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Rebecca W. Arnold, Commissioner
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Jim D. Hansen, Commissioner

Planning & Programming

April 6, 2016

TO: ACHD Commissioners, Director Wong, Deputy Directors
FROM: Ryan Head, AICP, Planning & Programming Supervisor
SUBJECT: **Main-Idaho Bike Lane Public Input Summary**
Commission Work Session – April 20, 2016

Executive Summary

In FY2016, ACHD is designing maintenance work on Main St and Idaho St as part of the 2017 Downtown Boise Implementation Plan project. Auxiliary to that work and in follow-up to the pilot project and stakeholder review, ACHD is pursuing the potential implementation of bike facilities on these corridors from Broadway to 16th St. During a February 24, 2016 work session, the Commission reviewed the four potential bike lane alternatives. These were presented to the public via an online survey and public open house held in March 2016.

During the work session, Staff will review with the Commission the public input received during the March public comment period, as well as all other input received to date, in preparation for an April 27, 2016 alternative selection hearing.

Facts & Findings

The concept of bike lanes on Main-Idaho has an extensive history over the last two years:

- August 2013 – ACHD Commission adopted the Downtown Boise Implementation Plan. Main-Idaho shown as a Shared Bike Route.
- October 2013 – Capital City Development Corp consultant completed the Boise, Idaho Downtown Walkability Analysis. Report recommends the addition of a protected bike lane on Main-Idaho by removing a travel lane on each road.
- March 2014 – ACHD Public Involvement Meeting held regarding protected bike lane proposal.
- May 2014 – ACHD conducted a pilot project to test protected bike lane proposal.
- June 2014 – ACHD Commission approved completion of pilot project. Directed staff to organize a stakeholder committee to review and make recommendation on bike lanes downtown.
- June 2014 – April 2015 – A simple majority of the stakeholder committee recommended permanent installation of protected bike lanes on Main-Idaho.
- April 2015 – Work session held with the Commission to review the stakeholder recommendation. Staff indicated design of bike facilities on Main-Idaho would occur with the 2017 DBIP project and that the Commission would review the design prior to implementation.
- September 2015 – During the bike lane retrofit update work session, the Commission directed staff to return with bike lane alternatives prior to design.
- November 2015 – The Commission reviewed the draft scope of work and schedule and approved staff moving forward the development of four concept alternatives.
- December 2015 – The Commission approved the contract for the development of the 2017 Downtown Boise Implementation project, including the bike lane concept development.

- February 2016 – The ACHD Commission reviewed four bike lane alternatives for Main and Idaho, including No Build (Bike Lanes on Jefferson St), Bike Lanes Protected by Parking, Bike Lanes Protected by Posts, and Bike Lanes with a Painted Buffer.
- March 2016 – ACHD conducted a public comment period with online survey and public open house.

During the March public comment period, ACHD received the following inputs:

- Online Survey Responses – 2,337
- Open House Attendees Signed In – 144
- Comment Sheets Submitted – 96
- Written Comments - 39

A draft public input summary (see Attachment A) is available for Commission consideration. **During the work session, staff will provide a summary of all input received from the public, agency partners, the Downtown Bike Lane Stakeholder Committee, as well as a draft staff recommendation for Commission consideration in anticipation of the alternative selection hearing scheduled for April 27, 2016.**

Policy Implications

The Commission has directed that for bike lane retrofit projects, staff should hold a work session with the Commission prior to proceeding with each step of the process. Prior to presenting the item for Commission decision, staff is making available all public and partner input received to date.

Fiscal Implication

Funding to complete the development and implementation of a bike lane alternative is budgeted as part of the FY2017 DBIP maintenance project as approved by the Commission in the FY2016-2020 Integrated Five-Year Work Plan. Depending on the alternative selected, ACHD may need to enter into a cost share agreement with the City and/or Capital City Development Corporation for certain project elements (transit islands, sidewalk modifications, etc.) outside the scope of the planned maintenance project.

Attachment(s)

Attachment A – Public Comment Summary

All comments received during the public comment period, including all survey response comments are compiled and can be found at: <http://www.achdidaho.org/Projects/PublicProject.aspx?ProjectID=379>


KITTELSON & ASSOCIATES, INC.

TRANSPORTATION ENGINEERING / PLANNING

101 S Capitol Boulevard, Suite 301, Boise, ID 83702 P 208.338.2683 F 208.338.2685

MEMORANDUM

Date: April 8, 2016 Project #: 19227

To: Ryan Head and Christy Foltz-Ahlrichs, Ada County Highway District

From: Robyn Austin and Nick Foster, AICP

Project: DBIP 2017: Main Street and Idaho Street Bicycle Alternatives Study

Subject: Public Comment Summary

This memorandum summarizes public feedback received for the Main Street and Idaho Street Bicycle Alternatives Study. Public comments were collected through an online survey and through a public involvement meeting (PIM). The online survey was open from March 3, 2016 through March 30, 2016. The PIM was held on March 16, 2016 from 4:00 to 7:00 PM at Boise City Hall. The meeting and the survey provided the public and stakeholders with an opportunity to learn about and provide comments on the four alternatives under consideration.

The majority of the comments received during this period came from the online survey, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Sources of Comments Received

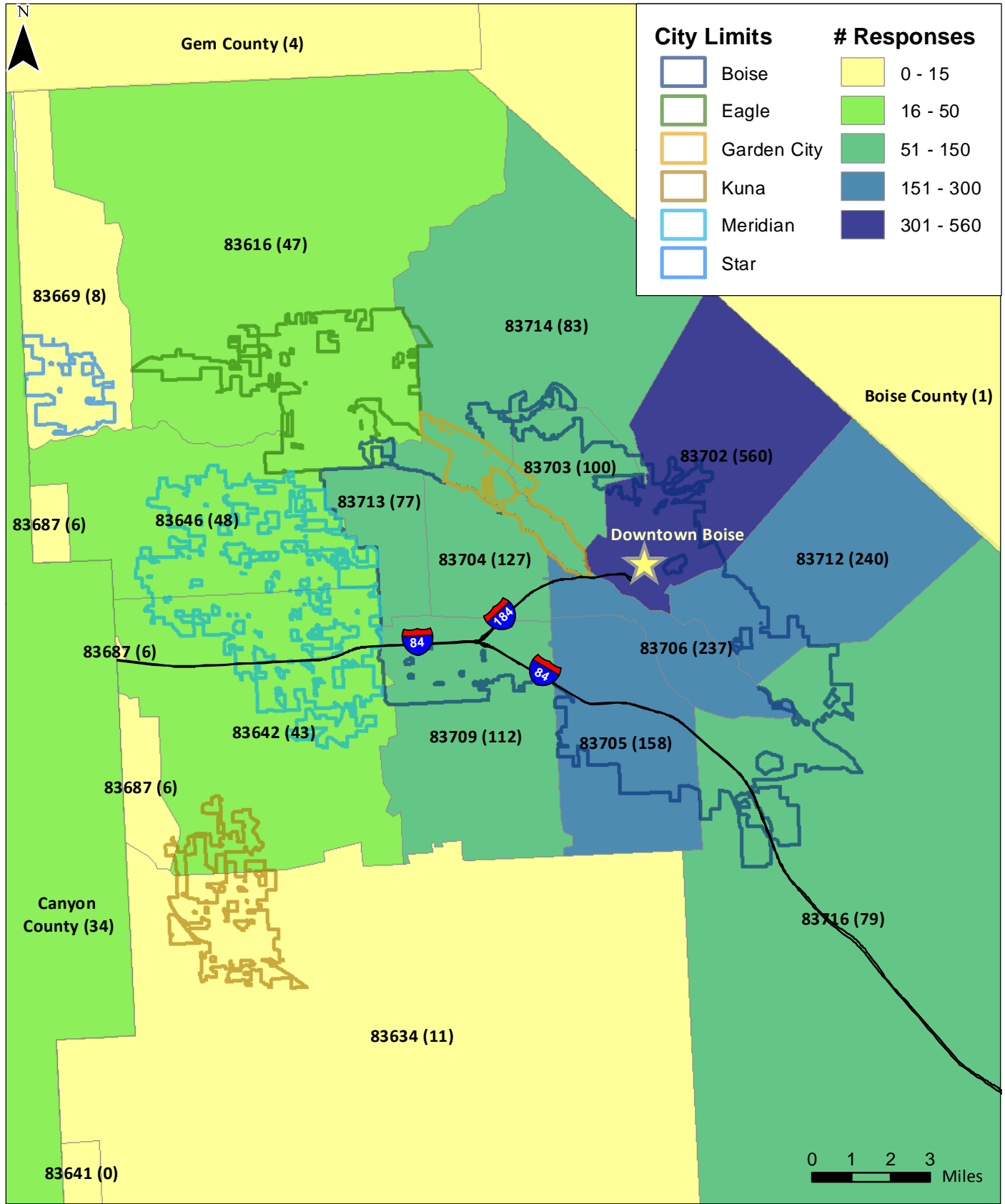
Comments Received	
Comment Sheets Collected at PIM	96
Emailed and Mailed Comments Received	39
Responses to Online Survey	2,337
TOTAL	2,472

SURVEY AND PIM COMMENTS

Respondents were asked similar questions at the PIM and in the online survey. The following sections summarize the feedback received to these questions.

Respondent Profile

People responding to the survey were asked to identify what zip code they live in. As shown in Figure 1, the greatest number of responses came from zip codes that are mostly in Boise, though western Ada County and the surrounding counties are also represented.



**Number of Survey Responses by Zip Code
Ada County, Idaho**

**Figure
1**

H:\proj\file\19227 - DBIP 2017 Design\GIS\Responses\zipcode.mxd - nfoster - 12:14 PM 4/6/2016

Mode Choice

Respondents were asked to indicate their primary mode(s) of transportation on Main & Idaho Streets. As shown in Figure 2, most people drive, though many respondents also bicycle or walk. Individuals were able to select more than one response, so the numbers in the figure below exceed the total number of responses.

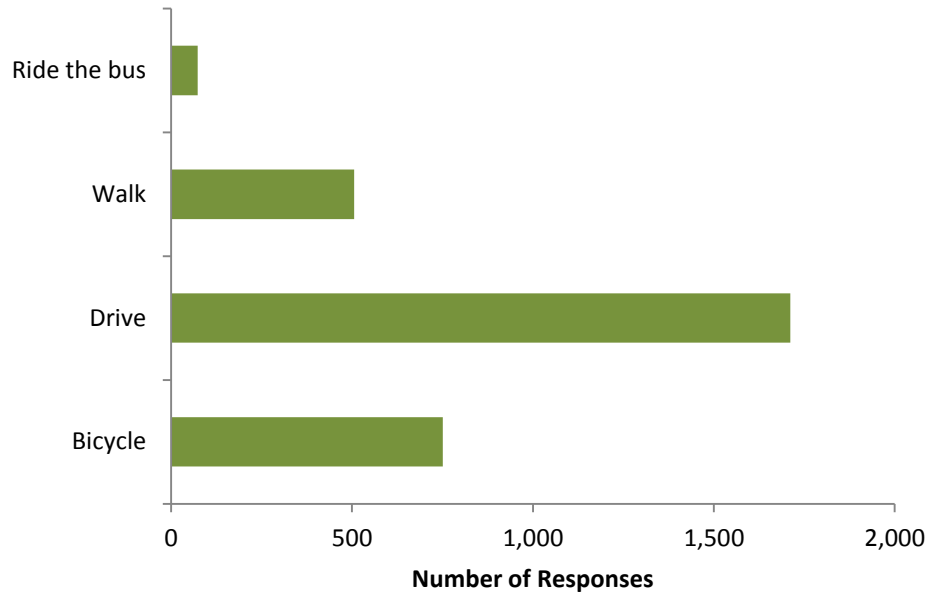


Figure 2 Primary Modes of Transportation

Reason for Using Main and Idaho

People were given the opportunity to indicate their reason for using Main Street and Idaho Street. As shown in Figure 3, personal errands and entertainment and commuting were the primary reasons given for using these streets. Individuals were able to select more than one response, so the numbers in the figure below exceed the total number of responses.

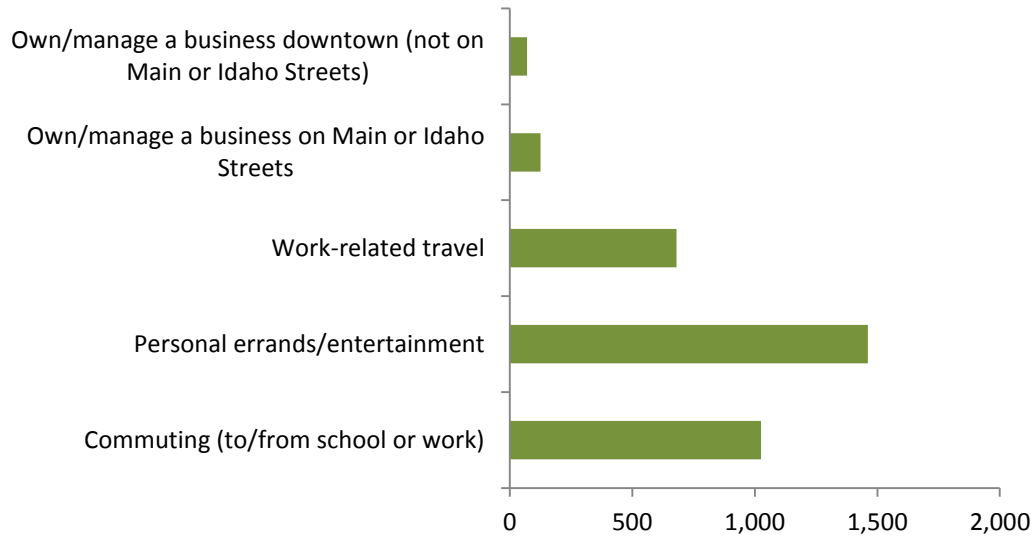


Figure 3 Primary Reasons for Using Main & Idaho

Overall Support and Rankings

Figure 4 summarizes the level of support indicated by respondents for each of the four alternatives presented.

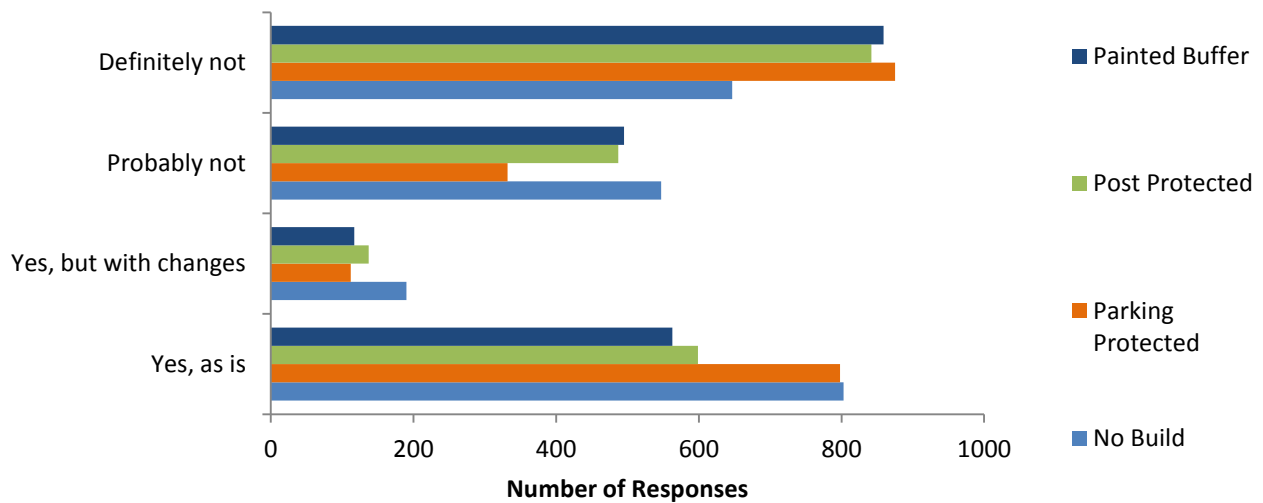


Figure 4 Support for Each Alternative

The No Build and Parking Protected Bike Lanes alternatives received the greatest level of support. Neither received a simple majority of support (i.e., about 45% of respondents indicated support for the No Build and 42% indicated support for Parking Protected Bike Lanes). Lack of support for the No Build alternative was more qualified than for the Parking Protected Bike Lanes alternative, as it received the most “Probably not” responses.

Figure 5 summarizes how respondents ranked each alternative in order from most preferred (1) to least preferred (4).

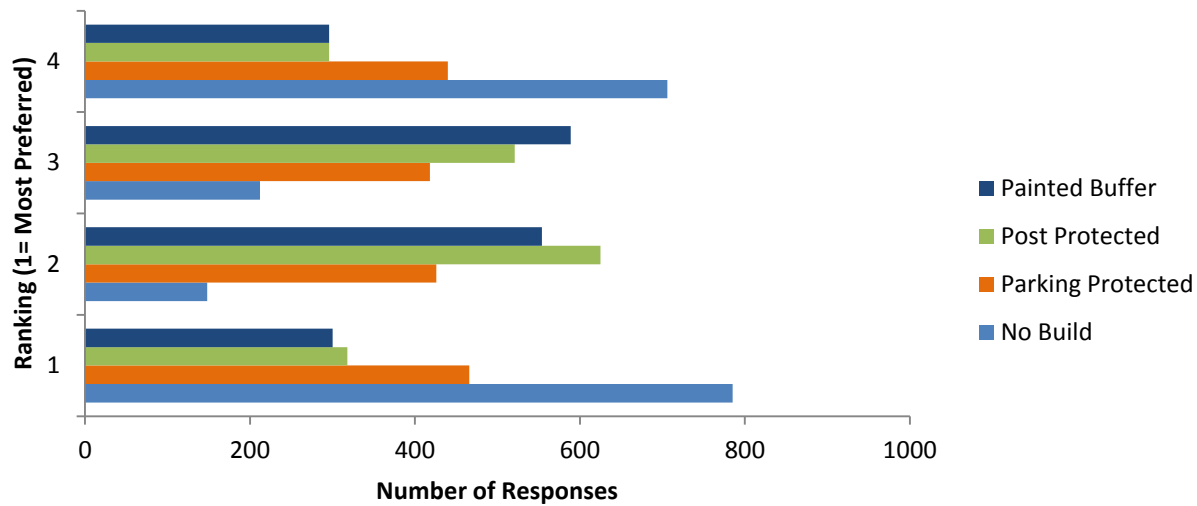


Figure 5 Rankings of Each Alternative

Responses to the No Build alternative were polarized. It received the greatest number of most preferred and least preferred rankings. The Parking Protected Bike Lanes alternative received the greatest number of most preferred rankings of the three build alternatives. There are also a similar number of rankings at each level of preference for this alternative. The other two build alternatives received the greatest number of rankings in the middle two categories. If a weighted average ranking is calculated for each alternative, results are similar across each of the alternatives (i.e., the rounded weighted average is 2.5 for each alternative).

Alternative Specific Comments

Respondents were asked why they supported or opposed each alternative. They were also given the opportunity to suggest changes to improve them. Below is a summary of these results.

No Build on Main & Idaho Streets (Bike Lanes on Jefferson Street)

Figure 6 summarizes the reasons given for supporting the No Build alternative and Figure 7 provides the reasons for not supporting it.

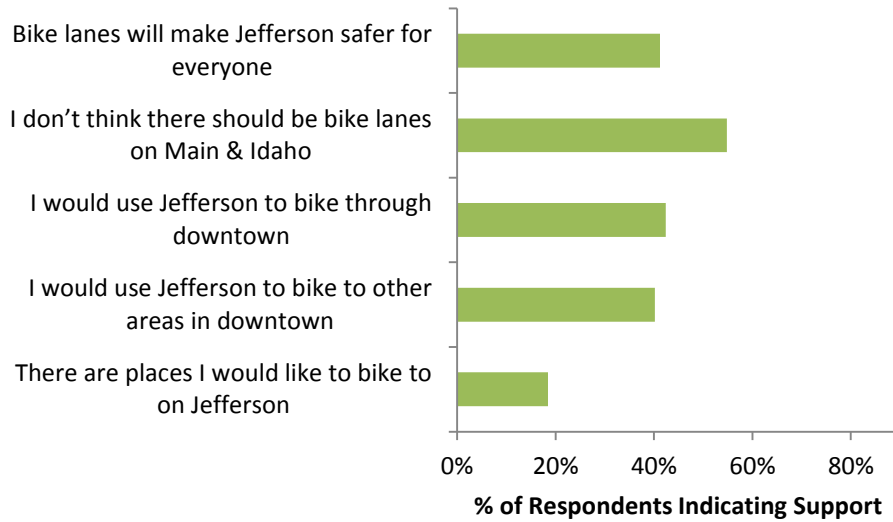


Figure 6 Reasons for Supporting No Build Alternative

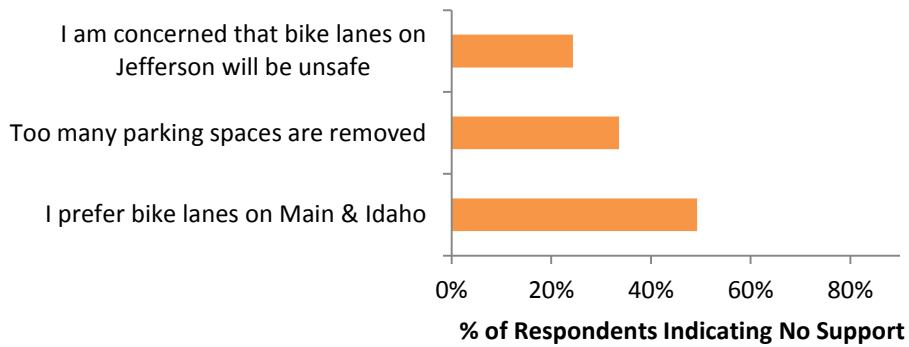


Figure 7 Reasons for Not Supporting No Build Alternative

Key findings from a review of the reasons for *supporting* the No Build alternative include:

- Over half (55%) of the individuals supporting the No Build alternative indicated they were doing so at least in part because they do not want bike lanes on Main Street and Idaho Street.
- About half (51%) indicated they would bike on the Jefferson Street bike lanes for at least one of the reasons provided.
 - Approximately 17% of the respondents said they would bike on Jefferson Street and that there should not be bike lanes on Main Street and Idaho Street.
- Other common reasons given for supporting this alternative included:
 - Lowest cost alternative
 - Jefferson Street is a low volume street

Key findings from a review of the reasons for *not supporting* the No Build alternative include:

- Nearly half (49%) indicated they do not support the No Build alternative at least in part because they do want bike lanes on Main Street and Idaho Street.
- Other reasons given for not supporting this alternative included:
 - Does not provide adequate connectivity
 - Will not reduce sidewalk riding on Main Street and Idaho Street

Suggested considerations and improvements related to this alternative included:

- Buffer the bike lanes with posts or parking
- Should only be implemented if Jefferson is not vacated as part of St. Luke’s masterplan
- Should be implemented in addition to bike lanes on Main Street and Idaho Street

Main Street and Idaho Street Build Alternatives

Reasons for supporting or not supporting the three build alternatives on Main Street and Idaho Street are shown in Figure 8 and Figure 9, respectively.

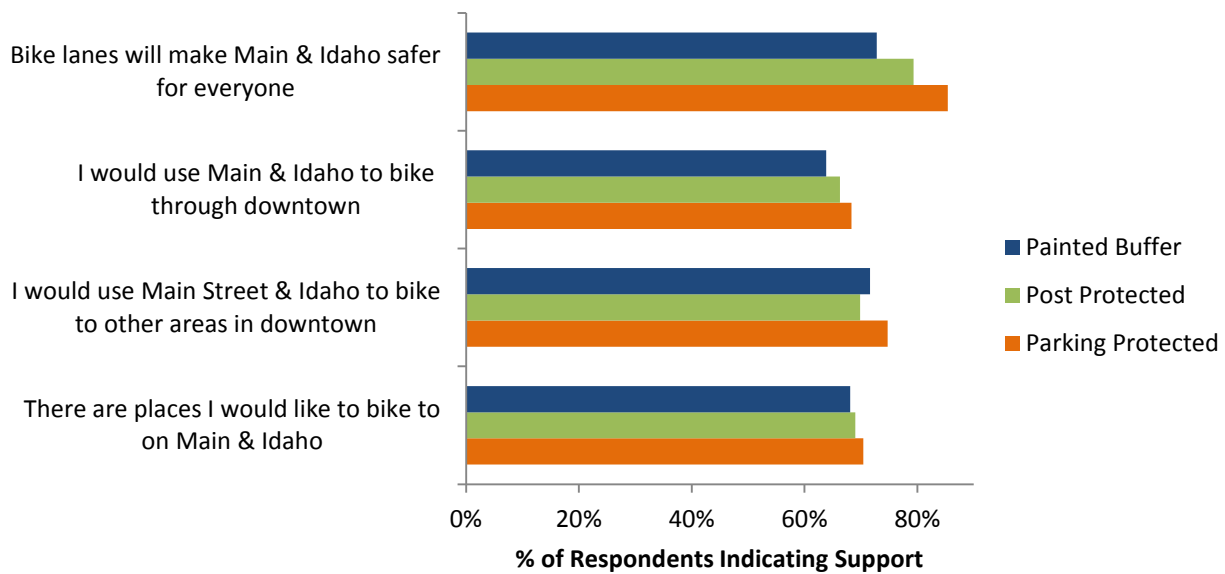


Figure 8 Reasons for Supporting the Main and Idaho Alternatives

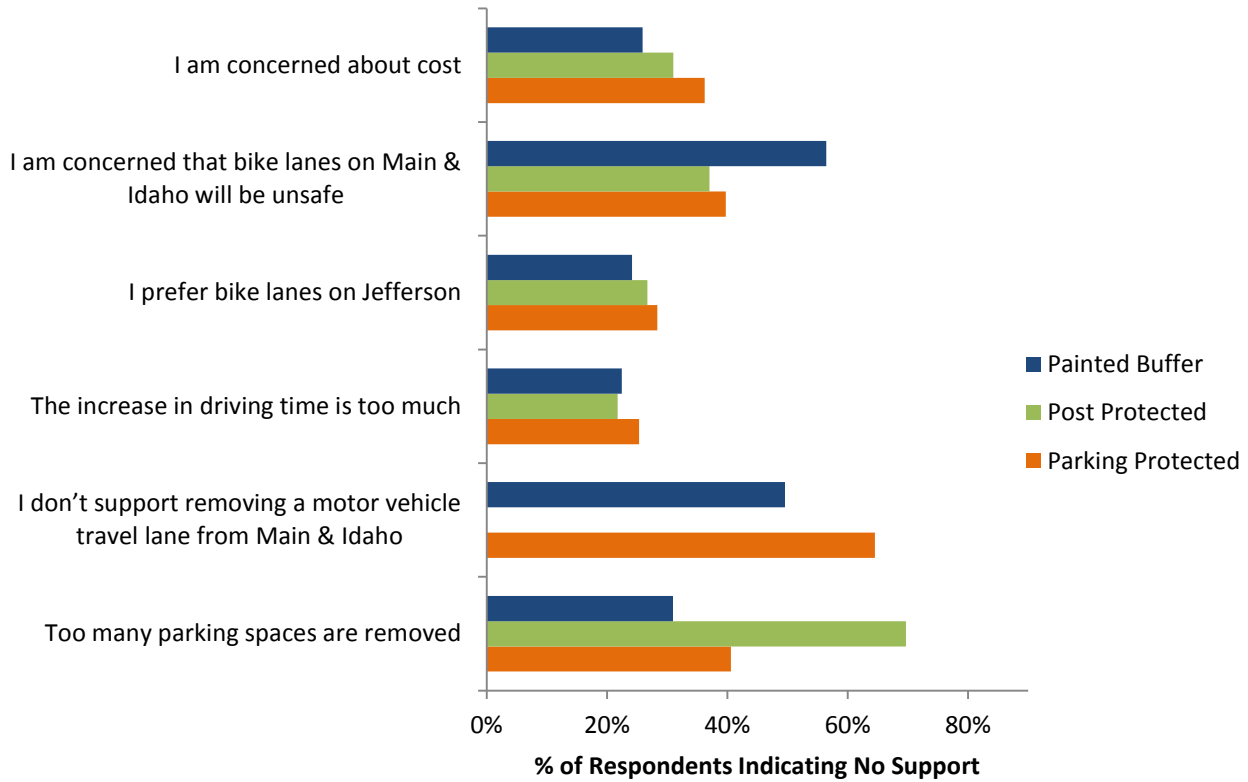


Figure 9 Reasons for Not Supporting the Main and Idaho Alternatives

Key findings from a review of the reasons for *supporting* the Main and Idaho build alternatives include:

- The percentage of respondents selecting each of the reasons for support is generally similar across the alternatives, with most respondents indicating they believe the alternatives would make the streets safer for everyone and/or that they would bike on Main Street and Idaho Street for various purposes.
 - A greater percentage of respondents indicated they felt the Parking Protected Bike Lanes alternative would make the streets safer (85% compared to 79% for Post Protected Bike Lanes and 73% for Painted Buffer Bike Lanes).

Other reasons given for supporting the build alternatives are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2 Additional Reasons Given for Supporting Main and Idaho Build Alternatives

Parking Protected	Post Protected	Painted Buffer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Safer for novice riders and families ▪ Creates a more livable and attractive downtown ▪ Slows motor vehicle traffic ▪ Reduces sidewalk riding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintains existing motor vehicle lanes ▪ Reduces sidewalk riding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ People biking are more visible than in Parking Protected alternative ▪ Best option for most confident people bicycling ▪ Lowest cost of build alternatives ▪ Most readily understood

Key findings from a review of the reasons for *not supporting* the Main and Idaho build alternatives include:

- Not wanting a motor vehicle travel lane removed are primary reasons for not supporting the Parking Protected and Painted Buffer alternatives (65% and 50%, respectively)
 - The change in driving time was not cited nearly as often for these alternatives (25% and 22%, respectively) and was cited about as frequently for these alternatives as it was for the alternative that does not remove a motor vehicle lane (22%).
 - This may suggest more of a principled response than an actual reaction to the expected change in the driving experience (i.e., we received several comments indicating a lack of support for providing infrastructure for bicycling in general, especially if it comes at the expense of space for driving or parking cars).
 - Or it may be that people chose to only select the first response related to losing a lane or some other reason that cannot be discerned from the data.
- The number of parking spaces that would be removed was a primary reason for not supporting the Post Protected alternative (70%), but a secondary concern for the other two build alternatives (41% for the Parking Protected alternative and 31% for the Painted Buffer alternative).
- Concern regarding the safety of the bike lanes was noted more frequently for the Painted Buffer alternative (56%) than for the other two build alternatives (about 37-40%).
- Cost and a preference for bike lanes on Jefferson Street were the least two cited reasons for not supporting the build alternatives.

Other common reasons given for not supporting the build alternatives are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3 Additional Reasons Given for Not Supporting Main and Idaho Build Alternatives

Parking Protected	Post Protected	Painted Buffer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Concern that lanes will not be kept free of debris and snow ▪ Lack of visibility between people bicycling and driving ▪ Conflicts between people exiting parked cars and people biking ▪ Difficult to pass other people bicycling ▪ Concerned it could impact economic competitiveness of downtown ▪ Impacts to loading/deliveries ▪ Bad experience with the pilot project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Posts are not aesthetically pleasing ▪ Buses stopping in the bike lane ▪ Difficult to pass other people bicycling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ May not be comfortable for novice riders who will remain on sidewalk ▪ Conflicts between people bicycling and people parking ▪ Conflicts with buses

Commonly suggested improvements related to the build alternatives are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4 Suggestions for Improving the Build Alternatives

Parking Protected	Post Protected	Painted Buffer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure people bicycling are visible at intersections ▪ Use a buffer object that is more aesthetically pleasing than posts ▪ Move parking meters to the buffer space between the bike lane and the parking lane 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use a buffer object that is more aesthetically pleasing than posts ▪ Do not allow buses to stop in the bike lane ▪ Ensure bike lanes are kept clear of debris and snow 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Include bike boxes at intersections

Other Analyses

Further analyses was done to identify what alternatives people preferred depending on how they currently travel on Main Street and Idaho Street, where they live, and whether they manage or own a business in downtown Boise.

Preference by Transportation Mode

Figure 10 summarizes the level of support for each alternative from people who indicated bicycling as one of their primary transportation modes on Main Street and Idaho Street. Figure 11 provides the same information for people who indicated that driving is one of their primary modes. Individuals were able to select both options, so there is some overlap in the respondents included in each figure.

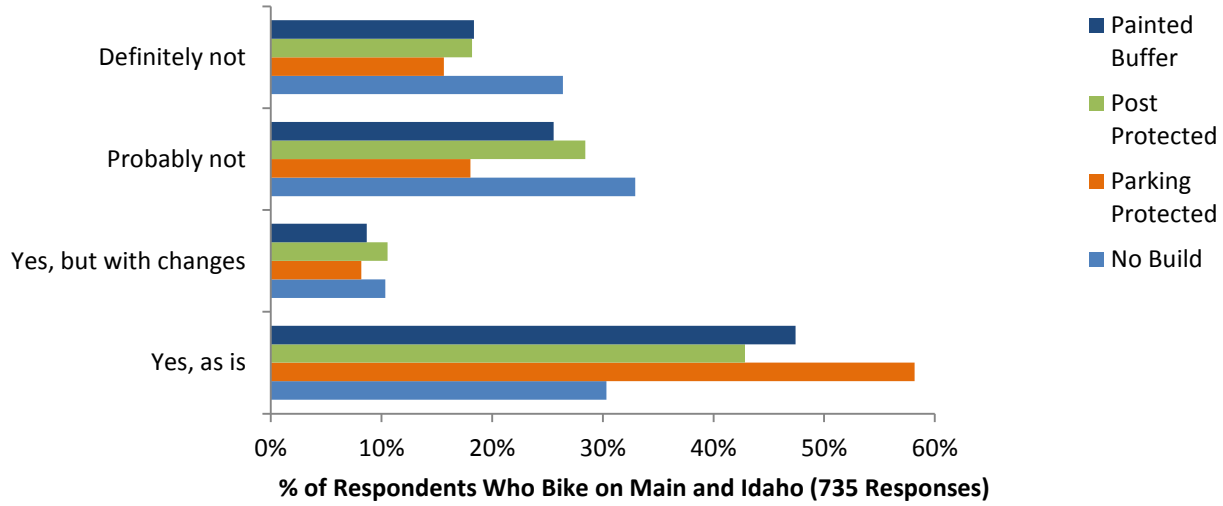


Figure 10 Support for Each Alternative from People Who Bike on Main and Idaho

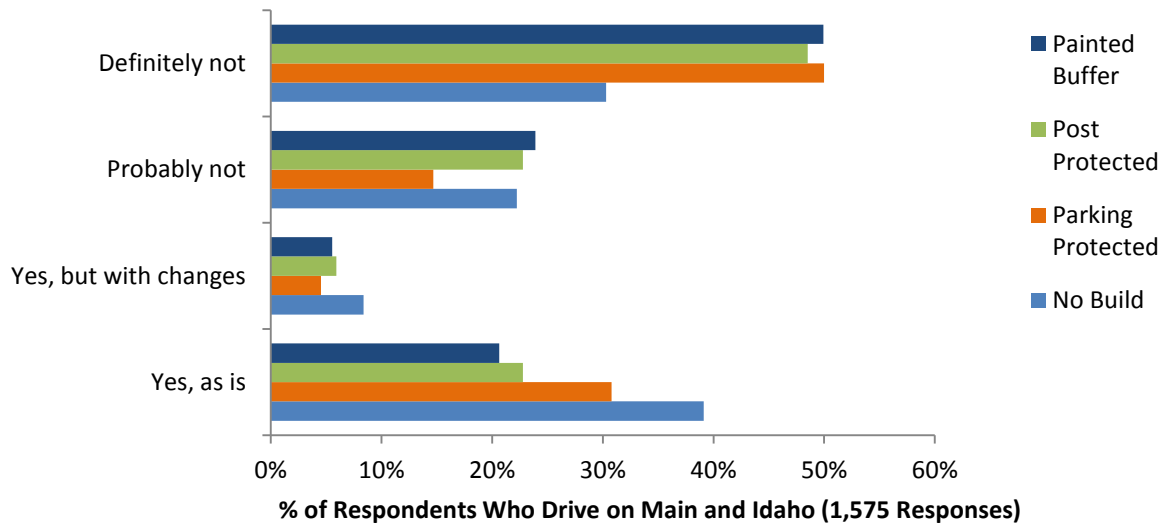


Figure 11 Support for Each Alternative from People Who Drive on Main and Idaho

Generally, those who ride a bike on Main Street and Idaho Street prefer the build alternatives to the No Build alternative. Parking Protected Bike Lanes have the greatest level of support from them, followed by the Painted Buffer and Post Protected alternatives.

Conversely, individuals who indicated that driving is one of their primary modes of transportation on Main Street and Idaho Street showed a preference for the No Build alternative. Parking Protected Bike Lanes received the greatest level of support of the build alternatives from these respondents.

Preference by Geographic Location

Figure 12, Figure 13, and Figure 14 indicate the level of support for each alternative based on the geographic location provided by whether the respondent’s zip code is near downtown, in the city of Boise, or beyond the city of Boise. The classification of zip codes into these boundaries is imprecise (i.e., zip code boundaries often extend beyond city limits), but provides a general picture of how geography affected responses. About 20% of all respondents did not provide a zip code and these responses are not included in the figures below.

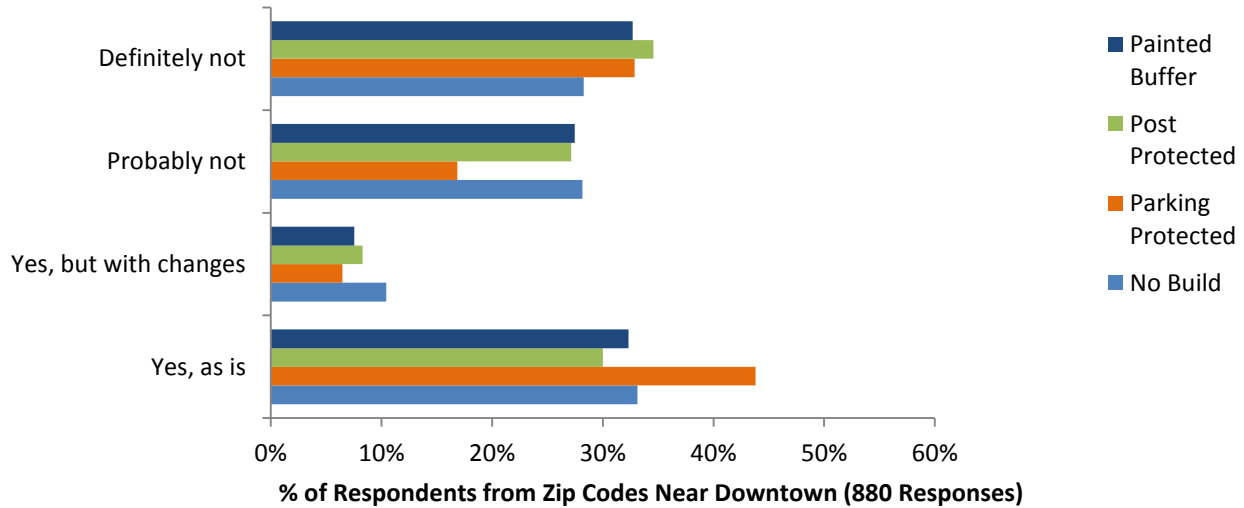


Figure 12 Support for Each Alternative from Zip Codes Near Downtown¹

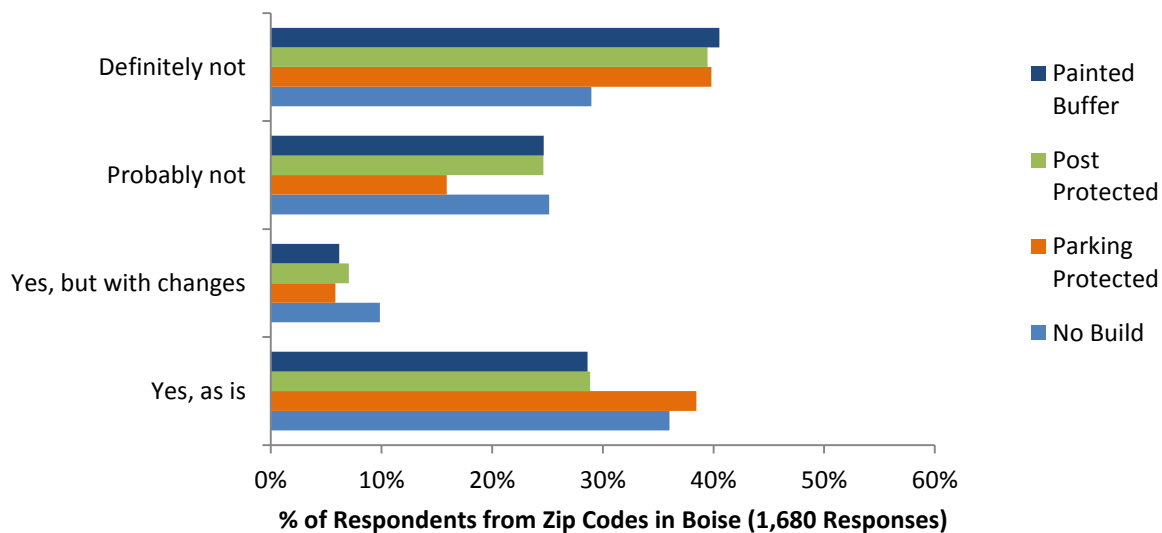


Figure 13 Support for Each Alternative from Boise Zip Codes²

¹ Zip codes 83702, 83703, 83706

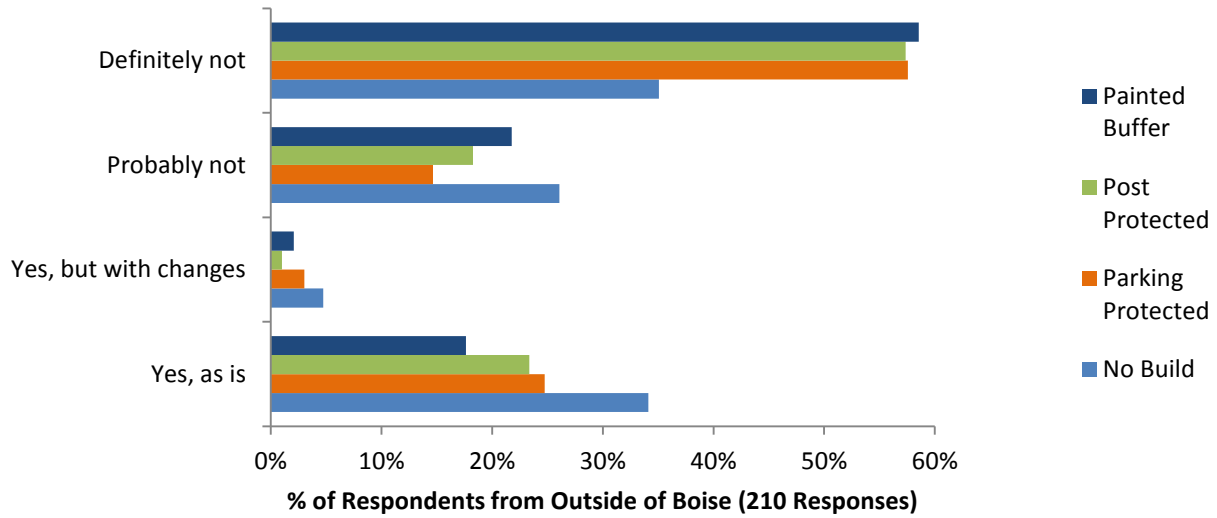


Figure 14 Support for Each Alternative from Zip Codes Outside of Boise³

Parking Protected Bike Lanes were generally preferred by respondents who live in Boise and those who live in zip codes that are at least partially included in Boise city limits; though the difference between Parking Protected Bike Lanes and the No Build alternatives is narrow at the larger scale. Individuals who indicated they live in a zip code that is completely outside of Boise city limits generally prefer the No Build Alternative.

² Zip codes 83702, 83703, 83704, 83705, 83706, 83709, 83713, 83714, 83716

³ All zip codes not included in Figure 13

Preference from Downtown Business Managers and Owners

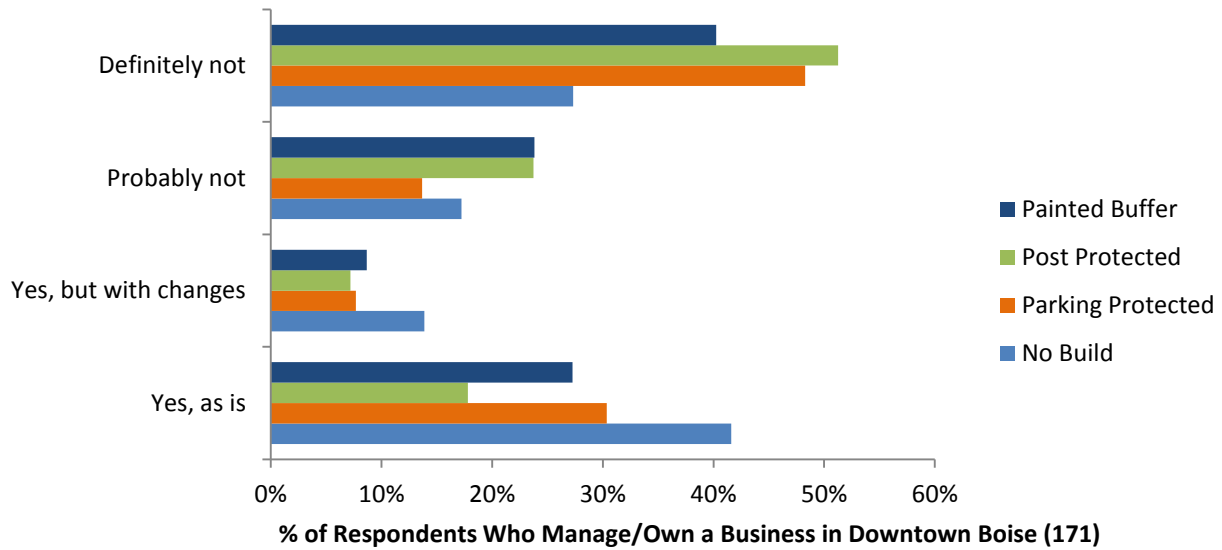


Figure 15 Support for Each Alternative from People Who Own or Manage a Business in Downtown

The No Build alternative was generally the most supported by respondents who said they owned or managed a business in downtown Boise. The Post Protected Bike Lanes alternative was the least preferred.

STATEMENTS FROM ORGANIZATIONS

Individual businesses and organization wrote in separate from the survey to provide their input. Letters and statements were received from Boise Bicycle Project, Idaho Conservation League, ACHD Bicycle Advisory Committee, and Givens Pursley LLP in support of the Parking Protected Bike Lanes alternative. A letter from Idaho First Bank stated their preference for the No Build alternative.

SUMMARY

This public outreach effort reached over 2,400 people representing a wide range of geographic areas and uses of Main Street and Idaho Street. Overall, there is no clear majority support for any of the alternatives. Whether bike lanes should replace motor vehicle travel lanes or parking spaces is clearly a polarizing topic. The No Build and Parking Protected Bike Lanes alternatives received the greatest level of support from respondents; however, the average ranking of each of the four alternatives was essentially the same.

Other key findings from this effort include:

- It is not clear whether the potential increase in driving time is a significant concern to respondents or if the opposition to a loss of the lane is a principled position (i.e., stems from a general belief that this trade-off should not be made no matter the effect).
- Boise residents appear to have a slight preference for the Parking Protected Bike Lanes alternative, while respondents from beyond Boise are more likely to prefer the No Build alternative.
- Over half of respondents who indicated they own or manage a business in downtown Boise stated they would “definitely not” support the Post Protected bike lanes alternative, with another approximately 25% stating they would “probably not” support that alternative.