

# Hillside Avenue Bikeway Survey Summary

March 2026

## **Acknowledgements**

This initiative builds on a foundation of studies and opportunities funded by the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) and the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) for the Borough of Metuchen and Middlesex County. Keep Middlesex Moving is committed to forwarding their recommendations for safety, traffic reduction, community health, and environmental sustainability. KMM would like to recognize the individuals and organizations who dedicated their time to this project, including the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority, Linda Koskoski, Metuchen Director of Economic Development, Jason Delia, Borough Council President, the Metuchen Traffic & Transportation Committee, Metuchen Police Department, Metuchen Farmers Market, Metuchen Public Library, Bike Walk Metuchen and Colliers Engineering & Design.

## **Report Authors**

Christopher Gonda, Program Manager  
Arlene Holt, Operations Director  
Brian Tobin, Executive Director

## **Keep Middlesex Moving, Inc.**

100 Bayard Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
New Brunswick, NJ 08901

---

*This report was prepared through the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) TMA Work Program with funding from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) of the U.S. Department of Transportation. This document is disseminated under the sponsorship of NJTPA and FHWA in the interest of information exchange. Keep Middlesex Moving TMA is solely responsible for its contents.*

---

## **Executive Summary**

### ***Background***

In 2013, the Borough of Metuchen adopted a Complete Streets Policy to enable safe access for pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, transit riders, and road users of all ages and abilities. To identify opportunities for an inclusive transportation network, the borough participated in the Local Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Assistance Program in 2016 to develop the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan (Bike/Ped Plan) that same year. Metuchen adopted the Bike/Ped Plan into its Master Plan Circulation Element which continues to guide the borough's considerations for safe and accessible connections for all modes of travel. The 2016 Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan identified a Priority Bicycle Network that includes Grove Avenue as a major north-south connection to destinations that includes Metuchen High School. In 2018, the borough secured funding from the Federal Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TA Set-Aside) program to design and implement the Grove Avenue Bikeway, which will begin construction in 2026 as Metuchen's first on-road dedicated bicycle facility.

The borough identified Hillside Avenue as a critical east-west connection that aligns with the recommendations within the borough's previous transportation studies and plans. Together, the Hillside and Grove Avenue Bikeways will connect residents east of the borough to the Metuchen Train Station, Main Street and the Middlesex Greenway. These three locations are among the leading generators of bicycle traffic.

The Borough of Metuchen received over \$500,000 in funding from the New Jersey Department of Transportation's Local Transportation Projects and Bikeway programs for the installation of the Hillside Avenue Bike Lane Project. These improvements follow the Borough's intentions of the 2013 Complete Streets Policy (RESOLUTION NO. 2013-210), where these improvements will designate spaces for cars and active transportation modes, and enhance the environment for schools, public facilities, transit stops, the downtown and neighborhood business districts, and the Middlesex Greenway.

### ***Engagement Methods***

In 2025, the borough partnered with Keep Middlesex Moving (KMM) to deliver a series of public engagement strategies. The primary engagement activities performed by Keep Middlesex Moving consisted of community meetings, in-person table events, and an online survey.

KMM produced maps and designs for display at Borough Hall and the Metuchen Public Library. These boards included instructions to participate in an online survey to collect local feedback on the Hillside Bike Lane project. Promotional methods included the borough's website, social media, and in-person events, including the Metuchen Farmers Market. KMM attended the Metuchen Farmers Market Opening Day on June 21, and again, on July 19, 2025. These events garnered the support of the Metuchen Traffic and Transportation Committee, whose members engaged with marketgoers and residents about the benefits and potential of the bicycle lanes. KMM invited

attendees to review the concept-level designs and encouraged the public to take the survey and record their feedback for specific locations on the maps.

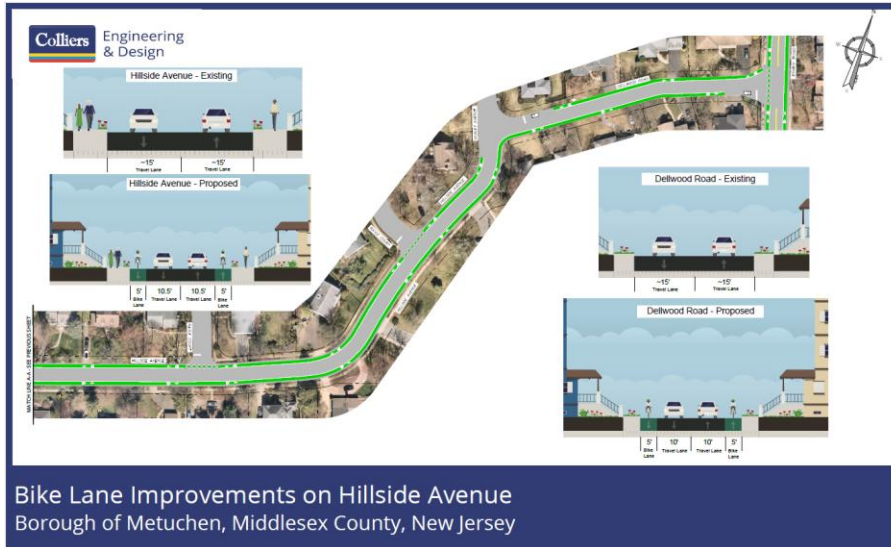


Figure 1: Dellwood Road and Hillside Avenue Cross Section Diagrams and Pavement Marking Concepts by Colliers Engineering & Design.

The online survey collected one hundred and two (102) responses, and key findings were highly positive of the Hillside Avenue Bikeway Project. Responses included concerns about the location of the project and its impact on safety, traffic patterns, and on-street parking. The feedback revealed the intended traffic-calming effects of the bikeway can address the leading concerns related to active transportation in the borough. Overall, opportunities for education, safety campaigns, and supportive engagement, such as a demonstration bike lane, are highly effective strategies to introduce the community to the project's benefits.



Figure 2: The Sixty (60) Percent Design by Colliers Engineering and Design shows the Hillside Avenue Bikeway Road Markings on Hillside Avenue, Station Place and Pennsylvania Avenue.

---

## Survey Analysis

The survey period began on June 19, 2025, and KMM collected one hundred and two (102) responses through October 5, 2025. Collectively, one hundred (100) respondents identified as community members who live in the Borough of Metuchen. Among these residents, forty-eight (48) individuals indicated that they live within the neighborhood of the project area. Twenty-six (26) of these community members reside on Hillside Avenue. Figure 3 illustrates the local distribution of respondents.

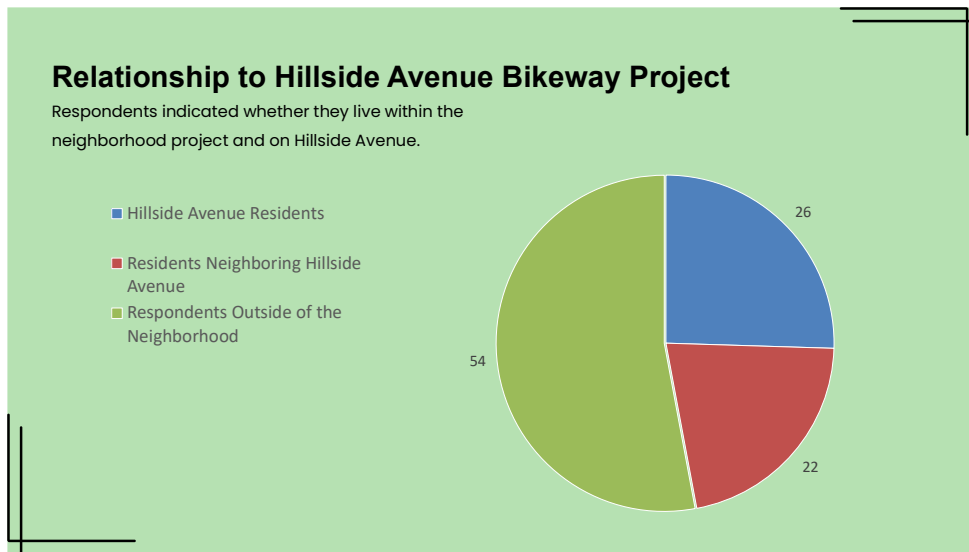
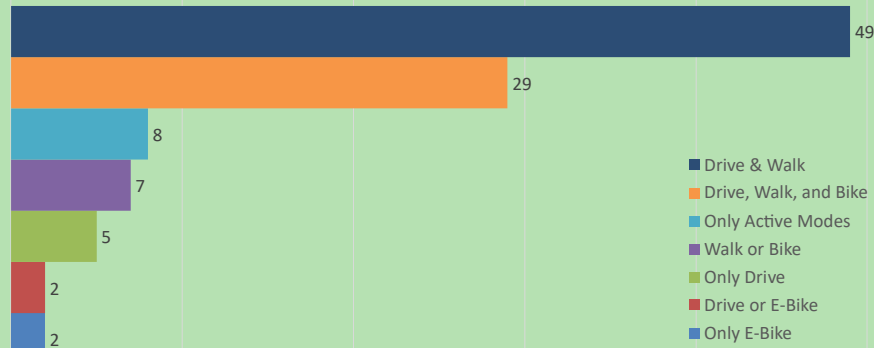


Figure 3: Relationship to Project Area and Neighborhood

The survey asked which forms of transportation they used within the borough of Metuchen. In total, the most popular mode of transportation was walking, with ninety-three (93) responses. This may be indicative of the borough's supportive walkable environment. Driving measured ninety-one (91) responses. Traditional bicycles (non-e-assist) were considerations in forty-two (42) responses. Electric-assist vehicles like e-bikes and e-scooters were in five (5) responses. The survey allowed participants to select multiple modes of travel, thus analysis revealed combinations of travel modes preferred by community members. Figure 4 illustrates the rankings of these combinations with driving and walking as the most popular combination of travel modes, with forty-nine (49) responses. Bicycles were included in the remaining combinations with a total of fifty-three (53) responses.

## Preferred Modes of Travel

Respondents were asked to check all modes of travel they choose to travel around Metuchen.



Within these results, Bicycles were selected by forty-three (43) respondents.

Figure 4: Community Travel Mode Preference

When analyzing the combinations of travel modes by age, the grouping of ages 18-to-35 represented twenty-one percent (21.5%) of participants. This age group included the largest number of those who “Drive and Walk,” and the smallest number of individuals who ride bicycles. The interest in cycling was more prominent for the 36-to-50 age bracket and 51-to-64 age brackets. Bicycling was less popular for older adults, 65-and-older.

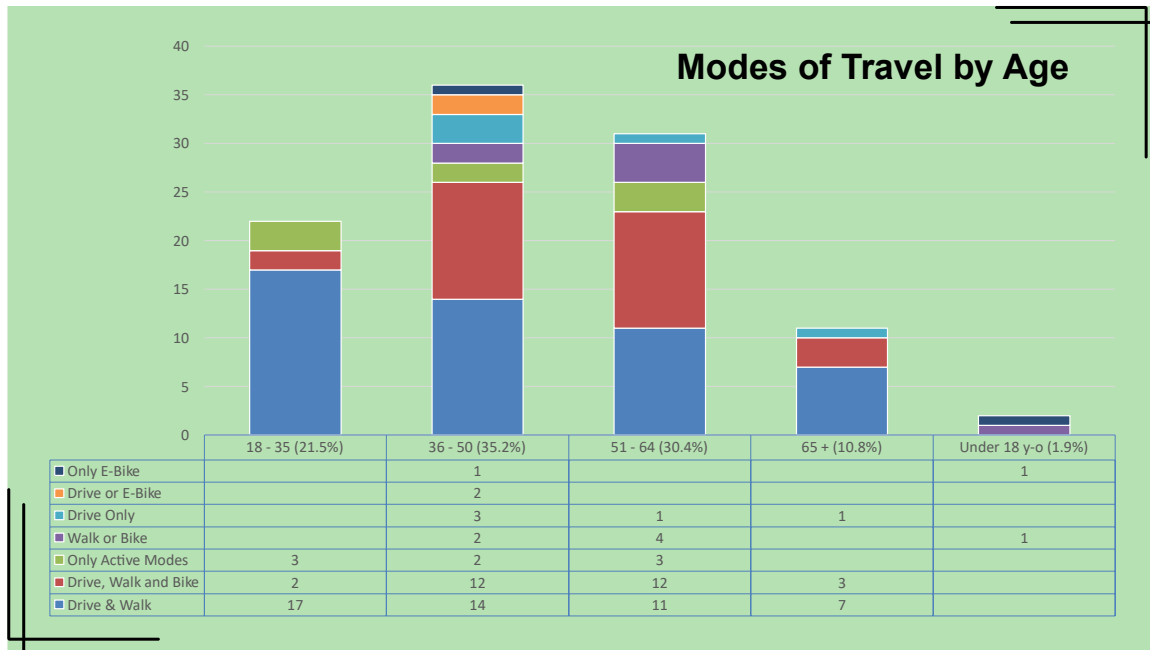


Figure 5: Combinations of Travel Modes by Age

The survey measured attitudes toward bicycles for transportation, and more than seventy percent (70.6%) of participants agreed that bicyclists on the road are vehicular traffic, and another eighteen percent (18.6%) slightly agreed with that notion. The survey presented a list of concerns that may discourage community members from biking in the borough. Participants were prompted to select their top three (3) concerns, with the option to write in additional thoughts. The three leading variables were “Driving Behaviors,” the “Presence of Traffic,” and “Limited space on roads and Sidewalks”. Respondents from within the neighborhood of the Hillside Avenue Bike Lane Project agreed that “Driver Behaviors” and “Traffic” were significant concerns, though responses spread among the other choices.

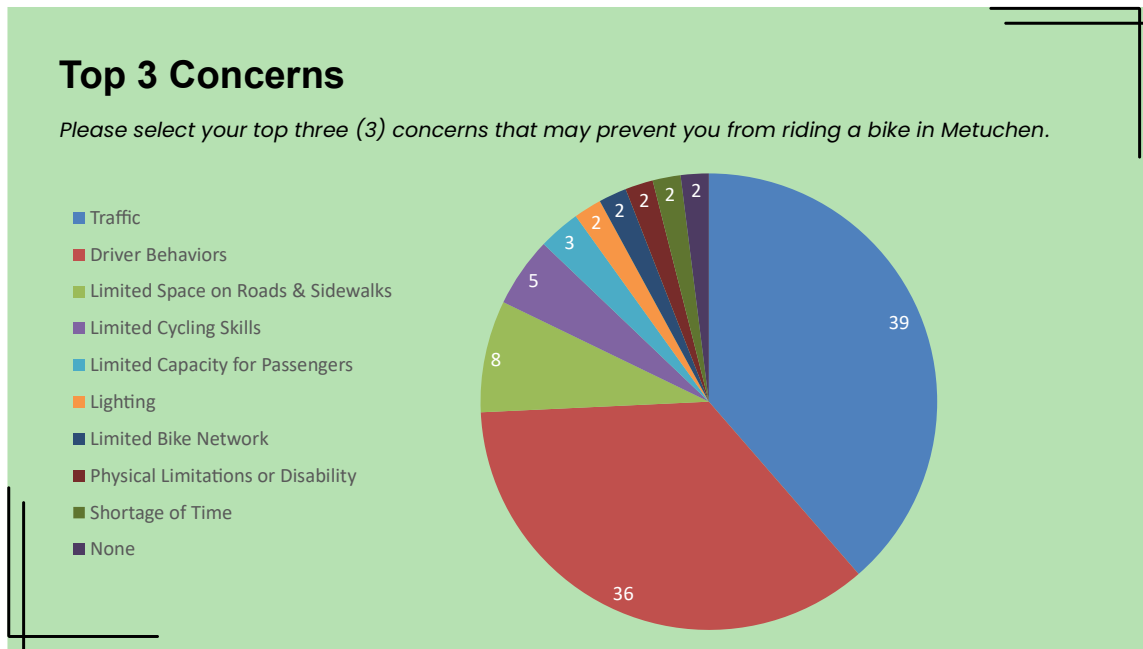


Figure 6: Top Concerns for the biking environment in Metuchen.

Three neighborhood residents expressed a lack of confidence in riding bicycles, while others felt there were no barriers to discourage them from bicycling. Two participants faced challenges related to their ability to transport children or larger items on a bike. One participant, who resides outside of the project area noted, “Cars speeding on the cut through street,” are a concern.



Figure 7: Concerns over biking by Neighborhood.

Conversely, the survey requested feedback on variables that may encourage participants to use bicycles in the community. When asked to select their top three improvements, “Respectful Drivers” and “Bike Lanes & Dedicated Paths” were the two leading choices among respondents, while “A Network of Bicycle-Friendly Streets,” stood out as the third most popular choice among all survey participants.

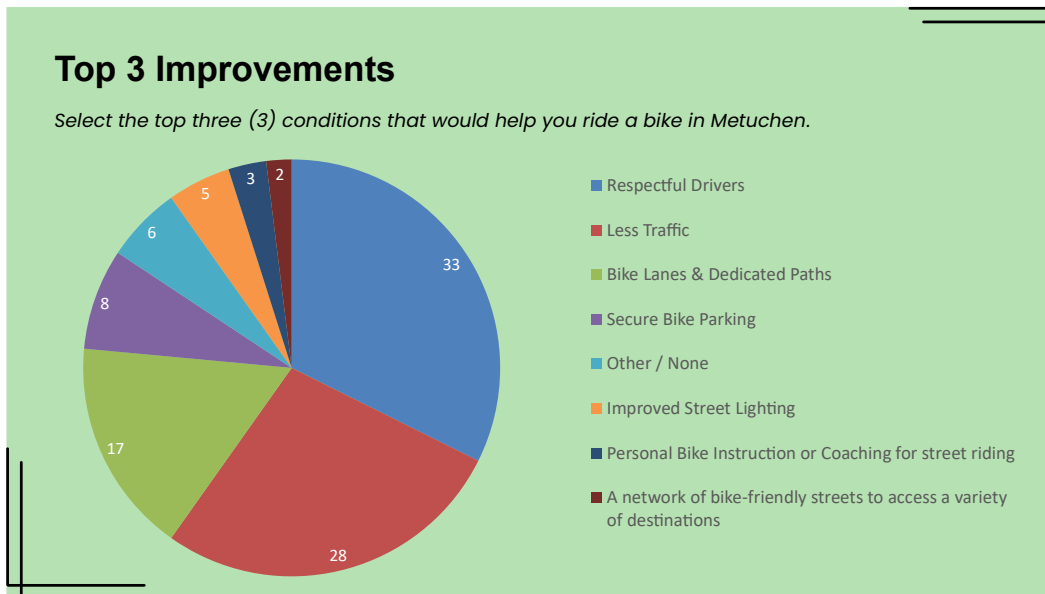


Figure 8: Top Improvements for supportive biking environment.

This question also encouraged participants to type in their own improvements that were not mentioned. Written responses ranged from satisfaction with the current conditions, disconnect from the project, and opposition to cycling in transportation spaces. Figure 9 lists the typed responses.

## Improvements: Additional Comments

- None. I don't ride a bike
- I am completely comfortable biking in my town.
- Nothing. Just make it safer for pedestrians instead.
- I find bike riding physically painful. Bikers on their phones and with headphones are dangerous. If you want to ride a bike for pleasure or exercise, it's better to ride in the park, not in an urban area.
- A new pair of knees

Figure 9: Typed responses for improvements.

Within the neighborhood of the Hillside Avenue Bike Lane project, “Decreased Traffic” ranked third in their responses with twenty-seven (27) responses, followed by “Bicycle Lanes & Paths,” with twenty-two (22) responses. While street improvements can limit the interaction between drivers and cyclists, the Hillside Avenue Bike Lane project has the potential to address these concerns.

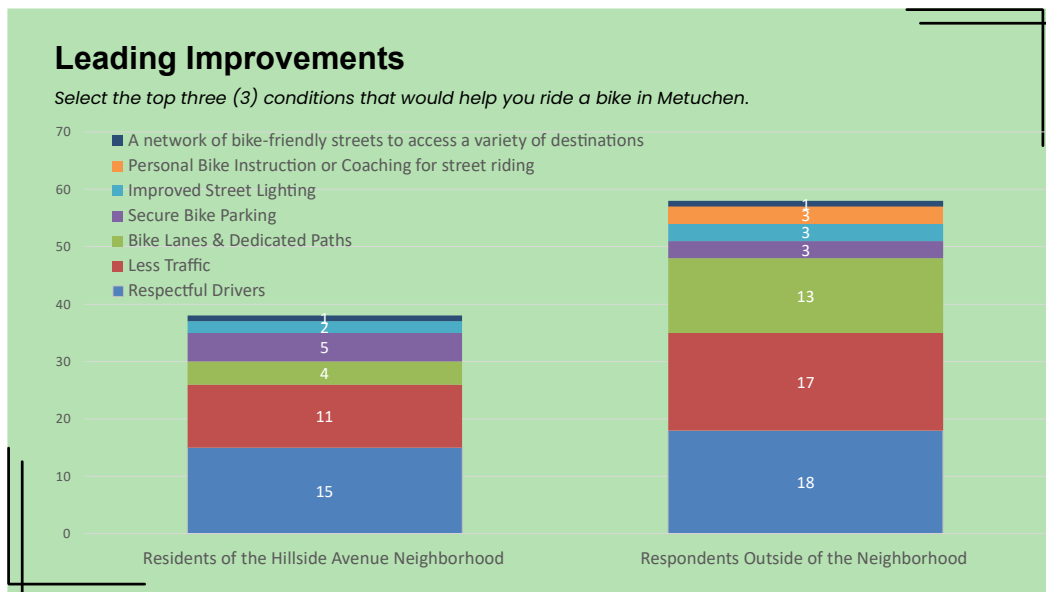


Figure 10: Attitudes toward supportive bicycling environment by neighborhood.

## Open Feedback

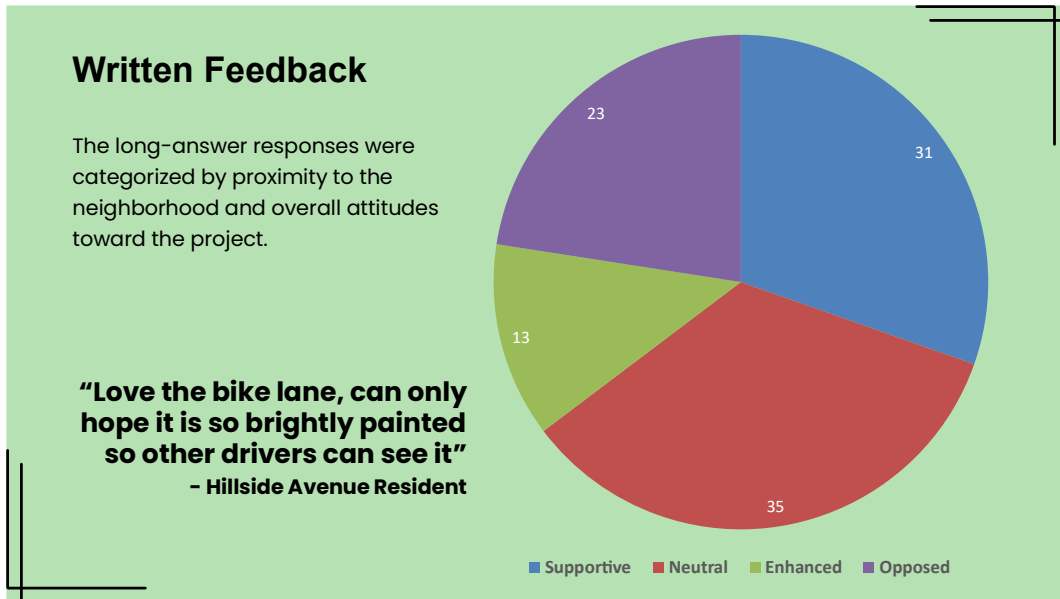


Figure 11: This pie chart displays the count of responses within the four distinct categories.

The survey invited participants to provide written and open feedback, and responses included support for the overall project, along with comments about the design. Based on the breadth of feedback, KMM classified these comments into four categories: **Supportive** of the project, Supportive with **Enhancements** to the concept, **Neutral**, and **Opposed** to the Project. The introduction to the survey estimated two minutes to complete the form, and participants spent an average of 13 minutes submitting their feedback.

Figure 12: Classification of Written Feedback

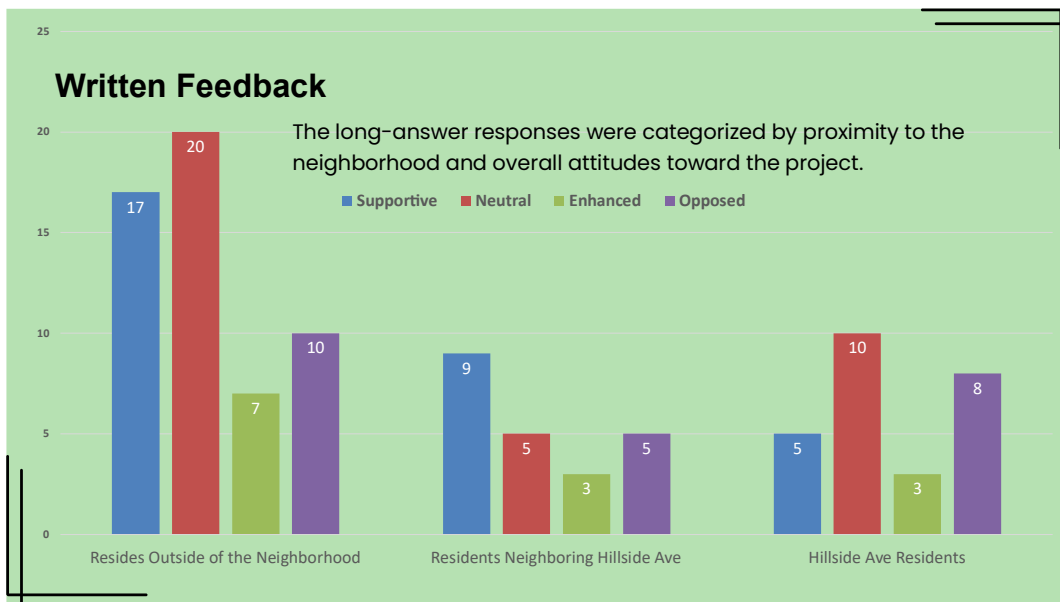


Figure 13: Community Feedback by Proximity to the Project Area

The chart above groups the respondents by their relationship to the project area and measures the community’s written feedback and attitudes. Thirty-five (35) comments remained neutral, without support or opposition to the project, and included questions and the need for clarification on the design. A total of thirty-two (32) comments questioned the impact on parking on Hillside Avenue and its surrounding neighborhood. The comments that identified parking as a concern fell into two categories: Neutral and Opposed to the project.

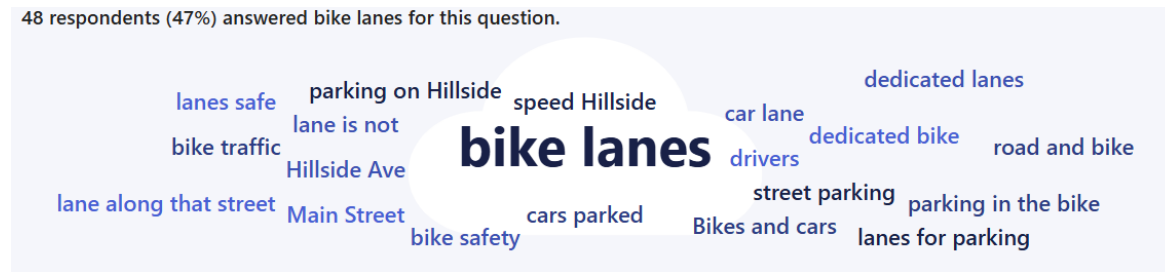


Figure 14: Word Cloud generated from Survey Responses via MS Forms

In response to the question asking for initial thoughts or concerns about the bikeway improvements, twenty-three (23) community members expressed that they are not in favor of the Hillside Avenue Bike Lane project. Sixteen (16) of these shared concerns about the loss of parking and included questions and concerns about the effectiveness of this type of treatment. Among the twenty-six (26) participants who live on Hillside, eight (8) expressed their lack of support for the project, and four (4) stated that parking was a main concern. The survey results were gathered using Microsoft Forms, and the application created the word cloud in Figure 13. The graphic highlights the parking concerns in several phrases.

Parking and the traffic flow adjacent to Downtown were a common concern for respondents, including a resident who offered the following remarks:

*“There are typically many cars parked on both sides of the road on Hillside Ave between Robins Place & Pleasant Place. My child’s daycare center is on Hillside Ave and there’s a lot of traffic in this area during typical pickup/drop off times. I’m concerned that the proposed bike lanes will make parking in the area difficult.”*

Furthermore, forty-three percent (43%) of the participants spoke highly of the concept for the Hillside Bike Lane project. Thirty-one (31) comments demonstrated clear support for the project – nine (9) of which requested more bicycle infrastructure in the Borough. An additional thirteen (13) comments included support for this project and offered recommendations for enhancements, such as delineators elements that will emphasize the separation between traffic and cyclists.

## Written Feedback

**Love this idea! I've been wanting more bike friendly travel in this town for a while! I drive to Roosevelt Park often to play basketball, so I love this idea. To me, the most important bike travel routes would be**

**Whole Foods <-> Downtown  
Roosevelt Park <-> Downtown  
Metuchen Pool <-> Downtown**

**If you could expand the bike lanes like so, I don't know if I'd need a car at all!**

**- Metuchen Neighbor**

*Figure 15: Expressed support by a Metuchen Resident*

In the responses, eleven (11) advocated for enhancements to the project, specifically requesting a protected bike lane with vertical elements, like its own curb, flexible posts, or planters. One Hillside resident commented, “Road Paint will not prevent a car from hitting me, or alert a driver when they are veering into the bike lane. An actual PHYSICAL BARRIER is needed. This can be as simple as flex posts that collapse when hit so as not to damage the car...”



*Figure 16: Families speaking with members of the Traffic & Committee at the Metuchen Farmers Market.*

## Temporary Demonstration Project and Continued Engagement

KMM submitted this summary and the raw survey data to the Borough of Metuchen. This survey has gained valuable community insights that will inform follow-up activities in this project. The responses also revealed opportunities for community members to benefit from KMM’s education programs, and continued engagement on this project.

In May 2026, KMM, Walk Bike Metuchen and the Borough's Traffic and Transportation Committee plan to install a temporary bike lane, with support from the Complete Streets Demonstration Library by the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA). The goal of the Temporary Demonstration Bike Lane is to deliver the experience of the Complete Streets treatment on Hillside Avenue months before the permanent installation. The community can observe the traffic calming effects as stated below:

*Demonstration projects empower communities to test out road improvements to make their streets safer and more people-focused, utilizing short-term, low-cost, and scalable interventions to achieve long-term change related to street safety and public space.*

While the current maps and concept drawings give a sense of the design on paper, the temporary design project is a more immersive experience of the public space, unobstructed by parked vehicles, and allowing designated spaces for all travel modes. KMM will conduct pre-and-post observations of the traffic patterns and driver behaviors, as well as collect feedback on the alternate streetscape.



*Figure 17: Bulldog Bike Brigade riding on Grove Avenue at Oakland Park*

Additionally, spring 2026 will come with relevant educational opportunities in the community. May is National Bike month, and Metuchen promotes biking through several events every year. The borough's Recreation and Police Departments host an annual Bicycle Rodeo for younger audiences to practice maneuvering their bikes confidently and safely. Student cyclists from Campbell Elementary will also participate in the Bulldog Bike Brigade. This Bike Bus led by teachers, parents and volunteers ride to school together by picking up student-cyclists at stops on the designated route. Another exciting mainstay in May is the Edison and Metuchen Mayor's Bike Tour – a 24-mile bike event that brings together community members for a fun and social ride. Each of these social activities is an opportunity to promote the Temporary Bike Lane and gather feedback from community members. A schedule with dates will be available on the Hillside Avenue Bikeway Project Page.