

# SYLVAN AVENUE MULTIMODAL PROJECT

## PUBLIC OFFICIALS & PUBLIC MEETING SUMMARY

### MEETING DETAILS:

**DATE:** Tuesday, April 26, 2022  
**TIME:** 3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. (Public Officials Briefing) and 5:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. (Public Meeting)  
**LOCATION:** Virtual, Microsoft Teams

The City of Pittsburgh Department of Mobility and Infrastructure (DOMI), in cooperation with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), held a Virtual Public Officials Briefing and Virtual Public Meeting on April 26, 2022. The Virtual Public Officials Briefing was held at 3:00 p.m., and the Virtual Public Meeting was held at 5:00 p.m., both using Microsoft Teams. The same PowerPoint presentation was utilized during both meetings and can be found on the [City's Engage PGH website](#), along with the recording of the Virtual Public Meeting.

### NOTIFICATIONS:

Invitations to the Virtual Public Meeting were mailed to the Notice of Intent to Enter list on April 5, 2022 and Public Officials list on March 29, 2022. Emails were sent to the email contacts collected during public outreach activities for the nearby Mon-Oakland Mobility Project on April 14, 2022. Additionally, emails were sent to Hazelwood neighborhood organizations to encourage them to share the meeting information with their communities. A newspaper ad was placed in the City Paper on April 20, 2022, and press release was issued by the City of Pittsburgh approximately one week in advance of the meeting.

### ATTENDEES (PUBLIC OFFICIALS MEETING):

NAME	TITLE	ORGANIZATION
<b>Project Team</b>		
Michael Panzitta, P.E.	Project Manager	Department of Mobility and Infrastructure
Emily Bourne	Communications Coordinator	Department of Mobility and Infrastructure
Anthony Annett, P.E.	Local Projects Coordinator	PennDOT District 11
Robert Slagel, P.E.	Senior Civil Engineer	PennDOT District 11
Rebecca Thompson	Civil Engineer	PennDOT District 11
Leon Jeziorski, P.E.	Professional Traffic Operations Engineer	Michael Baker International
Cindy Bartus, P.E.	Project Manager – Transportation	Michael Baker International
Amy Pinizzotto	Senior Transportation Planner	Michael Baker International
Carrie Machuga, AICP	Planner	McCormick Taylor
Celia Kottakis	Communications Specialist	McCormick Taylor
<b>Public Officials</b>		
Sean Harrington	Legislative Aide for Representative Dan Frankel	PA House, 23rd District
Matt Singer	Chief of Staff to Councilman Corey O'Conner	City of Pittsburgh, Council District 6
Brooke Gwin	Community Affairs Manager to Councilman Corey O'Conner	City of Pittsburgh, Council District 6

Three public officials attended the Public Officials' Briefing and 61 individuals attended at least part of the Virtual Public Meeting. The following meeting summary depicts the information that was presented and the input that was received.

## **WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS, & MICROSOFT TEAMS LOGISTICS:**

Carrie Machuga, AICP, McCormick Taylor Planner, opened both the Public Officials Meeting and Public Meeting to welcome the attendees and explain the format of the meeting, including how to navigate the necessary functions in Microsoft Teams. These functions included how meeting participants could mute and unmute their microphone, and how they could share feedback and asks questions by raising their hand using the Reactions tool or by typing in the Chat box. Carrie also recognized the organizations represented by the participants and/or those who were invited to attend the meeting, including the City of Pittsburgh, PennDOT, the FWH, Michael Baker International, and McCormick Taylor. She then specifically introduced Mike Panzitta, P.E., DOMI Project Manager, before turning the meeting over to Leon Jeziorski, P.E., Michael Baker International, Professional Traffic Operations Engineer, who introduced the project and delved into further detail about preliminary design plans.

## **PROJECT OVERVIEW:**

### **PROJECT AREA & EXISTING CONDITIONS:**

Leon Jeziorski, P.E., began by stating that the Sylvan Avenue Multimodal Project limits lie between Hazelwood Avenue and Homewood Street within the City of Pittsburgh. An overhead aerial view of the area was shown, and Mr. Jeziorski began identifying the area's preexisting conditions which were considered when laying out the project design. He pointed out the bus stops, the Center of Life, the Gladstone School, the sidewalks along both sides of the southern corridor, the Berwick Steps, the Tullymet Steps, the Hazelwood Greenway, and the aged retaining wall and railing.

### **PROJECT GOALS:**

Mr. Jeziorski explained that the project goals were to rehabilitate Sylvan Avenue from Home Rule Street to Hazelwood Avenue by increasing multimodal connections in the neighborhood and encouraging more active transportation in a safe environment.

### **PROJECT SCOPE:**

Mr. Jeziorski outlined the project scope and provided additional information on what the project would entail including:

- A full-depth reconstruction of sidewalks, curbs, and connections to the community through driveway aprons to ensure that all residents and homes are accommodated,
- The installation of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant curb ramps,
- The milling and overlaying of roadway pavement,
- New signage and pavement markings, and
- Streetscaping to enhance the natural beauty throughout the corridor.

### **PROJECT FUNDING & REQUIREMENTS:**

Mr. Jeziorski detailed that the project design will be funded by the City of Pittsburgh and that the construction will be funded federally by a Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC) Livability through Smart Transportation (SMART) Program funds. Use of these funds requires PennDOT oversight.

In terms of funding requirements, Mr. Jeziorski explains that the project must adhere to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). Referencing the NEPA Process graphic on the Funding Requirements PowerPoint slide, he shared that these funding requirements consider the environmental, cultural, economic, and social impacts of the project throughout decision making. He also shared that public involvement, via meetings such as these Public Officials and Public Meetings, gather feedback to guide decision making throughout the project design process as well.

## PRELIMINARY DESIGN PLANS:

### SYLVAN AVENUE SECTION 1:

Mr. Jeziorski pointed out that Section 1 of the project spans from Hazelwood Avenue to the Berwick Steps and showed an overhead aerial view of the section. He stated that the Center of Life, Gladstone School, and curbs will remain as they are; the cartway curb to curb width being 30 feet. He continued to explain that an intersection bulb out would be added to the intersection of Hazelwood Avenue and Sylvan Avenue to draw attention to pedestrians crossing while shortening the crossing width. A raised pedestrian crosswalk will also be added at the Berwick Steps, however the parking in the western part of the corridor between the Center of Life and Berwick Steps will remain as is. ***Note: This was the discussion at the meeting. The project team has since discussed parking impacts and will be investigating a street design that includes parking on both sides on Sylvan Avenue within Section 1.***

### SYLVAN AVENUE SECTION 2:

Mr. Jeziorski noted that Section 2 of the project spans from the Berwick Steps to the Tullymet Steps and showed an overhead aerial view of the section. He specified that the existing cartway curb to curb length of 22 feet will be maintained. Pavement markings on the roadway will be added to draw attention to pedestrians and bicyclists, and sharrows will be used to point in the direction of bicycle traffic flow, which was reflected in the graphic shown on the associated PowerPoint slide. A mid-block, raised pedestrian crossing will be introduced near the Tullymet Steps as well.

### SYLVAN AVENUE SECTION 3:

Mr. Jeziorski detailed that Section 3 of the project spans from the Tullymet Steps to Home Rule Street, noting that this area transitioned from residential spaces to a parklike corridor, while showing an overhead aerial view of the section. Within this section, the project will introduce five-foot advisory bike lanes on each side of the road with dashed pavement markings, which were detailed in a graphic on the associated PowerPoint slide. As motor vehicles approach each other, they will be able to slide into the designated bike lanes as necessary to pass. Adjacent to Sylvan Avenue, there will be landscaping to provide park-like beauty and separate pedestrians from the aged retaining wall and railing. There will also be a parking area behind the curb line of the advisory bike lanes, near the existing community garden. This parking area is currently designed to be 60-feet long to accommodate three vehicles. Mr. Jeziorski noted that there is space for adjustment in this parking area, and encouraged feedback, specifically through the comment form, if community members think it should or should not be expanded to fit more than three vehicles. ***Note: This was the discussion at the meeting. The project team has since discussed continuing a similar street configuration to Section 2 through to Section 3 (parking on one side).***

### ADVISORY BIKE LANES:

Mr. Jeziorski gave further detail about advisory bike lanes, referencing a map of the US and pointing out areas where they are already in use; specifically mentioning sites in the Ohio and Washington D.C. areas. He then showed a short video (watch the video [here](#)) that outlined the specifics of advisory bike lanes and how they successfully function to provide a safe area for cars and bikes to travel. These advisory bike lanes were within experimental process with the FHWA, but that process has come to an end. It is still to be determined whether the FHWA will approve advisory bike lanes for permanent inclusion in the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). Mr. Jeziorski noted that advisory bike lanes were recently approved within the City of Portland.

### ACCESS & TRAFFIC CONTROL:

Mr. Jeziorski expressed that when construction begins, it will advance one lane at a time and that no total closures of Sylvan Avenue are anticipated. All improvements will be within the City's right of way, and access to all homes will be maintained throughout the construction process. Nighttime construction is not anticipated.

### SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS:

Mr. Jeziorski explained that Sylvan Avenue will be designated as a Neighborway street and shared the following link on the PowerPoint slide for additional information: <https://pittsburghpa.gov/domi/neighborways>. He went on to explain that the proposed updates to the sidewalks and curb ramps will improve pedestrian safety and meet ADA standards. The

mid-block crossings and raised crosswalks at the Berwick and Tullymet Steps will also serve as a traffic calming feature. The bicycle improvements, including sharrows, advisory bike lanes, and appropriate signage, will allow for the new street design to be a slow, shared space. Current lighting will also be upgraded to improve corridor lighting and increase safety at night.

#### **PARKING CONSIDERATIONS:**

Mr. Jeziorski explained that there are no permanent parking impacts expected for this project. All permissible parking along the western side of the corridor in Section 2 of the project will remain as is. ***Note: This was the discussion at the meeting. The project team has since discussed parking impacts and will be investigating a street design that includes parking on both sides on Sylvan Avenue within Section 1, as well as parking on one side in Section 3.***

#### **LANDSCAPE/STREETSCAPE DESIGN:**

Mr. Jeziorski highlighted the fact that landscaping would be incorporated to bring trees to the streets along the corridor. These street trees will be in the southern portion of the corridor by the Center of Life and nearby residential areas. Landscaping will also be incorporated at the raised pedestrian crossings and adjacent to the aged retaining wall and railing.

#### **ANTICIPATED PROJECT SCHEDULE:**

Mr. Jeziorski passed the meeting on to Michael Panzitta, P.E., who outlined the anticipated project schedule as follows:

The project kicked off earlier this year in January 2022, with the first Public Meeting being held today to discuss the preliminary design of the project. Next, the project will seek environmental clearance during the summer of 2022, and move to final design by the fall of 2022. In the Fall of 2022, there will be a second Public Meeting to present a more developed plan and specific accommodations. The third and final Public Meeting will be conducted pre-construction to display the construction plans. Finally, construction of the project is scheduled to begin in the spring of 2023 and finish in the fall of 2023.

#### **CONTACT INFORMATION:**

Mr. Panzitta stated that the PowerPoint slides from this presentation and other project materials would be posted on the [Engage PGH webpage](#), and encouraged community members to fill out the [comment form](#), or reach out to him personally (via the contact information below) with any additional thoughts or feedback.

Michael E. Panzitta, PE | Project Manager

City of Pittsburgh | DOMI

412-255-8850 | [Sylvan-Trail@pittsburghpa.gov](mailto:Sylvan-Trail@pittsburghpa.gov)

#### **QUESTIONS & ANSWERS:**

The following summarizes the questions and answers which were discussed after the public presentation:

##### **PROJECT SCOPE:**

**Q: Will this project be repairing the city steps? Is there any chance the steps will be updated with bike channels or runnels?**

**A:** The city steps are not part of the scope for this project, so it will not include any construction, updates, or changes to the steps. The constraints of the project grant will not permit the project to extend to the steps.

**Q: What is the vision for connecting this project to existing bike infrastructure such as Greenfield Avenue and the Eliza Furnace Trail, and are these connections safe?**

**A:** This project is focused on connecting bikers and pedestrians to the Sylvan Trail, for which a PennDOT Multimodal Fund grant was recently obtained. This is part of the DOMI Bike Plus Plan to connect bike facilities as part of a network. As future funding is available, more safe bike connections will be built.

**Q: Will this project widen the street or impact properties?**

**A:** This project will not widen the street or take any private property. It will focus on repaving the street and rebuilding the sidewalks and curbs where they are now.

**Q: What is happening in front of the community garden?**

**A:** The way(s) in which this project will impact the community garden are very flexible this early in the design process. Before finalizing anything, community needs for that specific area must be identified. (A meeting attendee provided the name of the person whom DOMI can contact to discuss the community garden.)

**Q: Will there be a signal constructed at Sylvan Avenue and Hazelwood Avenue?**

**A:** This project will not include any signal construction. If there are safety concerns at this intersection, please explain your experiences in the [comment form](#) so that these concerns can be addressed as project design advances.

**Q: Does the project plan include extending any streets to connect to Sylvan Avenue for better access?**

**A:** No, that is outside the scope of this project.

**Q: Was dark sky compliant lighting considered in the area and other protected sites within the Hazelwood Greenway?**

**A:** This project will not go outside the street right of way or impact the Greenway. All landscaping features will work to reflect the character of the greenway, and all lighting will be compliant with the city's requirements.

**Q: What does the end of the project near the future Sylvan Avenue Trail look like? Is it safe?**

**A:** This project focuses solely on the portion of Sylvan Avenue that will attach to the Sylvan Avenue Trail. The area in question will have its own public outreach process since it is a separate project.

**Q: How does this project meet the goals set forth in the Climate Action Plan?**

**A:** The focus of this project is to improve bicycle and pedestrian traffic and encourage use of alternate transportation modes.

**Q: What kind of 'yield to pedestrian signage' will be installed at the mid-block crossings?**

**A:** Currently, the team expects to use fluorescent green signage with a pedestrian and an arrow that points down at the crossing. This project will add advanced signage and pavement markings to alert drivers that the mid-block crossing is approaching. The mid-block crossing itself will be made of concrete and stand out in color.

#### **RESIDENTIAL CONCERNS:**

**Q: How will residents safely enter and exit their driveways?**

**A:** The project will reconstruct driveways and walkways where they connect to the new roadway and sidewalk to ensure that people have safe access to their property and the road.

**Q: Will anything be done to residents' driveways?**

**A:** All driveway connection will be in equal or better their current shape after construction.

**Q: Will the street in Section 1 of the project be wide enough for residents to park in front of their houses or will bike lanes interfere?**

**A:** All parking will remain as it is today. Section 1 of this project will include sharrows symbols, not actual bike lanes. The bike traffic will be in the street. After the meeting, the team agreed to investigate designing the street as a two-way yield street in Section 1 with parking on both sides and Neighborway signage and markings. ***Note: This was the discussion at the meeting. The project team has since discussed parking impacts and will be investigating a street design that includes parking on both sides on Sylvan Avenue within Section 1 and Neighborway treatments for bicycle safety.***

#### **LANDSCAPING:**

**Q: Are the tree boxes going to include swales?**

**A:** This project will only include standard tree pits.

**Q: Will this project repair the Hazelwood Greenway?**

**A:** No, this project is only focused on the existing street. The corridor will be landscaped, and plantings will be added.

#### **CAPITAL FUNDING:**

**Q: Are there more details available on the grant funding and where it came from?**

**A:** The SMART funds for this project were applied for in 2018 as part of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission's Livability Through Smart Transportation (SMART) Grant Program. The City received \$1 million to use toward the Sylvan Avenue trail connection, and it was decided that due to the funding requirements it would be best spent on the on-road portion of the trail. The currently closed portion of Sylvan Avenue received \$1.76 million in funding from the state Multimodal Transportation fund earlier in 2022.

**Q: How can the City or the community address the immediate issues in the community such as repairing the city steps?**

**A:** This project area is included in the [Greater Hazelwood Neighborhood Plan](#) and other local planning efforts. As funding becomes available, DOMI enacts projects with appropriate scopes, in accordance with the specifications of the funding including usage and implementation. The community is encouraged to advocate for their needs in addition to more funding, more staff, and more projects.

#### **GENERAL:**

**Q: Is this the very beginning of the project?**

**A:** Yes, this project is in the early design process. We will have two more public meetings (three total) to have a continued discussion on its progress.

**Q: Is it possible to share a recording of the public meeting?**

**A:** Yes, the recording of the public meeting on April 26<sup>th</sup> can be found [here](#).

**Q: Do you have a history of neighborhood requests? Are these requests considered when embarking on a new project?**

**A:** Yes, contributions to the comment form are encouraged to continue building knowledge of the community's needs. Although this project cannot promise to fix all the issues identified in Hazelwood, if awareness is drawn to a specific concern, solutions can be considered during the project design process.

**Q: Have discussions with DOMI about previous project ideas, such as the Frazier St. bicycle connection, continued?**

**A:** Yes, DOMI is designing a shared use path on Frazier St. as part of another project and is continuously seeking funding for identified projects.

**Q: Why has this project been made a priority? What was the motivation and decision-making process to do so?**

**A:** The intent of this project is to connect bicyclists and pedestrians between the future Sylvan Avenue Trail and the greater Hazelwood neighborhood. Implementation of this project was identified through previous planning efforts.

**Q: How can we find out more about why this plan is going forward if it does not promote the priorities in the Hazelwood Neighborhood Plan?**

**A:** The [Greater Hazelwood Neighborhood Plan](#) identifies bicycle facilities along the Hazelwood Greenway as a way to connect the community. This project is going forward in support of this.

## COMMENTS

### TRAFFIC CALMING

- There is an immediate need for traffic calming on Hazelwood Avenue.
- Vehicles travel at dangerous speeds in this area.
- People drive four-wheelers and ATVs at dangerous speeds from the abandoned section of Sylvan Avenue into the residential part of Sylvan.

### PARKING

- Property owners barely have enough room to park in front of their houses in the current road conditions.
- It is challenging to turn in and out of Sylvan Avenue and Hazelwood Avenue with cars parked on both sides of the street.
- A raised crosswalk may make it even more difficult to turn onto and from Sylvan Avenue and Hazelwood Avenue.

### BIKE LANES

- Advisory bike lanes are good for streets with low traffic. From the standpoint of a driver in Pittsburgh, we already have the culture to adopt advisory bike lanes here since they would be similar to driving on narrow streets with cars parked on both sides.
- The bike lane ends at an intersection and does not allow for a safe turn.

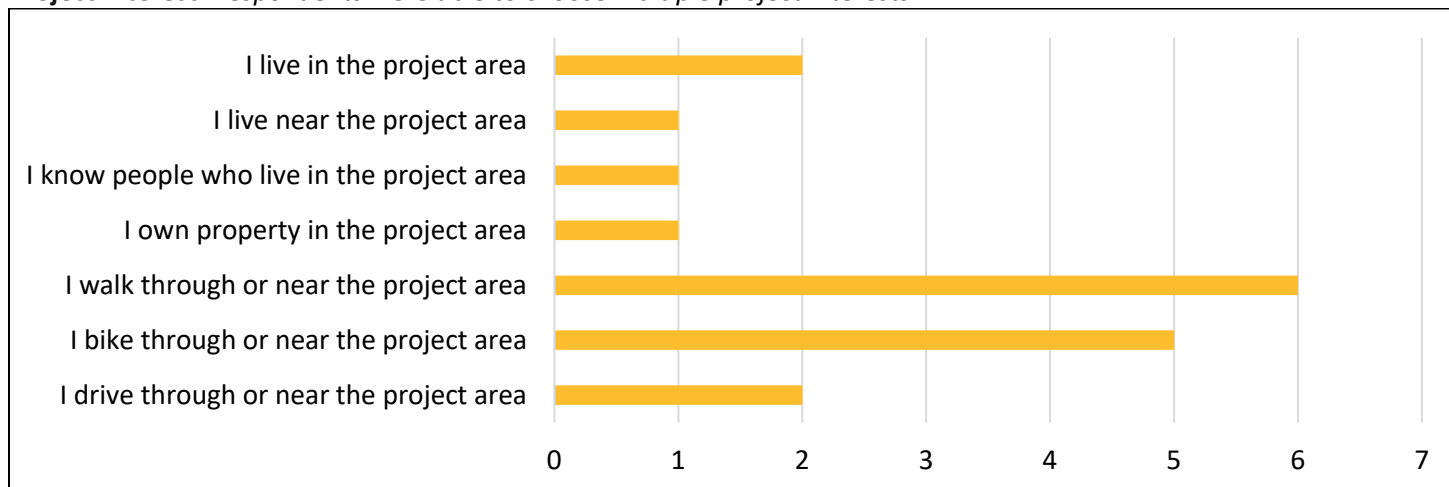
# PUBLIC COMMENT FORM SUMMARY

A web-based comment form was made available on the [Engage PGH website](#), associated with the April 2022 Sylvan Avenue Multimodal Project virtual public meeting. This summary is an overview of the feedback collected. Seven comment forms were submitted during the public comment period from April 26 to May 27. Not all respondents answered every question, and for some multiple-choice questions, respondents were able to choose multiple choices.

## QUESTIONS & RESPONSES

### Question 1:

**Project Interest:** *Respondents were able to choose multiple project interests.*



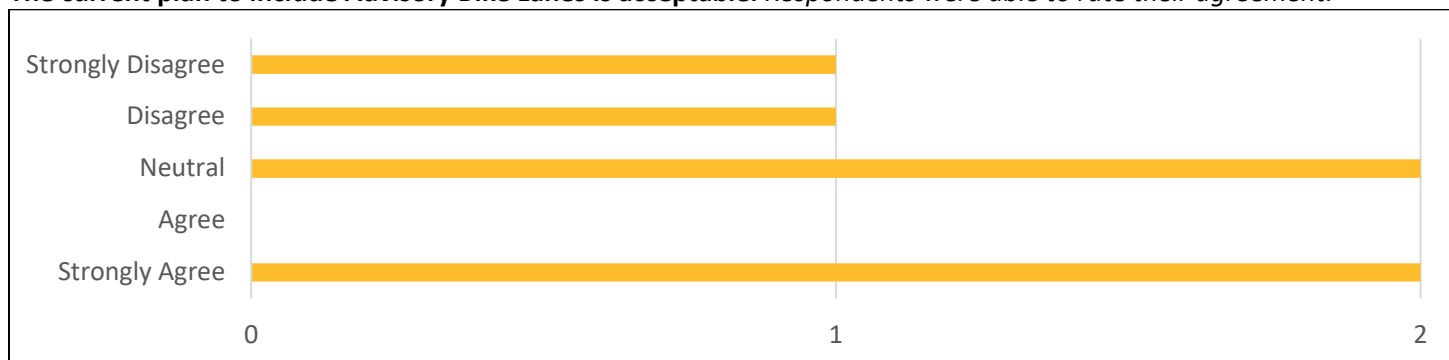
### Question 2:

**To your knowledge, are there any environmentally sensitive resources (i.e., socioeconomic resources, natural resources, public facilities, etc.) within the project area of which the project team should be made aware?**

- Public step improvements
  - Stagnant water and debris
- Hazelwood Greenway
  - Area runoff
  - In need of retaining wall or proper drainage where Sylvan Ave. meets Home Rule St.
- Be mindful of wildlife

### Question 3:

**The current plan to include Advisory Bike Lanes is acceptable.** *Respondents were able to rate their agreement.*



#### Additional Concerns:

- Condition of City Steps
- Need for Retaining Wall & Railing
- Speeding on Hazelwood & Greenfield
- Removal of Residential Parking
- Connection to the Eliza Furnace Trail

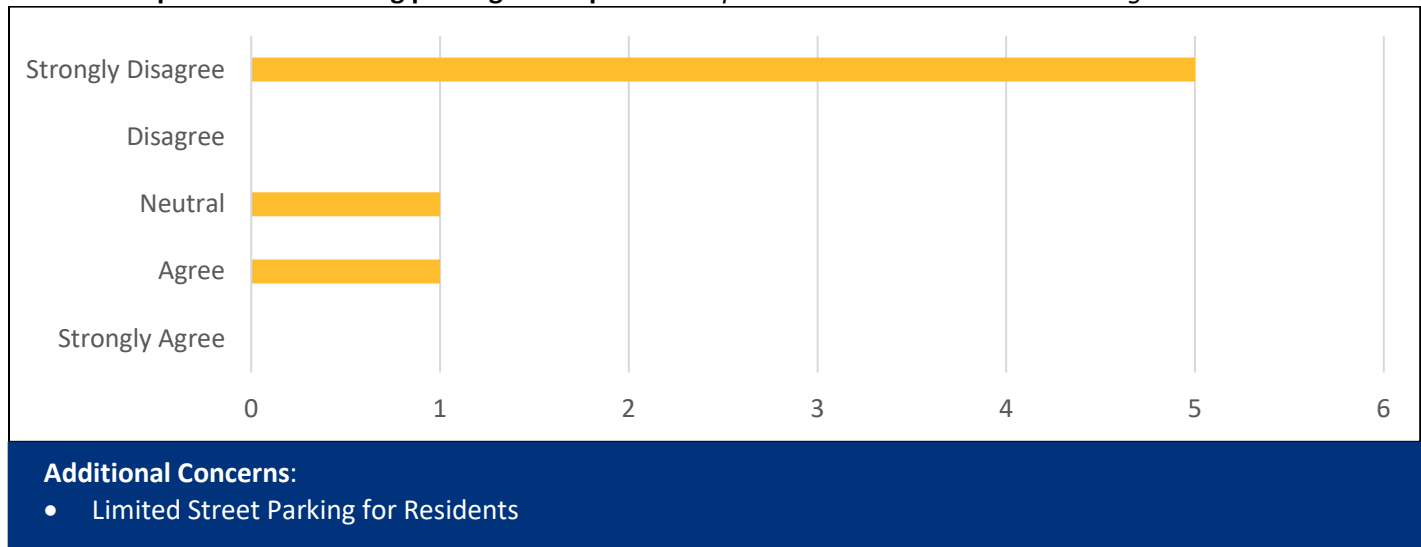
#### Preferences:

- Protected Bike Lanes



#### Question 4:

The current plan for maintaining parking is acceptable. Respondents were able to rate their agreement.



#### Question 5:

Please provide any additional explanation of your responses above or other comments or questions for the project team.

- Prioritize public safety
  - Speeding on Greenfield Ave.
  - Traffic calming needed in other areas of the neighborhood
- Public funding information
  - Request for public review of grant application information (grant name, filing information, approval status, etc.)
- Public step repair
- Improve Hazelwood Greenway and surrounding trails

### PUBLIC CONCERNS ADDRESSED

- **Traffic calming** will not be immediately addressed by this project but will become a focus for future funding since a need for it has been established.
- **The public steps, retaining wall, and railing** are not part of the scope for this project. This project will not include any construction, updates, or changes to them due to grant limitations; additional funding will need to be secured to repair these items.
- This project is part of the DOMI Bike Plus Plan to connect bike facilities and form a network. As future funding becomes available, more safe bike connections to the **Eliza Furnace Trail** and the **Hazelwood Greenway** will be built.
- **Residential parking** will remain as it is today. All driveway connections will also be in equal or better shape after construction. **Note: changes to parking noted above are being considered following post-meeting conversations.**
- The **capital funding** for this project was applied for in 2018 as part of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission's Livability Through Smart Transportation (SMART) Grant Program. The City received \$1 million to use toward the Sylvan Avenue trail connection, and it was decided that due to the funding requirements it would be best spent on the on-road portion of the trail. The currently closed portion of Sylvan Avenue received \$1.76 million in funding from the state Multimodal Transportation fund earlier in 2022.