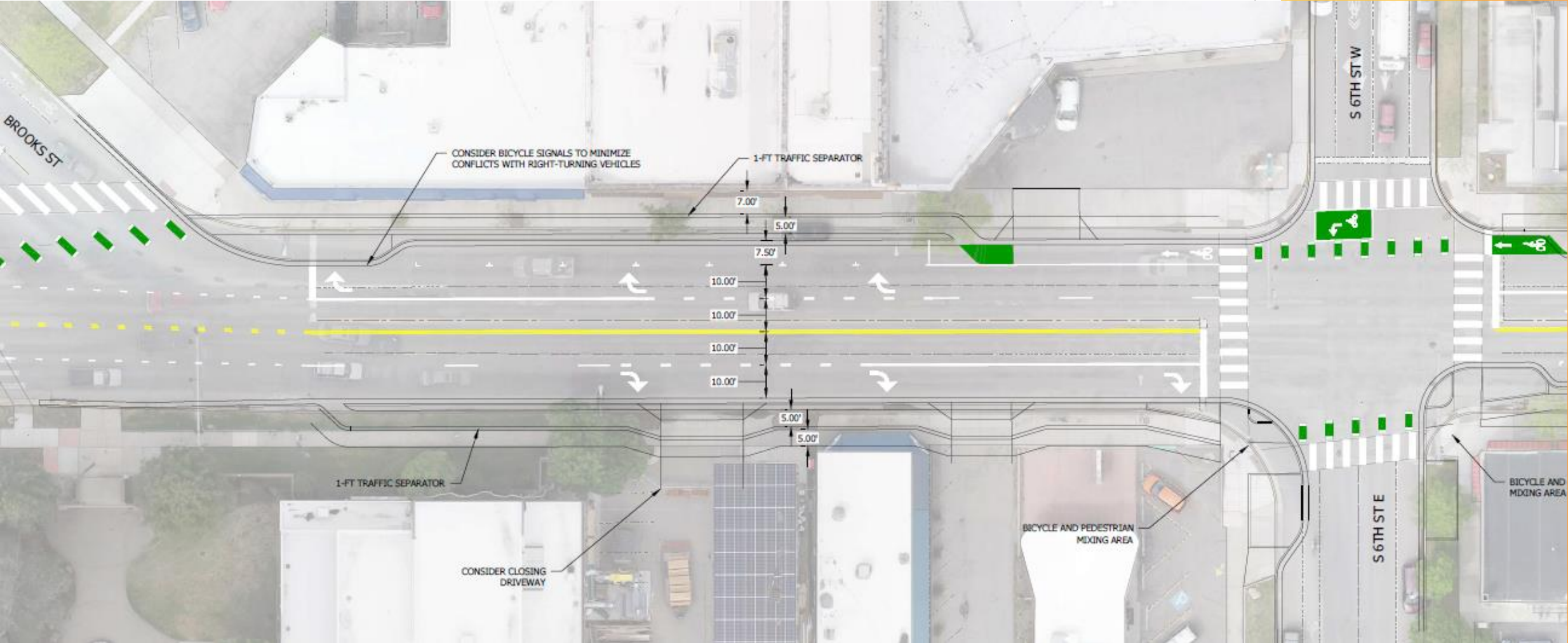
South Side Preferred Concept



Design: Beartracks Bridge

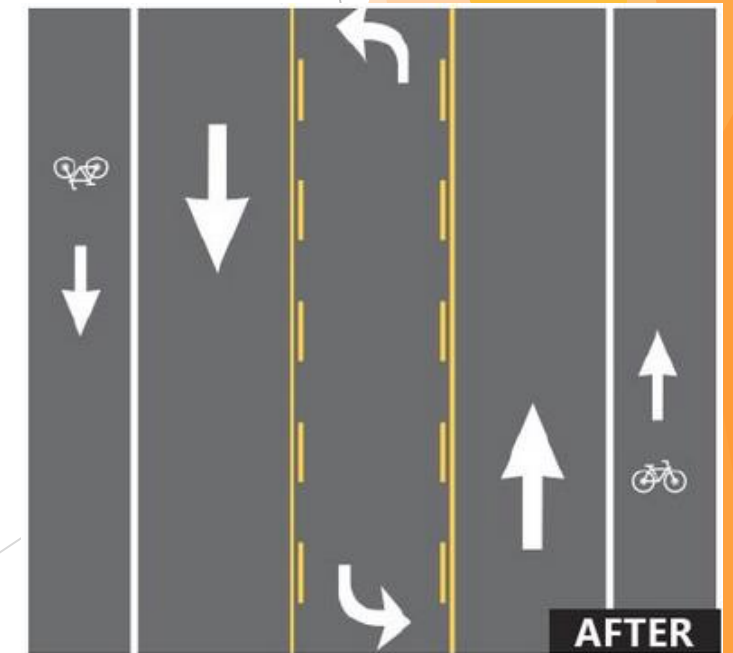
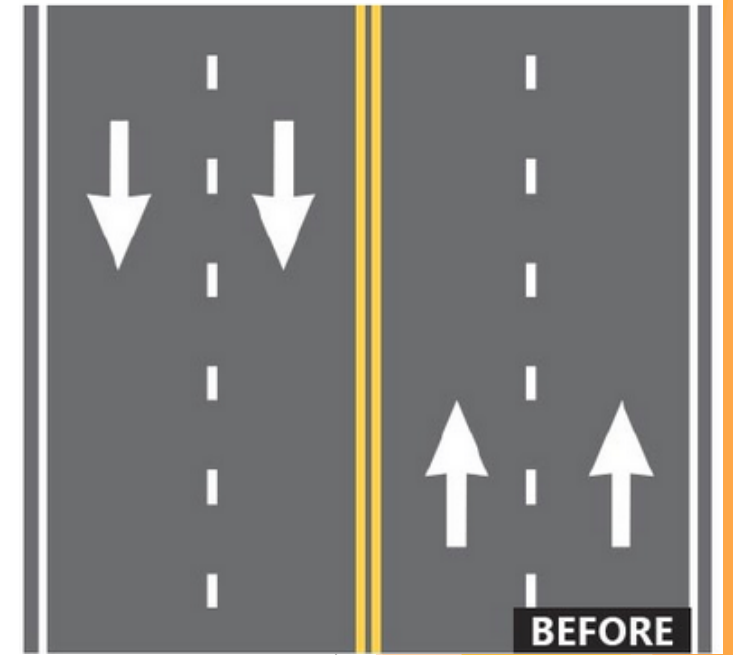


Design: Hwy 12






Design Benefits: 4-to-3 conversion





- ▶ Increased safety: up to 50% crash reduction
- ▶ Protected left turns – business & parking access
- ▶ Reduced crossing distance
- ▶ Improved lane widths
- ▶ Maintenance & emergency access



Trade-offs in decision

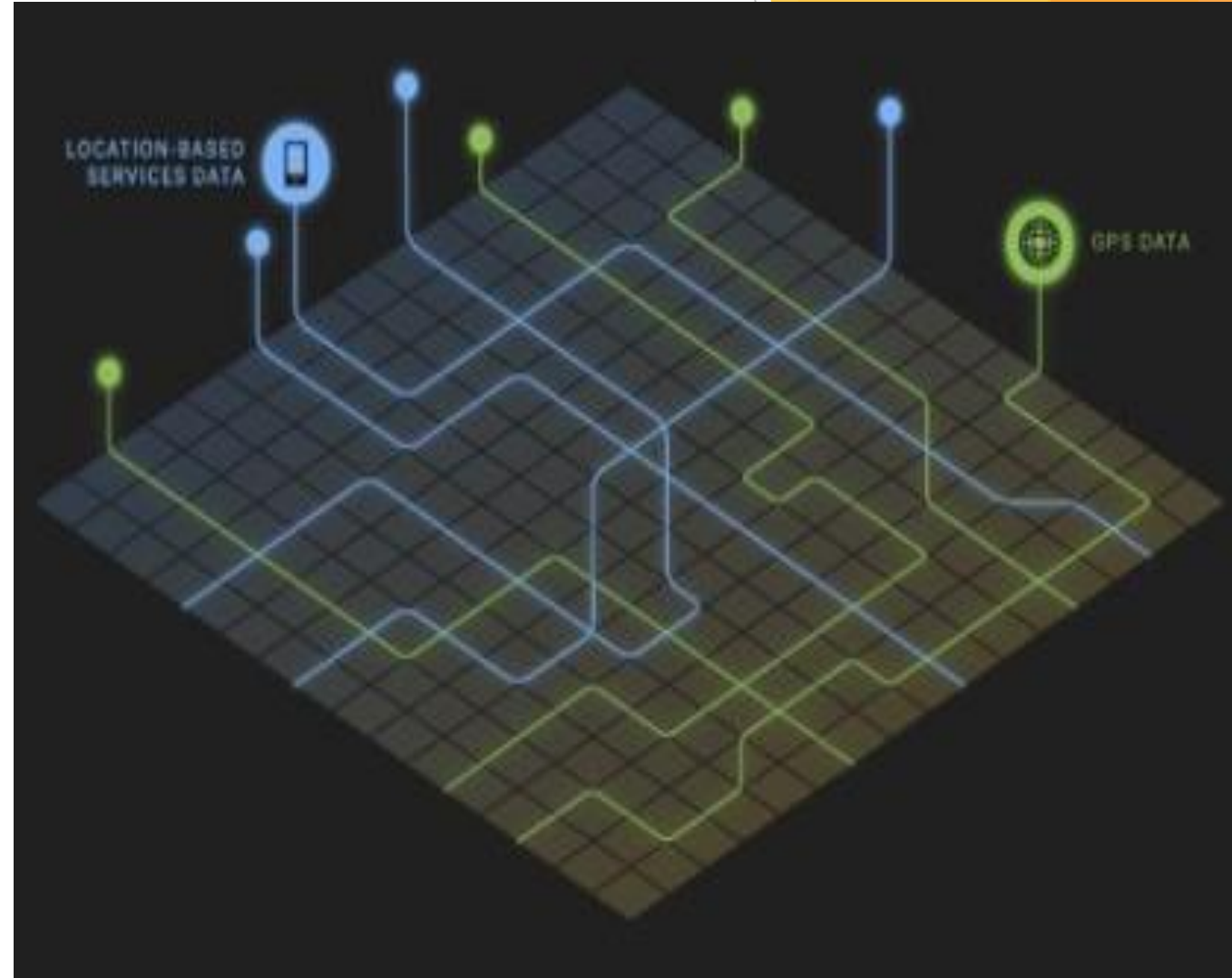
Criteria	Existing Conditions	Preferred Concept
Bicycle Comfort/Safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ 3.7 bike crashes/year (2011-20) ◆ Stressful biking conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Protected bike lanes reduce conflicts ◆ Bike lanes can reduce crashes by 30%-49% ◆ Increased predictability of where people biking will be
Economic Activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ No construction impacts ◆ Left-turn restrictions remain ◆ Difficult access by bike 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ 4- to 3-lane road conversions including high quality walking and biking infrastructure typically increase economic activity. ◆ Some construction impacts ◆ Left-turns allowed and center turn lane is provided, increasing access to businesses and parking along the corridor
Motor Vehicle Operations/Delay 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ No change; some congestion at peak hour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ PM peak hour intersection delay increases from ~3 to ~18 seconds/vehicle at the signalized intersections (total increase of ~51 seconds). ◆ Traffic queues back up between intersections ~5% of the peak hour. ◆ Delay could be worse if traffic increases (over 3 minutes/vehicle total from Brooks Street to Broadway), however traffic volumes have stayed the same or even decreased over the last 20 years.

Trade-offs in decision

<p>Motor Vehicle Safety</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ No left turn lanes ◆ ~55 crashes/year (2010-2019) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ 4-lane to 3-lane conversion north of 6th Street could reduce crashes by 29%
<p>Parking</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ 90 on-street spaces ◆ Spaces south of the bridge are tight 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ 68 on-street spaces (-22, almost entirely south of bridge) ◆ Wider parking spaces south of bridge
<p>Pedestrian Comfort/Safety</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Cross 4-lane road 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ 3 lane cross section and curb extensions shorten crossing distances and slow turning traffic. ◆ High visibility crosswalks improve pedestrian experience.
<p>Transit Access</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Stops do not meet current accessibility standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Defined, accessible stops separated from crosswalks. ◆ Increased delay may affect bus timing in PM peak

Streetlight Data

- ▶ Avg trip length < 5 mi
 - ▶ High potential for mode shift
- ▶ Most trips to Hip Strip & Downtown are local (< 2.5 mi, 90% City)
- ▶ < 1% of trips are pass-through, not traveling to City as a destination



Public Outreach Round #3 Process

[Welcome](#) [Project Background](#) [What We've Heard So Far](#) [Concept Treatments](#) [Draft Preferred Concepts](#) [Survey](#) [Next Step](#)

- ▶ General Public (>150 conversations)
 - ▶ Virtual Open House/Survey (>650)
 - ▶ E-mails (23)
 - ▶ City Meetings (8)
- ▶ Businesses & Other Stakeholders
 - ▶ MDA, BID, Florence & 1 v. 1 Meetings (53 Businesses)

Welcome

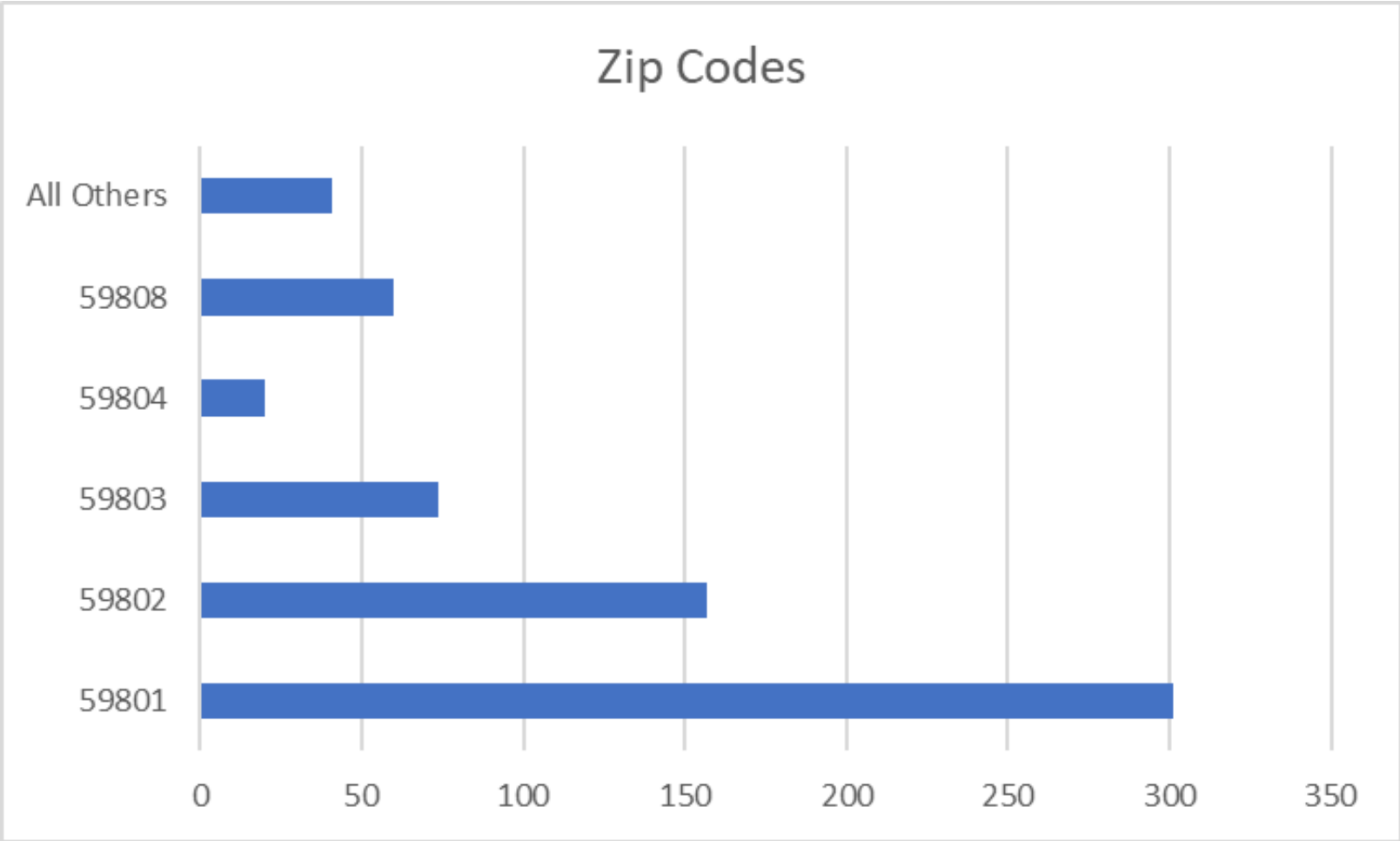
Thank you for visiting the Higgins Avenue Corridor Plan: Brooks to Broadway Virtual Open House. Here you will find information about the project's background, what we've heard so far from the community, and the draft preferred concept. At the end, you will be able to provide feedback on preferred concept and whether you think the City and Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) should move forward with it.

You can continue scrolling down to browse through the full content of the website or toggle to different sections using the navigation bar above. If you need printed materials mailed to you or need to make other arrangements to answer your questions, please call 406-552-6629 and we will be happy to help you.

This open house will be open through Friday, December 30, 2022.

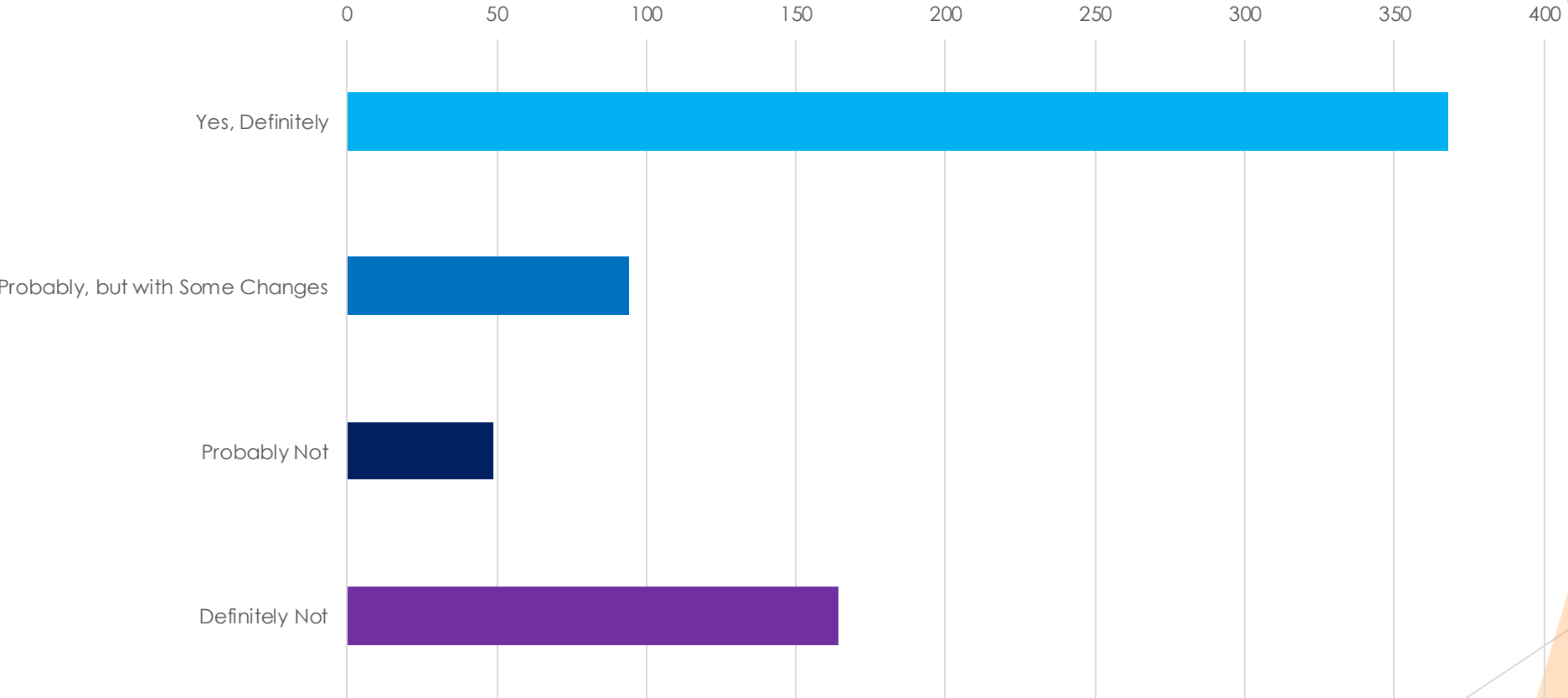
Have you been following the project? Feel free to use the short cuts at the top to skip ahead.

Public Outreach Round #3 Results



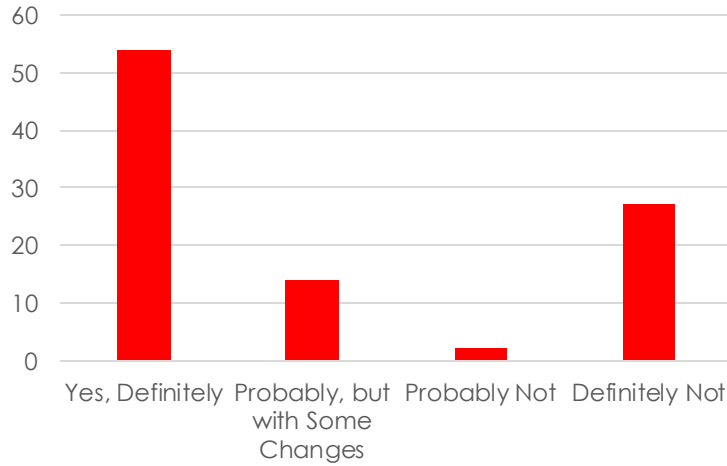
Public Outreach Round #3 Results

Do You Support the City and MDT Building the Preferred Concept

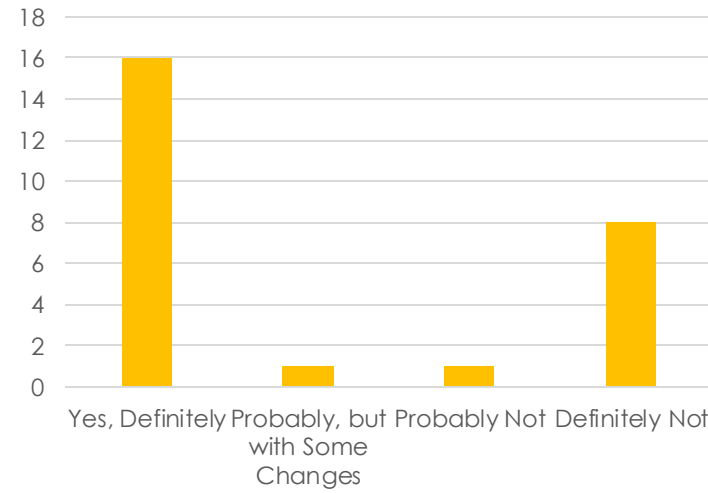


Public feedback – online survey

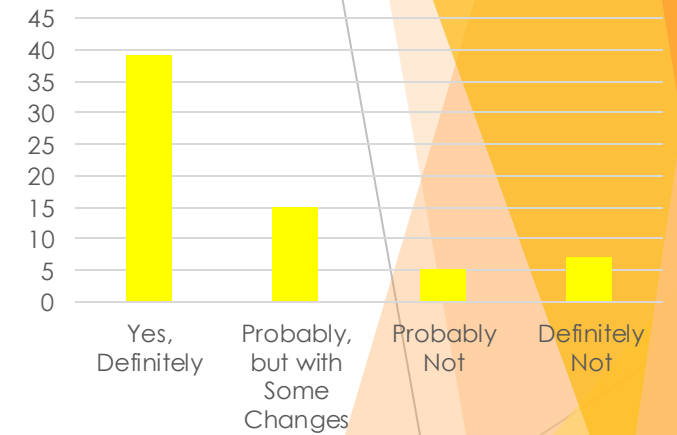
I work or go to school on Higgins



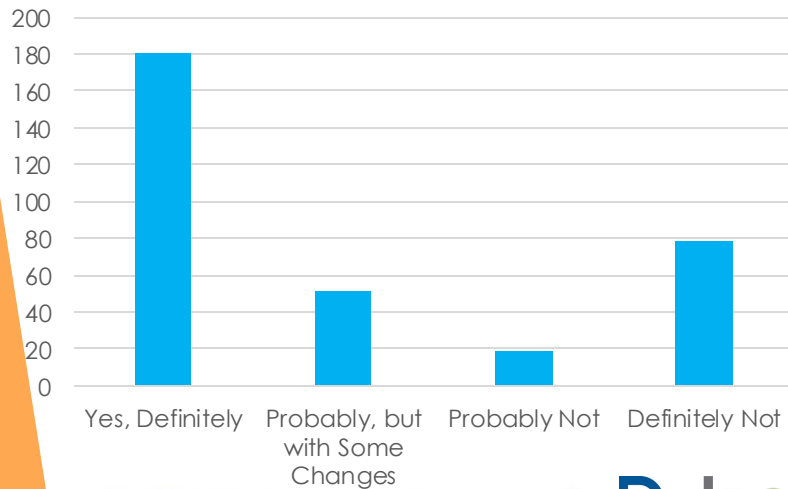
I live on Higgins



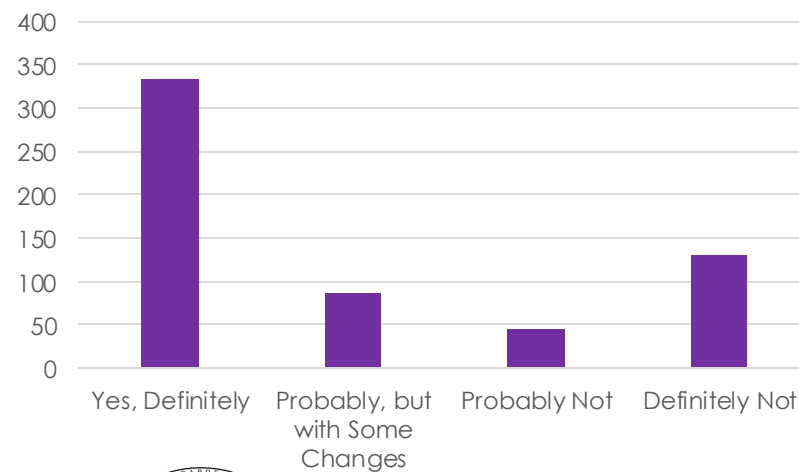
I have a child that attends school on/near Higgins



I use Higgins to commute to work



I use Higgins to go downtown for entertainment or errands



Business outreach

- ▶ Mixed input
- ▶ Even among supporters, significant concern about construction
- ▶ Focus on parking
 - ▶ Parking management is important
- ▶ Support for left turns and better access

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Businesses support Higgins Corridor concept

The Hip Strip District is a multi-generational center comprised of Missoula Senior Center, Hellgate High School, residential neighborhoods, and the numerous businesses and nonprofits that make the area so unique.

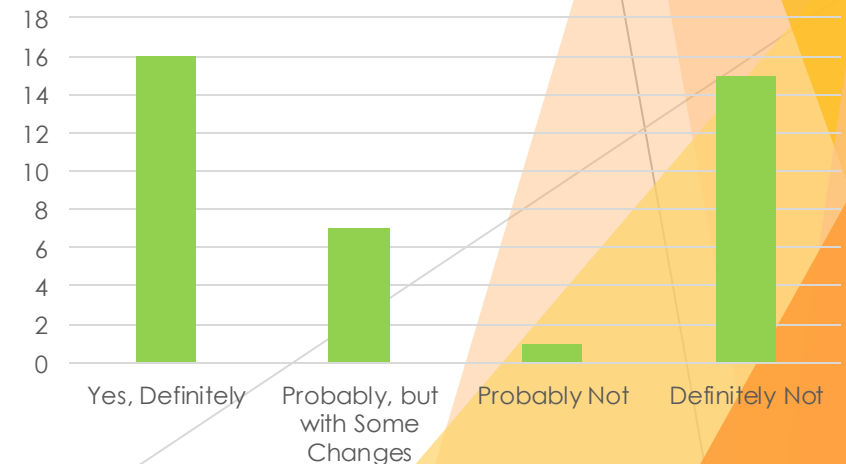
With safety and accessibility improvements, the Higgins Corridor plan addresses a vital component missing in the current layout. Higgins Avenue is not a through-fare but a destination route. Collisions between cars

Betty's Divine
Charlie and Barbie Beaton,
Big Dipper Ice Cream
Alex Gallego,
Missoula Bicycle Works

What liberty?

As a Hellgate High School student, I was aware of several very shy students who seemed anxious about possible bullying and harassment, at times for good reason. Over the years, I have come to understand that some folks just can't handle the fact there are people who are different than they are and who want them to feel uncomfortable or worse, even take violent ac-

I own/manage a business or property on Higgins



Public Outreach Round #3 Results – What People Like*

- ▶ Raised Bike Lanes (64%)
- ▶ Left-turn Lanes (59%)
- ▶ Shorter Crossings (43%)
- ▶ People-oriented
- ▶ Considers Higgins a destination

Public Outreach Round #3 Results – Concerns

- ▶ Increased Congestion (57%)
- ▶ **Construction impacts**
- ▶ Parking Loss (42%)
- ▶ Parallel parking and parking management
- ▶ Intersection design (bicyclists)
- ▶ Timing
- ▶ Right Turns

Next Steps:

- ▶ Council & MDT decision
- ▶ Funding & Grants
- ▶ Final Report
- ▶ Construction