



Community Workshop on the Benefits of a Walkable & Bikeable Community

Overview and Summary

On March 12, 2012, the Town of Bethlehem hosted a community workshop to collect ideas and recommendations for Bethlehem's Bicycle and Pedestrian Program. In addition to learning about Bethlehem's bicycle and pedestrian initiatives to-date, the workshop's 36 participants answered a series of demographic and bicycle and pedestrian-related questions through a keypad polling exercise. Participants also identified new actions and potential community partners for the Town's Bicycle and Pedestrian Program through small group discussions.

Information gathered throughout the workshop showed that the biggest barrier to walking / bicycling in Bethlehem was safety concerns. A variety of strategies were identified in the small group discussions to address bicycle and pedestrian safety in Bethlehem, such as improving safety for pedestrians in crosswalks and making intersections less dangerous for bicyclists. Workshop participants also identified a number of strategies to increase the use of bicycling for commuting to school/work and for other non-recreational purposes. Results from the polling exercise include:

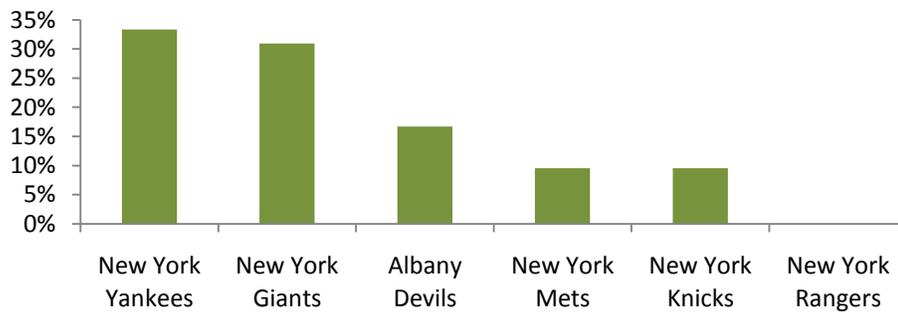
- Nearly 70 percent of participants identify themselves as a recreational cyclist, while only nine percent identify as a bicycle commuter.
- The majority (56 percent) of participants said that safety concerns/being on the road with cars was the biggest barrier to riding a bicycle in Bethlehem.
- Nearly 40 percent of participants said they use the Town's current marked bicycle routes, while 50 percent said they do not. Eleven percent did not know if they bike on marked routes.
- Eighty-four percent of participants reported walking around town at least once a week. Lack of sidewalks and distance were identified as the two biggest barriers to walking more in Bethlehem (24 percent of participants each), followed closely by a lack of network of sidewalks to get to key destinations (22 percent).
- Roadway and sidewalk maintenance was identified as the top priority for the Town to focus on this year (34 percent of participants).

A complete set of polling results, along with a summary of actions identified by the community workshop participants, are provided in this summary report.

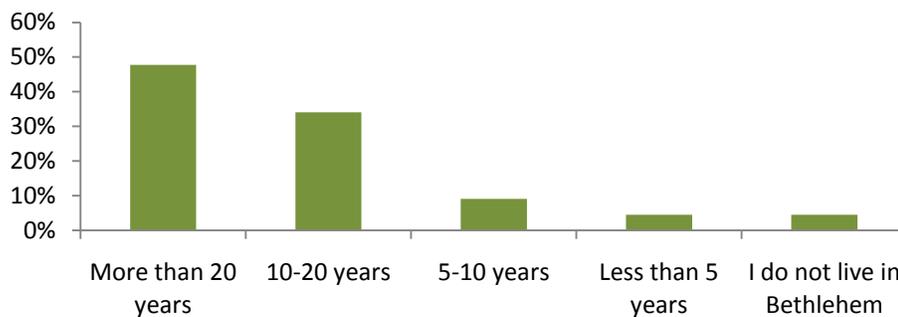


Workshop Polling Data Table

1.) What is your favorite Sports Team? (multiple choice)		Responses	
New York Yankees	14	33%	
New York Giants	13	31%	
Albany Devils	7	17%	
New York Mets	4	10%	
New York Knicks	4	10%	
New York Rangers	0	0%	
Totals	42	100%	



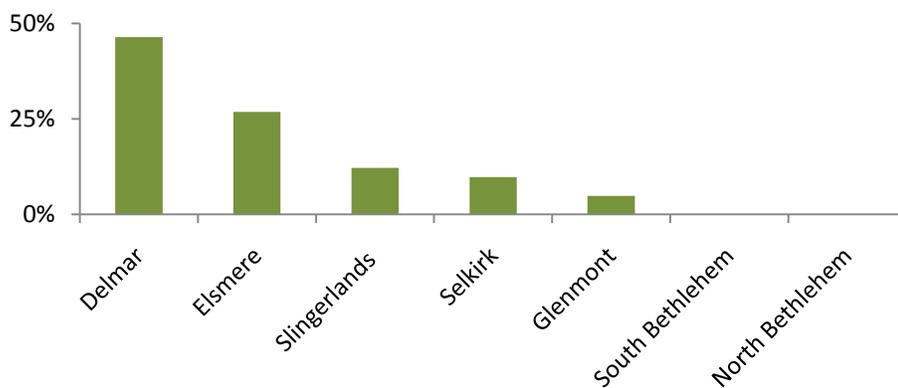
2.) How long have you lived in Bethlehem? (multiple choice)		Responses	
More than 20 years	21	48%	
10-20 years	15	34%	
5-10 years	4	9%	
Less than 5 years	2	5%	
I do not live in Bethlehem	2	5%	
Totals	44	100%	





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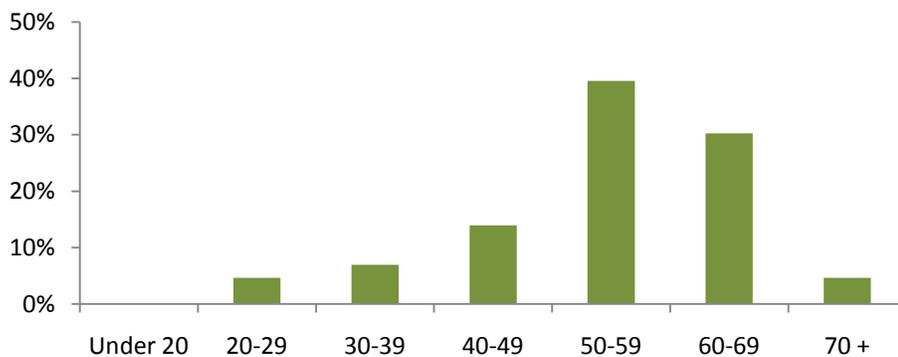
3.) Which hamlet do you live in? (multiple choice)		Responses	
Delmar	19	46%	
Elsmere	11	27%	
Slingerlands	5	12%	
Selkirk	4	10%	
Glenmont	2	5%	
South Bethlehem	0	0%	
North Bethlehem	0	0%	
Totals	41	100%	



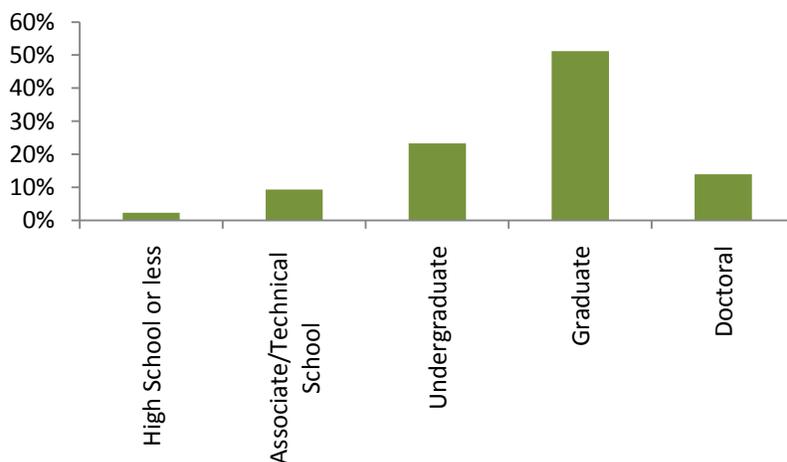
4.) Which age group do you fall into? (multiple choice)		Responses	
Under 20	0	0%	
20-29	2	5%	
30-39	3	7%	
40-49	6	14%	
50-59	17	40%	
60-69	13	30%	
70 +	2	5%	
Totals	43	100%	



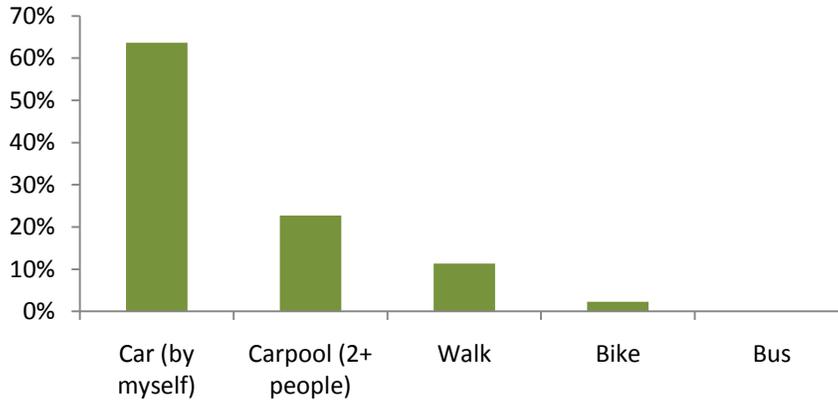
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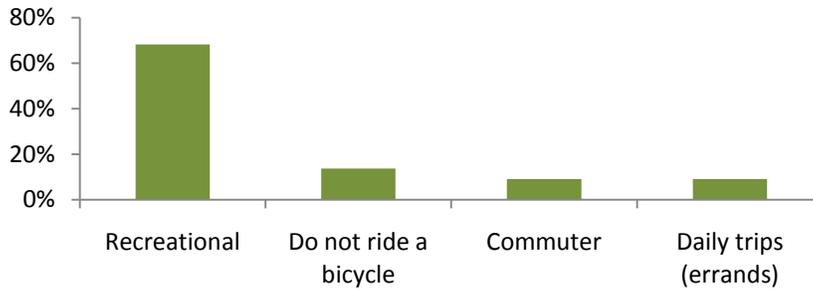
5.) What is the highest level of education that you have completed? (multiple choice)	Responses	
High School or less	1	2%
Associate/Technical School	4	9%
Undergraduate	10	23%
Graduate	22	51%
Doctoral	6	14%
Totals	43	100%



6.) What mode of transportation did you use to get here tonight? (multiple choice)	Responses	
Car (by myself)	28	64%
Carpool (2+ people)	10	23%
Walk	5	11%
Bike	1	2%
Bus	0	0%
Totals	44	100%



7.) How do you identify yourself with regards to biking? (multiple choice)	Responses	
Recreational	30	68%
Do not ride a bicycle	6	14%
Commuter	4	9%
Daily trips (errands)	4	9%
Totals	44	100%

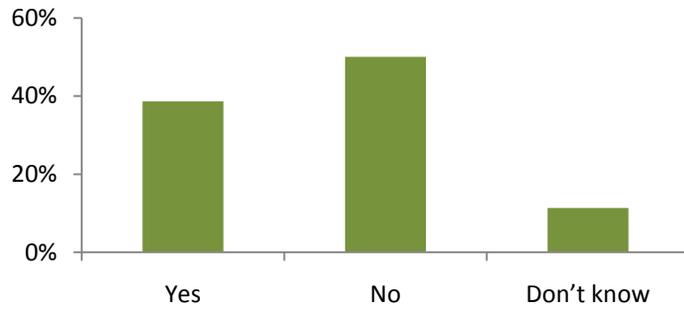


8.) Do you currently utilize any of the Town's marked bicycle routes? (multiple choice)	Responses	
Yes	17	39%
No	22	50%
Don't know	5	11%
Totals	44	100%



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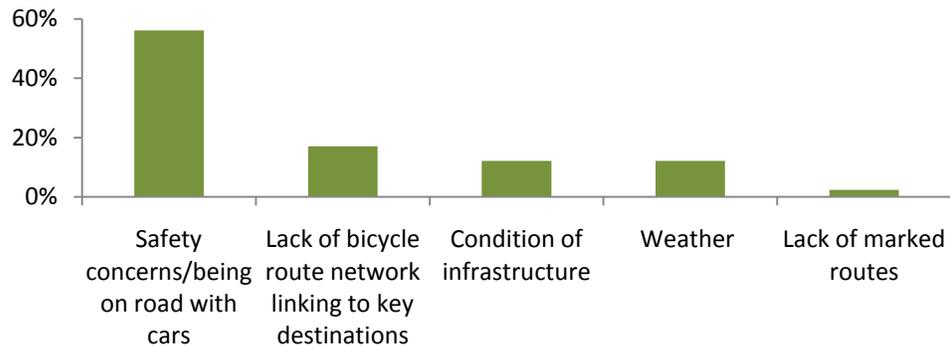
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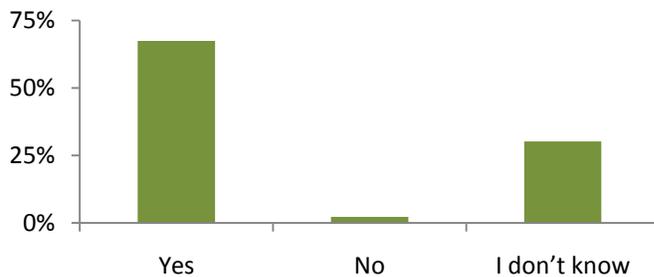


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9.) What do you consider the greatest barrier to riding a bicycle in Bethlehem? (multiple choice)	Responses	
Safety concerns/being on road with cars	23	56%
Lack of bicycle route network linking to key destinations	7	17%
Condition of infrastructure	5	12%
Weather	5	12%
Lack of marked routes	1	2%
Totals	41	100%



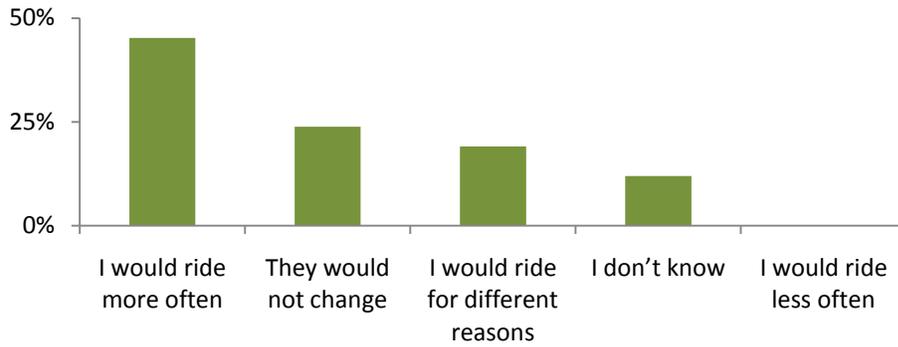
10.) Would you like to see the Town take steps to become a certified Bicycle Friendly Community? (multiple choice)	Responses	
Yes	29	67%
No	1	2%
I don't know	13	30%
Totals	43	100%



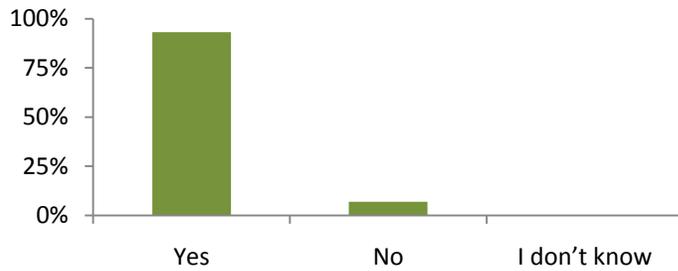


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11.) How would your biking habits change if Bethlehem was a certified Bicycle Friendly Community? (multiple choice)	Responses	
I would ride more often	19	45%
They would not change	10	24%
I would ride for different reasons	8	19%
I don't know	5	12%
I would ride less often	0	0%
Totals	42	100%



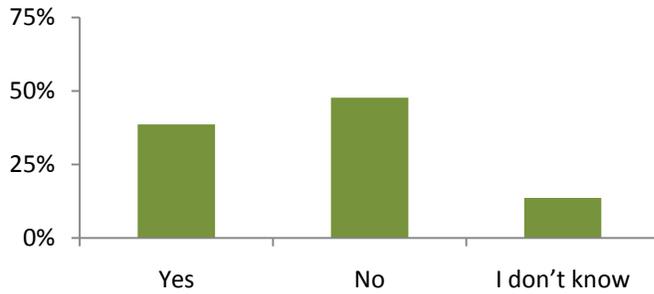
12.) Are you aware of the NYS V&T law requiring drivers to Yield to Pedestrians in the crosswalk at locations without signals? (multiple choice)	Responses	
Yes	41	93%
No	3	7%
I don't know	0	0%
Totals	44	100%



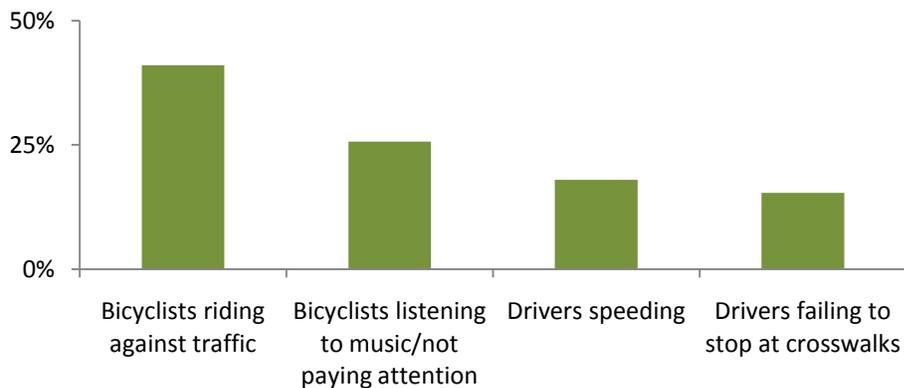


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13.) Do you support residents of all ages riding their bicycle on the sidewalk? (multiple choice)	Responses	
Yes	17	39%
No	21	48%
I don't know	6	14%
Totals	44	100%



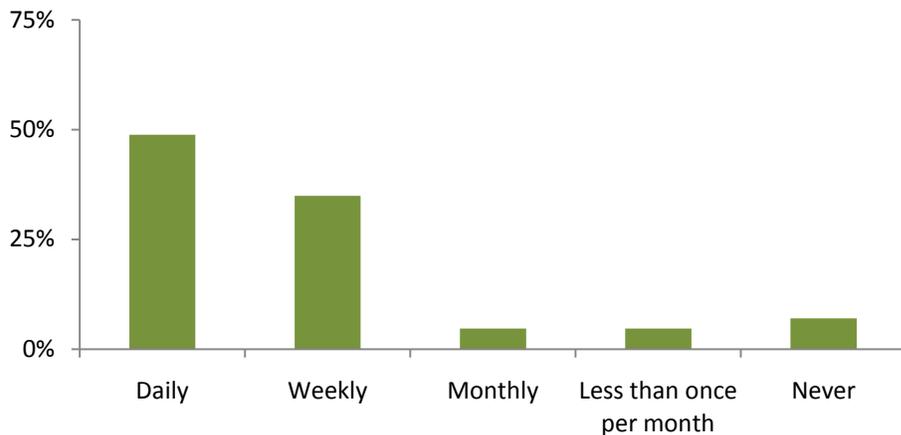
14.) What do you think is the cause of the most motor vehicle-bicycle accidents in Bethlehem. (multiple choice)	Responses	
Bicyclists riding against traffic	16	41%
Bicyclists listening to music/not paying attention	10	26%
Drivers speeding	7	18%
Drivers failing to stop at crosswalks	6	15%
Totals	39	100%



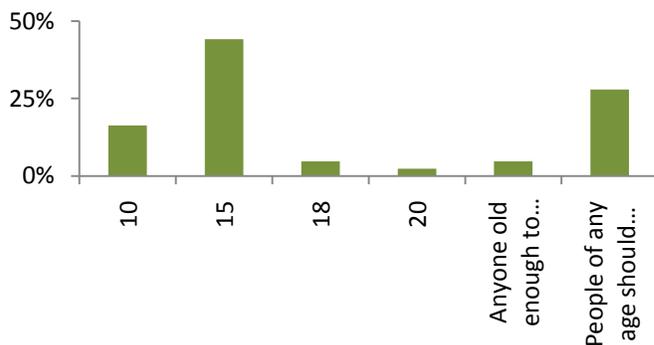


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15.) How often do you walk around town? (multiple choice)	Responses	
Daily	21	49%
Weekly	15	35%
Monthly	2	5%
Less than once per month	2	5%
Never	3	7%
Totals	43	100%



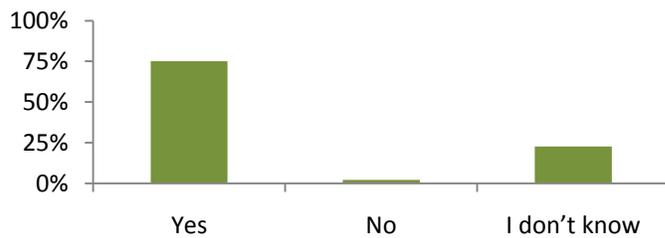
16.) What is the youngest age you believe it is appropriate for residents to ride their bicycle on the roadway, not on the sidewalk? (multiple choice)	Responses	
10	7	16%
15	19	44%
18	2	5%
20	1	2%
Anyone old enough to ride a bicycle should ride on the roadway	2	5%
People of any age should be able to ride on the sidewalk	12	28%
Totals	43	100%



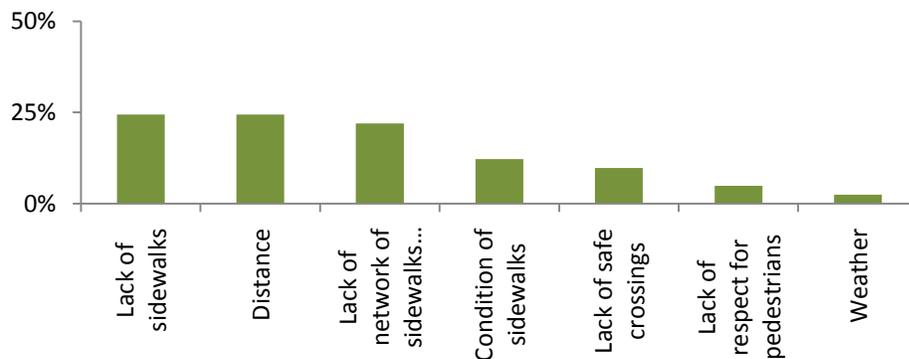


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17.) Would you like to see the Town take steps to become a certified Walk Friendly Community? (multiple choice)		Responses	
Yes	33	75%	
No	1	2%	
I don't know	10	23%	
Totals	44	100%	



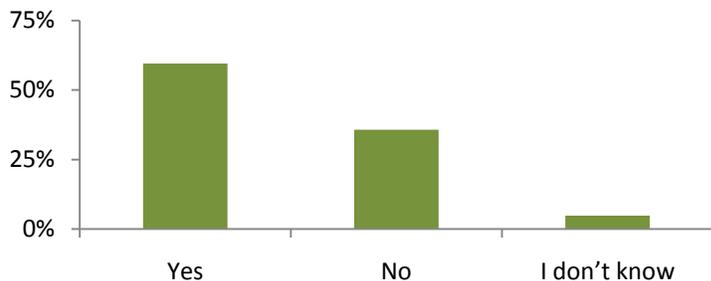
18.) What do you consider the greatest barrier to walking more in Bethlehem? (multiple choice)		Responses	
Lack of sidewalks	10	24%	
Distance	10	24%	
Lack of network of sidewalks to get to key destinations	9	22%	
Condition of sidewalks	5	12%	
Lack of safe crossings	4	10%	
Lack of respect for pedestrians	2	5%	
Weather	1	2%	
Totals	41	100%	



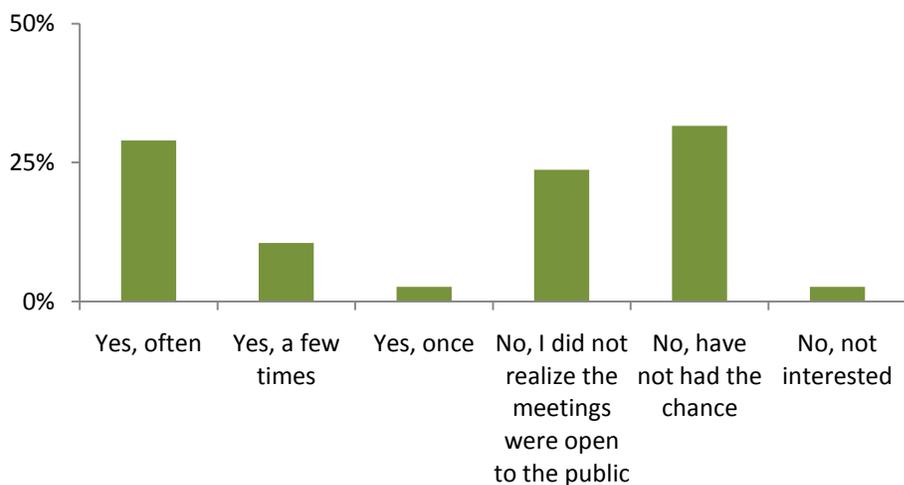


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19.) Prior to tonight, were you aware of the existence of the PaTHs Committee? (multiple choice)	Responses	
Yes	25	60%
No	15	36%
I don't know	2	5%
Totals	42	100%



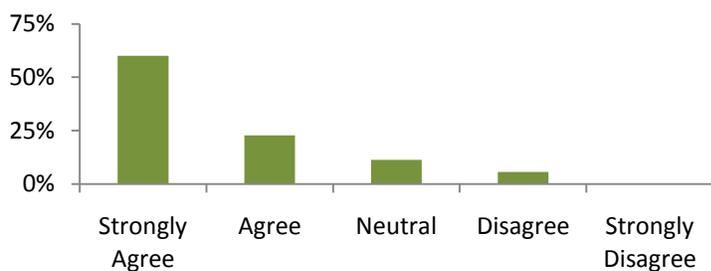
20.) Have you ever attended a PaTHs Committee meeting? (multiple choice)	Responses	
Yes, often	11	29%
Yes, a few times	4	11%
Yes, once	1	3%
No, I did not realize the meetings were open to the public	9	24%
No, have not had the chance	12	32%
No, not interested	1	3%
Totals	38	100%



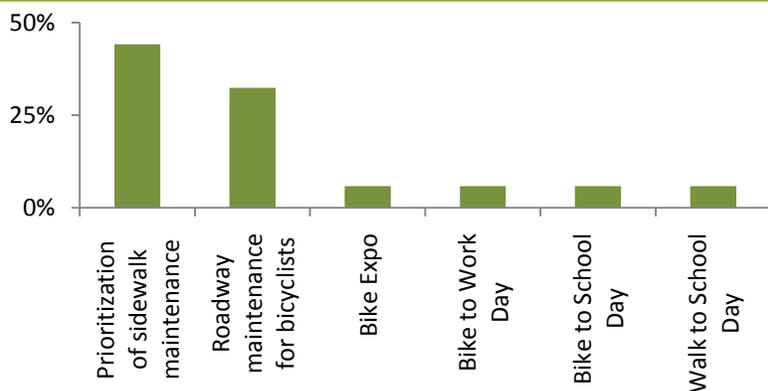


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21.) The PaTHs Committee has provided an invaluable service to Bethlehem (multiple choice)	Responses	
Strongly Agree	21	60%
Agree	8	23%
Neutral	4	11%
Disagree	2	6%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Totals	35	100%



22.) Which upcoming project/program are you most interested in seeing completed? (multiple choice)	Responses	
Prioritization of sidewalk maintenance	15	44%
Roadway maintenance for bicyclists	11	32%
Bike Expo	2	6%
Bike to Work Day	2	6%
Bike to School Day	2	6%
Walk to School Day	2	6%
Totals	34	100%





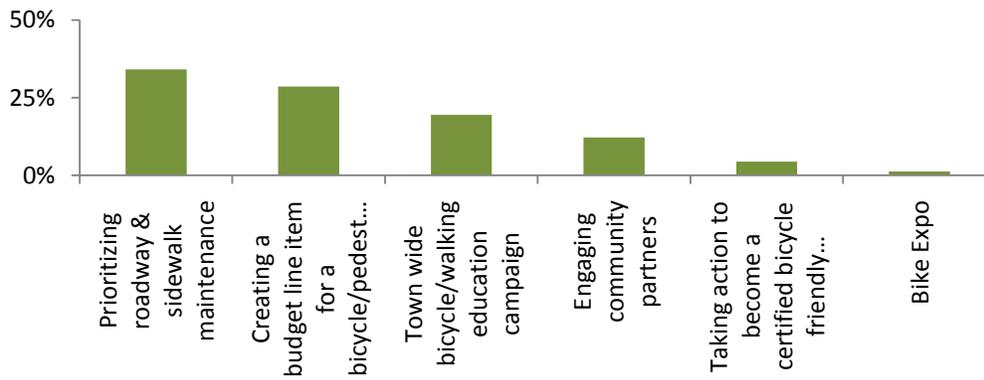
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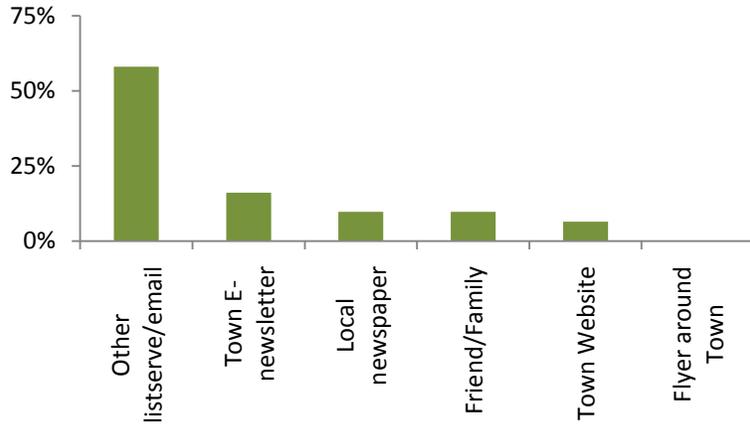
23.) Please rank the top three projects you think Bethlehem should focus on this year. (priority ranking)	Responses	
Prioritizing roadway & sidewalk maintenance	268	34%
Creating a budget line item for a bicycle/pedestrian infrastructure	225	29%
Town wide bicycle/walking education campaign	153	19%
Engaging community partners	96	12%
Taking action to become a certified bicycle friendly community	35	4%
Bike Expo	10	1%
Totals	787	100%



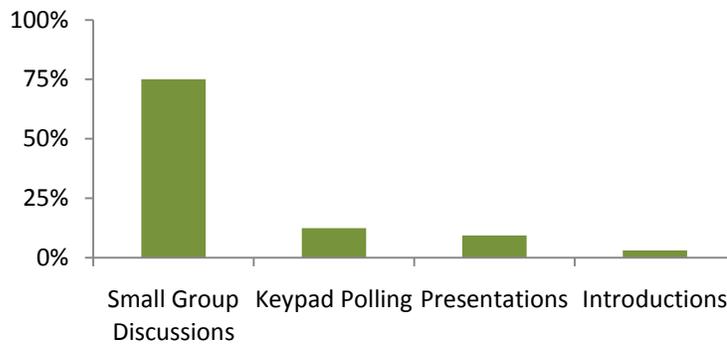
24.) How did you hear about tonight's Workshop? (multiple choice)	Responses	
Other listserve/email	18	58%
Town E-newsletter	5	16%
Local newspaper	3	10%
Friend/Family	3	10%
Town Website	2	6%
Flyer around Town	0	0%
Totals	31	100%



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25.) What do you think was the most useful portion of tonight's Workshop? (multiple choice)	Responses	
Small Group Discussions	24	75%
Keypad Polling	4	13%
Presentations	3	9%
Introductions	1	3%
Totals	32	100%





Small Group Discussions

Workshop participants were split into five groups of six to eight people and were asked to address the following questions:

- What other actions would you like to see Bethlehem take to support more biking and walking in the Town?
- Which actions would you like to see prioritized? Select your top three to five actions.
- Which organizations/people should be involved as a community partner on these various efforts?

Safety was a concern among many workshop participants. Many of the actions proposed during the small group discussions were intended to make Bethlehem's roads and sidewalks safer for bicyclists and pedestrians. Actions proposed by the five discussion groups generally fit into one of four thematic categories:

- Connectivity, Road Crossings, and Network Improvements
- Maintenance and Physical Improvements
- Education, Enforcement, Engagement, and Encouragement
- Regulations and Zoning

Tables 1 through 4 below illustrate the actions proposed by workshop participants by thematic category. Actions identified as a priority by one or more discussion groups and/or addressed by one or more of the Town of Bethlehem's Pathways to Healthy Homes, Hamlets and Hearts Advisory Committee (PaTHs 4 Bethlehem Committee) goal areas are marked with an "X." The PaTHs 4 Bethlehem Committee goals are focused around the 5E's of a bicycle friendly community:

- **Engineering** – Bethlehem offers safe and efficient infrastructure to ensure accessibility, connectivity, and mobility for bicyclists and pedestrians
- **Education and Enforcement** – The Bethlehem community is aware of and actively exhibits safe bicycling, walking, and driving behavior. A share the road approach is respected among all travel modes and reinforced through enforcement of traffic laws
- **Engagement and Encouragement** – The Bethlehem community is utilizing its bicycle and pedestrian network to its full extent and is empowered to drive new programs in the town

Table 5 lists potential community partners for the Bethlehem Bicycle and Pedestrian Program as identified by participants.



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Table 1. Connectivity, Road Crossings, and Network Improvements

Proposed Action	Priority Action	PaTHs 4 Bethlehem Committee Goal Area		
		Engineering	Education & Enforcement	Engagement & Encouragement
Add more sharrows. Reduce speed limit on Delaware Ave to allow for sharrows	X	X		
Complete rail trail and increase connectivity to it	X	X		
Create full connections with N.S./Delaware and neighboring communities	X	X		
Improve bike safety for kids and adults going to school (Stewarts/H.S. area, Delaware Ave crossings, connections to back of middle school), the soccer-plex, Little league, YMCA, and McGee Park	X	X	X	
Improve safety of crossings on main roads (Kenwood, Cherry, New Scotland, Delaware, Elm) by adding more crosswalks, installing walk lights (especially for long distances), and/or adding a crosswalk light at Cherry and Kenwood	X	X	X	
Repaint lines on Delaware Ave in Delmar (prior to crossing the bridge to Albany) so road has three lanes (two wide lanes and one turning lane) to increase the shoulder space	X	X		
Add commuter lane/sharrows to New Scotland Ave between Bethlehem and Albany		X	X	
Add more signs to Delaware, Elm, and Cherry bike routes		X	X	
Address crosswalk blind spots		X		
Allow for walking/biking through underpasses (Delaware, Elsmere, N.S. Ave)		X		
Create safe connections between rural areas and populated areas		X		
Increase street connectivity for bikes to off road paths		X		
Formalize connection between Elsmere Community and back of Delaware Plaza (along water line)		X		
Improve Capital District Transportation Authority parking lot road crossing so that riders can safely walk to their bus stop		X		



Table 2. Education, Enforcement, Engagement, and Encouragement

Proposed Action	Priority Action	PaTHs 4 Bethlehem Committee Goal Area		
		Engineering	Education & Enforcement	Engagement & Encouragement
Enforcement of stop signals/crosswalks	X		X	
Enforce distracted driving laws	X		X	
Encourage commuting behavior change in students by condensing bus stops, align Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA) bus schedule with school routes and stops, subsidize CDTA bus passes for students, and survey students to understand how to change commuter patterns	X			X
Implement educational campaigns, classes, and other learning opportunities for children and adults. Include bicycle and pedestrian education in the school's drivers education curriculum	X		X	X
Develop Smartphone/text applications for real time locations of CDTA buses		X	X	
Distribute bike/pedestrian maps of existing and proposed routes and infrastructure			X	X
Create Easier to read bus maps and schedules from CDTA			X	
Give-away program for reflectors and other safety products				X
Have government staff lead by example - bike police patrols, incentives for staff bike/pedestrian commuting			X	X
Have safe places for aging and disabled pedestrians and bikers		X		X
Host a Walk/Bike Day (to school and work). Challenge other schools/towns to a Bike/Walk Day competition.			X	X
Inform public how to report safety issues, such as sidewalk or road defects			X	X
Launch a walking school bus program where students can walk to school in a group			X	X



Table 3. Maintenance and Physical Improvements

Proposed Action	Priority Action	PaTHs 4 Bethlehem Committee Goal Area		
		Engineering	Education & Enforcement	Engagement & Encouragement
Better sidewalk maintenance and linkages with walking routes	X	X		
Maintain road shoulders and eliminate hard curbs	X	X		
Add additional bike racks to Town Hall and other heavily visited locations		X		
Focus on Fuera Bush Rd for improvements		X		
Maintain high quality roads		X		

Table 4. Regulations and Zoning

Proposed Action	Priority Action	PaTHs 4 Bethlehem Committee Goal Area		
		Engineering	Education & Enforcement	Engagement & Encouragement
Partner with developers/businesses to invest in bike/pedestrian infrastructure	X			X
Ban drive-throughs in future development projects				X
Encourage bicycle use by businesses who operate delivery services (for example, pizza delivery by bike)				X
Encourage local employers (including the Town) to become an American League of Cyclists Bicycle Friendly Business				X
Perform regular re-evaluation of bike/pedestrian initiatives				
Require bicycle accommodations in future residential and commercial development and link development with the planned and existing bicycle network				
Shorten trips with mixed use zoning				
Start a Bicycle Benefits program that rewards customers for biking/walking to local vendors. http://www.healthytransportation.org/benefits.html				X
Update Town bicycle rules to comply with state rules/regulations				



Table 5. Potential Community Partners for the Bethlehem Bike and Pedestrian Program

Organization	Potential Role
Albany County	Coordinate regional bike routes, host educational or Bike to School/Work Day events, work to create connections to centers of employment
Bicycle/Skateboard Shops	Distribute educational materials, event sponsorship, Bicycle Benefits program
Capital District Regional Planning Commission	Coordinate regional bicycle and pedestrian efforts
Capital District Transportation Authority	Information on transit schedules, bus route adjustments
Capital District Transportation Committee	Potential project partner or data source
Chamber of Commerce/Business Community	Engage in educational and incentive programs, lead by example efforts
Churches and Other Religious Organizations	Integrate into bicycle network, coordinate educational events
City of Albany Water Authority	Waterline bicycle connection
Department of Transportation	Delaware Ave and other state road improvements
Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy	Rail trail linkages
Other Towns/Cities	Regional bike/pedestrian network coordination, Bike to Work/School day events and competitions
School District and the PTA	Bicycle and pedestrian engagement and education of students
Senior Services	Help create safe walking areas for all populations
Service Organizations (Rotary, Lions, etc.)	Help run educational and engagement bicycle and pedestrian events
YMCA	Help coordinate and promote bicycle safety programs and connect with the Bethlehem bicycle and pedestrian network