

# Aberdeen Avenue Safety Improvement Project

# Design Feedback Report

## About the Safety Improvement Project

Aberdeen Avenue sees daily travel by people walking, biking, driving, and taking public transit, and it plays a key role in Cambridge's vision for a safe, connected, separated bicycle network.

Through the **Aberdeen Avenue Safety Improvement Project**, the City will:

- **Install a new pedestrian crossing island** at the intersection of Aberdeen Avenue and Mt. Auburn Street, replacing an outdated former bus and trolley turnaround.
- **Add separated bike lanes** adjacent to the median on Aberdeen Avenue. This will narrow travel lanes, reducing vehicle speeds and enhancing safety.

In Fall 2024, the City launched the public engagement process for the Aberdeen Avenue Safety Improvement Project. The City hosted a virtual introductory meeting where community members could learn more about the project and provide input. The meeting included a [presentation](#), a public comment period, and a [recording](#) available for those who could not attend.

**33**  
Attendees

**32**  
Public Comments

**4**  
City Presenters

*2024 Virtual Community Meeting Figures*



## August 19, 2025 Open House

The City held a follow-up community Open House in August 2025. This event shared the updated draft design plan and project schedule, along with design revisions that focused on flex-post locations and spacing.

**35**

**Attendees**

**40**

**Street Design Roll Pan  
Comments**

**8**

**Staff in Attendance**

*2025 Open House Community Meeting Figures*

**30**

**Email Inquiries to  
Project Team**

**9**

**Callers to Project Team**

**285**

**Joined Project Email List**

*General Engagement Figures*

Prior to work on Aberdeen Avenue, the city worked on nearby projects in the immediate area, including the installation of separated bike lanes and signalization changes on [Mt Auburn Street from Aberdeen Avenue to Homer Avenue](#), work on the [Brattle Street Safety Improvement Project](#) and the [Huron Avenue and Cushing Plaza Improvements Project](#). The engagement for this project built on earlier outreach conducted during the resignalization and intersection changes, which had already established a group of engaged residents.

## **Additional Engagement Efforts**

Beyond hosting virtual meetings and in-person open houses, the City made a deliberate effort to connect with community members through a variety of outreach methods designed to reach people where they are. These efforts included:

- **Door-to-Door Flyering Before Each Meeting:** Staff distributed printed more than 150 flyers to homes and businesses along Aberdeen Avenue to ensure residents received project information for both community meetings.
- **Laminated Posters in High-Traffic Areas Before Each Meeting:** Posters were installed along Mt Auburn St and Aberdeen Avenue to share project updates and advertise engagement opportunities (laminated posters were put up for each community meeting).
- **Direct Email Updates:** Community members who signed up for project alerts received email communications with meeting recordings, draft designs, and opportunities to provide feedback.
- **Project Website Updates:** The project [webpage](#) was regularly updated with new materials, FAQs, and contact information.

These additional engagement efforts ensured that a broad range of community voices were heard throughout the project planning process, even from those who could not attend formal meetings. Staff also worked closely with key stakeholders nearby, including

Eversource Gas, Cambridge Public Libraries, Mount Auburn Cemetery, businesses on Mt. Auburn Street, and with the MBTA.

## Key Takeaways from Community Feedback

Community members shared a wide range of input about safety, accessibility, and street design on Aberdeen Avenue. Their feedback focused on several main themes, including:

**Safety concerns** regarding the existing condition of the street, including, but not limited to:

- Too much speeding traffic.
- Instances of sideswipe-style crashes with parked vehicles.
- Poor yielding by drivers at the crosswalk half-way at Aberdeen Way.
- Noise generation from high traffic volumes.

**Support for improved bike infrastructure.** Specific feedback included:

- Support for dedicated bike signals and separating out when people walk and bike across key intersections from when drivers turn.
- Support for eliminating the currently uncontrolled bicycle crossing across the slip-lane onto Huron Avenue. This is achieved by moving the Aberdeen bike lane to the left side and connecting it directly, through signalization, to the recently completed two-way bike path on Huron Avenue.
- Support for moving the bike lane to the left side, away from driveways and parked cars, to improve visibility and reduce conflicts with people entering or exiting vehicles.

**Support for pedestrian safety improvements,** including:

- The completed construction of a pedestrian crossing-island at Aberdeen Avenue and Mt Auburn St.
- Signalization changes to separate out when pedestrians cross the street and when drivers turn.
- Speed reduction measures.

**Desire for supplemental safety devices,** such as speed-humps, rectangular rapid flashing beacons (RRFBs), raised crosswalks or other traffic calming devices.

**Concerns regarding the proposed narrowing of the street:** Specifically, we heard concerns that with the addition of flex-posts, drivers will no longer have space to navigate around vehicles that are stopped outside of the designated parking area.

**Feedback regarding changes to traffic signal timing,** including suggestions to increase the amount of time dedicated to traffic turning out of Aberdeen Avenue at Mt Auburn Street.

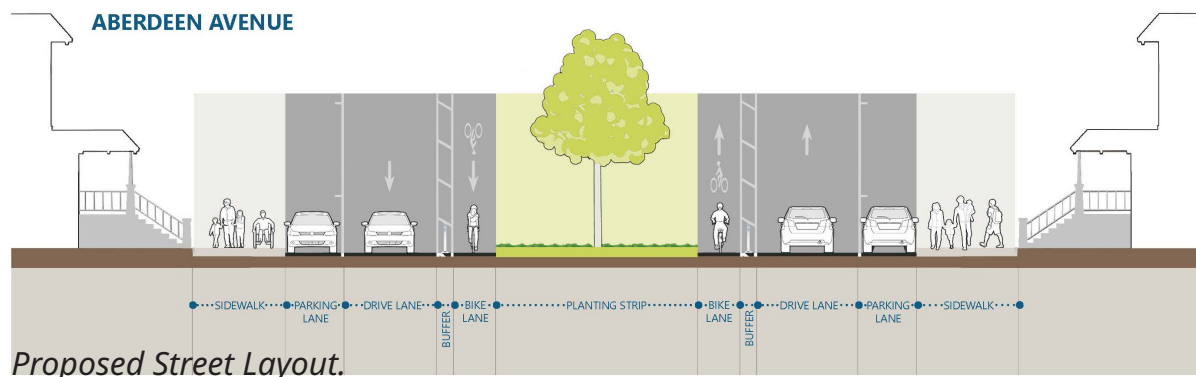
# How Community Feedback Guided Our Decisions

Community input has been central to shaping the Aberdeen Avenue Safety Improvement Project. Feedback came through multiple channels, including open houses, virtual community meetings, emails, and phone calls. Throughout the public engagement process, residents shared concerns, suggestions, and questions that directly informed design changes and installation plans.

**Below, we outline how this feedback influenced the project, from design revisions to additional accommodations and follow-up actions. This is broken into four categories:**

1. Changes made to the design in response to community feedback.
2. Additional accommodations we will provide the community during the installation process.
3. Additional outcomes shaped by community feedback.
4. Concerns brought to us that we forwarded to other city departments and/or agencies.

## 1. Changes we made to the design in response to community feedback:



- The first draft of the design included a 6 feet bike lane and a 2 feet buffer. The final design changed this to a 5 feet bike lane and a 3 feet buffer.
  - The larger buffer provides more flexibility to adjust the location of flex-posts, while still keeping the bike lane width at an acceptable minimum. This provides more buffer space if vehicles need to pass a vehicle that is blocking part of the drive lane.



*Example image of the new 30 ft flex-post spacing vs. original 15 ft. Center post will be removed. This image is not on Aberdeen Ave, but an example from Main Street.*

- The first draft of the design included flex-posts every 15 feet. The revised design will include flex posts every 30 feet. The increased space is intended to allow more room to drive in the buffer if a parked vehicle partially blocks the drive lane vehicles.
- The city to add additional posts in the future, reducing the gaps to the standard 15 feet spacing, if conditions permit.

## **2. Additional accommodations we will provide the community during the installation process:**

- Meet with residents 1:1 regarding flex-post placement to address concerns about turning movements in and out of driveways.
- Make changes to parking, including:
  - Installing additional non-resident parking near the library
  - Installing loading zones on each side of Aberdeen Avenue so delivery trucks have a designated spot to pull over. Loading zones can be added or removed in the future based on feedback.

## **3. Additional outcomes shaped by community feedback:**

- The City decided not to pursue speed humps on Aberdeen Avenue at this time. This was due to concerns brought to us regarding noise and heavy vehicle activity on Aberdeen Avenue. Speed humps contribute further to noise concerns, and thus were determined not be a good fit for the street.
- Addressed signage concerns brought to us by the community, such as a missing Do Not Enter sign at the end of Aberdeen Avenue.

#### 4. Concerns brought to us that were forwarded to other departments and/or agencies:

- Requests for traffic enforcement were forwarded to the Police Department.
- Requests for sidewalk repairs were forwarded to the Department of Public Works and Eversource, who is responsible for repairing trenches made as part of the new gas line that was installed.

## Next Steps

To stay updated about the installation schedule and future engagement opportunities please visit the [project website](#) and sign up for [email updates](#).

## Appendix: Public Comments and Feedback

*The appendix that follows includes all participant comments from the Open House and Virtual Community Meeting, transcribed verbatim. The inclusion of these comments does not imply that the City has pursued or implemented every suggestion; rather, they are provided in full to ensure transparency and accountability in the public engagement process.*

### Fall 2024 Virtual Community Meeting

- “Can you give assurances that when problems with the installment arise that you will fix them quickly?”
- “Could someone explain why Aberdeen is a dashed purple line?”
- “Project Goal 1: Was the speed data recorded on Aberdeen?”
- “Are flex posts the most we can do here? Can we add concrete curbs like on Brattle? I ask in light of the car that crossed a curb today on Mem drive onramp.”
- “Will a No U Turn sign be added at Aberdeen and Mt Auburn?”
- “The crosswalks should also have “shark teeth” yield markings, no?”
- “Can near-side bike signals be added in the turn boxes? This is a complex intersection and we’d like to see bike signal redundancy become standard.”
- “Can you touch on plans for improving connections to the other facilities you mentioned (Watertown Greenway, and Brattle to Harvard), and safe transit access to the Haggerty School nearby?”
- “What is the distance that cyclists will travel without flex posts on Aberdeen? Thank you for your work on this!”
- “How do city forces maintain flex posts? My experience when reporting them on SeeClickFix is that they go many months before repair.”
- “Will you still have the mid blockcar crossing in addition to the new crosswalks”

- “How are you going to handle electric scooters, which sometimes go even faster than bicycles?”
- “Is anything in place to encourage / compel bicyclists to obey laws? Stopping for pedestrians in cross walks, not coming w/in four feet of cars, for example”
- “PLEASE no concrete curbs. It would make it very difficult for Aberdeen residents to back out of their driveways.”
- “Can you add flashing yellow lights at the pedestrian crossing (when you push the crossing button) on the Huron end of Aberdeen, similar to the lights by the playground?”
- “Drivers and bikers currently disregard the lights.”
- “Not only is there gridlocking of traffic at Mount Auburn and Aberdeen, but frustrated motorists are freely using their horns to register their displeasure. The result is that, during high traffic times — especially 4pm to 7pm — there is a great deal of disruptive and unpleasant honking. Can we do anything to discourage the horn honking?”
- “The painted bike lane in the slip lane onto Huron I assume will be removed to make it clear that people biking should use the signal to enter the new lanes. Will it be replaced with anything to reduce the crossing distance on the slip lane?”
- “Jeff raised a very important concern about illegal right turns from Westbound Mt Auburn onto Aberdeen when the right arrow is red. I see it happen almost every light cycle and it is only a matter of time before a cyclist gets right hooked due to a driver making an illegal right (or, less frequently, a cyclist going straight through Mt Auburn when they have a red bike signal). This is a very similar signaling situation to DeWolfe St where a cyclist was killed in July. What kind of additional signage or signals have been considered to make this specific situation safer for cyclists and pedestrians crossing Aberdeen?”
- “One last proposal: adding sharrows to the waiting area at aberdeen way to make it clear that bikes will also be waiting there”
- “The crossing on the mid section is also there because of the bus stop.”
- “I’m concerned about the bus on Aberdeen. Will the bikers be aware that they must stop for people getting off bus and cross at the mid crosswalk?”
- “Representing, unofficially, people who live on Aberdeen Ave. as people from the ListServ on the street.”
- “Concerns with traffic congestion on Aberdeen Ave southbound at Mount Auburn street during rush hours on weekdays. Some congestion has been alleviated by recent changes.”
- “The light at Homer Avenue seems to be the bigger issue. Are you able to say that this project will be able to make this better?”

- “General expression of support from a Larchwood Drive resident - like Huron, Brattle lanes.”
- “Wondering about the turn from the library to northbound Aberdeen.”
- “Concern about the traffic congestion on Brattle Street approaching Mount Auburn Street.”
- “Unclear about how a cyclist moves from eastbound on Mount Auburn in bike lane to northbound on Aberdeen”
- “Concern about “blocking the box” for traffic exiting Aberdeen onto Mount Auburn and conflicts where right turns on red are made from WB Mt Auburn to NB Aberdeen or cyclists ignoring the bicycle signal”
- “Could the mid-block crosswalk become a raised crosswalk or have an RRFB added to it?”
- “Can parking spaces be individually marked?”
- “Pedestrian crossing at the midblock is offset oddly - can you explain it more?”
- “Can there be a red-yellow-green ped signal here at the midblock?”

## Summer 2025 Open House Street Design Roll Plan Comments

### **Mt Auburn intersection:**

- Mowing median would help with sight-lines
- Need clearer indicator that people shouldn’t drive here (southbound roadway)
- Lots of wrong way turns here. Please re-paint the turn guide lines
- Traffic light pattern should be reassessed. Long lines, road rage, honking etc. every day during community hours
- We need some police here for the red light runners!
- Light for left from Aberdeen to Mt. Auburn needs to be longer
- Light cycle for Aberdeen/Mt. Auburn is crazy - Gridlock, people running every red after waiting too long = not safe for bike or pedestrians
- Crosswalk to Nick’s garage needs synchronized blinking yellow lights with “walk” sign lit

### **The Collins Library:**

- Speeding & people cutting through parking lot due to traffic back up on Aberdeen
- Is it possible to add more short term, non-resident parking spaces near the library. The city generously added a single two-hour space about two years ago, but we need more
- Yes to more parking for library

### **The Mid-Section crosswalk on Aberdeen Avenue:**

- Add a big light
- Raised crosswalk
- Speed hump and signal needed or else there will be many accidents
- Turn off the excessive sprinklers right here

- Crosswalk signs
- Need signage to alert bikes that cars are making left turns across cut-through
- Need signal/hump to reduce vehicle vibrations due to road/vehicular traffic moving close to homes
- We need raised crosswalk and flashing lights at night (after triggered)

#### **The Aberdeen Avenue median:**

- Median repave?
- Can flex posts be placed in locations that aren't right + opposite of driveways
- Yes to 30 ft between flex-posts, and to not locate them directly in front of driveways
- Can we paint the driveway ends to help people park furthest from the curb?
- What happens when snow plowing? Can cars still park on street?
- Speed check signs?
- How to avoid clipped cars/side-view mirrors? Our car's mirror has been hit four times in the [...] years, this with the "buffer" of the current bike lanes; what when its gone?

#### **Bike lanes:**

- Yay bike lanes!
- Very excited about separated bike lanes
- 30 ft between flex posts is very unsafe. Please don't. 15 ft.
- Agree with this (above). As a cyclist and driver, would prefer greater viability
- Agree, 15 ft
- Go (yay) bike lanes!
- Left lane bike lane in median is terribly dangerous. Bikes will not ride on this without speed-hump/median
- Love the bike lanes
- Happy for the bike lanes

#### **Huron Avenue intersection:**

- Slip lane not ideal, make it straight to improve visibility
- Add light for pedestrians? Or raise/add signs
- Get rid of slip lane and add a little park! This is terrible as a pedestrian and Ive almost been hit many times

#### **Other General Comments:**

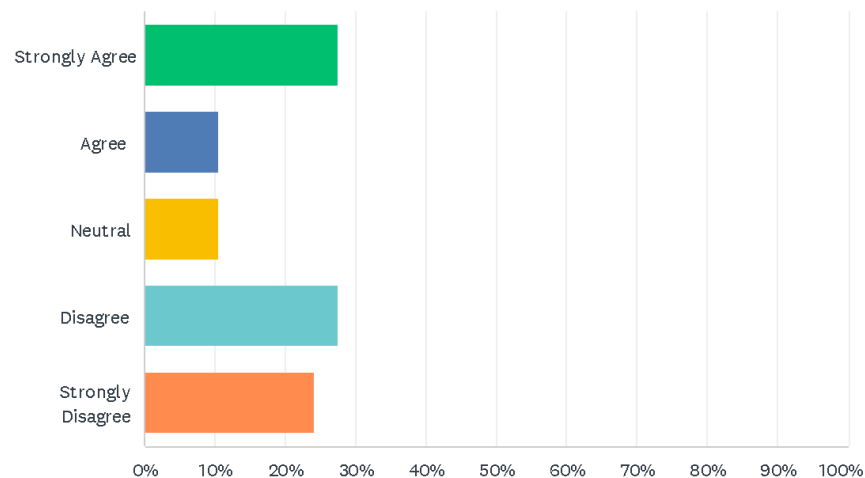
- Thanks for your work
- Better and safer HSA city street for everyone, not just the people who live there

#### **Informal Resident Organized Survey**

An informal resident survey was conducted on Aberdeen Avenue and shared with staff at the 8/19/25 meeting. The comments from that survey are available on the next page.

Q1 Do you agree with the direction of the pending project?

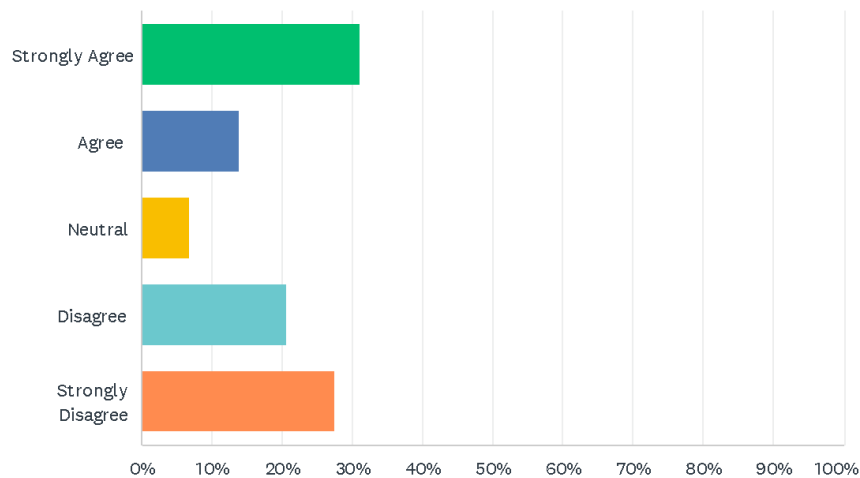
Answered: 29    Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	27.59%	8
Agree	10.34%	3
Neutral	10.34%	3
Disagree	27.59%	8
Strongly Disagree	24.14%	7
TOTAL		29

## Q2 Do you believe that the bike path and land reconfiguration will improve safety for bikers and/or pedestrians?

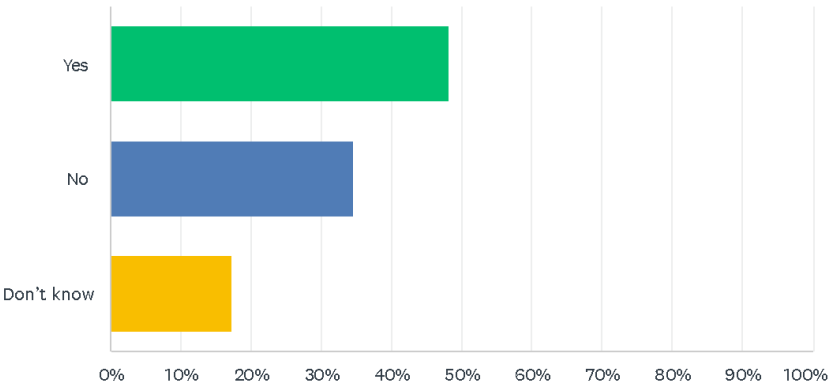
Answered: 29 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree		31.03%	9
Agree		13.79%	4
Neutral		6.90%	2
Disagree		20.69%	6
Strongly Disagree		27.59%	8
TOTAL			29

Q3 Do you have other safety transportation concerns as a result of the project?

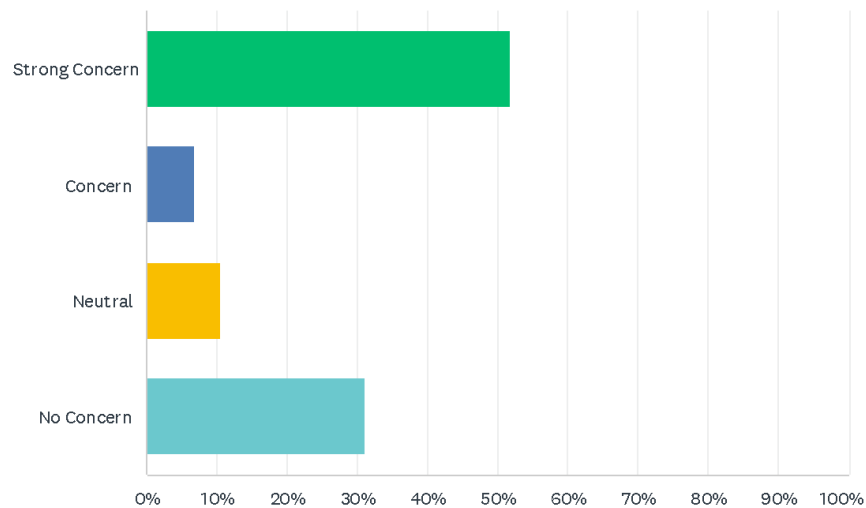
Answered: 29   Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	48.28%	14
No	34.48%	10
Don't know	17.24%	5
TOTAL		29

## Q4 Do you have concern about the vehicle traffic being moved closer to your home?

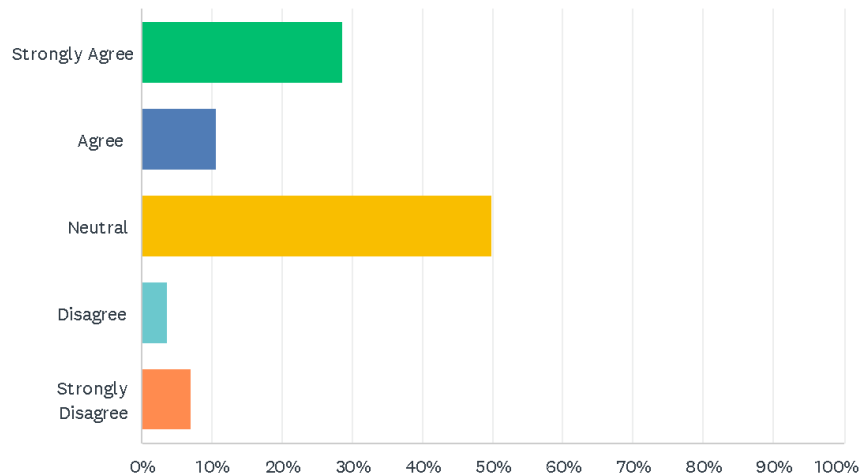
Answered: 29 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strong Concern	51.72%	15
Concern	6.90%	2
Neutral	10.34%	3
No Concern	31.03%	9
TOTAL		29

### Q5 Do you agree that the project meets 2020 Bicycle Plan goals (2020 Bicycle Network Vision - City of Cambridge, MA)?

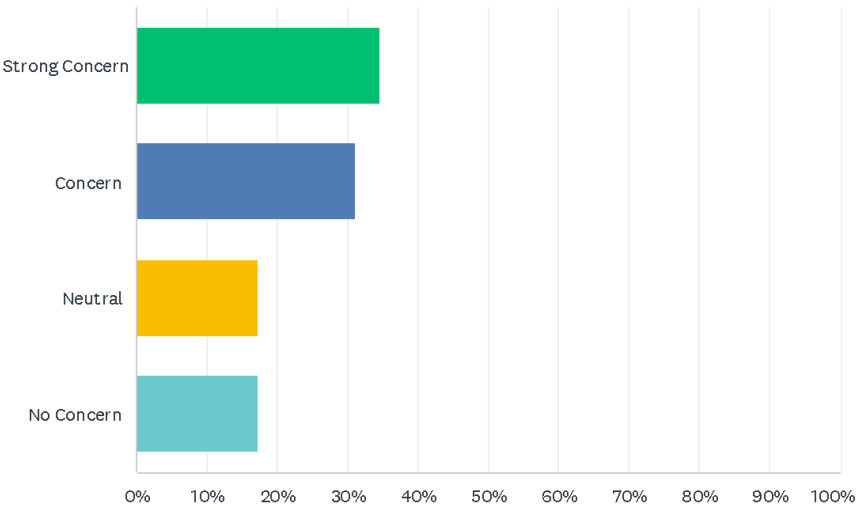
Answered: 28 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree		28.57%	8
Agree		10.71%	3
Neutral		50.00%	14
Disagree		3.57%	1
Strongly Disagree		7.14%	2
TOTAL			28

Q6 Do you have concern about the lack of speed bumps, a pavilion and/or signalization at the center of the street median?

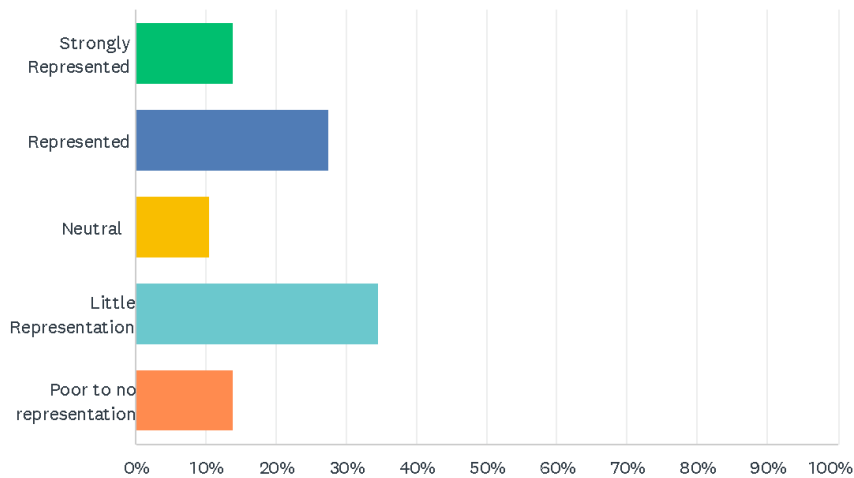
Answered: 29 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Strong Concern		34.48%	10
Concern		31.03%	9
Neutral		17.24%	5
No Concern		17.24%	5
TOTAL			29

## Q7 How do you feel that the residents of Aberdeen Avenue have been represented through the public meeting process?

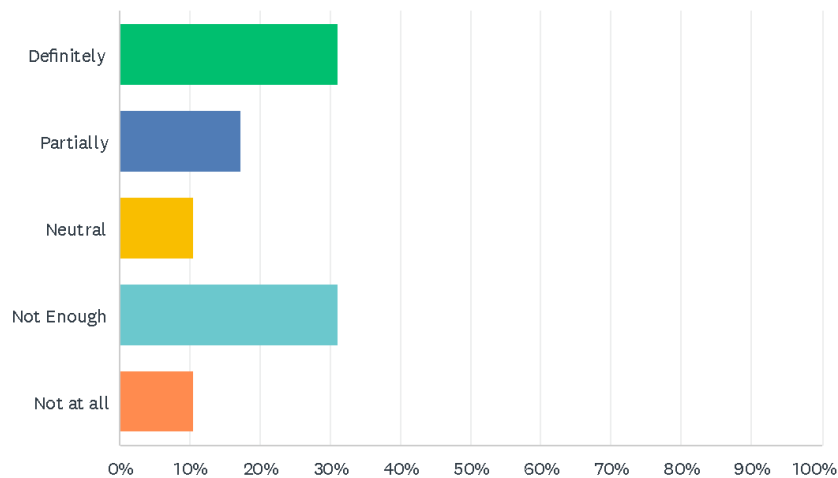
Answered: 29 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Represented	13.79%	4
Represented	27.59%	8
Neutral	10.34%	3
Little Representation	34.48%	10
Poor to no representation	13.79%	4
TOTAL		29

## Q8 How do you feel that the project team and/or City have worked to reasonably address concerns of residents?

Answered: 29 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Definitely		31.03%	9
Partially		17.24%	5
Neutral		10.34%	3
Not Enough		31.03%	9
Not at all		10.34%	3
TOTAL			29