

MEMORANDUM

To: Afshin Famili, Ph.D., PE
City of Richmond - Department of Public Works
From: David Capparuccini, P.E., Kimley-Horn
Date: August 23, 2024
Subject: Summary of Public Engagement

Introduction

The following is a summary of the public engagement survey for the changes to the bike lanes at Franklin Street between N Lombardy Street and Belvedere Street. There were three questions asked in relation to the design concept. These were the following:

1. The proposed design uses paint and flexible posts to separate the cycle track from parked cars. Do you have any comments on this design? (See A7 for comments about the Lombardy St intersection)
2. The Lombardy St intersection (Stuart Circle) is complicated. The proposed design incorporates street art on pavement (street murals), paint and flex posts to reduce the size of the intersection and eliminates parking spaces. Do you have any comments on this design?
3. Do you have any suggestions or changes you would like to see in the proposed design?

There are a total of 552 comments left for the two questions related to the Franklin Street design. Of the 552 comments, 333 of them support the proposed design, 156 oppose it, and 63 are neutral.

Question 1

Summary of Support Comments

- There are 119 comments in support of the changes to Franklin Street bike lanes expressing an appreciation for the proposed improved safety.
- Majority comments in support express concern over the lack of a physical barrier between the bike lanes and the parking. The comments can be summarized in the following:
 - Paint, flex posts, and parked cars are fine separation, as long as there is appropriate enforcement of parked cars encroaching on the bike lane. This is an issue city-wide.
 - Participants have already seen vehicles parked in buffer spaces with no physical deterrent.
 - Concerned with the service life of the flex posts, participants reference areas where they have seen vehicle traffic drive over flex posts and the posts are not replaced.
- One response was concerned with the transition to a single lane resulting in increased traffic within the corridor.
- One response was concerned with the retaining the loading/unloading area in front of 612 W. Franklin Street.
- Participants expressed concern with vehicular traffic making left-turn movements not yielding to bicycle traffic.

Summary of Neutral Comments

- There are 23 comments neutral to the changes to Franklin Street.
- Majority comments in support express concern over the lack of a physical barrier between the bike lanes and the parking. The comments can be summarized in the following:
 - Paint, flex posts, and parked cars are fine separation, as long as there is appropriate enforcement of parked cars encroaching on the bike lane. This is an issue city-wide.
 - Participants have already seen vehicles parked in buffer spaces with no physical deterrent.
 - Concerned with the service life of the flex posts, participants reference areas where they have seen vehicle traffic drive over flex posts and the posts are not replaced.

Summary of Opposition Comments

- There are 53 comments opposed to the changes to Franklin Street.
- Majority are concerned with losing street parking along the roadway. Emphasis was made regarding the loading/unloading area in front of 612 W. Franklin Street. One response stated that loading area provides a secondary entrance for emergency vehicles to access nearby residential buildings.
- Some participants dislike the aesthetic of using the flex post and would prefer more visually appealing improvements, such as vegetative planters.
- Concerned that the existing roadway does not have heavy bicycle traffic and are concerned that the improvement would be under utilized.
- Majority express concern with transition from two lanes to a single lane resulting in congestion and worsening traffic conditions. Creates the opportunity for backups caused by people trying to park or load/unload blocking the through lane.
- There are opinions that the proposed project is not an adequate use of taxpayer funds.

Question 2

Summary of Support Comments

- There are 128 comments in support of the changes to Franklin Street bike lanes expressing an appreciation for the proposed improved safety.
- Majority comments in support express concern over the lack of a physical barrier between the bike lanes and the parking. The comments can be summarized in the following:
 - Paint, flex posts, and parked cars are fine separation, as long as there is appropriate enforcement of parked cars encroaching on the bike lane. This is an issue city-wide.
 - Participants have already seen vehicles parked in buffer spaces with no physical deterrent.
 - Concerned with the service life of the flex posts, participants reference areas where they have seen vehicle traffic drive over flex posts and the posts are not replaced.
- Express support for restricting the intersection size to reduce vehicle travel speed and eliminating street parking on the corners of the intersection to improve sight distance.
- Expressed concern with the design being confusing due to the murals and complex bike route. One response mentioned cyclists on Franklin Street heading westbound to monument Avenue would not follow the route north to the bicycle crosswalk and would opt to enter the intersection through the flex posts.
- Majority supported the restriction of the intersection size to reduce vehicle travel speed and the shorten distance for pedestrian crossings.
- Some concerns were raised about the intersection being confusing and would prefer a roundabout due to the presence of an existing circular median.
- Participants expressed concern with vehicular traffic making left-turn movements not yielding to bicycle traffic.

Summary of Neutral Comments

- There are 20 comments neutral to the changes to Franklin Street bike lanes.
- Majority are concerned with losing street parking along the roadway.
- Majority comments in support express concern over the lack of a physical barrier between the bike lanes and parking, would prefer the installation of physical barriers, i.e., concrete curbs, jersey wall, or vegetation planters, to provide better safety from vehicular traffic.
- Concerned that the murals on the street will distract drivers and cyclists. Found the design confusing with how cyclists on Lombardy Street and Monument Avenue connect into the cycle track.
- Some concerns were raised about the intersection being confusing and would prefer a roundabout due to the presence of an existing circular median.

Summary of Opposition Comments

- There are 51 comments opposed to the changes to Franklin Street bike lanes.
- Majority are concerned with losing street parking along the roadway.
- Participants believe that the intersection is adequate as is and do not see the need to make any changes.
- Concerned with the service life of the flex posts, some responses reference areas where vehicle traffic driving over flex posts and the city not replacing or maintaining them. Also do not support the use of flex post due to their aesthetic.
- Concerned that the murals on the street will distract drivers and cyclists.
- Concerned that restricting the size of the intersection would not allow room for vehicles to maneuver around obstacle, such as jay walkers or reckless drivers.

Question 3

Summary of Support Comments

- There are 86 comments in support of the changes to Franklin Street bike lanes expressing an appreciation for the proposed improved safety.
- Majority comments in support express concern over the lack of a physical barrier between the bike lanes and the parking. The comments can be summarized in the following:
 - Paint, flex posts, and parked cars are fine separation, as long as there is appropriate enforcement of parked cars encroaching on the bike lane. This is an issue city-wide.
 - Participants have already seen vehicles parked in buffer spaces with no physical deterrent.
 - Concerned with the service life of the flex posts, participants reference areas where they have seen vehicle traffic drive over flex posts and the posts are not replaced.
- Express support for restricting the intersection size to reduce vehicle travel speed and eliminating street parking on the corners of the intersection to improve sight distance.
- Expressed concern with the design being confusing due to the murals and complex bike route. One response mentioned cyclists on Franklin Street heading westbound to Monument Avenue would not follow the route north to the bicycle crosswalk and would opt to enter the intersection through the flex posts.
- Majority supported the restriction of the intersection size to reduce vehicle travel speed and shorten the distance for pedestrian crossings.
- Some concerns were raised about the intersection being confusing and would prefer a roundabout due to the presence of an existing circular median.
- Participants expressed concern with vehicular traffic making left-turn movements not yielding to bicycle traffic.

Summary of Neutral Comments

- There are 20 comments neutral to the changes to Franklin Street bike lanes.
- Majority oppose the changes to Franklin Street bike lanes.
- Some comments express concern over the lack of a physical barrier between the bike lanes and parking, would prefer the installation of physical barriers, i.e., concrete curbs, jersey wall, or vegetation planters, to provide better safety from vehicular traffic.
- Participants expressed concern with vehicular traffic making left-turn movements not yielding to bicycle traffic.

Summary of Opposition Comments

- There are 52 comments opposed to the changes to Franklin Street bike lanes.
- Majority are concerned with losing street parking along the roadway. Emphasis was made regarding the loading/unloading area in front of 612 W. Franklin Street.
- Concerned that the existing roadway does not have heavy bicycle traffic and are concerned that the improvement would be under utilized.
- Majority express concern with transition from two lanes to a single lane resulting in congestion and worsening traffic conditions. Creates the opportunity for backups caused by people trying to park or load/unload blocking the through lane.
- Some comments express concern over the lack of a physical barrier between the bike lanes and the parking.

Overall Summary

The majority of the 552 comment responses supported the design (333 responses – 60 %). The majority of all comments in support of the project were related to the importance of physical barriers between the parking and bike lanes. Those in support also suggested flex posts were fine, but parking in the buffer area should be enforced.

Of those who were neutral towards the project or in opposition to the project there was concern with maintaining parking. Parking was a very large area of concern, and the need to maintain parking and/or loading zones.

For those opposed to the project they were mainly concerned with concerns over traffic backups, especially related to vehicles loading/unloading. They were also concerned with losing parking, and was the bicycle route actually needed.