

# W. CHESTNUT STREET STUDY AREA AT A GLANCE

---

The 1.5-mile W. Chestnut Street (including Merrick Road) corridor stretches from the northwestern terminus of Merrick Road to just beyond the E. Chestnut Street intersection with Black River Boulevard (NYS Route 46) on the southeast.

---



## POPULATION

**2,345 residents** live in the W. Chestnut Street Study area

---



## RESIDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Median age: **50.6 years**

Median household income: **\$71,379**

Mobility Impaired: **20.8%**

Residents with no vehicles: **9.3%**

Residents that are office workers: **72.0%**

---



## GEOGRAPHIC AREA

The study area encompasses W. Chestnut Street (including E. Chestnut Street) from just east of Black River Boulevard intersection to the Turin Road intersection, and continues to the end of Merrick Road.

---



## STUDY AREA CONCERNS

Traffic congestion

Pedestrian safety

Bicycle safety

Truck traffic

Lack of access to nearby trail systems

# W. CHESTNUT STREET STUDY PROCESS

---

## Phase 1: FALL 2022 & WINTER 2023

---



### PURPOSE

To foster improved connectivity, safety, and increase efficient transportation movement within the study area. Assess the conditions and begin the public engagement feedback loop.

---



### TECHNICAL ACTIVITIES

- Various types of data collection — along with formal and informal observations — to measure and assess speed, crash types, traffic counts, truck traffic, health impacts, utilities, pedestrian and cyclist activity, development impacts, environmental conditions, and air quality
  - Analysis and summary of the current status of the study area to be incorporated and serve as the baseline data
- 



### PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

- Public Survey #1 focused on identifying concerns and opportunities; with 353 responses
- Steering Committee formed with local elected and government staff to inform of local concerns
- Door-to-door advertisement and direct mailing to inform people of the study
- Public Meeting #1, with 50 attendees, where preliminary technical and survey data was shared

## **W. Chestnut Street Survey Discussion Appendix**

A community feedback survey was created on January 24, 2023, to get the opinion of residents, commuters, and regular users of the W. Chestnut Street corridor. The purpose of the survey was to collect the opinions from the public to better identify the issues prevalent along W. Chestnut Street, understand the transportation priorities of the community, and incorporate the community's vision of a safer and more accessible roadway into the study. The survey received responses between February 5<sup>th</sup> and March 22<sup>nd</sup>, approximately two weeks following the first W. Chestnut Street public meeting.

The survey received a total of 353 responses. Responses were collected using a variety of public outreach tools such as traditional mailings and social media. A postcard with a QR code and web link to the online survey was sent to 217 unique mailing addresses within or directly adjacent to the project area. In-person outreach efforts were conducted in the project area with flyers containing a web link to the survey distributed to businesses and commercial residential locations. The survey was widely distributed by local elected officials, regional transportation partners, several paper and online news agencies, and through private social media posts.

### *Characteristics of W. Chestnut Street Travelers*

A review of the survey results found that the age of the respondents tended to trend evenly among those over the age of 35 years old. The age group providing the highest frequency of responses to the survey was those 35-44 years old (21.3%). This is followed closely by individuals over the age of 65 years old (20.4%), 35-44 years old (18.6%), and 55-64 years old (18.6%). By comparison, just 21% of all survey respondents were under the age of 35.

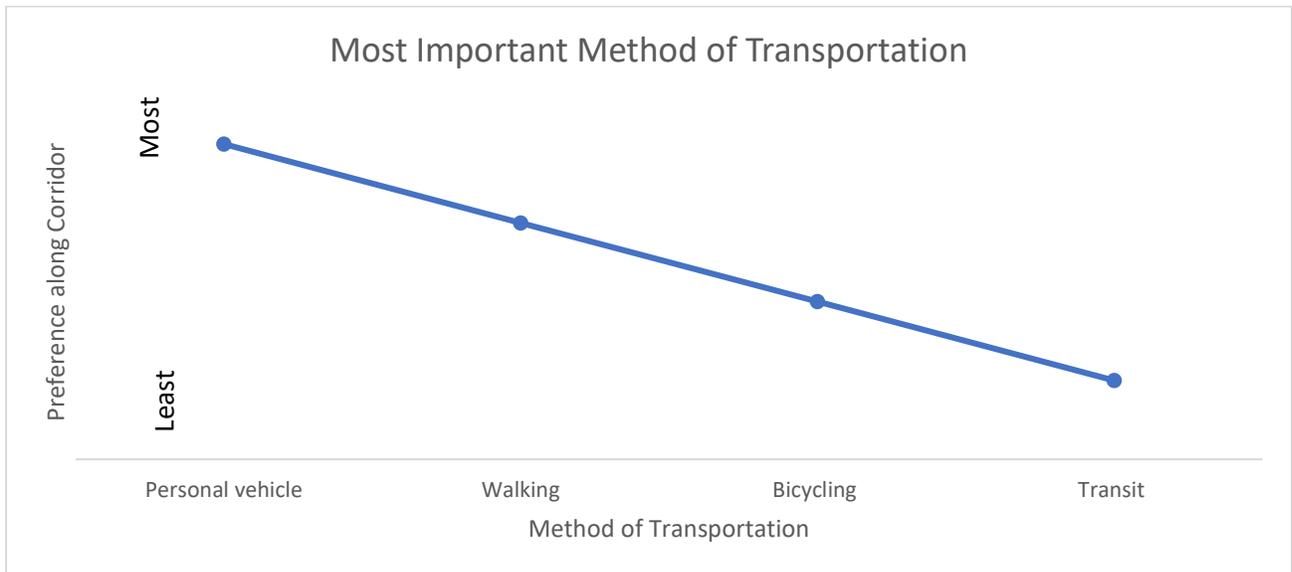
Most (73.6%) of the respondents of W. Chestnut Street have been regular users of the corridor for over 11 years. A much smaller share of respondents (13%) have used the corridor for between 6 and 10 years, while a similar share (13.4%) is relatively new users of the corridor for less than 5 years. These figures represent a total of 335 (94.9%) respondents who have indicated they are regular users of the W. Chestnut Street corridor.

### *Existing Preferences and Uses of W. Chestnut Street Travelers*

Respondents indicated in the survey that under the current roadway conditions, there is a large preference for the use of vehicles to navigate W. Chestnut Street. Just over half (52.6%) of respondents drive their single-occupant vehicle more than five days a week, with another 23.3% driving their vehicle 3-4 days per week. In total, 95.9% of respondents chose to drive a vehicle through W. Chestnut Street at least once throughout the week. Regarding shared motorized vehicle experiences, 59.1% of respondents chose to carpool at least once a week, while only 2.5% utilized the bus for transportation. The preference for vehicles on W. Chestnut Street under the current roadway conditions is reaffirmed in other survey questions where

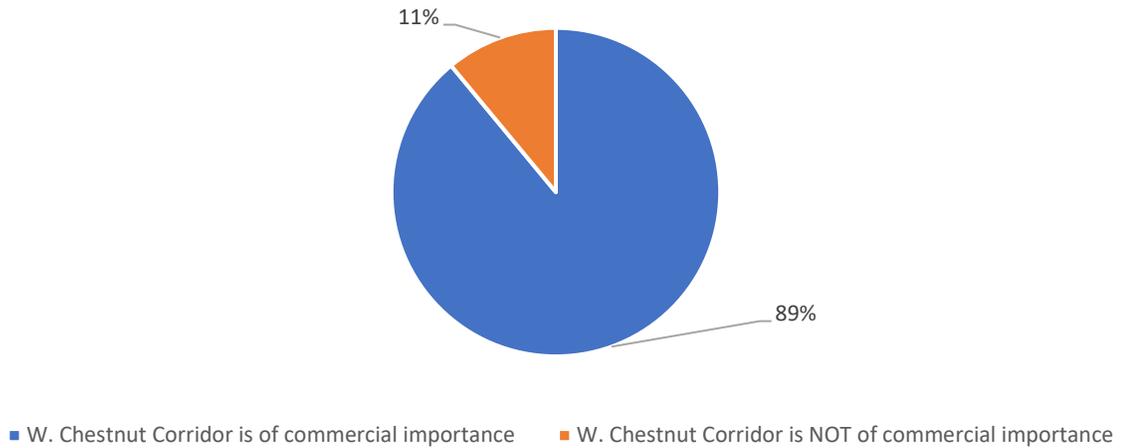
most respondents (82.7%) indicate their personal vehicle is the most important transportation method to them for use on W. Chestnut Street.

Compared to the usage of motorized vehicles, there is some, though considerably less, preference for walking or alternative forms of transportation under the current roadway conditions. Respondents reported walking or utilizing a mobility assisting device along the corridor at least once per week 20.8% of the time, while 15.8% of respondents utilized a bicycle or scooter at least once a week. Among those who walked or utilized a bicycle, the majority of respondents reported using this method of transportation just one or two days per week. Only 7.4% of respondents later in the survey stated that walking was personally the most important transportation method along W. Chestnut Street. Comments left in this section emphasized the importance of ensuring all modes of transportation were made safe and that sidewalks along W. Chestnut Street would improve pedestrian safety.



The large majority of respondents (88.9%) highlighted W. Chestnut Street's commercial importance by indicating that their most frequented reason for using W. Chestnut Street was to run errands such as grocery shopping, access the pharmacy, or complete other necessary tasks. The percentage of respondents who use the corridor for other commercial uses drops by almost 30% for purposes such as going to a restaurant (59.4%) or going retail shopping (57.2%). A large number of respondents also indicated they use the corridor for non-commercial purposes such as visiting family and friends (53.5%) or commuting to work (52.4%), which highlights the mixed usage of the corridor as both a major residential and business thoroughfare. The smallest usage of W. Chestnut Street was for the purposes of commuting to school (15.5%).

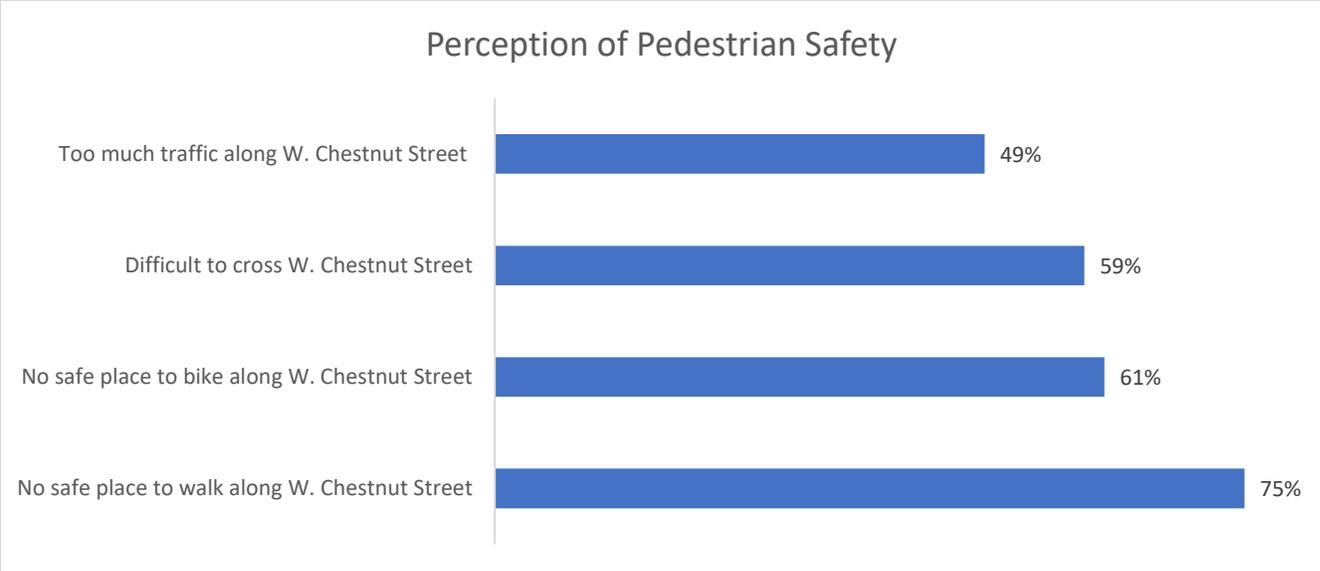
## Commercial Importance of W. Chestnut Street Corridor



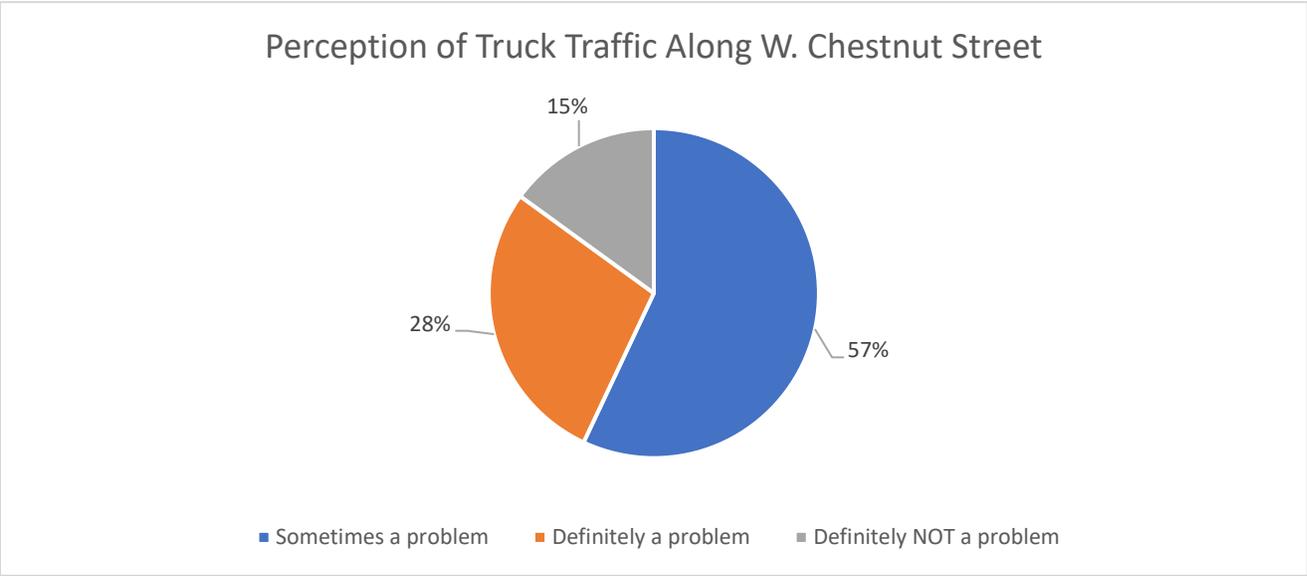
### *Concerns of W. Chestnut Street Travelers*

Survey respondents traveling on W. Chestnut Street have a shared perception that the roadway is generally unsafe for pedestrians and bicyclists. When asked how safe users of W. Chestnut Street would feel if walking or biking on the corridor, the level of safety was ranked at a 3 out of 10. On a separate question respondents were asked to rate pedestrian mobility/walkability in the W. Chestnut Street Neighborhood from one (very difficult to walk/access) to four (extremely walkable/accessible), respondents provided an average of a 1.5 rating. More specifically, respondents found schools to be the least accessible (46.7%) from W. Chestnut Street, followed by work (40.4%), and stores (33.5%) from a pedestrian and bicyclist perspective. It should be noted that no more than 10% of respondents labeled any of the above-mentioned locations, in addition to parks or other neighborhoods, as "extremely accessible".

Regarding traffic concerns more broadly, there were several potential issues respondents felt accurately applied to W. Chestnut Street. Chief among these concerns was that there was no place to walk safely (75.4%), followed by having no place to safely bike across the road (61.2%), difficulty crossing the road (59%), and there being too much traffic (49.3%). Inversely, just 16% of respondents indicated there was no place they wanted to go within walking distance, suggesting that W. Chestnut Street hosts a wide variety of commercial and recreational venues, but that such locations may be difficult to access.



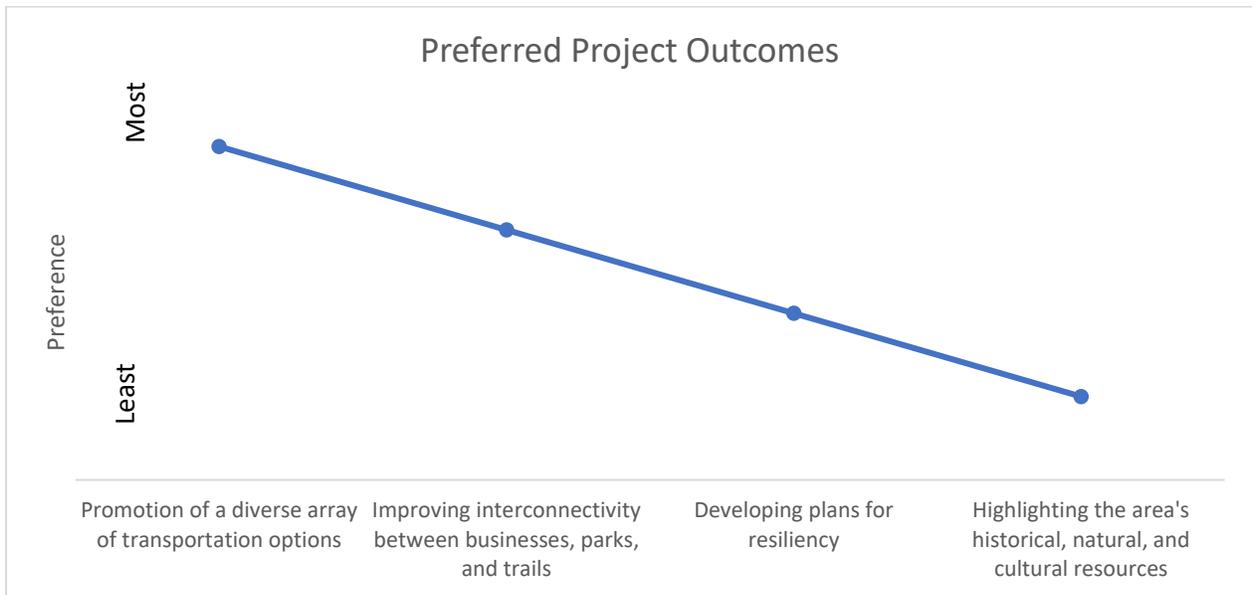
The survey also touched on the topic of commercial truck traffic, as this was frequently discussed by residents in the community and City stakeholders alike as a potential traffic safety concern. When asked if respondents thought commercial truck traffic was a problem along W. Chestnut Street, 77.5% of users responded it was a problem at least some of the time. Over a quarter of residents (28.4%) thought truck traffic was definitely a problem, while just 15% felt it was definitely not a problem.



***Suggested Improvements and Outcomes from W. Chestnut Street Travelers***

Respondents were provided an opportunity to rank several high-level conceptual project outcomes on a scale of one to five, with one being the most important outcome. The possible outcomes include: the promotion of a diverse array of transportation options, providing a sense of place, improving interconnectivity between nearby community assets, creating additional

climate and flood resiliency measures, and highlighting the area’s historical and cultural resources. The most frequently number one ranked outcome was the promotion of a diverse array of transportation options that are safe for bicycling, walking, running, public transit, and/or vehicles (56.1%). This is followed by improving interconnectivity between businesses, parks, and trails (42.5%) in rank two, and developing plans for resiliency (29.5%) in rank three. The least important outcome, with 62.16% of respondents ranking it at a five, was highlighting the area’s historical, natural, and cultural resources.



When prompted to prioritize the specific improvements respondents would like to see along W. Chestnut Street, there was a notable preference for pedestrian-accommodating roadway improvements. Specifically, respondents were most interested in sidewalks (83%), intersection improvements (67.8%), and wide road shoulders (48.5%). There was a lesser degree of, though still notable, enthusiasm regarding bicycle infrastructure, as 41.8% of respondents wanted to see bike lanes added. Placemaking elements such as street trees (25.2%), planters or hanging flowers (18.5%), decorative banners (11.5%), and gateway signage (11.2%) were the least prioritized element for the corridor. Additional lighting including pedestrian-scale lighting (27.8%) and road-scale lighting (21.5%) also received some, though comparatively little, enthusiasm. Finally, bio-retention infrastructure and rain gardens were a priority by just 21.5% of respondents.

Finally, respondents were provided a list of less tangible improvements that could be made to the W. Chestnut Street neighborhood and were prompted to choose what improvements they would like to see made. The most preferred improvement was to decrease traffic congestion in the neighborhood (63%). This is followed by respondents who want to see a reduction in the number of trucks traveling through the area (48.1%). Next, returning to the theme of pedestrian connectivity, there was some level of interest in accessibility and pedestrian improvements such as improved connectivity between parks and trails (44.3%) and the addition

of non-vehicular transportation options (34.7%). As evident from the responses to other questions, there was a comparative lack of interest in placemaking components such as street trees (25.6%), additional public recreational spaces (23.3%), and more event spaces (10.3%), as well as a lack of interest in increasing bus transit options (14.5%).

# W. CHESTNUT STREET STUDY PROCESS

---

## Phase 2: WINTER & SPRING 2023

---



### PURPOSE

To present possible design concepts, based on technical data and public comments from Phase 1. Obtain preferences and feedback from the public to refine the concepts and elements that will be progressed to the draft plan.

---



### TECHNICAL ACTIVITIES

- Use technical data analysis and community input from Phase 1, along with industry best practices, to develop preliminary concepts and define key elements for W. Chestnut Street
  - Propose possible site-specific safety improvements, based on residents' concerns
  - Summarize technical information about the corridor and design concepts
- 



### PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

- Public Survey #2 focused on visual and amenity preferences; with 290 responses
- Business stakeholders were identified and all contacted; short interviews were administered to 11 willing participants
- Public Meeting #2, held at two different times in the corridor, for people to talk with HOCTC about design concepts and elements

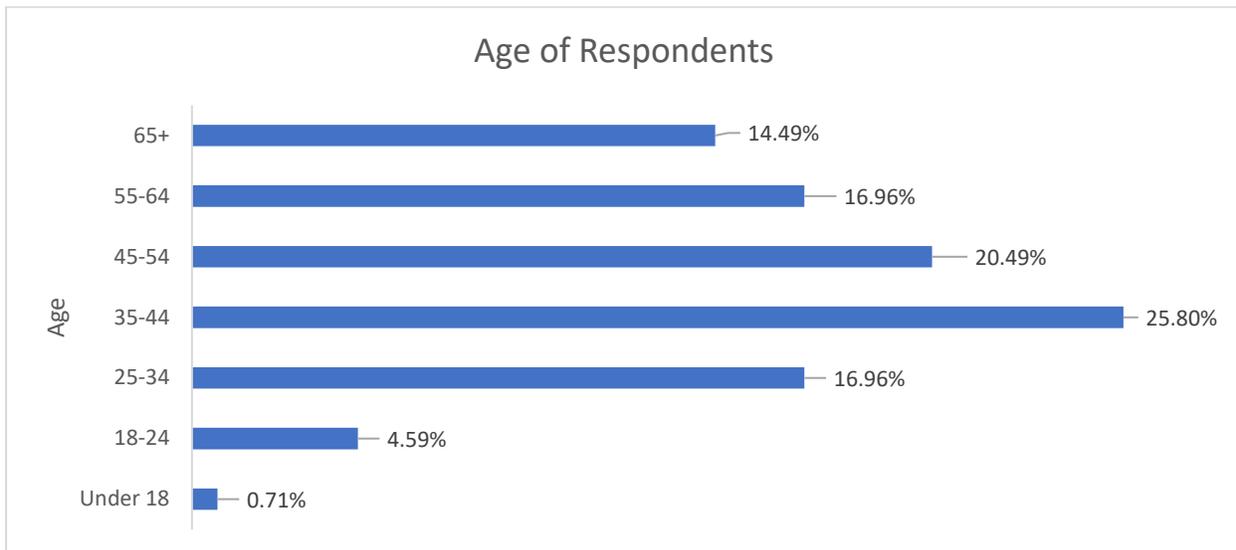
## W. Chestnut Street Visual Survey Discussion Appendix

A visual preference survey was released on May 9, 2023, to get the opinion of residents, commuters, and regular users of the W. Chestnut Street corridor regarding how they would like to improve their community's safety and aesthetic. The purpose of this survey was to ask respondents to rate their preferences on a series of roadway elements that could impact the future physical design concepts for W. Chestnut Street.

The survey received a total of 290 responses during the time it was open. The survey was open from May 9 until June 8, 2023. The survey was distributed at the second public meeting on May 23, 2023, and left open for two weeks following the meeting to allow for community participation. Responses were garnered using a variety of public outreach tools such as traditional mailings and social media. A postcard with a QR code and web link to the online survey was sent to 217 unique mailing addresses within or directly adjacent to the project area. The survey was widely distributed by local elected officials, regional transportation partners, several paper and online news agencies, and through private social media posts.

### *Characteristics of W. Chestnut Street Travelers*

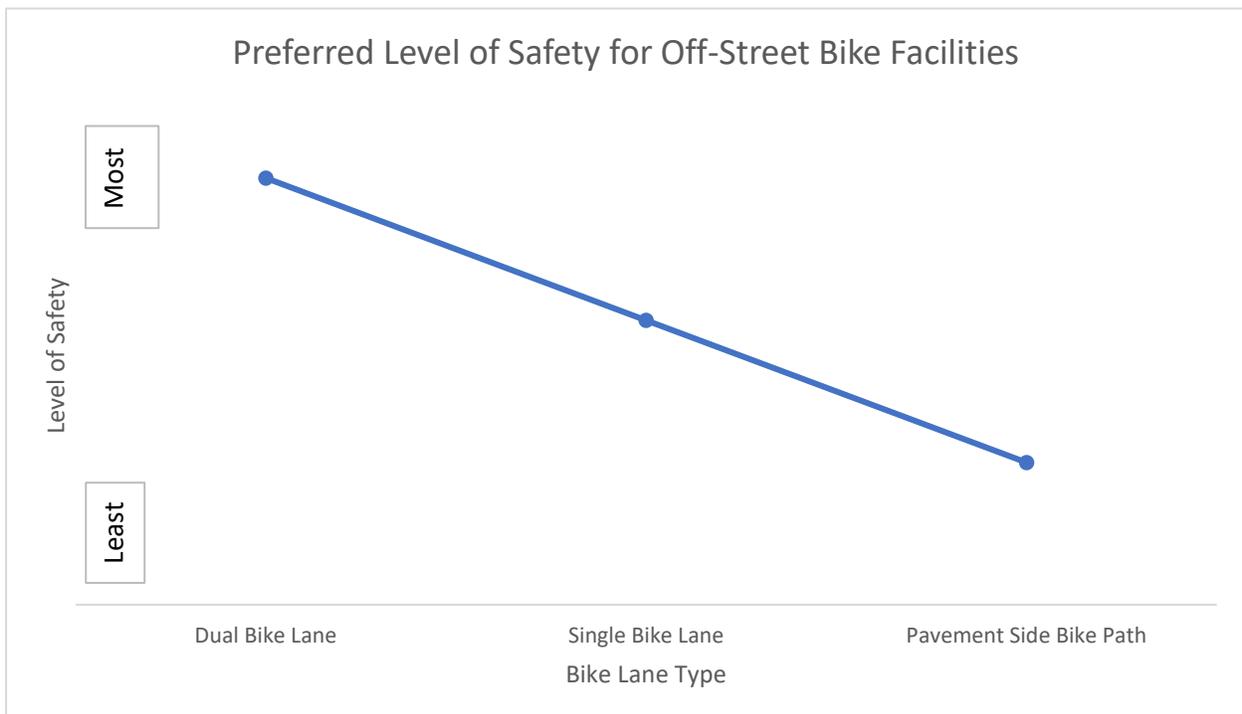
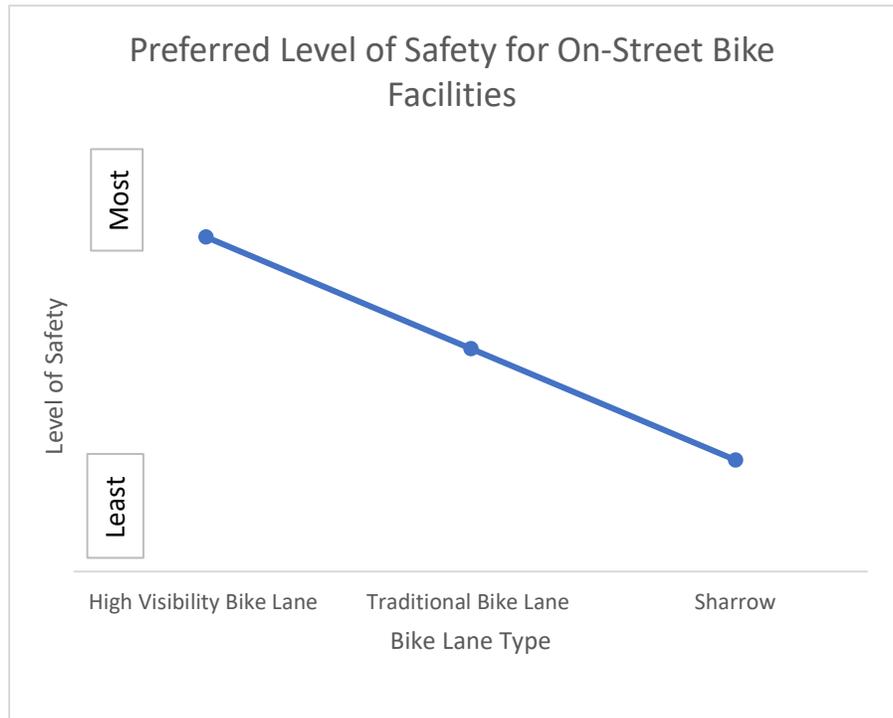
A review of the survey results found that the majority of respondents tended to be over the age of 35. The age group providing the highest frequency of responses to the survey was those 35-44 years old (25.8%), followed by those 45-54 years old (20.5%). The third largest sector of respondents included those ranging from 25-34 years old (17.0%) and 55-64 years old (17.0%). 14.5% of respondents were 65+ years old, while 5.3% were under the age of 24. Approximately 97% of respondents reported themselves regularly utilizing W. Chestnut Street for daily transportation.



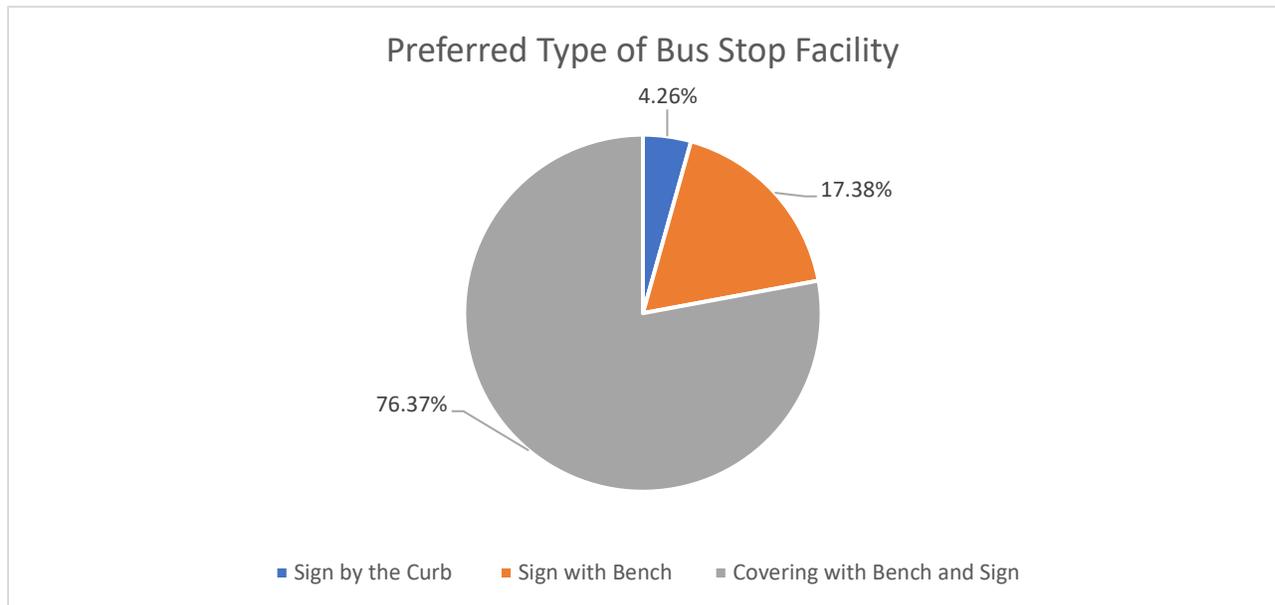
### Existing Preferences and Uses of W. Chestnut Street Travelers

When participants were asked if they felt safe enough to ride their bicycles along the corridor, only 8.4% responded affirmatively. It was clear that respondents preferred separated bike lanes with high visibility

markings as opposed to a sharrow or a bike lane delineated with only a white line. When asked to rank these options, 87.0% of respondents chose a high visibility bike lane as their first choice, 86.0% chose a traditional bike lane as their second choice, and nearly 90.0% of respondents chose a sharrow as their least favorable option. When asked about the perception of safety regarding different off-



street bicycle facilitates, 45.5% ranked a marked bi-directional bicycle lane as safest while 43.9% of participants ranked a delineated single lane as safest. Only 26% of participants indicated that the pavement side path for bicycles and pedestrians was a safe option. When asked about what would best encourage an increase in usage of public transit, participants generally agreed that a bus stop with a covering was the best option (78.4%), while 17.4% preferred a bench with a bus stop sign, and 4.4% preferred only a bus stop sign in the grass by the curb and no amenities.



Participants were asked to evaluate their comfort level when crossing different intersection configurations from a scale of 1 to 10, 1 being the least comfortable and 10 being the most. When asked about a more comprehensive four-way intersection with protected bike lanes as well as both pedestrian and bike crosswalks, the average comfort level was rated to be a 3. The intersection design included bump outs and detailed crossing delineations, which may be unfamiliar concepts to residents as they are not as common in the area. This image showed a higher level of vehicular traffic and did not include turning lanes.

When asked about a mini-roundabout with no designated bike lanes or crosswalks, the average comfort level was also rated to be a 3. This could be partially due to the lack of safety features, including lane markings and protection for bicyclists.

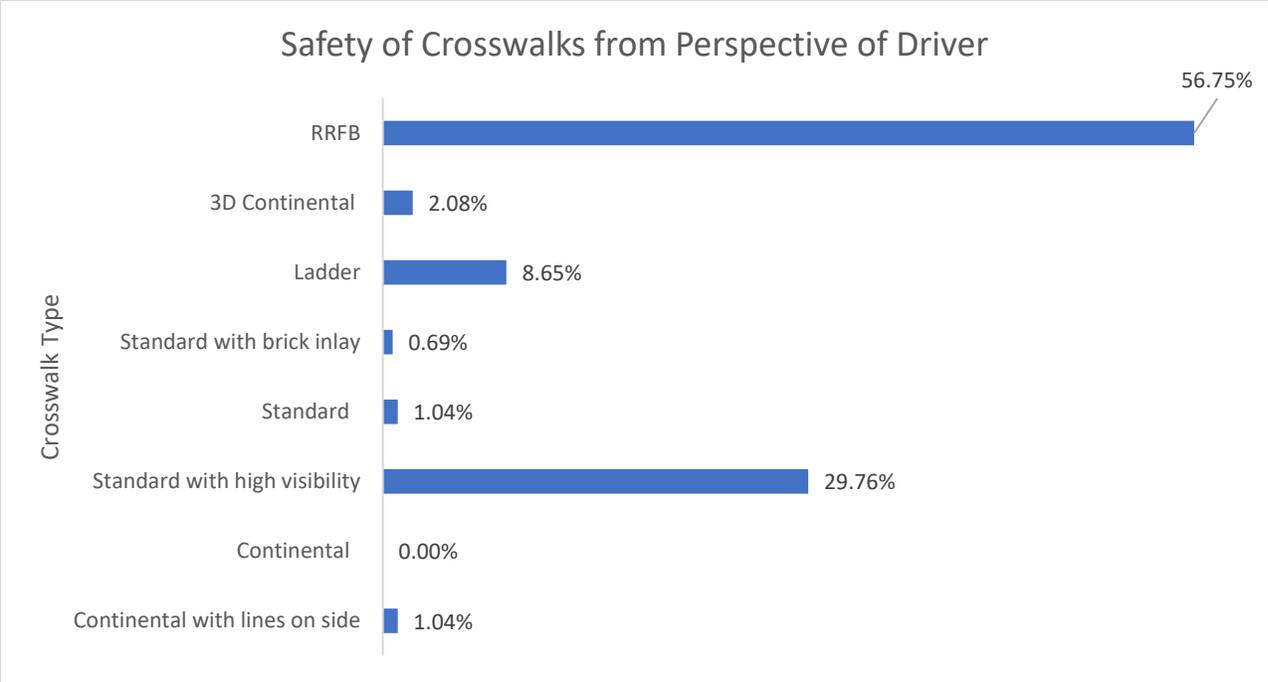
When asked about a highly delineated multi-mode friendly four-way intersection with a designated left turning lane and a pedestrian refuge island, respondents on average rated their comfort level to be a 4. This image was the highest-rated intersection in the visual preference survey. It featured a plentiful markings on the roadway, delineating bike lanes, and pedestrian crossings. The higher comfort level may have been influenced by the presence of a pedestrian refuge island and pavement markings.

When asked about a single-lane conventional roundabout, respondents on average rated their comfort level to be a 3. While there were lane markings depicted in the image, there were no other safeguards for bicyclists or pedestrians.

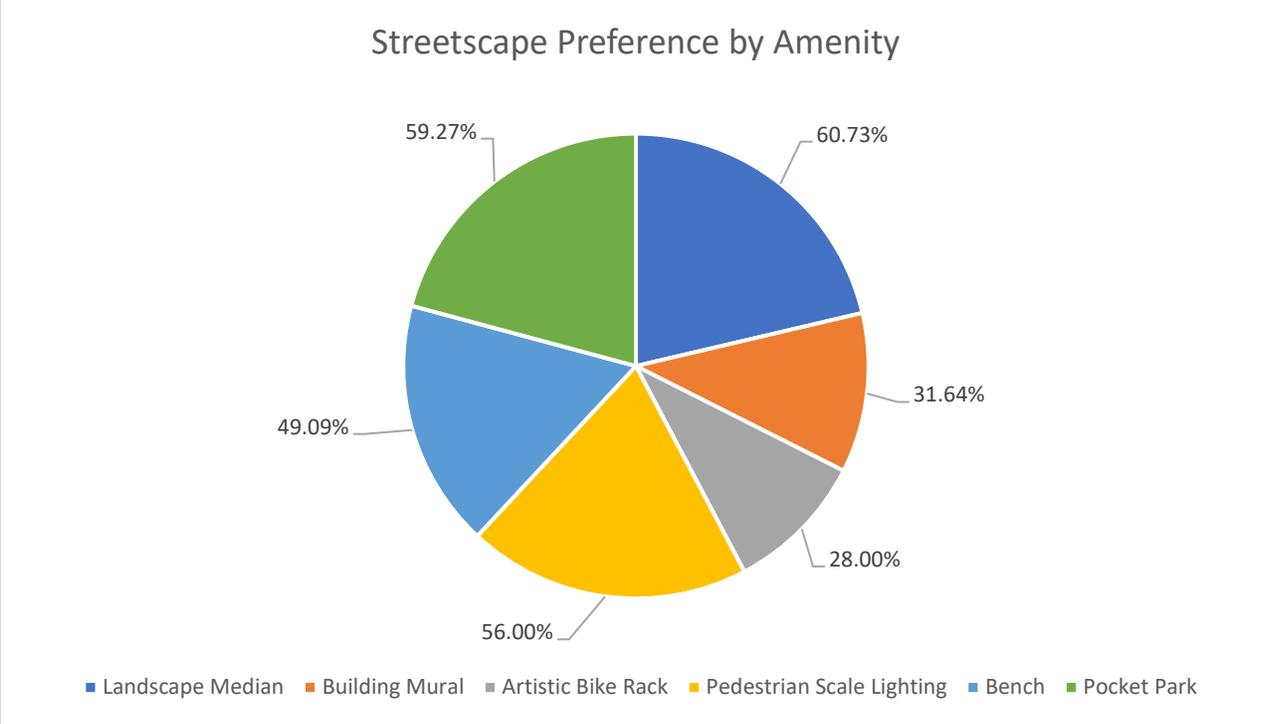
When asked about how safe respondents felt using different kinds of crosswalks, crosswalks supplemented with rectangular rapid flashing beacons (RRFB), textured or high visibility standard crosswalks, and ladder-style crosswalks all scored highly. The continental-style crosswalk scored low, and the 3-dimensional paint did not impact the results of this crosswalk type. 82.1% felt an RRFB was the safest, 64.5% felt a standard crosswalk with high visibility marking was the safest, over 50.0% felt a traditional ladder-style crosswalk was the safest, and 43.5% felt a standard crosswalk textured with a brick inlay was the safest. A consensus observed by the majority of respondents that the 3-dimensional continental crosswalk, a standard continental crosswalk, or a typical standard crosswalk were the least safe crossing types.



When asked about crosswalks from the perspective of a driver, respondents felt RRFBs and high visibility standard crosswalks were the safest. Less than 10% of drivers felt that all the other options would encourage them to be more aware of pedestrians and drive more safely.



When asked about which placemaking features would be preferred within the community, respondents rated a landscape median the highest (60.7%). The next highest-ranking amenity was a pocket park (59.2%), followed by pedestrian scale lighting (56.0%), benches (49.1%), a building mural (31.6%), and finally an artistic bike rack (28.0%).



Participants were asked to rank public spaces in which they could spend their leisure time on a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 being the least likely and 10 being the most. Respondents did not have a strong preference for any of the public spaces in the visual preference survey. On average a pavilion, playground, dog park, and amphitheater were all ranked a 3. While the pavilion and dog park offer open space, the playground included slides, shrubbery, and benches. The amphitheater did not depict much landscaping, which is why it could've been rated a 3 instead of a 4. A highly landscaped, garden-style park that included lots of outdoor space was rated to be a 4, the highest ranking out of all the options.

# W. CHESTNUT STREET STUDY PROCESS

---

## Phase 3: SUMMER 2023 & FALL 2023

---



### PURPOSE

To present refined draft collection concepts, elements, and recommendations (including cost estimates) to the public and tangentially, to local governments for review and acceptance.

---



### TECHNICAL ACTIVITIES

- Draft a final plan that refines elements of some of the design concepts, using community feedback and best practices as guidance
  - Coordinate all aspects of recommended design with local governments, including implementation options and funding
- 



### PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

- Public Meeting #3 to present the recommended corridor plan and get community input
- Public Survey #3 to determine the level of agreement with the concepts and plan
- Small group presentations with stakeholders, as requested, to answer questions about the study recommendations
- One-month public comment period to gather feedback