



A TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR W. 25TH CORRIDOR

SECTION 2 - WHAT WE HEARD

MARCH 2021

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INTRODUCTION

This document is one of five parts in the Transit-Oriented Plan for the West 25th Street Corridor (W. 25th Corridor), which aims to respond to FTA grant requirements related to the creation of a new Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) line running between Detroit Avenue and Broadview Road. The plan has five sections including:

1 Urban Analysis

2 What We Heard (public engagement)

- **3** BRT Study
- **4** Zoning Review and Policy Recommendations
- 5 Market Analysis

The What We Heard report provides an overview of the Community Engagement process. The following document presents the neighborhood documentation, demographics data, and enthnographic research, which informed the engagement actions. A wide range of engagement actions were used to provide easy and intuitive ways for diverse community members to share their concerns and ideas. The community feedback drove the project recommendations shown in the other four sections of the final plan. This report includes the following three chapters:

- Enagement Summary
- Engagement Methodology
- > Community Feedback



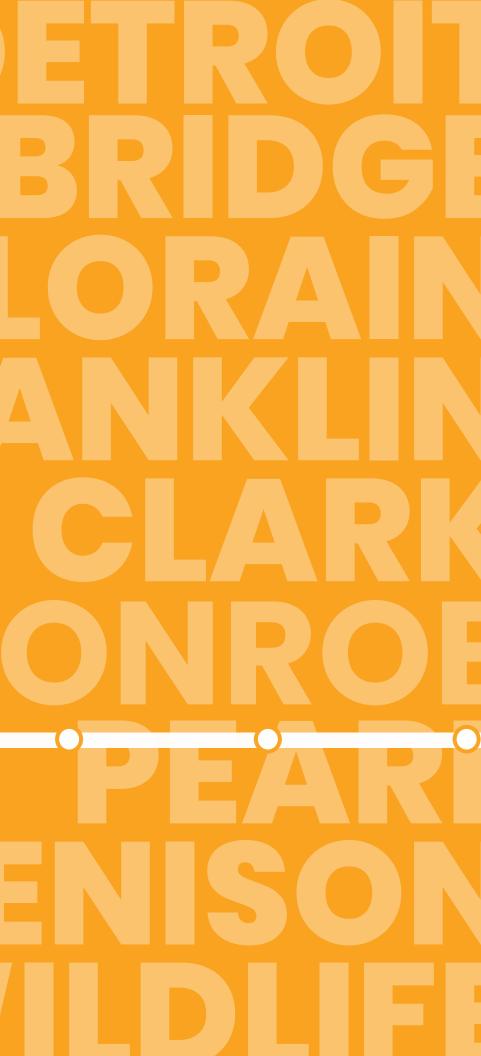








CHAPTER 1 ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY



CHAPTER 1 : ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

TIMELINE 12 MONTHS OF CONNECTION

THREE PHASES, ONE INTEGRATED PROCESS

Over the course of 12 months, the community engagement process conducted dozens of actions to gather stakeholder input. These actions were designed and scheduled to support the work of the Market Analysis, TOD Plan (Zoning & BRT Design Book), and Financial Plan. Key questions emerging from each work stream integrated into the engagement process.

The community engagement actions for the project were organized into three phases. During Phase 1, the actions focused on assessing existing conditions. Building on this foundation, Phase 2 presented community members with various design options and dedicated time to ensure the options were well understood. In Phase 3, options prioritized by the community during Phase 2 were further refined through an additional round of engagement activities. The iterative design process, with increasing levels of specificity, ensured the time dedicated by the community was spent effectively. Stakeholders could see how their previous comments guided subsequent recommendations.

COVID-19 PROTOCOLS

The community engagement strategy incorporated a few specific activities in response to COVID-19. All activities were conducted in accordance to evolving safety guidelines established by the State of Ohio. First, the project schedule was extended by a couple months to avoid personal contact during the initial quarantine period. Second, several virtual engagement opportunities were added to provide community feedback without physical contact. Lastly, large in-person events were divided into multiple activities with fewer participants, where face mask requirements, social distancing, and cleaning protocols were added to limit the potential spread of infection.













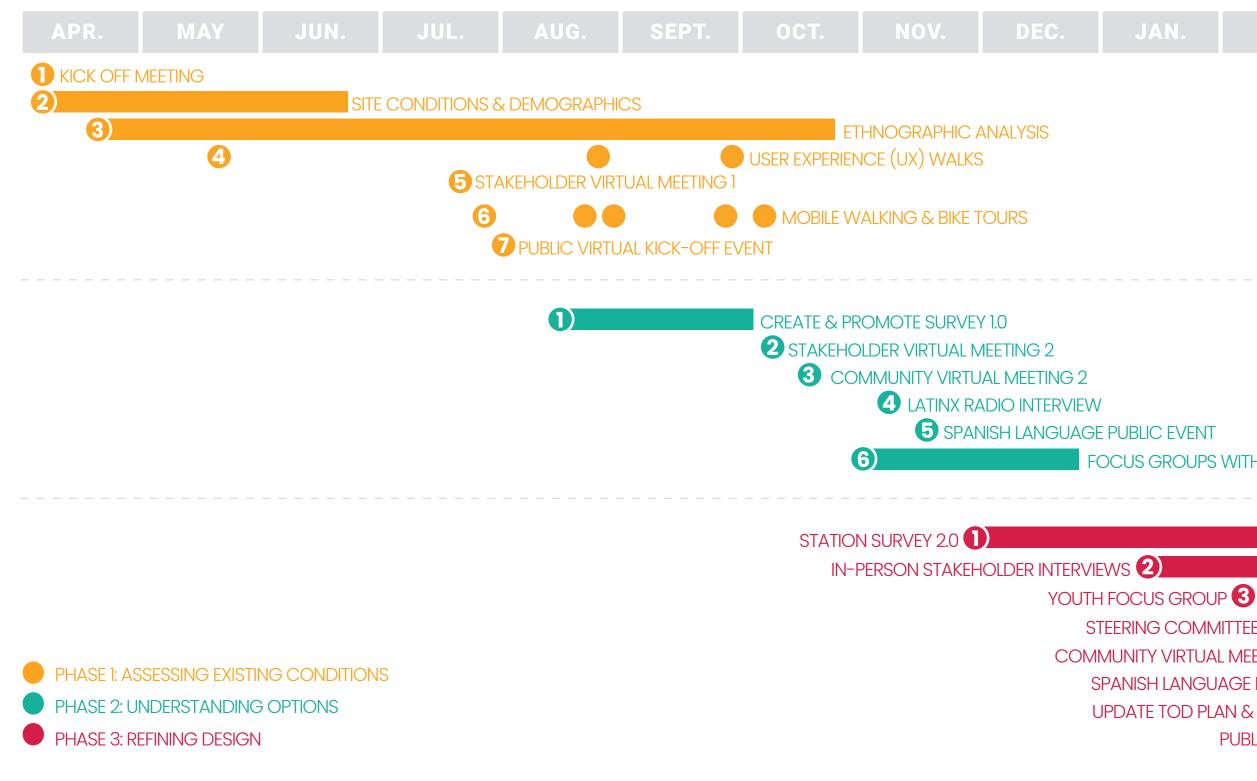


FIGURE X : XX

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CHAPTER 1 : ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY



FEB

FOCUS GROUPS WITH KEY STAKEHOLDERS

STEERING COMMITTEE 3 4 COMMUNITY VIRTUAL MEETING 3 5 SPANISH LANGUAGE PUBLIC EVENT 6 UPDATE TOD PLAN & DELIVERABLES 7 PUBLISH FINAL DOCUMENTS 8



1.2 **KEY THEMES**

COMMUNITY PRIORITIES FOR TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT.

The 25Connects planning process collected a large quantity of community feedback through a wide range of engagement methods. Some of the feedback pointed to particular spots along the corridor, such as missing crosswalks or preferred locations for a new bus shelters. But much of the feedback is applicable to the overall project area. Several key themes emerged from the engagement data. The key themes are organized into four categories:

- 1. Transit
- 2. Use and Built Form
- **3.** Economic Development
- 4. Parks and Recreation

Successful implementation of BRT and TOD along W. 25th Street requires careful integration of all four categories. A number of recommendations are closely related to recommendations in other categories; they are mutually reinforcing. Additional community priorities for specific elements in the plan are shown in Chapter 3 of this report.





In order to create high quality transit service, future corridor investments will need to incorporate viable road configurations, functional bus stations, and culturallyrelevant services. Community feedback identified a range of considerations, including adjacent land uses, Cleveland winter weather conditions, and Spanish language needs. All must be accommodated to create a seamless rider experience.

PRIORITIZE COMFORT AND RELIABILITY.

- mobility options.
- > Transit stations should prioritize form over function. Protection from rain, wind, and Cleveland winter weather is a top priority.

PROVIDE CULTURALLY RELEVANT IDENTITY & SERVICE.

- Spanish speaking patrons.
- > MetroHealth Line visual brand identity (consistent color & signage) is recognizable, but name of BRT is not universal.
- > Unique features of the neighborhoods along the corridor should be reflected in the transit stations to support sense of place.

IMPROVE SAFETY BY DESIGN.

- > Need for more lighting along the corridor and bus shelters could provide well-lit safe spots.



> According to community feedback, the biggest perceived opportunities for the project are: improved bus service and better connections between

- > Top preferred amenities for BRT stations are: bus shelters, seating, and digital signs with arrival information.
- > Additional outreach to Spanish-speaking community needed to build awareness and increase ridership.
- > RTA signage and bus drivers could provide more bilingual assistance for

- > Traffic speeds are a key concern for pedestrians along most of the
 - corridor. Integrate traffic calming measures to increase safety.





2 USE AND BUILT FORM

The W. 25th Street corridor connects five neighborhoods, each expressing unique architectural, cultural, and economic characteristics. New transit stations can offer a high level of service throughout the corridor, while reflecting the particular sense of place within each neighborhood. The varying widths of sidewalks and building forms also present distinct opportunities for new development.

COLLABORATE WITH LOCAL RETAIL TO BETTER SERVE RIDERS.

- > Proximity between bus stops and adjacent retail offers a valuable opportunity to provide food, refreshments, restrooms, and other desired services for transit patrons.
- > Provide more locations along the corridor to purchase bus tickets.

FOCUS ON AFFORDABILITY & CULTURAL IDENTITY.

- > One of the top three opportunities identified by the community for the project is the creation of more housing choices (variety of housing types and afforability options).
- > Public art is often recognized as a location's best quality.

REMOVE BARRIERS FOR EQUITABLE ACCESS.

- Winter weather conditions create significant barriers for pedestrians, transit riders, people with mobility challenges, and senior residents, particularly near grade changes.
- > Bridges along W. 25th Street create physical and percieved barriers between neighborhoods.
- > Temporary obstructions and construction materials create unsafe conditions for individuals with limited mobility.
- > Poor condition and narrow width of some sidewalks are barriers to equitable mobility.



3 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Community feedback voiced strong support for BRT and TOD investments along the corridor, but also included concerns. The primary concern was the potential displacement of current residents and local businesses due to new development. Building on strategies already underway in the neighborhoods, future development investments should include actions to address these valid concerns.

CREATE TOD WITH ACTIONS TO ADDRESS DISPLACEMENT.

- > Top concerns for the project are loss of affordability, loss of local businesses, and loss of cultural diversity.
- > Build mixed-use housing for both low-income residents who need transit and market-rate renters who want TOD.
- Long-time and new residents are concerned that visible improvements will drive neighborhood displacement.

SUPPORT LOCAL BUSINESSES EAGER TO GROW.

> Many local businesses value their connection to MetroHealth and want to expand their business presence along W. 25th Street.

TARGET INVESTMENTS TO INCREASE STREET LEVEL ACTIVITIES.

 Vacant storefronts along some segments of the corridor create strong negative perceptions.



4 PARKS AND RECREATION

The overall experience of a transit corridor is affected by the quality of its green spaces. W. 25th Street includes Market Square Park and a few nearby recreational amenities, but significant investments are required for the corridor to achieve the level of quality desired by the community. A new park planned near MetroHealth should be combined with smaller green space investments along the corridor.

IMPLEMENT PROGRAMS TO WELCOME COMMUNITY MEMBERS.

PROVIDE MORE GREEN SPACES OF DIFFERENT SIZES.

- new parks.

INTEGRATE DESIGN FEATURES TO SERVE ALL MOBILITY NEEDS.

- impaired individuals.
- pass by each other.

> New multi-use trails are perceived as valuable, but need more outreach activities to increase broader and more frequent use.

> Strong desire for more shade trees along the corridor and small public spaces to relax and people watch.

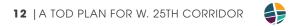
> The few existing public parks along W. 25th Street are valuable, but still have significant safety and maintenance challenges. Plan ahead for any

> Need more digital audible crosswalks and crossing indicators for visually

> Where possible, build wider sidewalks, so a wheelchair and stroller can

Coordinate maintenance plans to clear sidewalk debris, which causes safety hazzards for wheelchair use.

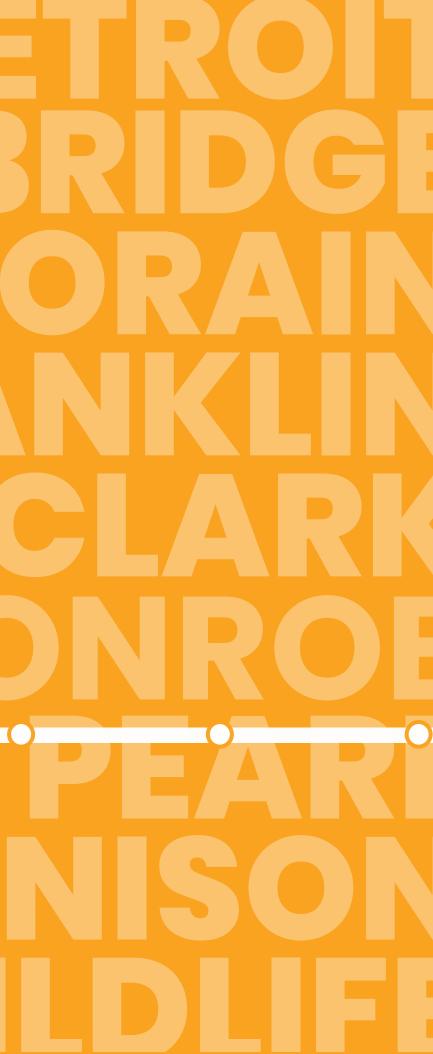








CHAPTER 2 ENGAGEMENT METHODOLOGY

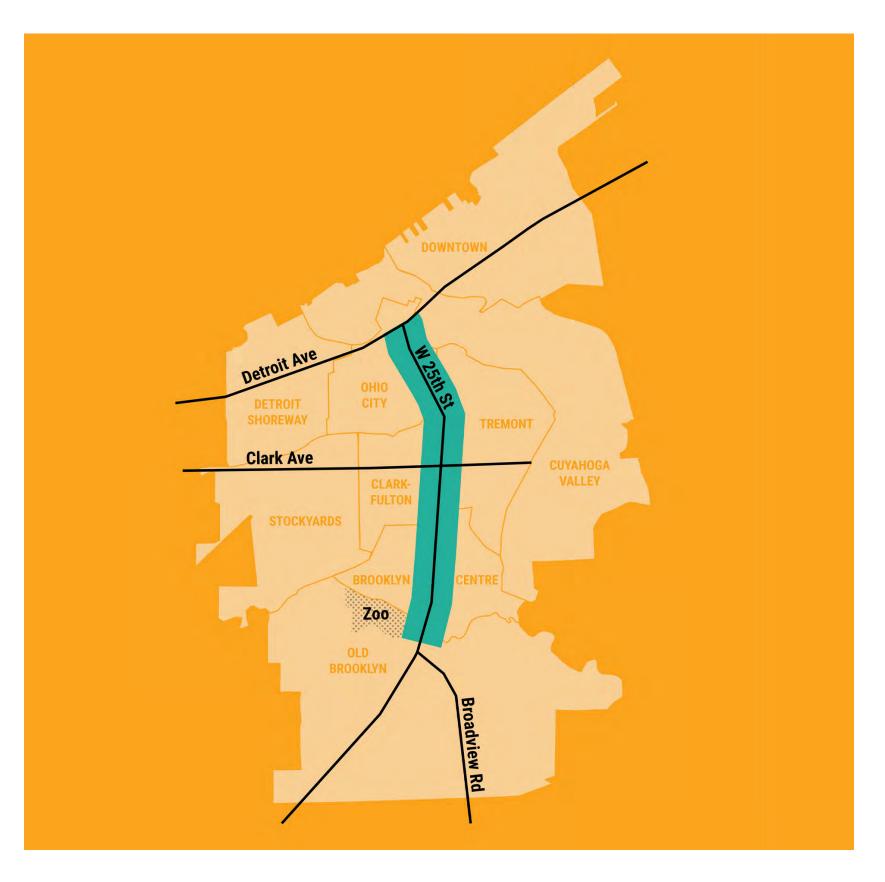


2.1 **COMMUNITY BACKGROUND UNDERSTANDING PEOPLE & PLACE**

W. 25th Street is a 3.5 mile long corridor on Cleveland's westside, connecting five neighborhoods. The neighborhoods of Ohio City, Clark-Fulton, Tremont, Brooklyn Centre, and Old Brooklyn are each unique in visual character and culture. The corridor extends from Detroit Avenue on the north to Broadview Road near the Metroparks Zoo on the south. Although the name of the street for most of its length is W. 25th Street, the name of the street changes to Pearl Road for its southernmost mile.

This diverse area is home to Cleveland's largest Spanish speaking population, multiple anchor institutions, and some of the highest market demand for new development. The community engagement strategy for 25Connects responds to this range of cultural, economic, and physical characteristics of the corridor.











DEMOGRAPHICS

The project area is defined by the 18 census tracts within 1/2 mile from W. 25th Street. Approximately 44,000 residents live within a guarter mile radius from W. 25th Street. This corridor constitutes about 11% of the total population of Cleveland. As far as age, the median age of the corridor is 32.3 years old and it ranges between 31.7 in Clark-Fulton and 36.5 in Old Brooklyn. The corridor's age pyramid shows an extensive population between 20 and 40. There is however an area with a significantly older population (50-56.9) on the east side of West 25th Street, between Lorain Avenue and Detroit Avenue, which aligns with the presence of Riverview Tower, the high-rise public housing that caters to senior citizens. The youngest block-group is located just north of Riverview Tower, with a median age between 22.7 and 30 that reflect a community with an important children and youth basis.

In general, the study area is characterized by the presence of a significant Hispanic and Latino population, that is mostly concentrated in Clark-Fulton and some parts of Brooklyn Centre and Old Brooklyn. While there is a prevalence of the Hispanic and Latino population, 74% of households speak English only at home. Spanish is the second most spoken language with 21% of households speaking it at home, most of which (15%) are also fluent in English and 6% has limited English proficiency. The highest percentage of people speaking Spanish is recorded in Clark-Fulton, which is about 40%.

As far as racial distribution, 65% of the corridor identifies as white and 16% as Black or African American. Other races such as Asians, American Indians and Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders are only under 2% in the whole corridor.

11%

OF CLEVELAND POPULATION LIVE IN THE STUDY AREA

\$32K THE MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

32.3

STUDY AREA

21% OF STUDY AREA RESIDENTS SPEAK

SPANISH AT HOME

CHAPTER 2 : ENGAGEMENT METHODOLOGY



TOTAL HOUSING UNITS IN THE STUDY AREA



WITHIN THE STUDY AREA

OWNER-OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS

15-29MIN

THE MEDIAN AGE WITHIN THE

COMMUTING TIME OF HALF OF THE STUDY AREA'S POPULATION

7%

PROJECT AREA POPULATION USE **PUBLIC TRANSIT**



2.2

ENGAGEMENT METRICS HOW DO WE MEASURE SUCCESS?

At the start of the planning process the project team established goals for community engagement. The goals included both qualitative and quantitative evaluations. Many of the qualitative assessments were conducted through verbal feedback from participants during the Ethnographic Research (see page 18) and public events. The quantitative engagement goals were based on the demographics of the project area. Using total population, age, gender, and racial/ ethnic data of the geographic community, the engagement goals set measurable targets for representative participation.

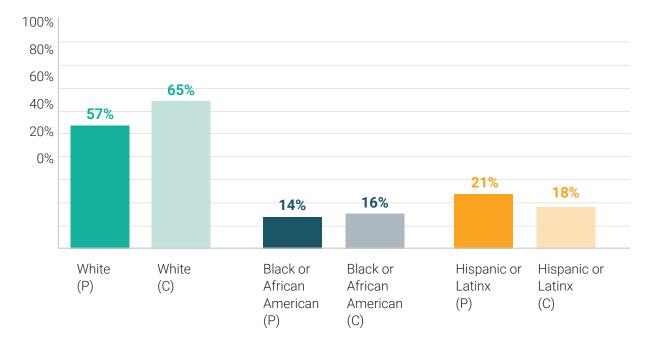
Progress towards the goals was monitored frequently throughout the planning process. Rather than wait until the end of the project, measuring the demographics of participants continually indicated moments when additional efforts were required. The surveys (both online and printer versions) provided the most reliable demographic data on participants. Adjustments were made a key milestones to ensure the project was on track. Questions within the survey allowed participants to self-describe their age, race, ethnicity, language preference, neighborhood of residence, and stakeholder affiliation. A primary goal across all engagement methods was to reflect the local community's age, racial, ethnic, and gender diversity in the project's participants. Responses to the survey were used as the main method for tracking overall project participation and progress toward the engagement goals.

TARGETS

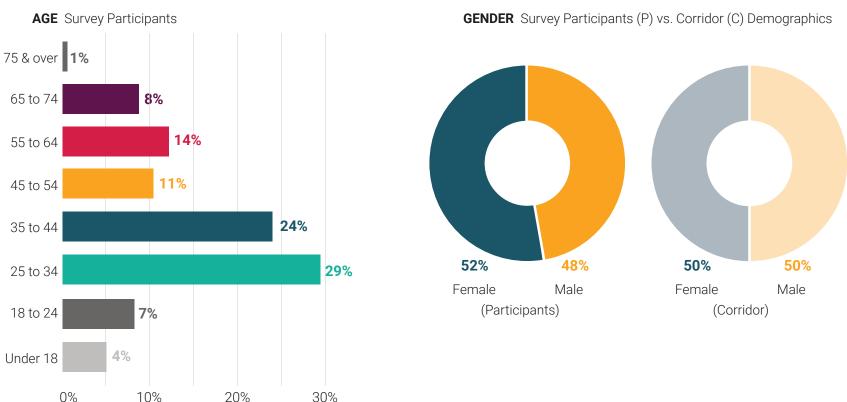
Key targets for engagement are shown in charts on the right and the table on the opposite page. Based on the total population of the project area (44,000), the project set a goal to have 1% of residents (440) to participate in the process. Participation was defined as attending a project event or completing a survey. Other goals set at the start of the project included: Distribute 2,200 marketing materials; Hold 21 different events; and Create 44,000 impressions.

OUTCOMES

Progress towards the demographics engagement goals were primarily tracked through the survey. Other goals relied on a variety of sources, including website analytics, social media engagement data, MailChimp email tracking, print material distribution, and simply counting participants at live events. As shown in the charts, the project met or exceeded all engagement goals for the project.





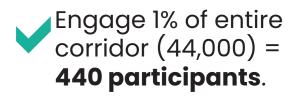




Engagement Goals:

Distribute 5% of entire corridor (44,000) = **2,200 items**.

Hold 7 events per each phase (3) = **21 events**.





		Distributed Items	Events	Participants	Impressions
ials	Bilingual postcards	1,600			
	BRT Priorities Survey 1.0			162	
Materia	Station Design Survey 2.0			327	
Na	Neighborhood flyers	700			
	Bus shelter handouts	200			
C	User Experience (UX) walks		4	4	4
SOI	Mobile tours		5	42	42
erso	Ethnographic interviews			6	6
	Latinx events		6		500
	Las Dos Fronteras event		1	16	16
	Youth Focus Group		1	12	12
	Email Campaigns				1,122
DO	Stakeholder Virtual Mtgs		3	98	98
nline	Public Virtual Mtgs		3	105	65
Ō	Website				6,090
	Social media ads				57,432
	TOTAL	2,500	22	772	65,387

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2.3 ETHNOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS ENSURING EQUITABLE MOBILITY

INTRODUCTION

The W.25th Street Corridor is complex. It connects culturally diverse and historically marginalized neighborhoods, including those that are linguistically isolated or digitally disenfranchised. The goal of the Ethnographic Research is to act as one of several techniques to ensure an equitable public engagement plan informs the important decision-making processes for planning and design recommendations, and ultimately increase RTA's MetroHealth Bus Line ridership.

The Ethnographic Research is designed to meet regular and infrequent transit riders that live, work or play along the W.25th Street corridor through (COVID-19 safe):

- > Bilingual (English-Spanish) face-to-face interviews;
- Participant observations riding the MetroHealth Bus Line, waiting in bus shelters, at 25Connects workshop(s) and community event(s);
- Pop-Up engagement(s) at local and popular transited spaces along the corridor in partnership with community organizations/stakeholders.

The Ethnographic Research enabled the project team us to listen, learn and immerse ourselves in the W. 25th Street Corridor, and ultimately select the appropriate tools to connect with regular transit riders and some of the more vulnerable and underestimated communities. The Ethnographic Research also informed the Personas' project. The Ethnographic Research guided the project team's ongoing management of an inclusive engagement and awareness process for 25Connects.

METHODOLOGY

The Ethnographic Research positions 25Connects to be present and intentionally engage with those who are impacted by planning decisions. It also invites them to play a role in the planning process through authentic and trustworthy partnerships. The participant experiences are crucial insights that 25Connects needs to design meaningful processes and practices that lead to positive outcomes and equitable mobility.







INSIGHTS FROM ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH

Conversations and observations during the Ethnographic Research process identified numerous insights from participants. These community derived ideas are organized into 3 major areas: Safety, Outreach, and Design. These categories suggest which RTA division and/or community ally may need to be involved and what type of actions may be merited.

SAFETY

Focusing on customer service (i.e. RTA staff behavior and demeanor with riders, improvements on riders' experience).

- > Extend bus service hours (and frequency) at night to accommodate students and adults attending after-school programs and/or working late shifts.
- > RTA drivers should be more friendly to passengers.
- > Bus drivers and/or RTA ambassadors during high traffic times (an idea brought by a resident) should assist individuals with strollers, wheelchairs and/or "shopping" carts. The RTA ambassador could also address passengers who may be drinking alcohol, smoking, or not giving their seats to pregnant women and/or disable individuals.
- > Ensue that RTA drivers are not driving aggressively.
- > Provide real time information for bus arrival times at every bus stop. Riders, especially women, don't feel safe waiting for the bus at night (and long waits during the winters are "painful").
- > Ensure current (and future) bus stops are clean and well-maintained. Riders / residents also want better lighting, security cameras, trash cans and wide/comfortable seats.

OUTREACH

Referring to RTA's familiarity and presence along the corridor (i.e. changes in human resources policies, requirements for staff culturally competent training).

- > Better advertising of the different options to purchase RTA tickets (i.e. via the RTA app, Terminal Tower, bus stops).
- > RTA should provide important information to riders via bilingual flyers (in busses + bus shelters), audio recordings (in busses + bus shelters) and through community organizations (i.e. CDCs, libraries). Meeting community residents and riders where they're at.
- RTA should host internal conversations with bus drivers to discuss what needs to change in order to better serve/support diverse riders, and create a healthy environment for their staff.
- Provide avenues for riders (and drivers) that experienced a traumatizing experience riding the RTA to report and be heard (if not from RTA, then a local organization).
- > Improve on-time arrival/departure in order to improve RTA's schedule consistency (especially in the winter).

DESIGN

- staff during rush hours.
- City, across the West Side Market.
- toddlers + pregnant women.

CHAPTER 2 : ENGAGEMENT METHODOLOGY

Pointing out elements in the built environment and/or physical elements on buses and bus shelters that could be targeted for change.

> The RTA needs better "farebox" technology on their buses. Riders' tickets are often swallowed by the machine, and they are left with no tickets to transfer and/or take a different bus that day/week.

> RTA should have a "CMSD-only bus" designated for students and/or CMSD

> RTA bus shelters should have a "breathable design" to control and/or mitigate bad odors on bus shelters. The bus stops should also be cleaned often. Particularly the most busy/transited shelters like the one in Ohio

> Bus shelters with room for strollers

> Reserve bus seats exclusively for passengers traveling with babies/

Provide "charging stations" on busses and/or bus shelters.

> Make a designated area for riders to store their bags/carts.



2.4 **PERSONAS** CAPTURING LIVED EXPERIENCES

W. 25th Street is a 3.5 mile long corridor on Cleveland's westside, extending through five neighborhoods. Each neighborhood has a unique visual character and culture. Approximately 44,000 residents live within a quarter mile radius from W. 25th Street. This diverse area is home to Cleveland's largest Spanish speaking population, multiple anchor institutions, and some of the highest market demand for new development. The community engagement strategy for 25Connects responds to this range of cultural, economic, and physical characteristics of the corridor. Multiple engagement tools were used to capture both the broad preferences and detailed experiences of community members, including a personas framework.

WHAT ARE PERSONAS?

A persona is a user archetype whose goals and behavior patterns are clearly described. The information describing each archetype is created through demographics research and interviews with individual community members. Personas created for 25Connects focused on users who may encounter particular barriers during their transit experience. For example, the persona named Diane is a pregnant woman in her 30s. Her perceptions of the transit experience are influenced by her concerns for her comfort and her child's safety. Other personas incorporated particular needs for wheelchair access, Spanish language translation, and amenities to support limited mobility.By designing for each persona, project recommendations can respond to the needs of the broader group represented by it.

HOW WERE THE PERSONAS USED?

Based on analysis of the target area's demographic data and ethnographic research, the design team generated six personas. The personas shown on the opposite page cover a range of ages, backgrounds, geographic locations, and mobility needs. Throughout the design process, the proposed ideas were assessed through the lens of each persona to identify missing opportunities to address user needs.

In addition, three of the personas represent individuals who participated in User Experience (UX) walks. These UX walks involved video and audio recording during the individual's walk from their home or business to the nearest bus stop. The individual was asked to talk-out-loud during length of the experience to verbalize everything that they thought or felt. Following the walk, the recordings were analyzed to identify moments where the individual appreciated an existing feature in their surroundings or felt a particular need for improvement. Overall, the personas served as one useful tool in a range of engagement methods to ensure all community voices were included in the design process.







Diane, 36 White Female

DEMOGRAPHICS:

Clark-Fulton resident Bachelor's Degree Rides bus 2x year

ABOUT:

Currently pregnant, she is concerned about her comfort and her young child's safety.

Jamal, 42 **Black Male**

DEMOGRAPHICS:

Old Brooklyn resident Bachelor's Degree Rides bus daily

ABOUT:

As a person who uses a wheelchair, he pays careful attention to sidewalk conditions and seamless access to transportation.



Isabella, 15 Latinx Female

DEMOGRAPHICS:

Brooklyn Centre resident High School Student Rides bus weekly

ABOUT:

She walks to Lincoln West High School from home most days, bus sometimes takes the bus with her friends.



Ben, 28 White Male

DEMOGRAPHICS: Ohio City resident Professional Degree Cyclist, bus 1x month

ABOUT: Riding his bike from Ohio City to work at MetroHealth. he is concerned about traffic calming on W. 25th.

Luis, 50 Latinx Male

DEMOGRAPHICS: Suburban resident No High School Degree Usually drives

ABOUT:

As an immigrant and local business owner, he hopes to attract visitors to his store and express his cultural heritage in the area.

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Monique, 75 **Black Female**

DEMOGRAPHICS: Ohio City resident

Master's Degree Rides bus 2x week

ABOUT:

Since retiring, she enjoys visiting local parks to stroll with use of her cane and volunteering at local service organizations.



2.5 ENGAGEMENT METHODS MANY MODES FOR A DIVERSE COMMUNITY

APPROACH

The engagement plan utilized multiple modes of input, providing options for different stakeholder needs and preferences. The variety of engagement methods also responded to COVID-19 safety guidelines by providing online public meetings, while also connecting with individuals without internet access. Engagement Street Team Leaders, Diane Howard and Sonia Matis, were critical to the project's success reaching people in-person. They distributed invitations to public meetings, helped residents complete printed copies of the survey, and spoke directly with members of the community to document their feedback.

Incorporating a range of broad to in-depth engagement actions, the project recommendations respond confidently to the community's priorities. Community feedback was received through nearly 800 participant touchpoints and project information was shared through 65,000+ impressions.

The engagment methods below were designed to work like a multifaceted lens to see the community in its full complexity.

- Project websites: 25Connects.com (English) & 25Conecta.com (Spanish)
- Social Media (posts and paid ads)
- > Ethnographic Research (individual interviews & observations)
- > Stakeholder Committee Meetings
- Virtual Community Events
- > Mobile Tours
- > User Experience (UX) Walks
- > Youth Focus Group
- Latinx Radio Interviews
- Surveys (Online and Print)
- > Café con Leche Events

Examples of five engagement methods are described and shown to the right. The following pages (24 & 25) include more detailed insights derived from the User Experience (UX) Walks. Each of the four UX Walks were documented using a journey map visual as shown on page 24. Insights derived from three of the UX Walks are summarized on page 25. Feedback gathered from all modes of engagement were integrated into the accompanying reports for the *BRT Study* and *Zoning Review and Policy Recommendations*.

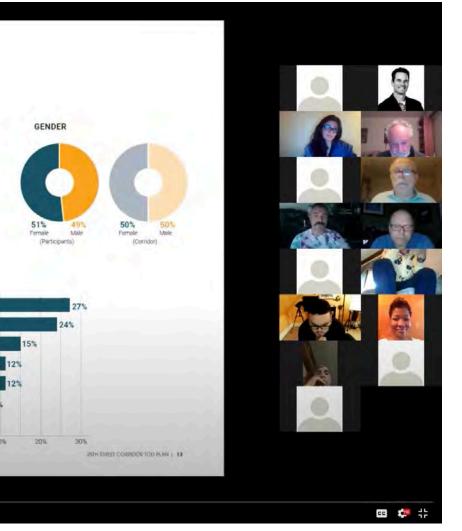
VIRTUAL COMMUNITY & STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

7%

Due to COVID-19 safety guidelines, the engagement plan included online virtual meetings held on Zoom. Virtual meetings were used for the Stakeholder Committee meetings and the three public meetings. In order to include residents who were not likely to participate online, the engagement plan also incorporated a range of in-person activities. The number of participants at each of these events was limited to the applicable safety threshold.

MOBILE TOURS

In addition to the online public meetings, the engagement strategy included a series of Mobile Tours. Each outdoor session limited participation to 12 or fewer individuals, following COVID-19 safety protocols. The facilitated sessions were conducted along five different segments of W. 25th Street and Pearl Road. A sixth session invited cyclists and covered the entire length of the corridor. Participants stopped at several spots along the tour to answer questions via mobile device.









USER EXPERIENCE (UX) WALKS

A User Experience (UX) Walk is an enagement method used to capture detailed insights on an individual's actions, feelings, and thoughts while walking from their home to the nearest bus stop. Four individuals participated in the walks. Each person represented a different Persona: Diane; Jamal; Luis; and Monique. A project team member followed each individual to video and audio record their activities and verbal descriptions during the walk, then analyzed for insights.

SURVEYS

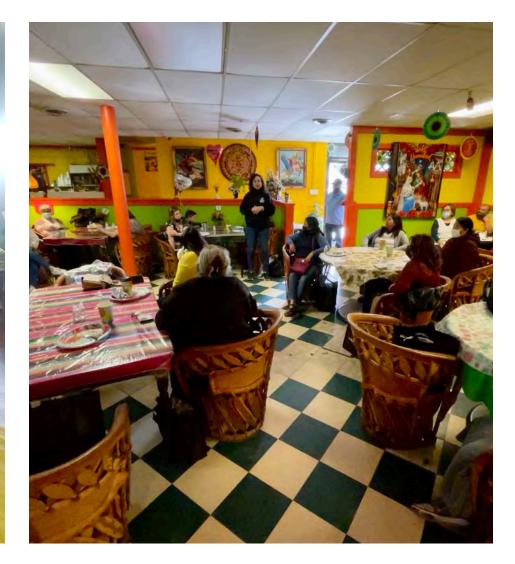
Over the course of the project, two different surveys were disseminated in the community. Nearly 500 individuals responded to the surveys, which were available online and provided in print versions. The first survey allowed respondents to identify their main priorities and concerns for the project. Based on the responses from the first survey, the questions for the second survey focused on the community's preferences for bus station design and community character.

CAFÉ CON LECHE EVENTS

In order to effectively engage and welcome individuals who speak Spanish, all project materials were provided in bilingual versions. The first online public event invited both English and Spanish speakers. Both English and Spanish text was shown on each presentation slide and a translator was available for participant questions. But two subsequent public events for the Spanish speaking community were held in-person at Las Dos Fronteras, called Café Con Leche events.







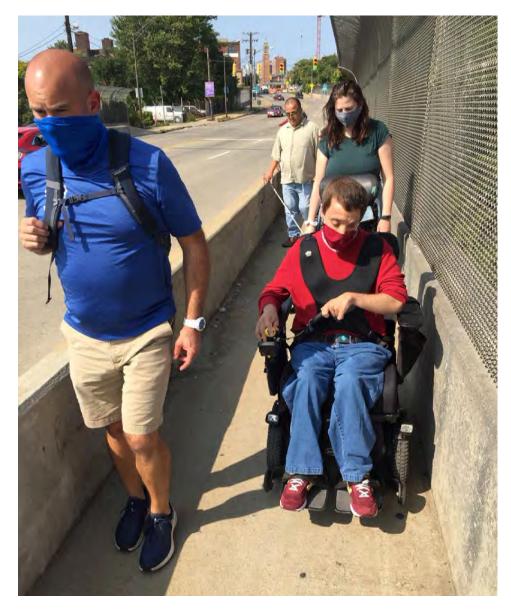
CHAPTER 2 : ENGAGEMENT METHODOLOGY



EXAMPLES OF FEEDBACK DURING MOBILE TOURS

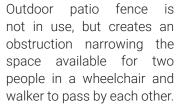


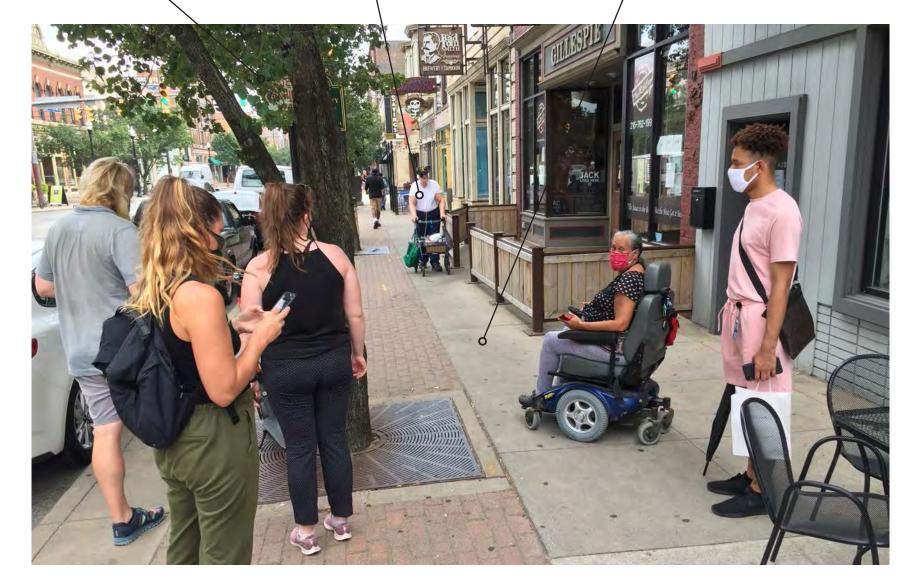
Lack of sufficient lighting. Broken glass is very difficult for people in a wheelchair to avoid and can puncture tires. Walkway is not wide enough for a wheelchair and stroller to pass by. Felt vulnerable crossing long bridge without ability to avoid danger.





Trees provide shade within a hardscape environment.









Due to the narrow effective width of the sidewalk, an individual in a wheelchair is forced to wait for another person with mobility limitations to walk past before she can continue on her way.



COMMENTS FROM COMMUNITY MEMBER WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

First of all, there's no crosswalk indicator for the blind. Second of all, there's no crosswalk marking on the street to let the blind know they're going off track.

There's a little too much congestion in this busy area to be walking around with unmarked crosswalks.

Some locations have too many curb cuts into parking lots. They should install signs in the parking lots warning drivers that pedestrians are crossing on the sidewalk. The condition of the sidewalks is bad. Some sections that are sloped should be leveled out.

CHAPTER 2 : ENGAGEMENT METHODOLOGY



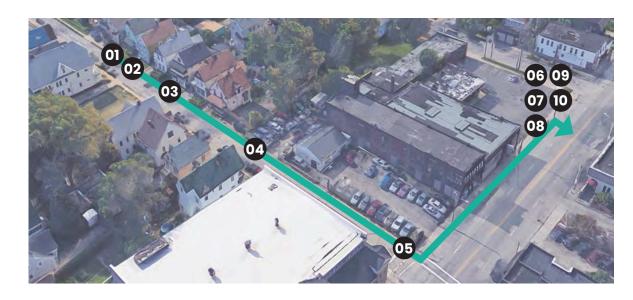
EXAMPLE OF USER EXPERIENCE (UX) WALK JOURNEY MAP



Diane, 36 White Female

DEMOGRAPHICS: Clark-Fulton resident Bachelor's Degree Rides bus 2x year

ABOUT: Currently pregnant, she is concerned about her comfort and her young child's safety.

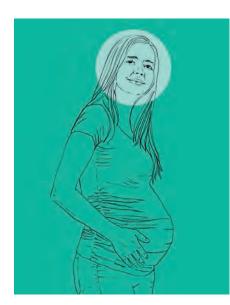


		PLAN	NING	W.	ALKING TO E	BUS		WAITING A	AT BUS STOP		REFLECTIO	ON
ACTIONS	: MARKET	She takes out cellphone to find location of nearest bus stop and bus schedule.	First uses phone to find schedule on RTA's website, then switches to Google Maps.	Identifies which direction to walk from her house to the nearest bus stop.	Walks down Althen Avenue to W. 25th St.	Notices the blue MetroHealth Line bus signage along W. 25th St.	Arrives at bus stop on northbound side of W. 25th St, at Holmden Ave.	While standing, waiting at the bus stop, she notices the convenience store nearby.	Looks around the bus stop area and points to parking lot and sidewalks.	Points to W. 25th Street and Althen Ave. roadways, near the curb edges.	As bus arrives, she talks about the benefits of riding the bus in the future.	S
THOUGHTS	BUS TO WESTIDE	I've never been on the bus before, but I know there's a bus route on W. 25th Street.	I use public transit in other cities and I just remembered that I use Google Maps there.	I'm assuming it will take a long time for the bus to come and I'll have to sit on a bench.	I wish our sidewalk was in better condition. These hanging wires look dangerous for kids!	I see a sign! I also see one on the other side of the street—that's to go to the Zoo.	I assumed I would have seen a whole shelter. I wish I had somewhere to sit.	If there's ever a long wait, I could just run in Hanni's Convenience Store if it's too hot.	I don't like that people leave trash around like this. I wish the weeds were removed.	When it rains, there's a huge pool of water. I hope no one splashes me.	I hope I will meet more of my neighbors, if I walk to the bus more often.	METROHEALTH LINE BUS
EMOTIONS	TO TAKE	Curious Pensive	Confused Uncertain	Attentive Curious	Uncomfortable Irritated	Relieved Happy	Dissapointed Uncomfortable	Attentive Bored	Concerned Disappointed	Unsafe Worried	Reflective Optimistic	BOARDS METROH
EMOTIONAL BASELINE	LEAVES HOME	↑0]	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	





KEY INSIGHTS FROM THREE USER EXPERIENCE (UX) WALKS



I wish it looked the way it felt to live here.

DIANE, 36 White Female

KEY INSIGHTS:

- + Proximity between bus stop and convenient store could provide useful amenity (restroom, drinks, etc.), if it's safe.
- + More familiar with using public transit in other cities.
- + Wants to buy groceries nearby, if convenient
- + Appreciated recognizable bus signs from a distance.
- Needs clarity about which transit app to trust.
- Not confident bus will actually arrive when app indicates.
- Poor quality of sidewalks is barrier to walking with stroller.
- Wires hanging from poles feels like safety hazzard.
- Narrow sidewalks leave little room to walk safely & avoid puddle splashes from roadway.
- Concerned about maintaining distance (COVID & smokers) while waiting at bus stop.
- Disappointed no seating or shelter is available at bus stop.
- Doesn't mind grafitti, but would like trash removed near stop.

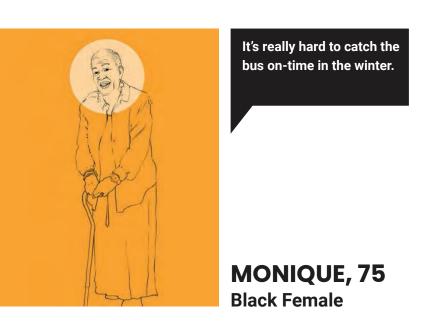


We're looking for a lot to build our own space where we can grow our business near MetroHealth.

LUIS, 50 Latinx Male

KEY INSIGHTS:

- + Wants to grow business nearby MetroHealth.
- + Appreciates bus riders and MetroHealth employees/visitors as important customers.
- + Interested in buying a building on W. 25th Street to expand his business and no longer pay rent to a landlord.
- Lack of bus shelter compels people to wait inside his store to stay warm and dry, but sometimes create problems.
- Snow plows bury the sidewalks and his store windows in snow, blocking access and creating a dirty exterior.
- Concerned about cars cutting through his parking lot to access side streets.
- Poor parking lot condition creates dust and safety issues.
- Would like to improve safety crossing W. 25th Street
- Concerned about landlord's lack of repairs and investment.
- Too much trash on adjacent lots and unauthorized garbage piling up in his business dumpster.



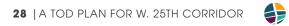
KEY INSIGHTS:

- Street.
- + Loves the new multi-use trail nearby where seniors can walk.
- sunny and too hot.
- early to be safe.
- bus stop.
- Concerned about safety at the bus stop—would like a security camera in addition to Emergency Call Box.
- It's really hard to catch the bus on-time in the winter.

CHAPTER 2 : ENGAGEMENT METHODOLOGY

- + Bus is an important transportation mode for her and her neighbors.
- + Appreciates paratransit access and the #81 bus to connect to W. 25th
- + Enjoys talking to other neighbors while walking to the bus.
- Lack of trees, particularly on one side of the street, makes the walk very
- Having to walk up the hill is difficult for seniors and can take a long time, which makes us late for the bus. So, we have to leave at least a 1/2 hour
- Wants more seating at spots along the walk from her apartment to the

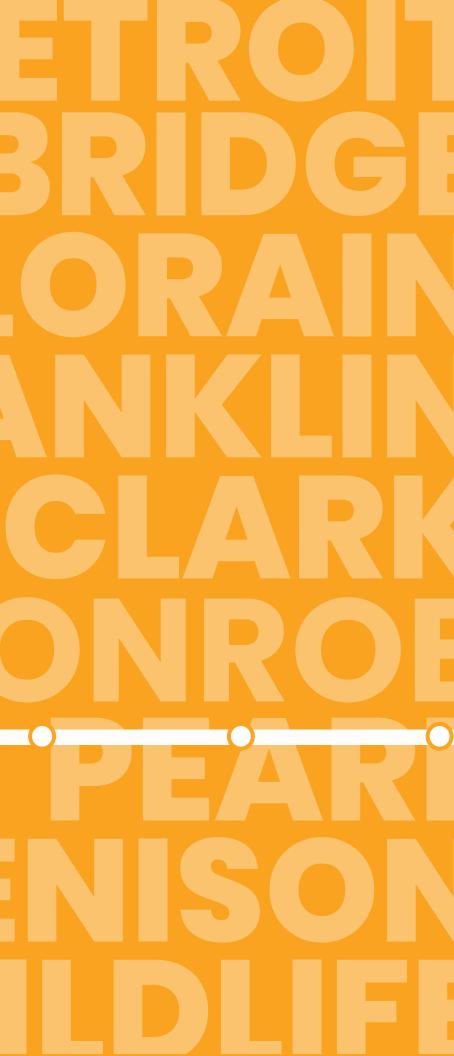








CHAPTER 3 COMMUNITY FEEDBACK



3.1 **PHASE 1: EXISTING CONDITIONS OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES**

The first phase of the engagement process focused on gathering visual documentation and community sentiment on existing conditions. As an initial form of documentation, the project team photographed both sides of the entire 3.5 mile corridor. These continuous streetscape elevations served as a valuable reference to compare architectural styles, building scales, vacant lots, and bus station amenities between different corridor segments.

Community engagement activities during the first phase of work included ethnographic research, the first Stakeholder Committee meeting, a Virtual Community Kick-off Meeting, and Mobile Tours. A insights from the site documentation, ethnographic research, and Stakeholder Committee meeting identified important segments of the corridor. These segments served as the routes for six Mobile Tours conducted along the corridor.

MOBILE TOURS FORMAT

Scheduled early in the engagement process, the Mobile Tours provided a valuable method to collect community sentiments on existing conditions. The on-the-ground experience allowed design team members to meet and interact with local residents, while maintaining COVID-19 guidelines. Five of the sessions invited participants to walk or use wheelchairs during a 45-60 minute facilitated tour of a corridor segment. An additional tour was designed for cyclists, which covered the entire length of the corridor. Participants stopped to answer questions via mobile device survey at 4-5 locations per tour. The survey questions asked

- > How would you rate the following street conditions? (Sense of safety, width of sidewalks, width of roadway, height of buildings, street trees, available seating)
- > What are the three best qualities of this place? (Street trees, traffic speeds, surrounding buildings, public art, seating/benches, sidewalk area, outdoor spaces, bus waiting area, other - please specify)
- > What are the most negative-biggest challenges-for this place? (Vacant land, sidewalk width, sense of safety, traffic speeds, lack of street trees, lack of seating, bus waiting area, other - please specify)
- > What additional comments do you have to improve this place?

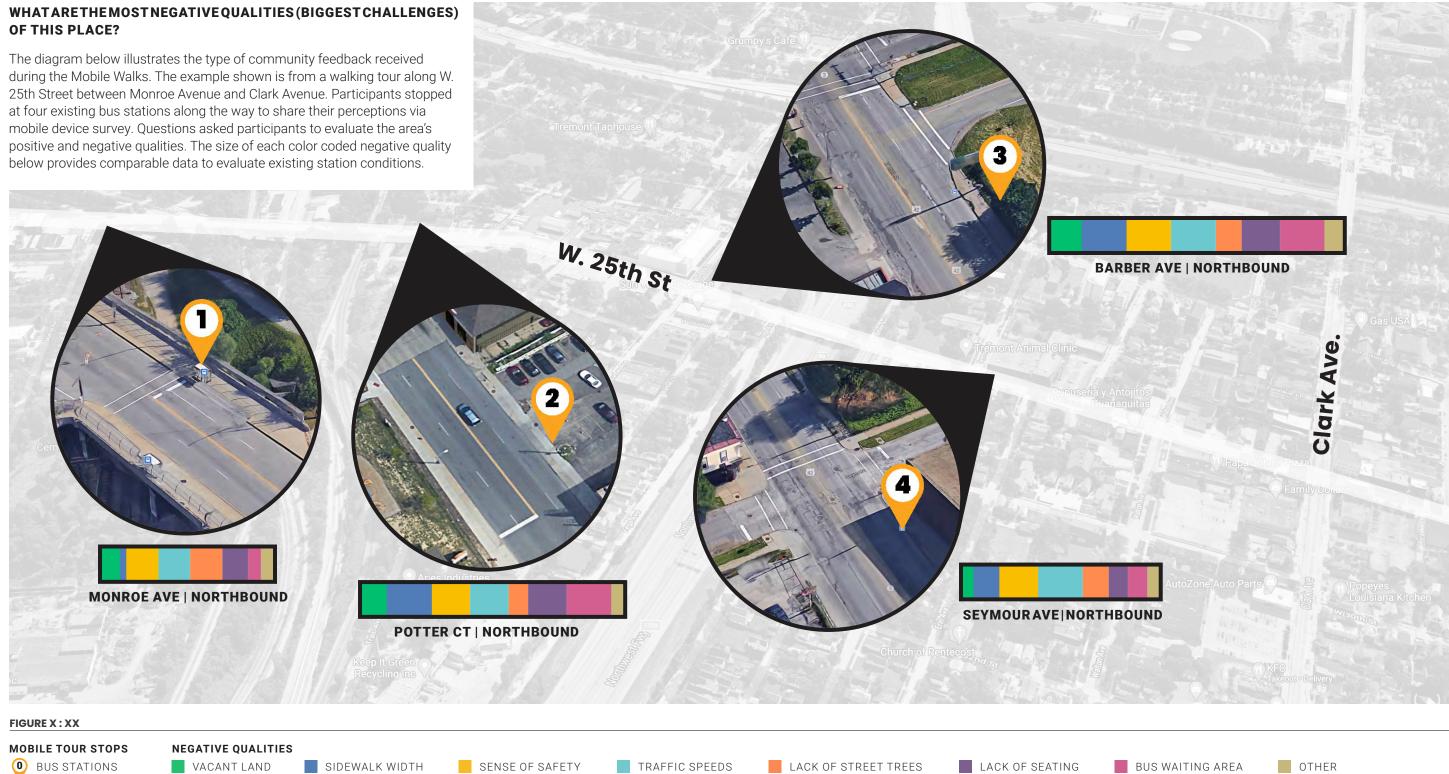
A summary of the feedback received during the Mobile Tours for 17 bus stop locations along the W. 25th Street corridor is shown in the chart on the right.

LOCATION	COMMENTS	LOCATION	COMMENTS
1 DETROIT AVE	 PUBLIC ART & BUS STOP ARE ATTRACTIVE NEED TO NARROW ROAD, FEELS UNSAFE 	10 CLARK AVE	 > BEST QUALITIES ARE BUILDINGS & PUBLIC ART > NEEDS TRAFFIC CALMING & LITTER REMOVAL
2 FRANKLIN BLVD	 GREAT POTENTIAL VIEWS OF FARM & RIVER NEEDS LITTER CLEANUP, SEATING, LIGHTING 	11 ALTHEN AVE	 SIDEWALK NARROW, TRAFFIC TOO FAST LACK OF STREET TREES AND SHADE
3 JAY AVE	 SIDEWALKS & TREE LAWNS NEED MAINTENANCE WANT MORE SEATING OPTIONS 	12 MEYER AVE	 ADJACENT USES ARE ASSETS LACK OF SEATING AND NARROW SIDEWALKS
4 LORAIN AVE	 ATTRACTIVE SEATING, BUILDINGS, & PUBLIC ART SAFETY CONCERNS AT MARKET SQUARE PARK 	13 METROHEALTH	 DEVELOPMENT TOO AUTOMOBILE CENTRIC FEELS A BIT SAFER THAN OTHER STOPS
5 CHATHAM AVE	 STREET TREES ARE THE BEST FEATURE NEED SHELTER, SEATING & CROSSWALKS 	14 MAPLEDALE AVE	 AMPLE SIDEWALK & WALL FOR SITTING STOP COULD MOVE CLOSER TO LIBRARY
6 COLUMBUS RD	 FEELS ISOLATED, WITHOUT ACTIVE BUILDINGS NEEDS GREENERY, SHADE & PUBLIC ART 	15 ARCHWOOD AVE	 > HISTORIC ARCHITECTURE & STREET TREES > NEEDS MORE LIGHTING & BENCHES
7 POTTER CT	 NARROW SIDEWALK AND LACK OF SEATING TRAFFIC SPEEDS MAKE CROSSING UNSAFE 	16 DENISON AVE	 > TRAFFIC SPEEDS ARE SAFETY CONCERN > NEEDS STREET TREES & SEATING
8 I-90 RAMP	 VERY UNSAFE, CARS ENTERING HIGHWAY NEEDS NEW LIGHTING & CROSSWALKS 	17 WILDLIFE WAY	 ATTRACTIVE PARK, TREES & PUBLIC ART TRAFFIC SPEEDS & CROSSWALK UNSAFE
9 SEYMOUR AVE	 > BUS SHELTER FEELS SAFE NEAR BUILDING > MORE SEATING, CROSSWALKS & PUBLIC ART 		

MOBILE TOURS SUMMARY







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CHAPTER 3 : COMMUNITY FEEDBACK



3.2 **PHASE 2: UNDERSTANDING OPTIONS** ESTABLISHING CORRIDOR PRIORITIES

Building on the previous existing conditions assessment, Phase 2 of the engagement plan introduced options to the community. The objective for this phase was to help stakeholders understand various options the project could focus on and empower the community to choose their priorities. The options included elements of Transit Oriented Development (TOD), Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), and related opportunities.

Engagement activities during Phase 2 included the second Stakeholder Committee meeting and Virtual Public Meeting, as well as focus groups and BRT Priorities Survey 1.0. The survey was completed by 162 individuals, providing clear priorities to guide the design recommendations and subsequent engagement activities in Phase 3.

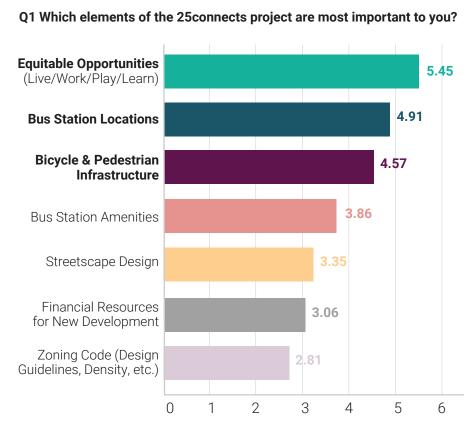
BRT PRIORITIES SURVEY 1.0 RESULTS

The first of two surveys used during 25Connects, the BRT Priorities Survey introduced community members to the project objectives, study area map, key terms, project prioritization questions, and demographics data. The four main questions about project priorities allowed respondents to rank their answers. Questions included:

- > Which elements of the 25Connects project are most important to you?
- > What do you see as the biggest opportunity with the 25connects project?
- > What do you see as the biggest risks with the 25connects project?
- > What elements should be included at every Base BRT station?

Responses to the four questions are shown in rank order in the charts to the right. The emphasis on Equitable Opportunities in the neighborhood to live, work, play, and learn was noted throughout the engagement process. It corresponds with the top answer to Question 3 about biggest perceived risks for the project: Loss of Affordability (increase in Rental/Home prices).

According to community feedback, the biggest opportunities for the project are improved bus service (faster and more reliable), better connections between mobility options (bike, bus, car, pedestrian, scooters, etc.), and more housing choices (in terms of variety and affordability). Question 4's top response of bus shelters at each station led to the prioritization of bus shelter design and station amenities in the second community survey.



Improve Bus Service (Faster, More Reliable)

> **Better Connections / Mobility Options**

More Housing Choices (Variety & Affordability)

Job Creation

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New Businesses
(Retail & Commercial)
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Improve Accessibility (Universal Design)

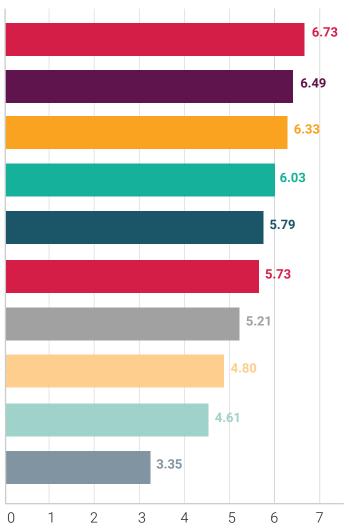
Build Up Community Character & Culture

> Better Sidewalk Conditions

Improve Visual Appearance (W. 25th)

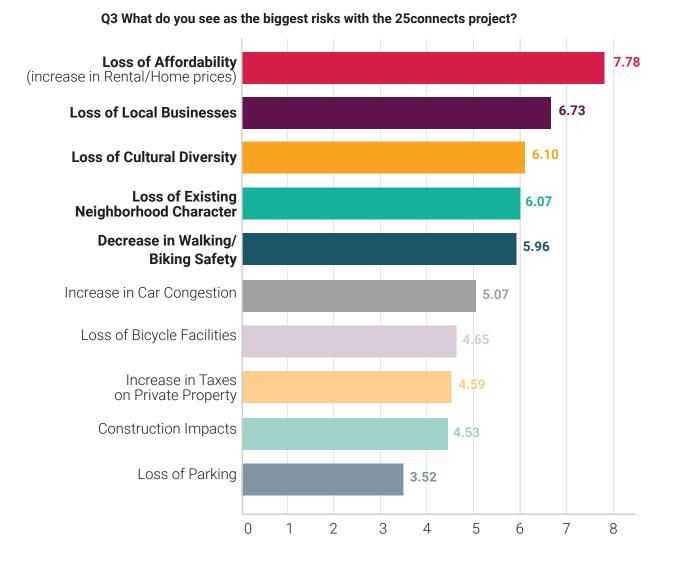
Better Road Conditions for Driving



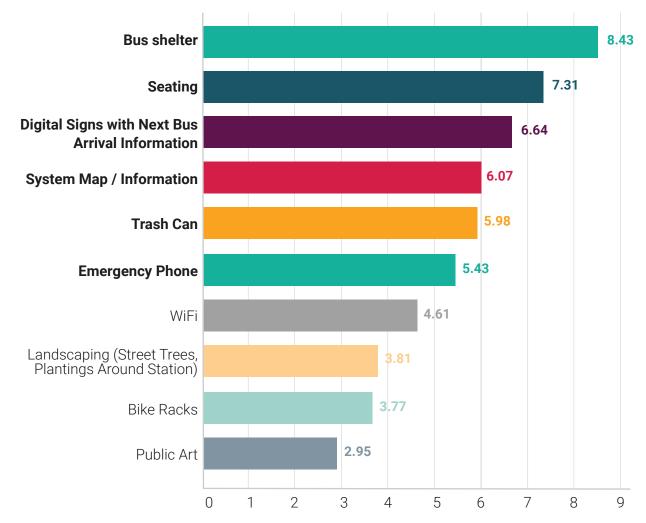


Q2 What do you see as the biggest opportunity with the 25connects project?









CHAPTER 3 : COMMUNITY FEEDBACK



^{3.3} **PHASE 3: REFINING DESIGN** STATION AND SHELTER PREFERENCES

The final phase of community engagement centered attention on critical features of the bus shelters and station areas. Feedback from the previous survey and other feedback methods underscored the importance of the transit waiting environments. To improve the transit rider experience and enhance the appearance of the corridor, the bus stations will play a key role.

PUBLIC FEEDBACK FOR STATION OPTIONS

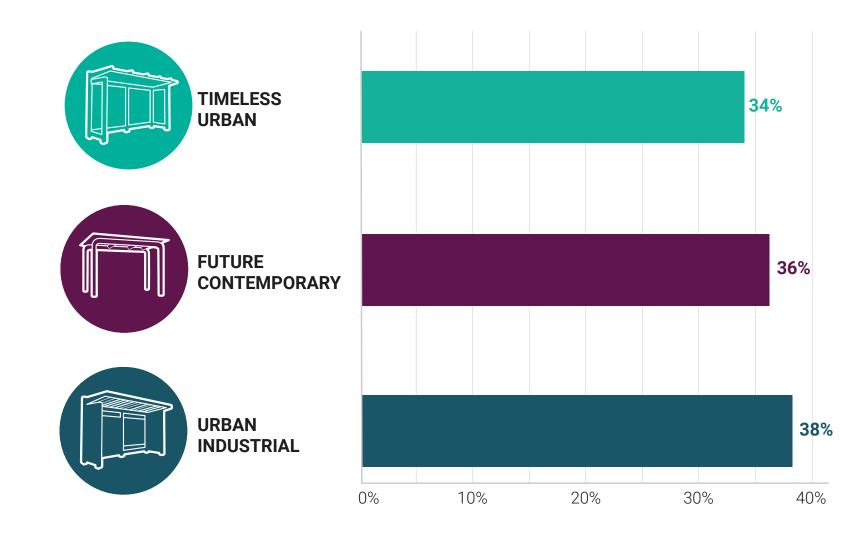
Multiple engagement methods were used to gather community input on station typologies, design, and character. These methods included mobile tours, User Experience (UX) walks, virtual public meetings, and surveys. Three mobile tours were conducted as walking tours, one by bicycle, and another conducted with individuals who require the use of a wheelchair. Feedback from these five different mobile tours provided a range of recommendations for station locations, public realm enhancements, and improvements for accessibility. The UX walks revealed detailed insights on three transit riders' emotional and physical experiences travelling between their home or business and the nearest bus stop. Two different surveys were used during the engagement process. The importance of bus shelters was particularly emphasized through the responses from the first survey. Therefore, the second survey focused questions on the design features of the bus station's shelter and amenities.

STATION SURVEY 2.0 RESULTS

The second survey introduced three distinct bus station design options. Survey respondents were provided brief descriptions and images of each design. The example images were only representational and not shown with the full complement of amenities and possible configurations. The design options are:

- > Timeless Urban
- Future Contemporary
- > Urban Industrial

Community preference was split between the three options. Each design option received about 1/3 of the votes. Urban Industrial was the slight favorite with 38% of the survey respondants. But public comments identified pros and cons with each design. The final design process for the bus station should incorporate the best features from each option to reflect community priorities.







TIMELESS URBAN



DESIGN DESCRIPTION

Influenced by the architecture along the corridor, the Timeless Urban station design gives a nod to the past expressed in simple lines and a lighter aesthetic.

- Traditional lines
- Contemporary materials
- > Highly transparent (allows views of surrounding buildings)
- > Light aesthetic

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

- > It is simple and quite similar to the booths today.
- > I like all glass so you can see buses coming and also I feel safer when cars can see me, especially when I'm travelling alone.
- > I like that this design blends in well with the surroundings.
- > I don't think it's very suitable for the weather. It must be something a little warmer.
- > Good wind and rain protection. Not super attractive.
- > I like how transparent they are but don't make a statement in the same way that the other options do.

FUTURE CONTEMPORARY



DESIGN DESCRIPTION

The fluid expressive shape of the shelter combined with clean line amenities make the station stand out along the corridor.

- Expressive shape
- > Establishes unique BRT identity
- > Materials contrast with masonry/brick of the corridor

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

- > I like that the top is not clear and provides shade. The bench does not look comfortable or practical though. Its a little futuristic, but all around okay!
- > Too modern and is out of context with the many historical buildings that exist on this corridor. May end up looking dated ...
- > The gaps between the glass sides and the top would let in too much cold air.
- > Modern and attractive. It's unique!
- > It looks cool, but too skimpy.



DESIGN DESCRIPTION

Celebrating the industrial commerce past of the corridor, the black ironlike frames of the shelters support wood paneling underneath providing a warmth to the structure.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

- in design.
- elements

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CHAPTER 3 : COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

URBAN INDUSTRIAL

> Middle ground of the two previous options > Balance of glass and metal

> Wooden under-roof provides a 'warm' look

> I like this a lot. It is unique, it establishes a BRT identity, it fits with the street without blending into the street, and it's visually interesting. But the narrow/non-existing sides will let in too much rain/snow, rendering it a less-than-useful shelter.

Warm look but still lacks enough sitting area.

> Now this is much better than the other two options. I like the mix of architectural features and colors. This matches current trends

> Like: wooden under-roof Dislike: least amount of shelter from



3.3 **PHASE 3: REFINING DESIGN** PRIORITIES FOR STATION DESIGN

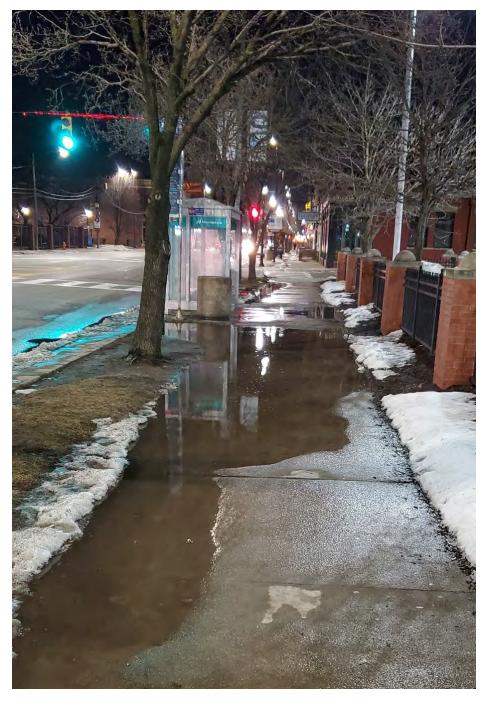
CRITERIA FOR FINAL STATION DESIGN

The close results of the station design preference survey showed no single option was a clear winner. Comments in the survey revealed a number of positive attributes and negative features for each design. The design and engineering process to create the final bus station should incorporate elements from all. A summary of the feedback from each station option is shown on the opposite page. The feedback is organized under three key priorities.

KEY PRIORITIES

- Focus on station function
- > Design the details
- Accessible for everyone











1 FOCUS ON STATION FUNCTION

Design of the bus stations will require careful assessment of each location to respond to available space in the public right-of-way. Some locations along the corridor have ample room for large bus shelters and additional seating, but most locations have relatively narrow space available. Available footprint will be a key factor in determining the configuration of the bus station. The community feedback emphasized the importance of bus shelter function-protection from the elements. Survey responses targeted the need for the final design to provide protection from wind and rain from not only the roof, but at least three sides of the bus shelter. Transparent walls for bus visibility and safety were also critical.

DESIGN FOR CLEVELAND'S WET, WINDY, AND WINTER WEATHER.

- > Most common desire was protection from the elements on all sides of the shelter
- > Want to have ample seating inside and outside the shelter (deep and wide)
- > Concerned about roofs with clear glass because of visible dirt buildup, vandalism. and heat in summer
- > Desire for glass/transparent side walls to maximize visual safety and provide protection from the weather
- > Many liked the wood seat and ceiling material option

2 DESIGN THE DETAILS

The MetroHealth Line is already one of Cleveland's busiest transit corridors. But community members believe the corridor can attract many more bus riders. For the benefit of current and future riders, the bus shelters and station amenities need to express special attention to detail. For example, community members stressed the need to minimize gaps between shelter walls to protect patrons from cold winter winds. The corridor's architectural style and cultural character changes along its 3.5 mile stretch. While the basic bus shelter design may remain the same, some amenities or public art elements might change to reflect their surroundings.

DESIGN TO ELEVATE THE TRANSIT RIDER EXPERIENCE.

- Focus on function over form
- > Split between people who want a neutral design vs. a distinctive design
- > Do not obstruct direct line of sight of arriving buses from inside shelter with signs (maps, ads, etc.)
- > Lighting is a critical consideration to provide a sense of safety



The engagement process benefited from the participation of many individuals with specific mobility needs. One of the Mobile Tours was conducted in partnership with Maximum Accessible Housing of Ohio, an organization that advances accessibility, independence, and inclusion in homes and communities. Several participants during the Mobile Tour require the use of a wheelchair or visually impaired. Feedback from the session identified needs for new ramps, wider sidewalk areas, audible crosswalk signals, and better maintenance to remove debris which could cause wheelchair tire punctures.

SET AN EXAMPLE FOR BARRIER-FREE MOBILITY.

- under the shelter

CHAPTER 3 : COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

ACCESSIBLE FOR EVERYONE

> Should accommodate individuals who use a wheelchair to fit comfortably

> Provide ample space adjacent to shelters for individuals who require a wheelchair to maneuver and access the bus



^{3.5} **PHASE 3: REFINING DESIGN** NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER

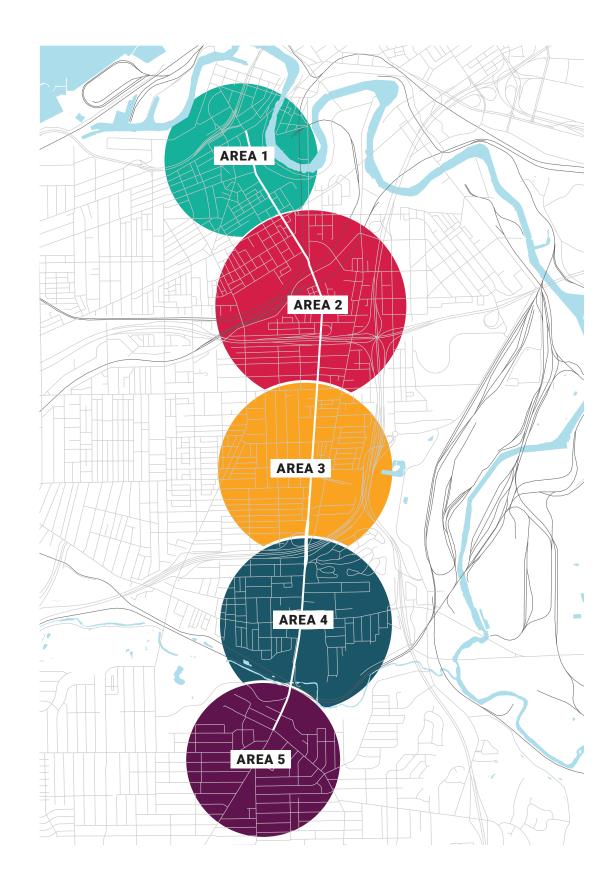
Once a bus shelter option is selected for the Once a bus shelter option is selected for the entire corridor, unique design elements may be added to the shelters in each area to express the local character and culture. In addition to questions about the bus station design, the second survey also asked respondents to share their impressions of the corridor. The entire corridor was divided into five areas based on physical conditions and local identity. For example, the survey asked:

 What existing places, special features, or other visual elements do you see when you think of Area 1? (These ideas will inspire unique design elements for bus stations within Area 1: North of Lorain Avenue.)

Responses to similar questions for each of the five areas were processed into word clouds. The visual format of the word clouds presents words used most frequently as larger sizes. So, a quick scan of each word cloud provides a summary of the terms participants associate with each area. Further investigation is necessary to identify the exact visual imagery and narratives the bus station designs should incorporate. But the following data provides a start for describing the neighborhood character from the community's perspective.

CORRIDOR AREAS

- AREA 1: Ohio City (North)
- > AREA 2: Ohio City (South) / Tremont
- > AREA 3: Clark-Fulton
- > AREA 4: Brooklyn-Centre
- > AREA 5: Old Brooklyn







AREA 1: OHIO CITY (NORTH)

PARK DETROIT SUPERIOR BRIDGE LUTHERAN HOSPITAL FRANKLIN CIRCLE LAKEVIEW TERRACE ST MALACHI BRICK CLEVELAND HISTORY FLATS WELL IMPORTANT ACCESS VIEWS DOWNTOWN WESTSIDE MARKET LOCAL ELEMENTS TREES **HISTORIC** UNIQUE THINK FOOD AREA HOUSING **DESIGN** SHOPPING WEST SIDE MARKET PEOPLE BRIDGES STREET LAKE BUSINESSES BUILDINGS ST IGNATIUS OHIO CITY STATION OLD INDUSTRY RIVER ART BREWERY CHURCH MURALS DISTRICT

LAKEVIEW PUBLIC ART LAKE ERIE IRISHTOWN BEND PARK WATER

AREA 2: OHIO CITY (SOUTH) / TREMONT

FEATURE RED LINE W 25TH TRAIN AVENUE CONNECTION MIX NEIGHBORHOOD

BRIDGE NESTLE BUILDINGS MURAL AREA GOOD

COMMUNITY HOMES OLD USED NEW GATEWAYS BUSINESSES NEW DEVELOPMENTS CLARKS NEEDS DUCK ISLAND **HISTORIC** TREES

AREA 3: CLARK-FULTON

FEATURE CHRISTMAS STORY HOUSE LATINX CLARK FULTON CHURCHES SPANISH

METRO HEALTH SHELTERS BUILDINGS TREMONT HISPANIC BUS SHELTERS

PLACE AREA HEALTH METRO LIVES

NEIGHBORHOOD USING HOSPITAL LATIN COMMUNITY NEW DICKEY LANES BUSINESSES

AREA 4: BROOKLYN-CENTRE

NEED W 25TH PEARL HISTORIC DISTRIC PARK OLD CEMETERY BUS BRIDGE OLD BROOKLYN DENISON BUILDING

BROOKLYN CENTRE VALLEY AREA TREES ZOO **RIVERSIDE CEMETERY** SEE **HISTORIC** DISTRICT METROPARKS

AREA 5: OLD BROOKLYN

OLD CLEVELAND METROPARKS ZOO RESIDENTIAL SMALL BUSINESSES BRIGHTON PARK

PEARL BUILDINGS OLD BROOKLYN BRIGHTON ZOO

NEIGHBORHOODS AREA DOWNTOWN OLD BROOKLYN HISTORIC USING CHURCH

COMMUNITY **NEW** DEACONESS HOSPITAL OLD BROOKLYN NEIGHBORHOOD **PARK**

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CHAPTER 3 : COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

LORAIN FEEL HISPANIC WEST ALSO PLACE INDUSTRIAL LA VILLA HISPANA

WEST SIDE MARKET CLARK TRAIN TREMONT





