# **DICKERSON NORTH CORRIDOR STUDY**







# KICKOFF EVENT SUMMARY MARCH 2020





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### PROJECT INTRODUCTION

### **Corridor Planning Process and Plan Purpose**

The Dickerson North Corridor Study is a public process led by the Metro Planning Department with the goal of creating a long-range plan for Dickerson Pike. The plan will be based on a vision created by residents, property owners, business owners, and other stakeholders. That vision will lead to the creation of multi-modal transportation, streetscape, land use, and urban design strategies to improve the corridor. Stakeholders will be asked to review and evaluate these strategies. The final product will be a Corridor Plan with long-range policy guidance that will be presented to the Planning Commission for adoption.

The process includes the following major project components:

- Steering Committee
- Community Assessment Document
- Kickoff Event
- Charrette Week
- Draft Plan Public Review
- Planning Commission Presentation

### **Study Area Background**

The corridor study covers three miles of Dickerson Pike, north of Trinity Lane to north of Skyline Ridge Road.

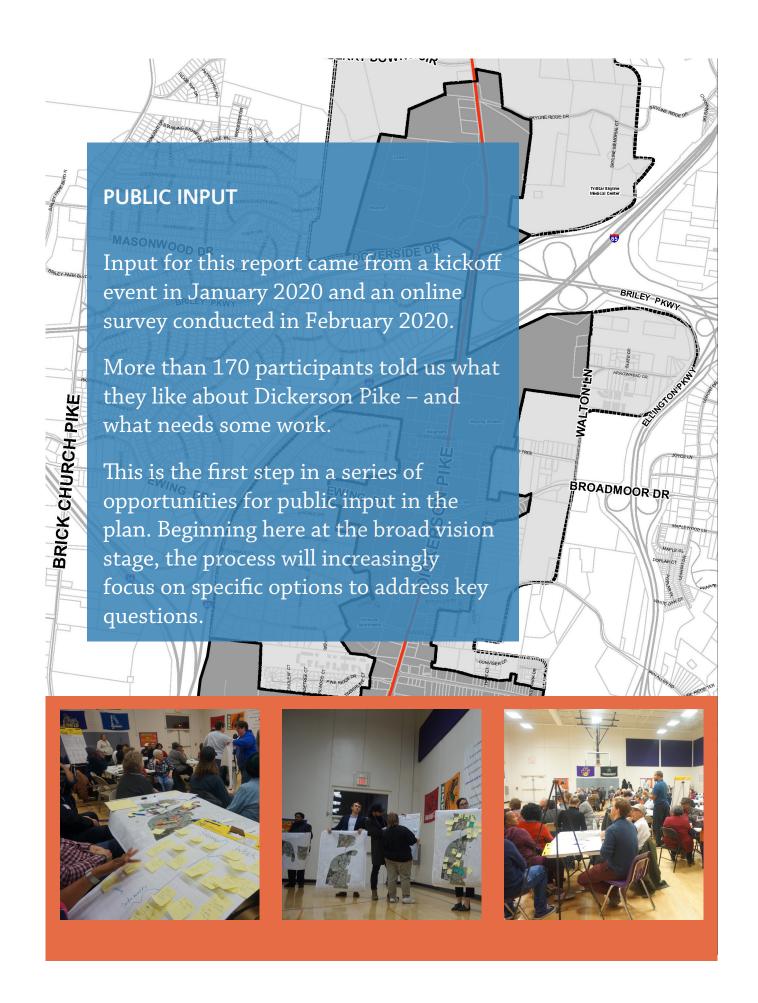
Dickerson Pike is a major transportation artery in Nashville. Its busiest section moves an average of 21,000 car trips per day. In 2019, WeGo Route 23, which serves the length of the corridor, provided an average of 1,721 passenger trips each weekday. Route 23 is the highest productivity route in the WeGo system and is the sixth highest in terms of overall ridership.

A variety of land uses find a home on the corridor and the adjacent residential areas provide a significant amount of low-cost and market-rate housing. As Nashville continues to grow indicators point to future housing affordability challenges as gentrification moves northward from downtown.

The built environment of this stretch of Dickerson Pike strongly reflects the early automobile-age when Nashville was experiencing its initial urbanization. Motor courts and mid-century strip malls continue to exert a strong influence on the land use character of the corridor.

The character of the corridor and its surrounding neighborhoods creates specific transportation issues. The design of the roadway dates from a time when moving cars was the only goal. However, today there is a proportionally higher demand for transit along Dickerson Pike. Those living within the study area are twice as likely to live without a car, and more likely to carpool or use public transit. Transit depends upon a quality pedestrian network, yet significant gaps in the sidewalk network exist. These gaps are not just along the corridor but also in connections to adjacent residential areas. This is inconvenient for those local residents who use transit and potentially deters those who wish to use transit.

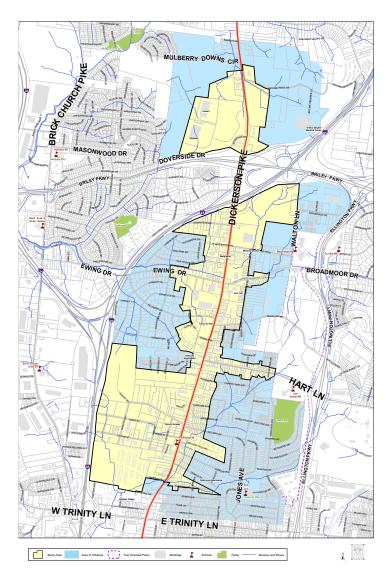
Overall, complete transit amenities are lacking and adjacent land uses lack a pedestrian orientation. A portion of Dickerson Pike through the study area is identified as an existing bikeway for experienced cyclists, although there are no lane markings or signage.



### THE STUDY AREA

A map showing the study area boundaries is below; images showing the typical existing character within the study area are on the following page. The study focuses primarily on the area shown in yellow on the map. The area of influence, in blue, includes residential neighborhoods just outside the study area. These communities might not be the subject of recommendations from the study, but will likely see the effects of changes along Dickerson Pike.

The width of the study area varies from one property to one-quarter mile deep. Land uses within the boundary are mostly commercial, and light industrial. Residential neighborhoods off the corridor are included within the area of influence.





Transit Stop at Skyline





Intersection of Dickerson and Ewing/Broadmoor



Mobile Home Park on Dickerson



Pages Branch at Jones Avenue



Cottage Park homes on Dickerson



### KICKOFF MEETING

### **Kickoff Overview**

The kickoff for this study was based on two major efforts - a kickoff meeting and an online survey. The kickoff meeting was held at Rocketship Elementary School located in the study area on Monday evening, January 30. The meeting was advertised via a notice sent to property owners within the study area and area of influence as well as within a 1300-foot buffer of the area of influence, for a total of 2,711 notices. Metro Planning also publicized the event through social media and the project website dickersonnorthstudy.nashville.gov. Notices were posted at businesses along the corridor. Finally, Metro Councilmembers and steering committee members shared the notice with their constituents and audiences.

At the meeting attendees viewed a presentation from city staff about the planning process and the study area. They were then asked to participate in facilitated small group exercises that gathered their impressions of the study area, including critical issues and important assets. Approximately 150 people attended.

The following questions and exercises were posed to discussion groups at the workshop:

- Exercise One: was a flip chart and mapping exercise using post-it notes and green and red dots to geographically locate strong and weak places within the study area;
- Exercise Two: was a flip chart and mapping exercise providing the opportunity to share an overall vision for the area; and a voting exercise using green and red dots for participants to indicate their top choices of the visions presented.

An in-person survey was given and completed by 121 participants. The survey was structured to ask participants basic demographic information, transportation modes used, and about priority topics for the study.

### **Online Survey**

For those unable to attend the in-person event, information was gathered using an online survey available on the study webpage. Participants were asked questions similar to those asked at the public meeting. The online survey was open for 30 days, with 22 individuals participating.

### **SUMMARY OF INPUT**

### **Survey Results**

A printed survey and an online survey were made available. The survey covered topics such as transportation, familiarity with planning in Nashville, demographics, and issues important to stakeholders. More than 140 participants offered feedback through the survey.

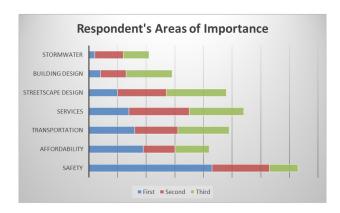
An Appendix contains all the data inputs received from the in-person and online survey.

### **Top Issues**

The survey asked respondents to assess a list of topics related to the corridor and rank them by degree of importance. Participants identified the following five primary issues in order of importance:

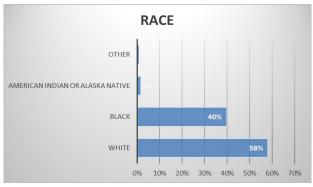
- Safety (crime, traffic, kid-friendly environment)
- 2. Services (shopping, restaurant, healthcare facilities, libraries)
- 3. Transportation (getting around)
- 4. Streetscape Design (sidewalks, crosswalks, stop-lights)
- 5. Affordability (cost of living)

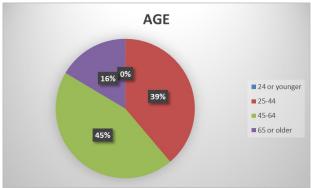
A summary of the results is shown in the graph below.



### **Demographics**

Survey participants ranged in age from 25 to the 90. None of the attendees who completed the survey were below the age of 25. The racial composition of survey respondents consisted of white and black with some who identify as American Indian or Alaska Native. Ethnic composition of respondents were almost non-Hispanic.





**Types of Stakeholders** 

Respondents hold a variety of interests in the study area. Property owners and residents were the majority of survey respondents. Others included business owners, developers, and real estate professionals.

### **Communication**

Respondents learned of the Kickoff meeting primarily through the mailed notice. Other methods included through a neighbor and social media. Most respondents prefer for future communication to be through e-mail.

# EXERCISE ONE: STRONG AND WEAK PLACES

Two facilitated small group exercises were undertaken at the kickoff meeting. The first exercise was designed to identify place-specific issues. Meeting attendees were asked to list two or three strong and weak places on individual post-it notes and place green dots on a map to identify strong places and red dots on a map identifying weak places.

### **Strong Places**

A composite map of the strong places is shown on the next page. Strong places clustered around areas with good interstate access, community resources (e.g. schools and the hospital), and lots with perceived opportunities for new development. There was an overall emphasis on the cultural diversity and variety of housing options within existing neighborhoods.

The most commonly mentioned asset of Dickerson North was that it connects with and is in close proximity of I-65, I-24, Briley Parkway, Ellington Parkway, and Downtown. People were generally satisfied with the ease of using the road via car to get from place to place, with a lack of traffic noted several times.

Another positive aspect was the shopping destinations along the corridor, particularly the presence of national retailers (Walmart and Lowes) at the northern end of the study area and smaller, local businesses further south.

Schools and the hospital also received frequent positive notes. Neighborhoods, the mix of housing, from quiet single-family homes off the corridor with large yards and mature trees, to multi-family apartments and mobile home parks on the corridor and the affordability of all types of housing in the area were also cited as positive elements.

The potential for redevelopment on vacant, empty parcels, greenways and greenspace also were heavily supported by the attendees.

Finally, an appreciation of the diversity and sense of community, as well as the views of the downtown skyline was evident from the exercise.

### **Visualizing Input: Strong Places**

The word cloud below illustrates the strong places participants noted (Courtesy of worditout.com).

# Redevelopment Opp. Real Estate Value Affordability Education Sense of Community Viewshed Parks Medical Retail New Housing Greenway Transit Neighborhood Character Transportation Network

### **STRONG PLACES MAPPED**

### **Composite Map of Strong Places**



### **Weak Places**

A composite map of the weak places is shown on the next page. Weak places generally reflected transportation concerns, such as gaps in sidewalks and pedestrian safety. Participants also marked where the appearance of private developments was unsatisfactory, where trash collects, and where crime may be an issue.

Agglomerations of weak places identified were concentrated at the Ewing/Broadmoor intersection, the Hart Lane intersection, and at vacant parcels located along Dickerson Pike.

An ever-present issue that was mentioned repeatedly by meeting attendees was the lack of an established sidewalk network along Dickerson Pike and along the side streets entering adjacent neighborhoods. Neighbors cited limited sidewalk connectivity as an impediment to walking to local services and institutions, for children to walk to schools/parks, and as a reason as to why they typically choose to drive.

Another important issue mentioned was the lack of diversity in retail options as meeting attendees cited few choices for restaurants, family-friendly activities, or local businesses.

The perception of safety was a commonality shared by several members of the community followed by accumulations of trash found along the corridor and behind retail buildings. Attendees identified limited street lighting, the presence of homeless individuals, and unsafe streets as reasons why they did not feel safe occupying or visiting the study area.

Finally, environmental issues were repeatedly identified during the exercise as attendees cited flooding events within their neighborhoods and adjacent to creeks as well as the lack of open space or parks that are easily accessible.

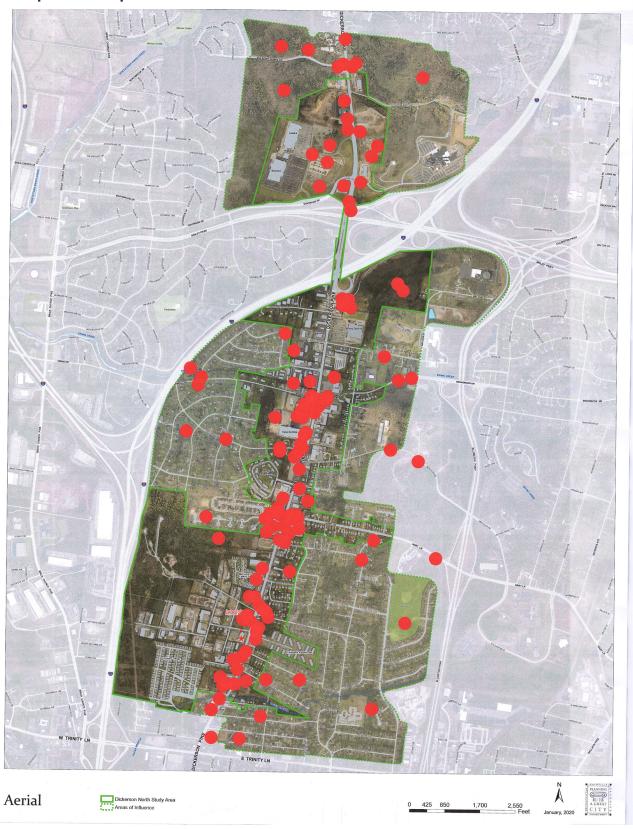
### **Visualizing Input: Weak Places**

The word cloud below illustrates the weak places participants noted (Courtesy of worditout.com).



### **WEAK PLACES MAPPED**

### Composite Map of Weak Places



### **EXERCISE TWO: VISIONS**

The second mapping exercise was designed to reveal participant's future visions for the study area. Meeting attendees were asked "imagine that you have been away for 20 years and just came back. With the best hope for your community, what does the study area look like?". Each individual vision was written on post-it notes and placed on a flip chart as well as drawn on the map. Participants could then use three green dots to vote for their top three vision ideas. Dots were tallied and the top three vision items identified.

A composite map of the top vision items is shown on the next page. A majority expressed a desire for more diverse retail options. Specifically, these included a need for a high-quality or specialty grocer, sit-down restaurants, locally-owned businesses, and family-oriented places such as a movie theater or bowling alley.

A significant number of participants expressed concern with safety and the ongoing need for greater enforcement and oversight throughout the community.

In addition to safety concerns, attendees hoped the area would have a continuous and connected sidewalk network in the future making it easier and safer to walk to and from neighborhood services. This would also make transit more accessible and improve mobility.

Many hoped the area would continue to serve the diverse people, mix of incomes, and multiple generations that currently reside in the area. Participants want new development to consider affordability and housing choices, accommodate the needs of seniors as well as youth, and celebrate the ethnic and cultural diversity of the area. Specifically, some folks expressed the need for retirement homes, a library branch, and a community center.

Another common element shared among attendees was the need for a destination park, recreation facility, and connecting greenway system.

### Visualizing Input: Vision

The word cloud below illustrates the topics participants focused on when asked what they hope the area will be like in 20 years.

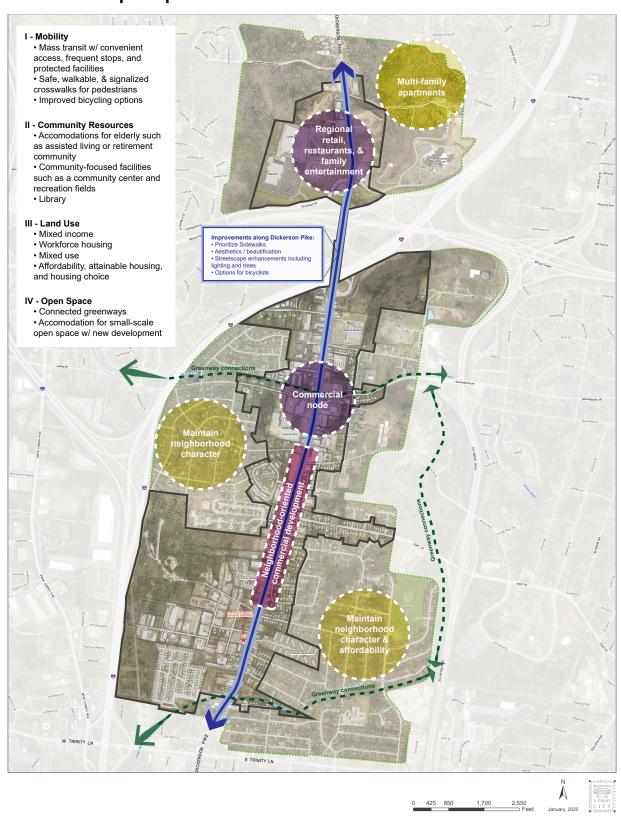
> Quality Transit System
> Affordable Housing Options **Small Business Community** Higher Density Urban Streets Family-Friendly Destination Park Safer Streets with Sidewalks

> > Access to Healthy Foods Greenways along Creeks

More Diverse Retail Options New Mobility Options for Dickerson

### **VISIONS MAPPED**

### **Vision Concept Map with Common Themes**



### **NEXT STEPS**

The input described in this report will shape the next phase of the planning effort, which involves a week-long charrette at the end of March 2020. Public input will be received during this week on the five primary issues we heard from the kickoff meeting and survey. They are safety, services, transportation, streetscape design, and affordability.

Safety (crime, traffic, kid-friendly environment) - kickoff participants see safety as the number one issue for Dickerson North. Multiple participants stated that the study area is or feels unsafe.

These observations were related primarily to one of two issues. The first is the perceived risk of walking or cycling in areas without sidewalks and crosswalks and with high traffic speeds and volumes. The other was the physical characteristics of the corridor including vacant and abandoned buildings, buildings and parking lots in disrepair, insufficient lighting, deficient maintenance and accumulations of trash that make the area feel unsafe.

**Services** (shopping, restaurants, healthcare facilities, libraries) - existing land uses in the study area are a source of divergent views. While participants appreciate the large, regional retail options of Walmart and Lowes, they also expressed a desire for more smaller, local shops and restaurants. Many comments were directed at land uses that have proliferated along the corridor which are generally viewed as negative. These include automotive sales and tire repair shops. Several participants commented on the condition of the older strip retail centers. These comments pointed out that a number of these centers have vacant suites and could use facade improvements to enhance the overall quality of these retail areas.

**Transportation** (getting around) - while many noted the ease of travelling through the corridor by car and the ready access to interstates, highways, and downtown, many also noted that other modes of transportation need improvement. Participants were interested in modes of travel other than the

personal vehicle but did not view the study area as safe or amenable to other modes, such as walking, cycling, or transit.

**Streetscape Design** (sidewalks, crosswalks, stop lights) - participants described the presence of streetscape infrastructure as inconsistent, insufficient, and unsafe. Sidewalks were the highest priority for streetscapes.

**Affordability** (cost of living) - maintaining the affordability of the area was a concern. There is a desire to see new development and to balance this revitalization with maintaining affordability, to prevent the displacement of residents.

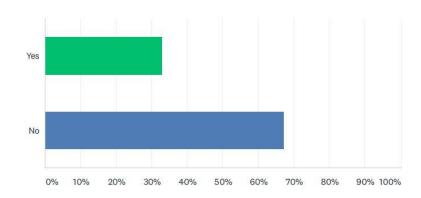
Different options and scenarios to address these primary issues will be developed and presented during charrette week for further public input. That input will then be used to shape a draft plan containing a series of recommendations. The draft plan is scheduled to be completed in summer 2020.

### **Survey Questions**

The following is a summary of the questions and answers which made up the in-person and online survey.

### Q1. Are you familiar with *NashvilleNext*, the county-wide general plan?

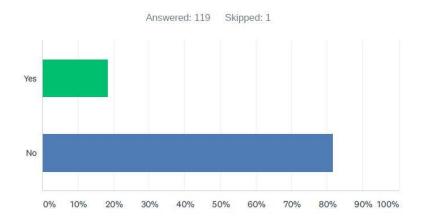
• 119 responses



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	32.77%	39
No	67.23%	80
TOTAL		119

# Q2. Are you familiar with the East Nashville or Parkwood-Union Hill Community Plans?

### • 119 Responses



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	18.49%	22
No	81.51%	97
TOTAL		119

### Q3. What do you value most about the area?

- Summary of responses
  - o 74 responses; The following are highlights.
    - I live in the study area: 12 responses
    - Like proximity to downtown: 5 responses
    - Safety: 5 responses
    - Diversity: 3 responses
    - Opportunity/potential: 3 responses

### **Full responses**

the commercially zoned properties

density along the corridor

diversity and affordability

proximity to downtown and other community assets

potential

beautification

attraction of small businesses

safety

development of community

traffic

sidewalks

crime

green space

caring about the development of my community and how it will affect my life

I live here

I live here

quiet

convenient highway access

great neighborhoods

good businesses

close to downtown

untapped potential

room for growth

the diversity

mix of uses

how it will impact my home the most

restaurants

dingy hotels cleaned up

I live here

there is a sense of community to preserve

communication

inclusive and aesthetically appropriate growth

I live here and want to see growth and value in this area

that it won't put strain on the existing residents

access to transit

parks

safety

quality of life

grew up here, parents live in neighborhood

greenspace

proximity to downtown and major highways

Dickerson North of Briley

my home, work and neighbors

proximity to downtown

traffic close to downtown

information + ability for impact

discussion

to learn about the growth opportunity for the area

worked in the area my whole life

opportunity

dry cleaners, better grocery stores, more retail, more restaurants, more bars

the potential for becoming a well-planned community

development

improvements

development and improvement of area/restaurants, hotels, family feature events, etc.

opportunity

higher property value

development of Dickerson Road

don't know

possibility of improvements - long for a beautiful neighborhood

hearing about future development plans

work is available

land value

appearance

forward thinking infrastructure planning

I don't know enough about what the plans are

seeing the map and interacting with others

growth

it may address sidewalks

it may address street resurfacing

the potential of growth down Dickerson

safety

over population

sidewalks

it is my home

safe community

my neighborhood for 32 years

preserve rural character by encouraging density on corridor and at nodes

my home

convenience

diversification

room to grow

homes

safety

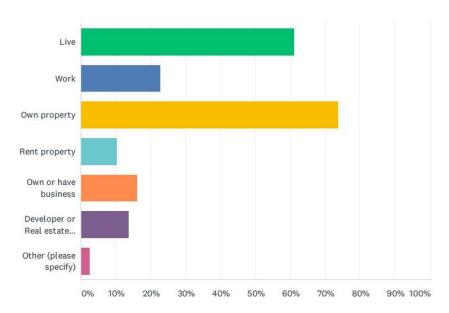
community involvement

safe environment increased traffic

I live in it you are doing something I own a house and lot in this area lifelong resident closest to downtown and the interstate connection

### Q4. What is your interest in or near the study area? (Check all that apply)

### • 118 responses



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Live	61.02%	72
Work	22.88%	27
Own property	73.73%	87
Rent property	10.17%	12
Own or have business	16.10%	19
Developer or Real estate professional	13.56%	16
Other (please specify)	2.54%	3
Total Respondents: 118		

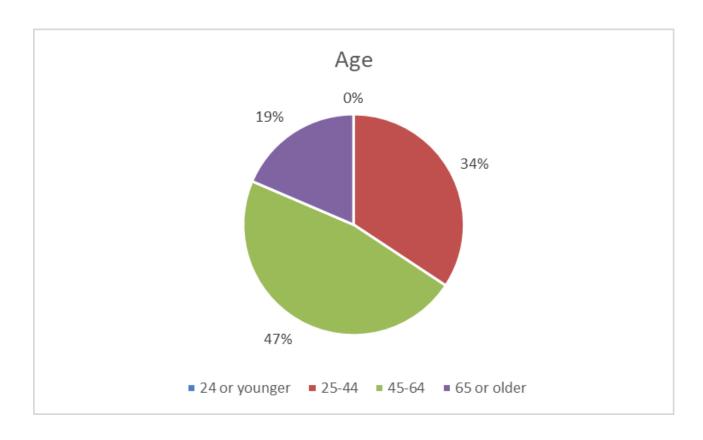
### Q5. What is your age?

- Summary of responses

o 109 responses

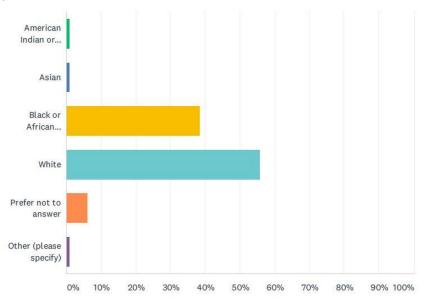
24 or younger: 0 responses

25-44: 24 responses45-64: 33 responses65 or older: 13 responses



### Q6. What is your race? (Check one or more)

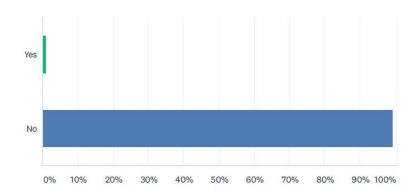
### • 117 responses



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.85%	1
Asian	0.85%	1
Black or African American	38.46%	45
White	55.56%	65
Prefer not to answer	5.98%	7
Other (please specify)	0.85%	1
Total Respondents: 117		

### Q7. Are you of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?

• 112 responses



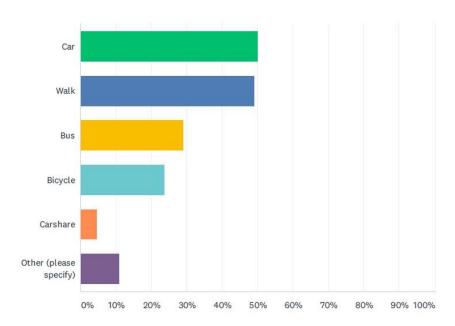
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	0.89%	1
No	99.11%	111
TOTAL		112

# Q8. How do you get around the study area the most (car, walk, bus, bicycle, carshare, other)?

- Summary of responses
  - o 109 responses
    - All responses listed car
    - A few responses included walking, rideshare, and transit

# Q9. What mode of transportation would you like to use more of in the study area? (Circle all that apply)

### • 110 responses



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Car	50.00%	55
Walk	49.09%	54
Bus	29.09%	32
Bicycle	23.64%	26
Carshare	4.55%	5
Other (please specify)	10.91%	12
Total Respondents: 110		

### Q10. What prevents you from using more of the transportation mode(s)?

- Summary of responses
  - o 79 responses
    - Lack of pedestrian infrastructure (sidewalks and bike lanes) 25 responses
    - Concern about safety (pedestrian, bicycle, and crime in general) 10 responses
    - Lack of quality public transit 7 responses
    - Lack of convenience 3

### Full responses:

Dickerson is dangerous road

not walkable - things are too far away from each other

I have kids to drop off and work

Accessibility

frequency (bus)

safety (bike)

poor infrastructure/street design

availability and strategy

safety

safety

crime

for a growing city the bus system isn't the best compared to other cities

no sidewalks

bad lighting

no sidewalks

bike lanes

poor sidewalks

infrequent MTA stops

lack of sidewalks/bike safety

no sidewalks/no bike lane

takes longer

no sidewalks

inconsistent bike lanes/sidewalks

bicycle safety

lack of sidewalks/businesses

the study area is not "walkable"

sidewalks and quality public transit

not available

poor bus transportation

car

lack of sidewalks and bike lanes

access

no sidewalks

no sidewalks and bike lanes

traffic

no sidewalks or bike lanes

Nashville doesn't have infrastructure

not accessible

Heavy traffic

Not available

no sidewalk

not available

safety

no need

lack of

no sidewalks, crosswalks, or bike lanes

lifestyle

no or bad sidewalks

bus system is bad

convenience

live close to work

location

speeders

lack of infrastructure

no sidewalks

sidewalks

time it takes to get services

time is a factor, bus takes long for arrival to Vanderbilt

not available

time

don't live near

lack of sidewalks

nothing

no sidewalks

no sidewalks

dangerous roads

no sidewalks, no bus lanes

no bike lanes, no sidewalks past Trinity intersection

convenience

time

no sidewalks - no place to walk

not available

I'm realtor - need a car

nothing

lack of routes/stops

none

nothing

I rather drive

none

availability

lack of sidewalks/bike lanes, bus route

not practical for my needs

nothing

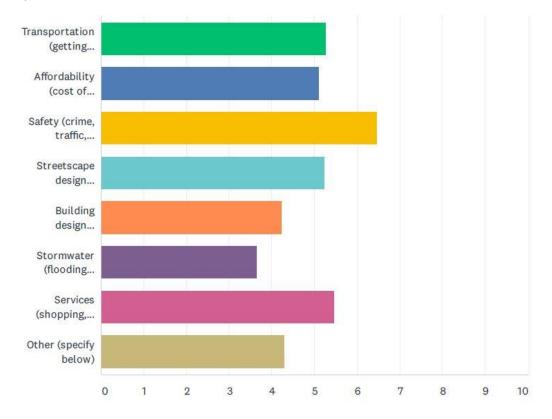
not needed

no sidewalks

age, sidewalks, safety

# Q11. Assess each of the following topics. Rank them by degree of importance, with 1 being the most important and 7 being the least important.

### • 103 responses



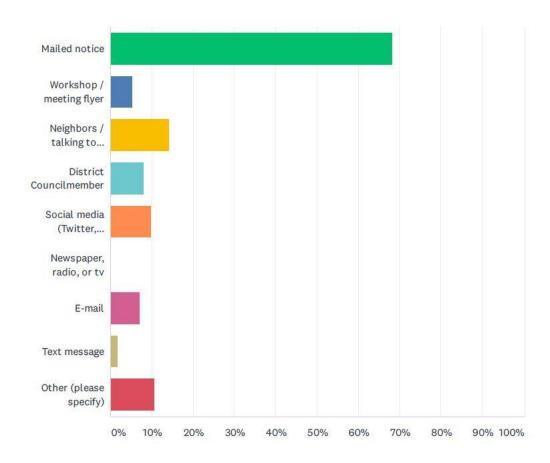
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	N/A	TOTAL	SCORE
Transportation (getting around)	16.85% 15	14.61% 13	16.85% 15	13.48% 12	19.10% 17	7.87% 7	10.11%	1.12% 1	0.00%	89	5.27
Affordability (cost of living)	16.67% 14	11.90% 10	14.29% 12	17.86% 15	13.10% 11	13.10% 11	13.10% 11	0.00%	0.00%	84	5.10
Safety (crime, traffic, kid- friendly environment, etc.)	43.48% 40	18.48% 17	7.61% 7	14.13% 13	6.52% 6	4.35%	3.26%	1.09%	1.09%	92	6.47
Streetscape design (sidewalks, crosswalks, stop-lights, etc.)	9.52% 8	17.86% 15	20.24%	13.10% 11	20.24%	16.67% 14	2.38%	0.00%	0.00%	84	5.24
Building design (materials, parking, history, height, etc.)	3.41%	9.09%	14.77% 13	12.50% 11	14.77% 13	31.82% 28	12.50% 11	1.14%	0.00%	88	4.23
Stormwater (flooding issues)	2.44%	9.76% 8	9.76% 8	7.32% 6	15.85% 13	8.54% 7	45.12% 37	1.22%	0.00%	82	3.63
Services (shopping, restaurant, healthcare facilities, libraries, etc.)	13.10%	20.24%	21.43%	17.86% 15	7.14% 6	11.90%	8.33% 7	0.00%	0.00%	84	5.45
Other (specify below)	28.57% 2	14.29% 1	0.00%	0.00%	14.29% 1	0.00%	0.00%	42.86% 3	0.00%	7	4.29

### Q12. Other topics of importance?

- Summary of responses
  - o 5 responses
    - Density
    - Park/hiking trail
    - Development-businesses, etc.
    - Park

### Q13. How did you hear about the study?

• 113 responses



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES		
Mailed notice	68.14%	77	
Workshop / meeting flyer	5.31%	6	
Neighbors / talking to neighborhood leaders	14.16%	16	
District Councilmember	7.96%	9	
Social media (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram)	9.73%	11	
Newspaper, radio, or tv	0.00%	0	
E-mail	7.08%	8	
Text message	1.77%	2	
Other (please specify)	10.62%	12	
Total Respondents: 113			

### Q14. Is there a better way to communicate with you?

- 38 responses
  - o Email- 24
  - o Phone- 3
  - o Text-3
  - o Mail-1
  - o Newspaper notice- 1

# Q15. Please use this space if you'd like to share additional thoughts about yourself or Dickerson Pike.

### • 7 responses

- I love the older neighborhoods. It would great to have the forest off Lemuel Road turned into a park.
- o I live in Mulberry downs, been living there since 1998. Love the area.
- I have been involved with a couple of projects both in my neighborhood and surrounding areas.
- Love to see the area redeveloped, welcoming many diverse opportunities and services.
   Increase in property value.
- We want to do workforce housing, but the community needs to have an actual plan, not just some tools. The community needs to work with the developer for land and fees that will encourage not impede, starter homes and starter flats.
- New businesses, such as restaurants and a major hotel and shopping center. Do away
  with so many car lots, tire shops, low end motels. Businesses should be held to a higher
  standard and appearance too.
- o I'm concerned about these vacant lots on both sides of me. I was told that 20 units will be built on these two lots. Walton Lane is a dead end. I wonder if transportation has done a study on this area. Please be advised I'm across from Faith Is Victory Church, with 1500+ members. It's a busy street on Wednesdays and Sunday Services. 70 units beside Maplewood School are being built now. Traffic is going to be outrageous in the future. Transportation need to do a study on this matter. This street will still be a dead end when these units are completed.