

CHAPTER

3

Public Involvement

A series of public involvement opportunities helped shape the development of the AMATS NMP. The following section summarizes the types of outreach conducted as well as the key outcomes that guided plan development.

Residents, visitors, and other stakeholders were invited to provide feedback through a variety of formats, including workshops, presentations, mobile meetings, stakeholder interviews, field data collection, and an online community survey.

An agency advisory group (AAG) and community advisory group (CAG) provided additional oversight throughout the process by reviewing key deliverables, informing plan goals and objectives, and guiding the regulatory and implementation component of the plan.

3.1 Field Data Collection + Community Input Map

To start this effort, a public data collection event held during plan kick-off asked residents to capture points of interest and identify travel barriers as they walked and biked along six of the area's shared use pathways that were targeted for data collection (see Figure 3.1).

A project website provided general information for the plan, including an overview of the plan purpose, key documents, timeline, and contact information. Additionally, an online map (see Figure 3.2) asked residents and stakeholders to draw in routes they liked and disliked; identify point barriers to current non-motorized travel; highlight safety concerns; and locate destinations of particular interest. Figure 3.3 shows those results.

Walk Audit



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TIMELINE

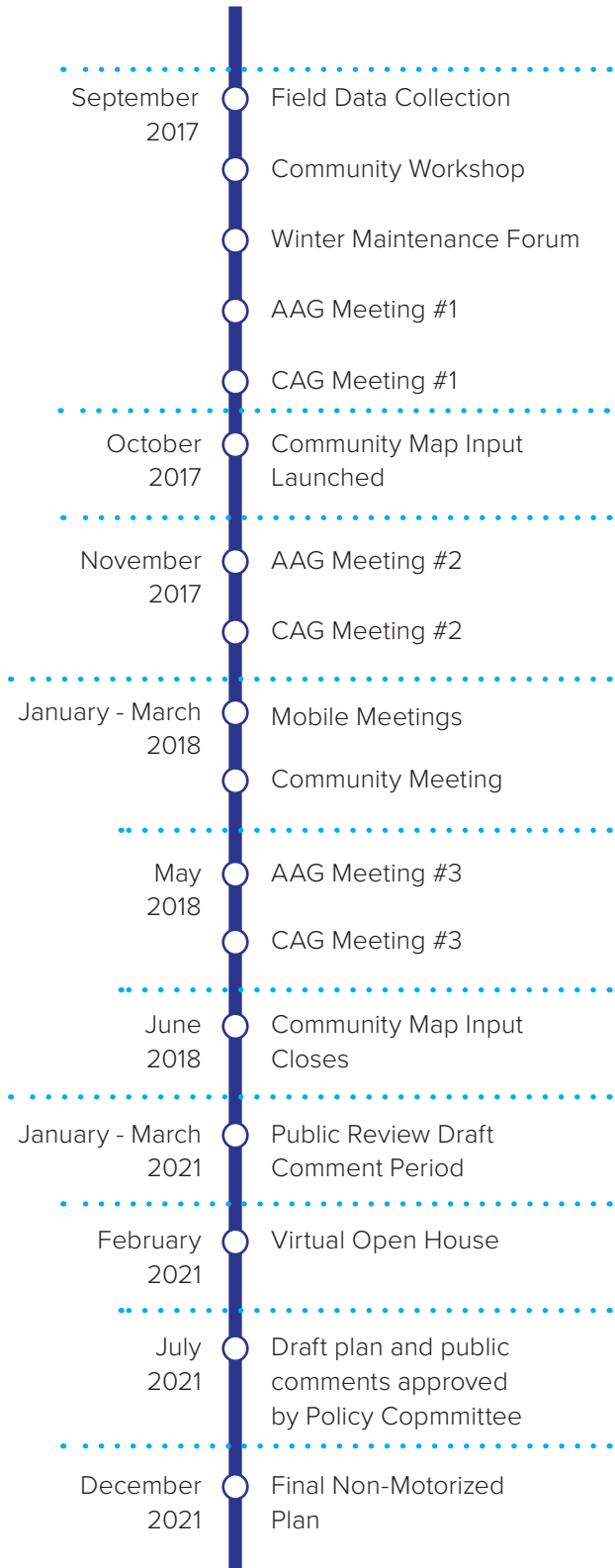


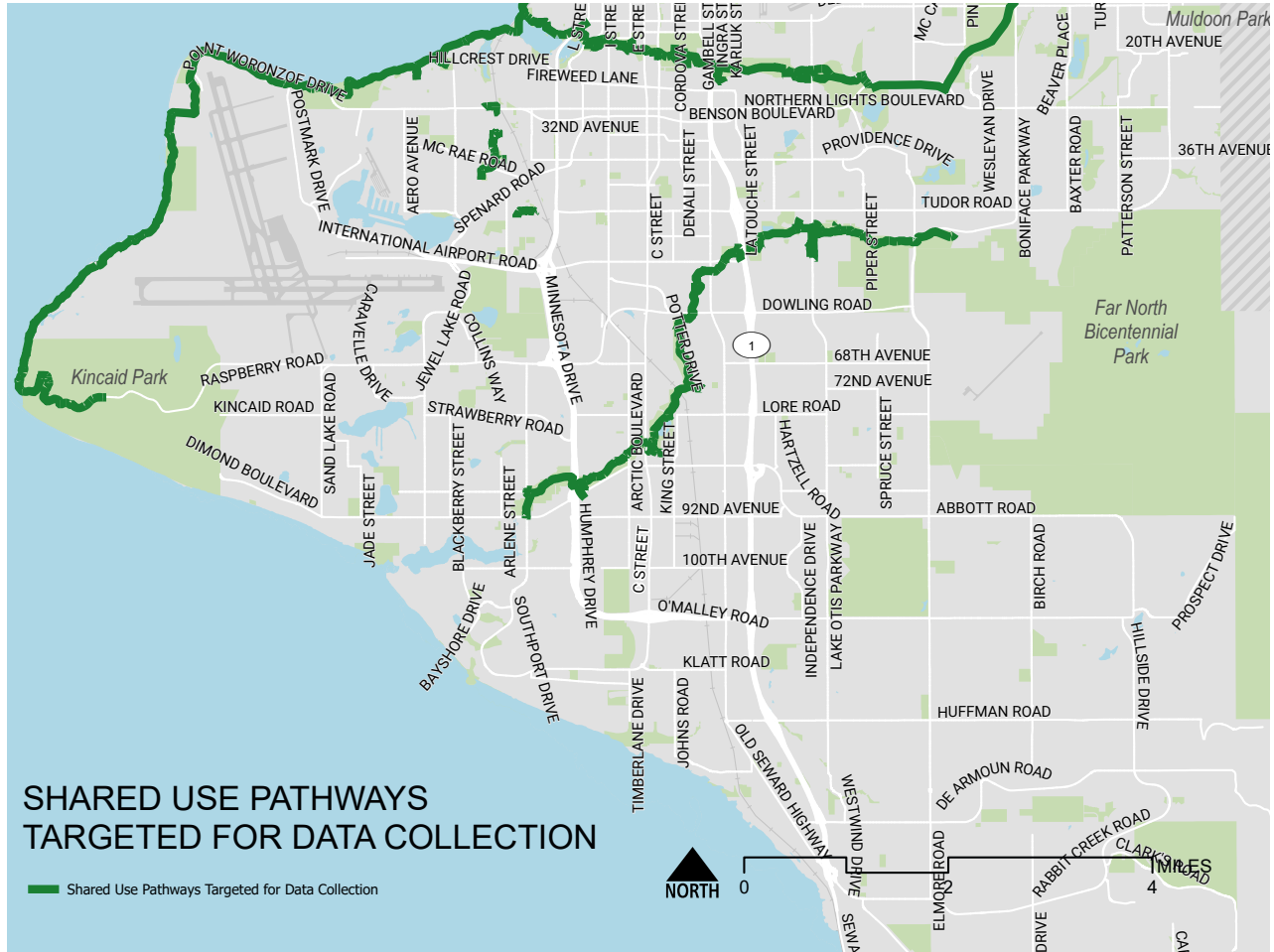
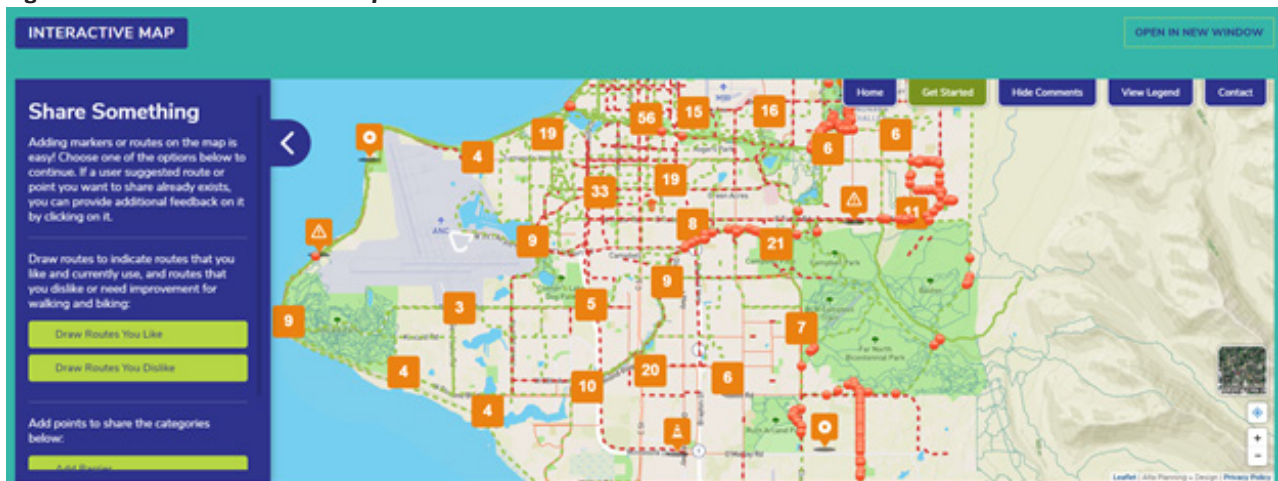
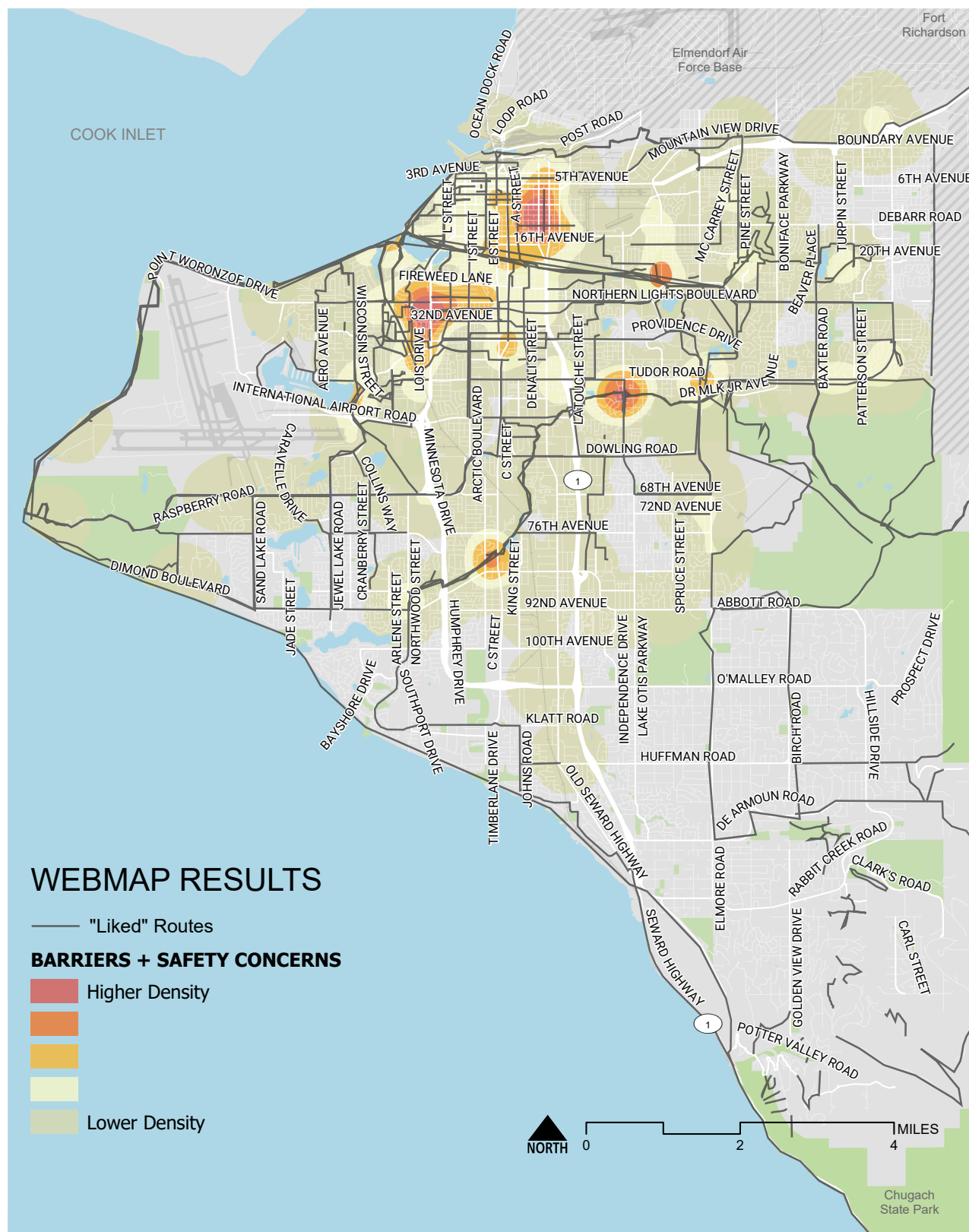
Figure 3.1: Shared Use Pathways Targeted for Data**Figure 3.2: Online interactive map**

Figure 3.3: Results from webmap



Residents received a flier on how to use their mobile device for data collection and then they were invited to collect data as a group via an organized ride or individually. Over 15 volunteers joined the planning team during the data collection event.

Overall, the webmap was open for comment from November 2017 to June 2018. During this time, more than 120 different participants identified over 200 spot and corridor locations for recommended improvements.

Frequent topics addressed by residents include the following:

» **Personal Safety:** Needed safety improvements along primary shared use pathways within the AMATS Planning area. Lighting, sight-lines, and general personal security were frequently noted.

» **Missing Connections:** Several routes were

identified as routes that residents preferred to use but are currently lacking infrastructure that facilitates travel among destinations.

» **Safety:** Crossings and lack of facilities were noted as key concerns related to traveling safely across the network.

» **Connectivity and Access:** Clearly defining how and where to access shared use pathways through public right-of-way can encourage use of the shared use pathway system and support connections among facility types.

» **Lighting:** Visibility during non-daylight hours and at high-conflict areas, such as driveways and intersections, was a frequently noted concern.

The results from this webmap helped inform project selection and prioritization; see Chapter 4 and 5 for more details.

Non-motorized Plan Kick Off Bicycle Tour



3.2 Open House/Community Workshop

A community workshop was held at the project kick-off. This workshop provided residents the opportunity to learn about project progress, engage with project staff, and provide comments on plan progress and direction.

In addition to boards and presentations, Community Workshop #1 included a community bicycle tour, which highlighted current infrastructure and potential design solutions for improving safety, connectivity, and accessibility across the network. A full meeting summary is available in the Appendix.

A general summary of findings includes the following:

- » When asked to describe a vision of non-motorized Anchorage in three words, frequent answers included ‘connected’, ‘safe’ and ‘stress-free.’ These results are reported more completely in Table 3.1, below.
- » Connections to shared use pathways and year-round accessibility for non-motorized transportation were listed as primary goals in mapping exercises.
- » Frequently requested areas of improvement included on-street linkages to shared use pathways, connections to downtown and across the city and investment in intersection improvements.

Table 3.1: Workshop Feedback

WALKING & BIKING CONCEPTS	MOST IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	LEAST IMPORTANT
5 E's – holistic approach that includes education, encouragement, engineering, enforcement and evaluation	3	10	0
All Ages and Abilities – providing infrastructure that is appropriate for people of all ages and abilities	7	6	0
Safety – safety from motor vehicles, as well as crime	15	0	0
Connectivity – making sure that getting from place to place is easy and convenient	17	1	0
Directed Funding – providing infrastructure while being respectful of project cost and budget constraints	3	11	0

Open House



Open House



Open House



3.3 Advisory Committees

The project included both a Citizens Advisory Group (CAG) and Agency Advisory Group (AAG). These meetings served to provide guidance on the overall plan development and direction for areas of additional focus. CAG Meetings are summarized below. Details of all meetings can be found in Appendix A2.

- Meeting 2, November 2017. This meeting presented the results of preliminary data gathering and analysis to the CAG for comment including findings from demand, health, equity analysis and community mapping conducted in September. Key feedback from this meeting included:
 - » Recognition that the CAG and the AAG had aligning goals in terms of plan vision and goals
 - » The plan should be diverse, coordinated, implementable, and create a world class city
 - » Recognition that increasing the use of non-motorized facilities will also require a culture shift

- Meeting 1, September 2017. This meeting included an introduction to the plan context, the project team and previous planning efforts. The discussion included an overview of the planning effort, scope and schedule and anticipated goals of the stakeholder advisory committee. Attendees were then asked to help define the plan in terms of aspirations, success and obstacles. The following key themes were identified:
 - » Aspirations: Network connections, enhancing interagency collaboration, forward-thinking and synergistic
 - » Success: Increasing mode share, focus on public health, recognition of Anchorage as a leader in providing non-motorized transportation
 - » Obstacles: Limitations in funding and maintenance of new types of infrastructure, momentum

Advisory Committee**Visioning Exercise Results**

AAG MEETINGS

The AAG meetings followed the same schedule and format as the CAG. Convening this group allowed cooperation and conversations about active transportation across departments. Throughout the course of the project the AAG provided guidance on major components of the plan including vision goals and objectives; peer cities selection; public engagement strategy; network recommendations, design guidance and project prioritization.

Meeting 3, May 2018. The focus of this meeting was a presentation of the final needs assessment and preliminary plan recommendations for consideration by the group. Key points of discussion included:

- » The need for more separated bicycle facilities along major roadways
- » The relatively high demand for walking and bicycling in midtown, downtown and along east-west and north-south corridors
- » The need for a comprehensive approach to network design
- » A desire for demonstration projects
- » A prioritized project list that reflects demand and maintenance of facilities (meeting notes are included in Appendix A2)

3.4 Mobile Meetings

In order to reach people less likely to engage on the Non-motorized plan, a series of mobile meetings were conducted in early 2018:

- » 2/8, Anchorage Transportation Fair (tabling, no formal presentation)
- » 2/14, Anchorage Senior Activity Center (tabling, no formal presentation)
- » 3/8, Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission
- » 3/12, Eagle River/Chugiak Parks and Recreation Board
- » 3/13, Anchorage ADA Commission
- » 3/15, Anchorage Equal Rights Commission
- » 3/22, Anchorage Youth Advisory Commission
- » 4/12, Public Transit Advisory Board
- » 4/20, Alaska Nations Reentry Group

These meetings included a short presentation on vision, goals, and a short-written activity with 6 open-ended questions regarding how people move around the Anchorage Bowl, barriers to non-

motorized transportation, possible solutions, and prioritizing the project goals.

When asked about barriers and solutions to active transportation in the AMATS Planning area, the following topics were identified:

- » More non-motorized transportation infrastructure
- » Improved maintenance of existing infrastructure
- » Increased safety and feelings of safety on shared use pathways
- » Better winter sidewalk maintenance and prioritization of snow removal
- » Better first and last mile connectivity to transit
- » Increased connectivity of non-motorized transportation infrastructure

A more detailed summary is included in the Appendix.

3.5 Winter Maintenance Forum

In September 2017, a winter maintenance forum was conducted to share information on winter maintenance practices, operations and challenges. The forum included presentations from agency operations including maintenance and operations from the MOA, AKDOT, and MOA Park Operations, case study presentations from three winter cities, summarized in the Appendix. The group then discussed what is currently working well in the AMATS Planning area:

- » Communication and collaboration are occurring between the city and state agencies.
- » There is increasing awareness of the need for winter maintenance of non-motorized infrastructure.
- » Anchorage is used to dealing with snow events.
- » Currently, major roads are plowed quickly, there is a desire to improve snow clearing practices.
- » Skilled workers are available to complete maintenance work when resources are available.

The following ideas were presented as potential ways to improve winter maintenance in the AMATS Planning area:

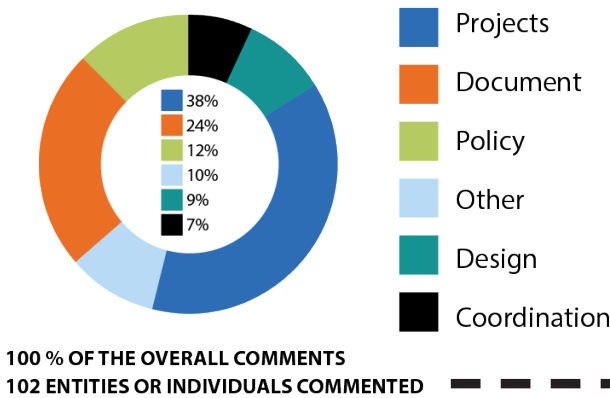
- » Communication could be improved so that design and maintenance are better aligned as projects are brought on line.
- » Identifying snow plowing priorities will improve function of the overall transportation system; cities should play an active role in shaping priorities and seek support from top public officials.
- » Purchase more right-of-way for snow storage as a long-term, network-based initiative.
- » Innovative methods should be investigated with an intent to increase the efficiency of plowing efforts.
- » Identify new sources of funding for winter infrastructure maintenance.

3.6 Public Comment on Draft Plan

During the public review of the NMP, 776 unique comments were received. These comments recommended new projects, updates to policies, design guidance, agency coordination, and refinements to the layout of the document itself.

COMMENT PERIOD:
2021: January 4th - March 5th

COMMENT CATEGORIES



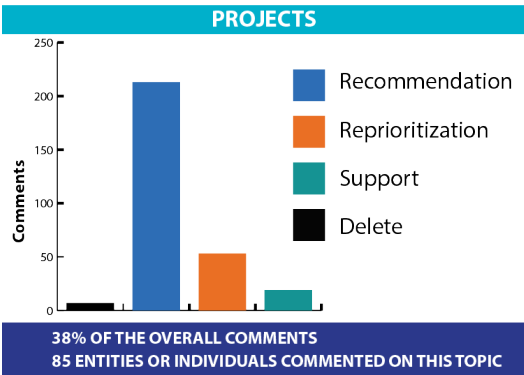
PUBLIC COMMENTS

Total Comments	776
Comments by Categories	
Projects.....	292
Document.....	186
Policy.....	96
Other.....	75
Design.....	71
Coordination.....	56

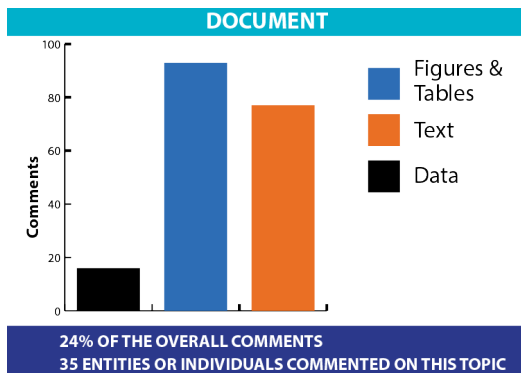
An individual or entity may have submitted multiple comments and each submitted comment may have covered multiple categories.

Projects: Over 30% of the overall comments received were about specific projects. The majority of those comments concerned project recommendations; missing connections to prioritized projects and additional projects not currently listed in the plan.

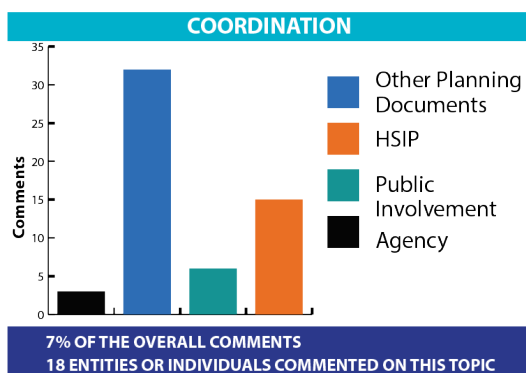
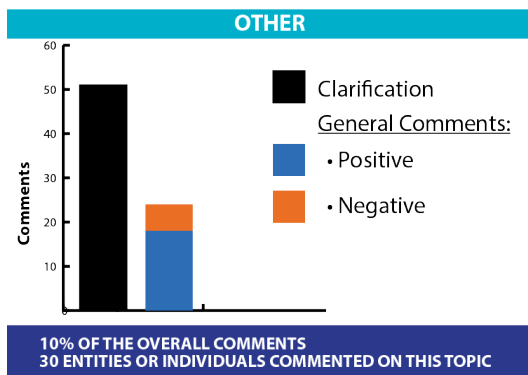
COMMENTS BY CATEGORY



COMMENTS BY CATEGORY

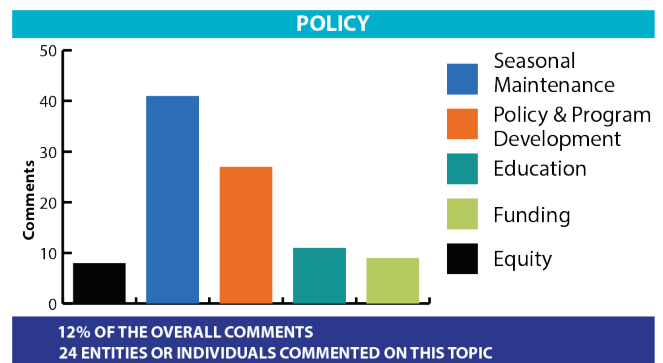


Other: Includes comments that asked for clarification or provided general support or disapproval of the plan as a whole.

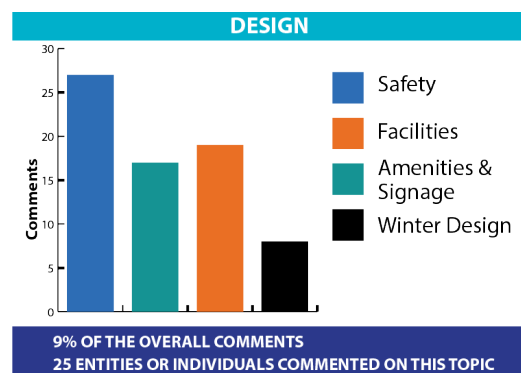


Document: Includes suggested text edits or elaborations, imagery & map/table edits, and updated data requests.

Policy: The majority of comments related to policy addressed needed attention paid to seasonal maintenance & development criteria or targets to be set in place before project selection.



Design: Includes comments received that pertain to suggested project design features or considerations during the design phase of a project.



Coordination: Includes mentions of Municipal planning documents, agency overlap & the Highway Safety Improvement Program, as well as comments about the public involvement process for this plan.