

DUKE STREET *IN MOTION*



Summer 2021
Community Engagement Summary



Overview

Project Purpose

Duke Street In Motion is a project focused on ensuring that bus-related improvements within the Duke Street corridor, from the Landmark Mall area to King Street Metro Station, align with all users' needs, wants, and expectations, and support **improved transportation choices** for the Duke Street corridor and Alexandria communities.

While **bus improvements** are the primary focus of this effort, other community priorities such as safety, driving, bicycle, pedestrian, and vehicle access are also important considerations of this corridor study.



Extensive Outreach

In summer 2021, the City of Alexandria launched Phase 1 of **Duke Street In Motion**. The goal of this first community visioning process was to gather open, honest feedback – representative of all community members and Duke Street users – to help develop both a vision and a set of goals for the future of travel along the Duke Street corridor, shaped by what is most important to the community.

Many people participated in the process - for example:

- **1,785** responses on the web feedback form
- **3,587** project handouts distributed
- **6,393** received City T&ES eNews blast
- **95,889** reached on social media
- **22** community pop-up events
- **92** webinar attendees



Findings

It is the responsibility of this project to **improve overall bus service and related bus amenities** in order to make the bus a more appealing travel option for the community in the short and longer term.

Community input indicates the majority of people are interested in bus improvements, and there is potential interest by nearly half of feedback form respondents to **ride the bus more often** if overall service, bus-related amenities, and bicycle and pedestrian access are improved.

Majority of Feedback Form Responses were Submitted by Community Members who are Affluent, White, and/or Homeowners

Despite the extensive community engagement efforts and methods employed in this project to gain feedback from minority and low-income populations, their percentage of responses do not align with the corridor’s minority and low-income population percentages.

Example Demographics For Comparison	Duke Street Corridor	Feedback Form Responses
Household Income > \$100,000/year	49%	74%
White or Caucasian	54%	72%
Renter Households	57%	16%

To ensure that the Duke Street *In Motion* Goals and Visions are representative of all Duke Street corridor travelers and residents, this summary **highlights the similarities and differences in the concerns and priorities indicated by minority groups, lower-income groups, renters, and other groups that are often systematically excluded**, as well as describing the concerns and priorities of higher-income and White respondents. To analyze the potential impact of Duke Street corridor bus-related improvements on increasing bus ridership, this summary also **highlights responses from both current bus riders and non-bus riders**.



Feedback Form Highlights Related to Bus Improvements

- **47%** of all respondents said they **would ride or would consider riding the bus more often** if improved, safer, and more efficient options were provided.
- **68%** of all respondents said **bus stop improvements** were “very” or “somewhat” important.
- **63%** interested in seeing **improved bus waiting areas**.
- **65%** interested in **real-time arrival information** at bus stops.
- **75%** of respondents with **incomes less than \$35,000** chose improved **safety at intersections** as a top priority.
- **Renters** were more likely to desire all types of bus-related improvements than homeowners and expressed more interest in **seeing dedicated bus lanes** (41% renters vs 19% homeowners), **improved bicycle and pedestrian access** to stations (50% renters vs. 31% homeowners), and **real-time bus arrival information** at bus stops (51% renters vs. 29% homeowners).

This information and other community-driven direction gathered from the feedback form, webinar, and other conversations at bus stops and pop-ups, provide the City’s planning team with guidance as to how to move forward with design concepts that will improve the bus system. Bus system improvements will boost the overall improvement in the quality of life for all Duke Street corridor residents and users, both in the short-term, and in the longer-term, especially as additional residents and commercial uses may begin to develop in this area.

Summary of Community Engagement Activities and Efforts

Types of Engagement and Target Groups

For the first phase of extensive community engagement, the team used a variety of inclusive strategies, including both online and low-touch in-person activities in compliance with all CDC-required distancing and guidelines related to COVID-19.

Activities and opportunities were announced and advertised via:

- Social media, email blasts, press release, *The Council Connection*, and the project website
- Community flyers, yard signs, door hangers (800 hung in low-income and Spanish-speaking neighborhoods/apartment complexes)
- DASH bus flyers, advertisements
- Media releases

Outreach & Participation statistics through July 31:

- Materials distributed: 3,550+ flyers/door hangers/postcards, 820+ sanitizers and magnet clips
- Email eBlast recipients: 6,393
- Social media audience: 95,889
- QR code scans: 861
- Bus stop chats: 5 (84 people engaged)
- Pop-up events: 17 (2,468 people engaged)
- Feedback form: 1,785 unique submissions
- Webinar: 92 attendees

Feedback Form:

- **Description:** This web-based feedback form gathered community input on existing Duke Street travel-related conditions and choices as well as what people want to see in the future of mobility along the corridor.
- **Target Groups:** All community members. Community members provided 1,785 responses. Relative to the overall demographic composition of the corridor's population, there were higher percentages of responses from affluent and white individuals, as well as from homeowners.



Pop up Events:

- **Description:** Multilingual street teams with English, Spanish, and Amharic speakers were stationed at 17 pop-up locations at libraries, grocery stores, laundromats, parks, and apartment complexes along the Duke Street corridor to promote the feedback form and webinar while providing opportunity to collect input on site with Wi-Fi connected tablets.
- **Target Groups:** Most locations were strategically selected to reach and collect input from minority, low-income, marginalized non-English speaking members of the community which conventional methods may not have reached.

Bus Stop Chats:

- **Description:** English, Spanish, and Amharic speakers were stationed at 5 different bus stops along Duke Street at peak morning and evening ridership times during **Duke Street In Motion Week** to gather input from those currently riding the bus.
- **Target Groups:** Current transit riders, including both English and non-English speakers. 83% of participants at bus stop chats were minority members of the community (51% Hispanic, 29% Black, 3% Asian or other), and minority representation at bus stop chats aligns with the region's minority bus ridership statistics (81%).

Virtual Public Meeting:

- **Description:** The City held a webinar-style presentation with Q&A to share information about the Duke Street *In Motion* process, promote the feedback form, provide responses to attendees' questions, and gather input.
- **Target Groups:** All community members. 92 people participated in the live meeting.



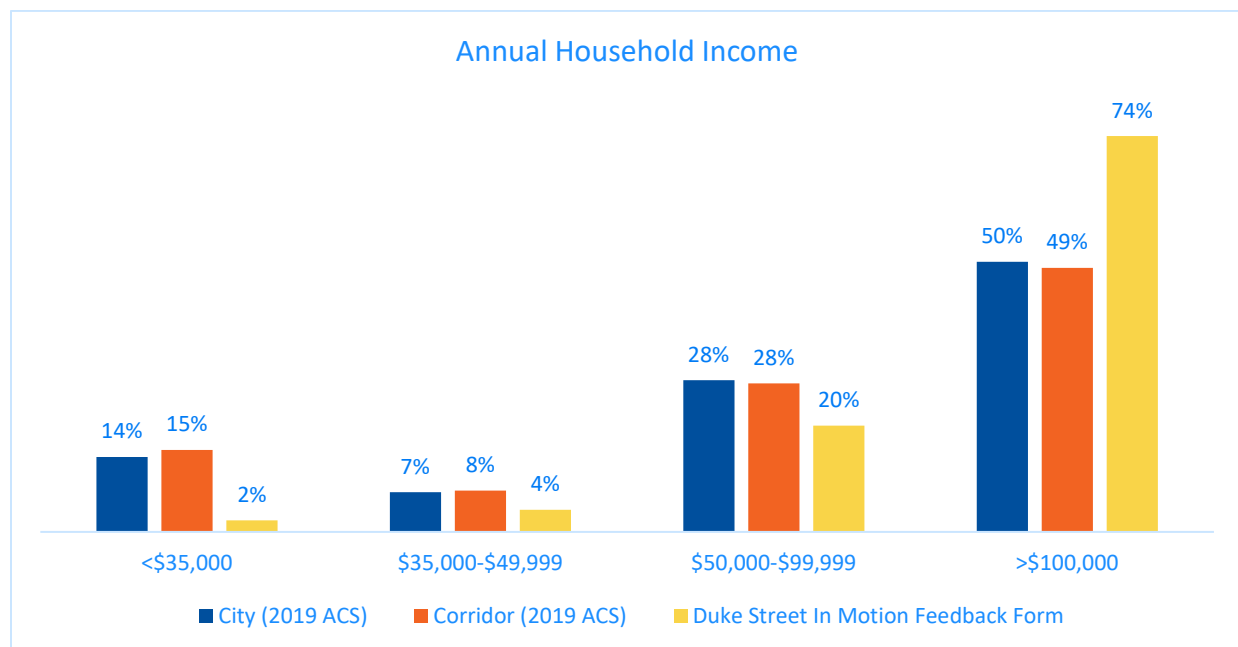
Feedback Form: Demographic Comparisons

According to the Washington Area [Bus Transformation Project](#), for the region as a whole, including Northern Virginia, DC, Prince George’s County, and Montgomery County, a large percentage of bus riders are low-income (53%) and of a minority race and/or ethnicity (81% Non- White), and nearly a quarter (24%) have Limited English Proficiency (LEP). According to the US Census American Community Survey (2019), there are large populations of low-income and minority residents in Alexandria (48%) and along the Duke Street corridor (51%), and although the majority of the engagement effort was targeted at these groups, there was still low representation in the input received.

In the following comparisons, city and corridor demographics come from the 2019 US Census Bureau’s American Community Survey data. “Duke Street Corridor” or “Corridor” demographics include people who live in the Census Block Groups within about .25 miles of Duke Street, between the Landmark Mall site and King Street Metro.

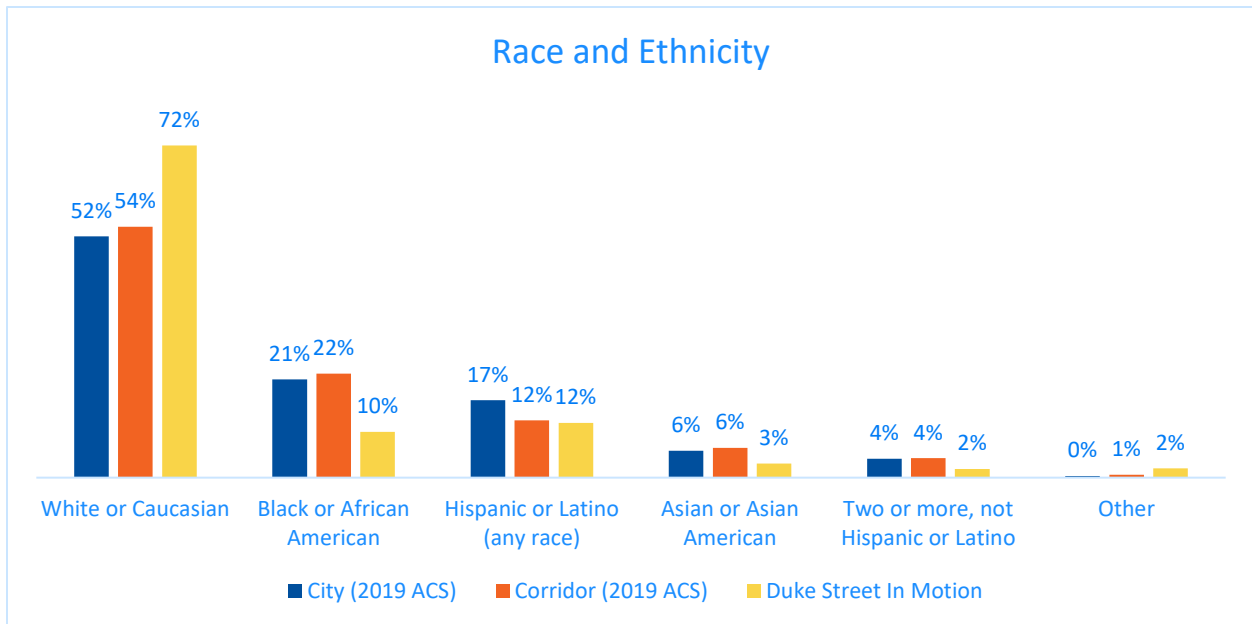
Annual Household Income

The income distribution in the Duke Street corridor shows a range of income levels, and closely mirrors incomes in the city as a whole; however, the feedback form received more participation from respondents of higher income levels over \$100,000/year (74%).



Race and Ethnicity

Corridor demographics related to race and ethnicity are similar to the overall city’s demographics, but the feedback form received more participation from respondents who identified as White or Caucasian (72%) and fewer from others, including those who identify as Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, Asian or Asian-American, and Other.



Other Points of Comparison:






- **Transit Ridership:** 20% of both the city and corridor commute to work via public transportation. 29% of those who provided input on the feedback form ride the bus at least once per month and 10% ride Metrorail.
- **Renters/Homeowners:** Though both the city and corridor have a majority of renters (>55% for both), the responses on the feedback form overwhelmingly came from homeowners (82%) despite in-person events and print collateral distribution efforts concentrated in apartment complexes.
- **Age:** Responses from people 45-74 were higher (55%) than the proportion of these groups both in the city (32%) and along the corridor (32%). Participation from people 18-34 was lower (15%) than for the general population in the city (28%) and along the corridor (29%).
- **Location on Corridor:** 79% of respondents live directly within or adjacent to the corridor area. Approximately 31% of the Alexandria population lives in ZIP code 22304 (which includes the West End, Seminary Hill, Cameron Station), but 52% of the responses came from this area.

Feedback Form: Community Input related to Bus Improvements

Though this summary provides high-level information about community input received on the feedback form, all comments were reviewed, and all input is being considered.

Overall Response Themes & Responses from Current Bus Riders

Looking at all 1785 responses received, several data points support bus and bus-related improvements along the Duke Street corridor and indicate that a bus rapid transit service that expedites bus service without causing further delays to vehicular traffic would be welcomed by the community. Responses from current bus riders compared to all responses indicate that current bus riders share similar concerns about current travel time and delays show an increased desire to see bus-related improvements.

	<u>INPUT FROM ALL RESPONSES</u>	<u>INPUT FROM CURRENT BUS RIDERS ¹</u>
<p>BUS RIDING FREQUENCY</p> 	<p>47% said they would ride or would consider riding the bus more often if improved, safer, and more efficient options were provided.</p>	<p>72% of respondents who currently ride the bus 1-5 times per month and 51% of those who currently ride the bus 5-10 times per month said they would ride or would consider riding the bus more often if improved, safer, and more efficient options were provided.</p>
<p>ACCESS TO & FROM BUS STOPS</p> 	<p>58% would like to see improved pedestrian and bicycle access to/from bus stops, with 82% noting the importance of improved intersection safety and 75% noting that improved sidewalks were important.</p>	<p>68% of current bus riders would like to see improved pedestrian and bicycle access to/from bus stops, with 86% noting the importance of improved intersection safety and 82% noting that improved sidewalks were important.</p>
<p>AMENITIES</p> 	<p>68% said bus stop improvements were “very” or “somewhat” important, with 63% interested in seeing improved bus waiting areas and 65% interested in real-time arrival information at bus stops.</p>	<p>Current riders expressed an increased interest with 78% who said bus stop improvements were “very” or “somewhat” important, and 74% interested in seeing both improved bus waiting areas and real-time arrival information at bus stops.</p>
<p>BUS SYSTEM</p> 	<p>51% of respondents are interested in bus signal priority improvements, and 48% are interested in dedicated bus lanes.</p>	<p>62% of current bus riders are interested in bus signal priority improvements, and 57% are interested in dedicated bus lanes.</p>
<p>TRAVEL TIME & EFFICIENCY</p> 	<p>88% selected reduced traffic as an important priority for future improvements. Congestion along the Duke Street corridor was identified as one of the top challenges according to 64% of respondents, with traffic delays selected by 52%.</p>	<p>88% selected reduced traffic as an important priority for future improvements. 57% of current bus riders identified congestion as a top challenge for the corridor, with travel delays selected by 50%.</p>

¹ This includes people who indicated they currently (or pre-COVID) rode the bus at least 1 time per month (29% of all respondents).

Comparison of Responses by Demographics

The following pages highlight some areas in which demographic groups shared feedback that deviates either from the overall feedback form input or from other related demographic groups. The purpose of this section is to ensure that our process is equitable and that feedback from all demographic groups is considered in this community visioning process.

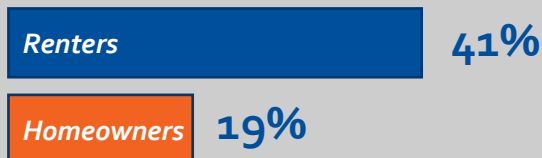
Comparison by Household tenure (Owner vs. Renter)

Marked traffic as a top travel challenge on Duke Street (64% of all responses)

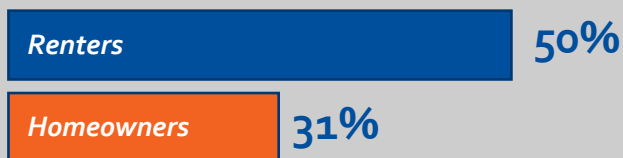


Said they were “very interested” in seeing the following types of bus-related improvements

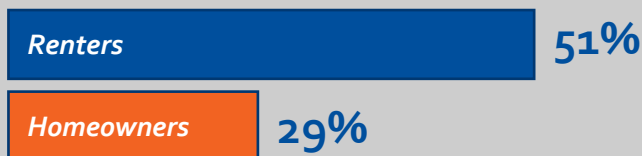
Dedicated bus lanes (26% of all responses)



Improved bicycle and pedestrian access to bus stops (32% of all responses)



Real-time bus arrival information at bus stops (34% of all responses)



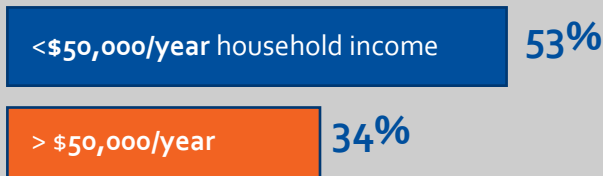
Comparison by Household Income

Marked improvements to bus stops as “very important” (34% of all responses)



Indicated they were “very interested” in the following transit improvements:

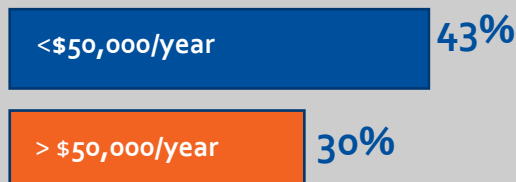
Real-time bus arrival information
(34% of all responses)



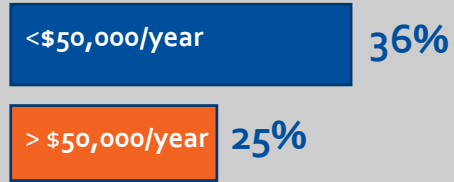
Bus signal priority
(23% of all responses)



Improved bus waiting areas
(29% of all responses)

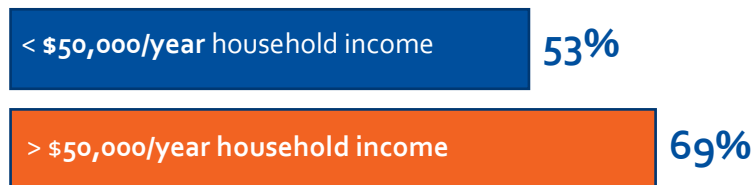


Dedicated bus lanes
(26% of all responses)



Selected the following issues as major travel challenges in the Duke Street corridor

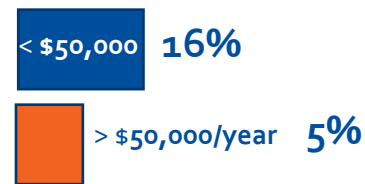
Congestion (64% of all responses)



Cost (7% of all responses)



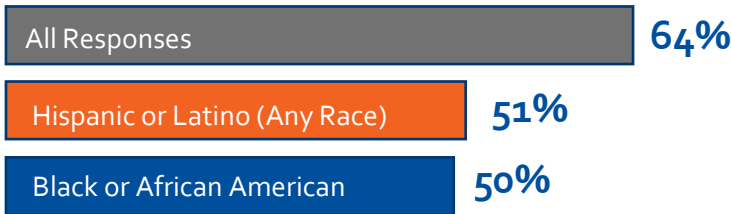
Accessibility (5% of all responses)



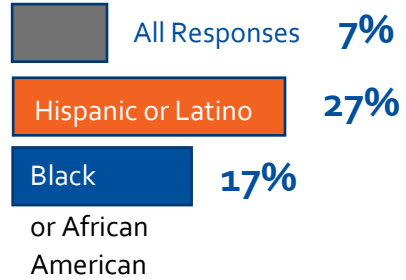
Comparison by Race/Ethnicity

Top challenges to traveling along Duke Street

Congestion / time of day

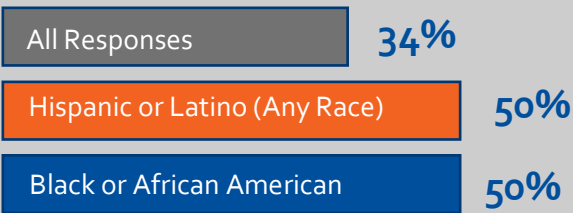


Cost

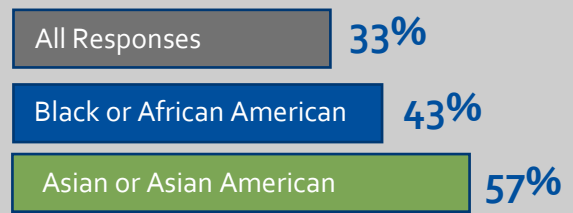


Transportation improvements respondents believe are “very important” to improve mobility in the Duke Street corridor

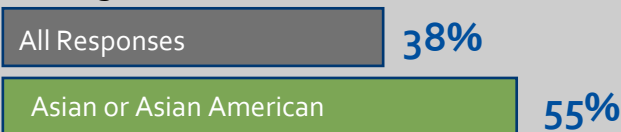
Improvements to bus stops



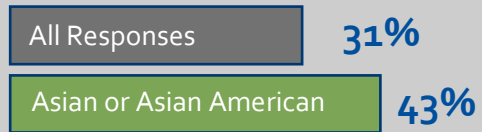
Improvements to bus travel



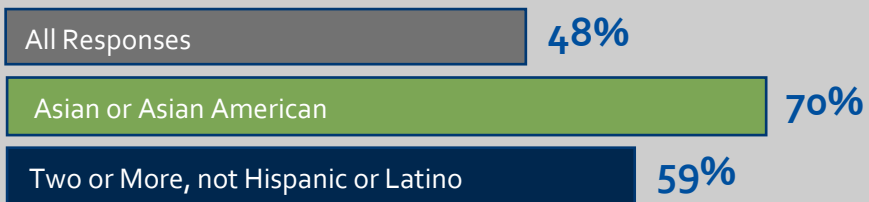
Additional pedestrian or bicycle crossing locations



More or improved bike lanes or trails



More or improved sidewalks

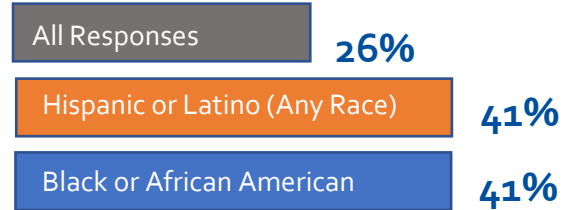


Transit improvements respondents are “very interested” in seeing

Bus signal priority



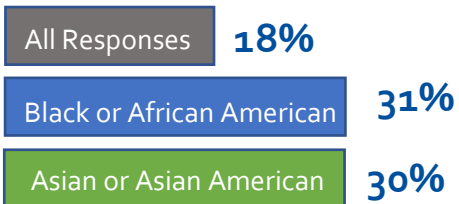
Dedicated bus lanes



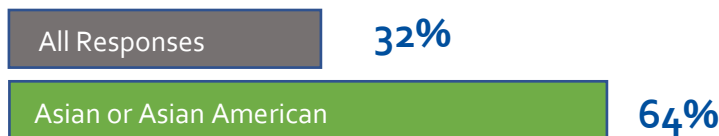
Improved bus waiting areas



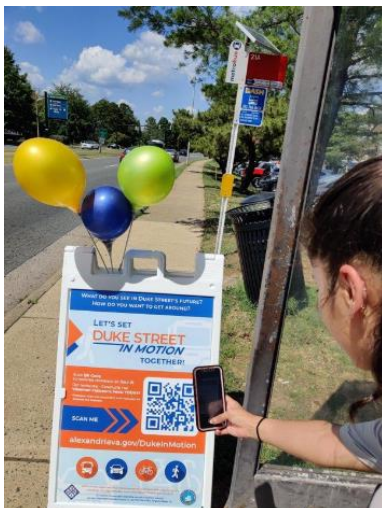
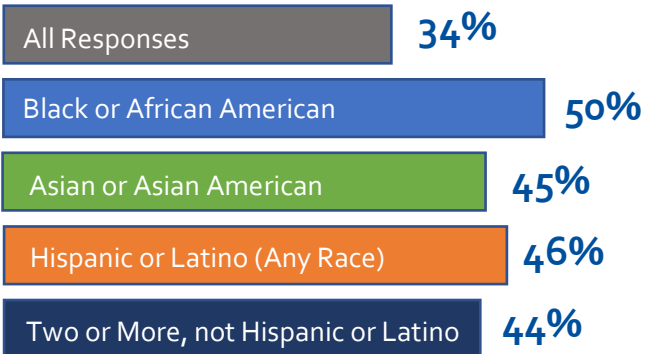
Public art incorporated into bus stops



Improved pedestrian and bicycle access to /from bus stops

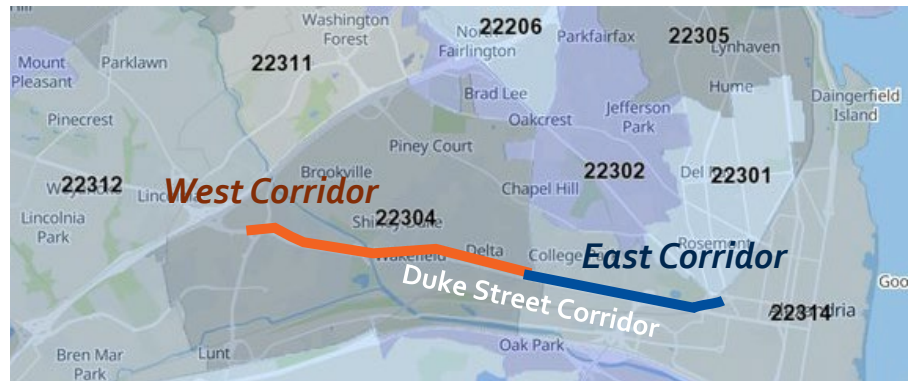


Real-time bus arrival information at bus stops



Comparison by ZIP Code

For this section, “West Corridor” refers to zip codes West of Quaker Lane (22304, 22312, 22311) and “East Corridor” is East of Quaker Lane – or zip codes 22314, 22301, 22302. Though there are many similarities in priorities between the two corridor areas, there are some notable differences.



Desired Improvements

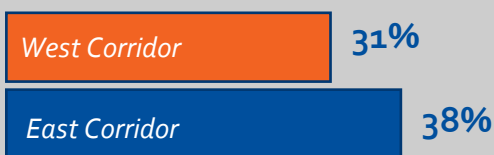
Selected **improved intersection safety** as “very important” (55% of all responses)



Selected **improved crossing locations** as “very important” (38% of all responses)



Indicated they were “very interested” in improved **pedestrian and bicycle access** to / from bus stops (32% of all responses)



Selected **more or improved bike lanes or trails** as “very important” (31% of all responses)



Top Challenges

Selected **traffic delays** as a major travel challenge (52% of all responses)



Selected **travel times** as a major travel challenge (35% of all responses)



Personal traffic safety as a major travel challenge (23% of all responses)



Next Steps

How We Are Using This Input

The project’s next objective is to develop a Vision Statement and set of Goals that are based on community input and corridor needs. The Vision Statement and Goals must align with the overall goal of improving bus service to increase bus ridership and reduce single occupancy vehicle trips that are contributing to the travel times and congestion within the Duke Street corridor. Additional residential and commercial development in the corridor will increase corridor travelers, only increasing the importance of improvements.

The Vision Statement and Goals will guide the next phases of this project. By developing specific Goals based on community input, the City can provide a community-driven outcome by which draft alternative corridor design concepts can be measured and compared. This project will identify bus rapid transit design concepts that are supportive of this community-developed Vision and Goals for the future of enhanced transportation options for the corridor. As concepts are developed and analyzed, the City will measure potential benefits and impacts to travel related factors that we know may impact quality of life on the Duke Street corridor. These design concepts will be shared with the community for input in future engagement phases.

Timeline and Future Engagement

Once the Vision Statement and Goals are defined, the City of Alexandria will work to develop alternative corridor design concepts to be shared with the community for input in 2022.

