

# Shared Street Pilot Projects – North Wakefield Street

Pilot Project Concept Design and Feedback – May 2024

## Project Background

The segment of N. Wakefield Street from Wilson Blvd. to North Carling Springs Rd., in the Bluemont Neighborhood, was nominated for Neighborhood Complete Streets (NCS) funding consideration. It ranked highly on a scored list of nominated streets. The Neighborhood Complete Streets Commission (NCSC) affirmed pursuance of a concept design and public engagement at their February 27, 2023, meeting.

This section of roadway is located near commercial corridors, schools, transit, and Metro while lacking complete sidewalks. Existing conditions include parking on both sides of the street, utilities in the right of way and moderately high traffic volume of 1271.

Completing the existing sidewalk network is not feasible currently given the limited space within the right of way.

## Public Engagement

This is the second round of public engagement beginning May 2024. The County project team opened an online feedback form and interactive comment page to solicit feedback on a proposed shared street concept for N. Wakefield Street. The project team received 157 responses to the online form, with 10 open-ended comments and 6 location-specific comments on proposed concept design. Staff received fewer comments in the second round of public engagement than in the first.

## Who Participated

24 Respondents provided feedback. Most of the respondents are residents of Arlington County with a majority (34%) living in the Bluemont and neighboring Ballston- Virginia Square neighborhoods (10%).

Question: What neighborhood do you live in?

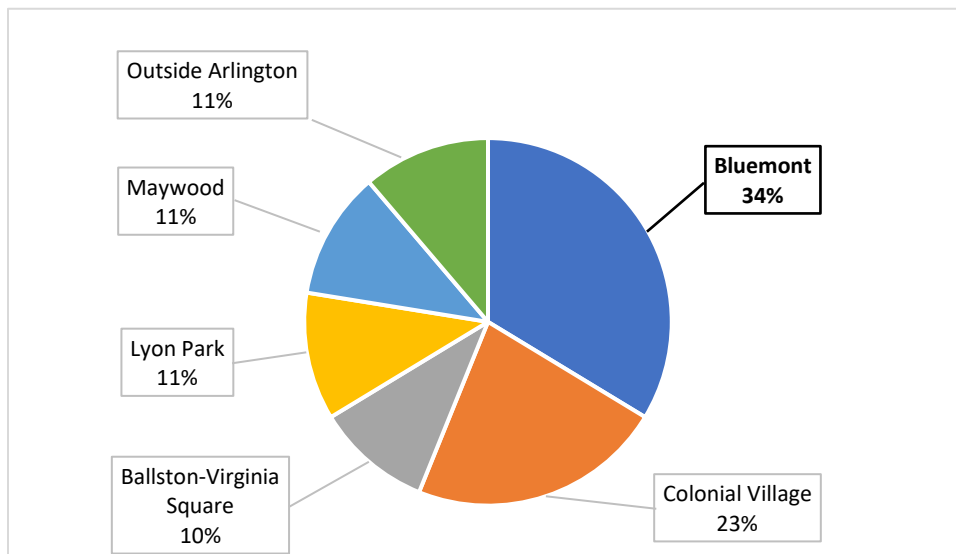


Figure 1: Respondent Neighborhoods

## What We Heard

Staff asked three questions to understand how people use the street and to gauge participants perceived impact of the pilot project on driver behavior and the safety of all roadway users. These questions are below and, where appropriate, compared to the previous round of public engagement.

Question: On a typical day, how do you travel N. Wakefield Street (Wilson Blvd. to N. Carlin Springs Rd.)?

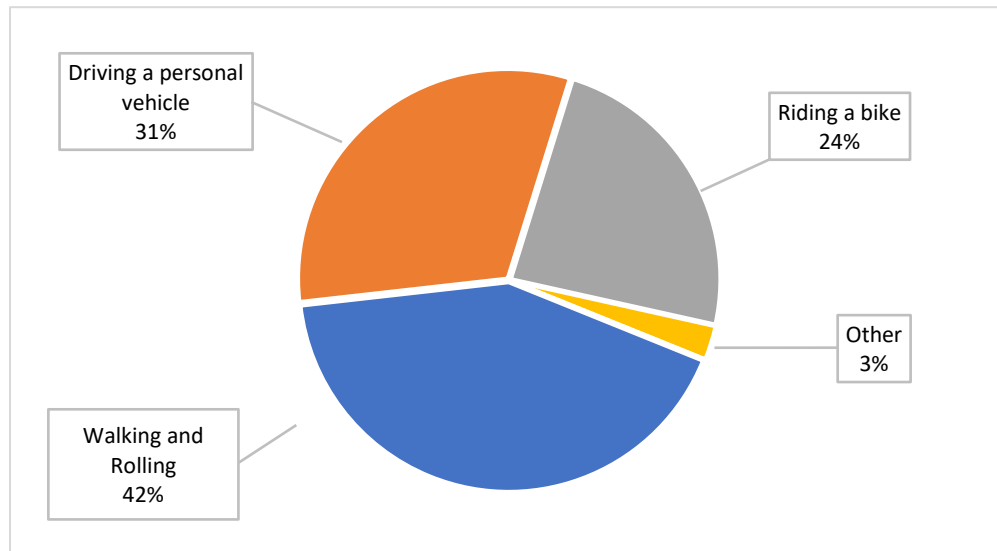


Figure 2: How respondents travel the corridor

Question: Overall how safe or unsafe would this concept design make you feel while traveling through this corridor using the following types of transportation?

	Very Safe	Safe	Neutral	Unsafe	Very Unsafe	Not Applicable	Not Sure
Walking / rolling	- Very Safe	27% Safe	55% Neutral	18% Unsafe	- Very Unsafe	- Not Applicable	- Not Sure
Riding a bike	10% Very Safe	40% Safe	30% Neutral	10% Unsafe	- Very Unsafe	10% Not Applicable	- Not Sure
Using a scooter	- Very Safe	22% Safe	33% Neutral	11% Unsafe	- Very Unsafe	33% Not Applicable	- Not Sure
Driving a personal vehicle	9% Very Safe	18% Safe	45% Neutral	- Unsafe	- Very Unsafe	27% Not Applicable	- Not Sure

Figure 3: Results from the concept design engagement (second feedback opportunity)

When compared to the previous round of public engagement which asked respondents; Overall how safe do you feel while traveling N. Wakefield Street (Wilson Blvd. to N. Carlin Springs Rd.) using the following types of transportation?

	Very Safe	Safe	Neutral	Unsafe	Very Unsafe	Not Applicable	Not Sure
Walking / Rolling	2% Very Safe	6% Safe	12% Neutral	43% Unsafe	29% Very Unsafe	4% Not Applicable	4% Not Sure
Riding a bike	- Very Safe	12% Safe	7% Neutral	33% Unsafe	12% Very Unsafe	33% Not Applicable	5% Not Sure
Using a scooter	2% Very Safe	2% Safe	5% Neutral	14% Unsafe	7% Very Unsafe	62% Not Applicable	7% Not Sure
Driving a personal vehicle	4% Very Safe	21% Safe	26% Neutral	34% Unsafe	9% Very Unsafe	4% Not Applicable	2% Not Sure

Figure 4: Results from the existing conditions engagement (first feedback opportunity)

There is a noticeable shift from most respondents in the first round of public engagement from feeling “Unsafe” and “Very Unsafe” (72%) without any treatment to most respondents (87%) in the second round of public engagement feeling that the proposed treatments would make them feel “Neutral” to “Safe.”

This shift is also reflected in the next question from the second round of public engagement where residents were asked to gauge the treatments potential impact on driver behavior.

Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Not sure
This concept design encourages people driving to yield to people walking and rolling in the street.	9% Strongly agree	36% Agree	18% Disagree	18% Strongly disagree	18% Not sure
The concept design encourages people driving to drive at or below the speed limit.	- Strongly agree	55% Agree	27% Disagree	9% Strongly disagree	9% Not sure

Figure 5: Results from the concept design engagement (second feedback opportunity)

Most respondents (45%) “Agreed” or “Strongly Agreed” That the concept design would encourage better driver behavior towards pedestrians. Most respondents “Agreed” (55%) that the concept design would also slow drivers down.

## Open Ended Feedback

Respondents were also given the opportunity to provide additional feedback on the concept design for N. Wakefield Street of which we received 9 open ended comments.

Major themes from the open-ended feedback on the concept design:

- **More treatments need to be provided in addition to the proposed stamp and sign to slow traffic to safe speeds.**
  - The belief that vertical traffic calming measures are the only way to slow traffic.
  - Bulb outs, Chicanes, and Curb Extensions should be more pronounced than proposed.

### Supporting Comments

- “I am not convinced that maintaining bi-directional car flow to potentially reduce speeds is the best design. One way with speed bumps/tables seems more likely to provide a safer space for non-vehicle users.”
- “The shared street concept \*can\* work, but more robust engineering is required to ensure reasonable speeds. Pavement treatments, speed humps, chicanes, etc. have to be considered for the shared street to work.”
- “Street should appear narrower and curb extension bump-outs should be more pronounced.”

Staff has explored the option of adding bulb-outs, curb extensions, and chicanes along North Wakefield Street and at each of the intersections in the project area. Improvements were made where safe turning movements for automobile traffic including emergency response vehicles could be accommodated. The dimensions of the street where bulb-outs or curb extensions are provided must accommodate the space required for emergency access vehicles.

Speed and volume data were collected for North Wakefield Street in June 2023. The 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed for this segment of North Wakefield Street is 24.4 mph which means that 85% of vehicles are driving at or below the current posted speed limit. Speed and volume studies will be conducted as part of the monitoring and evaluation phase.

- **Build a sidewalk.**
  - Some respondents believed the only safe option is building a sidewalk.
  - Some suggested the removal of parking on one side of the street to obtain the sidewalk.

Staff can continue to explore opportunities to add sidewalk in the future, but sidewalk isn't possible within the existing right of way.

### Supporting Comments

- “This is not a good solution. A sidewalk outside of the travelway is really necessary. I don't think that the Shared Streets markings will work any better than Sharrow markings do.”

- **Continue Shared Street Signage along the entire length of N. Wakefield**
  - Indicate pedestrian traffic.
  - Notify Drivers ahead of the shared street condition.

At this time the speed limit for North Wakefield Street will remain at 25mph. The 15mph speed limit, which is included in the sign assembly, is advisory only and not enforceable. Advanced warning signs cannot be used to indicate lower advisory speed limits.

#### **Supporting Comments**

- “Can additional visible signage be place across the length of the Wakefield to indicate pedestrian traffic.”
- “I think it could be helpful to also put a sign at the end of the street closest to Carling springs road to also inform of the shared street and reduced speed limit so that they are less likely to come speeding down the road from that direction.”

#### Next Steps

The project team will use the comments to refine the concept and produce a final design. The final design will be recommended to the Neighborhood Complete Streets Commission funding at the next funding hearing, June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

Once installed the pilot projects will be closely monitored for one year. Because pilots involve new tools, treatments, or designs, staff might adjust, or end the pilot if there are immediate safety concerns.

The next public engagement checkpoint for this project is expected to occur at the end of the monitoring and evaluation period and will be used to gather feedback on the performance of the pilot project.

**Project Page:** <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Projects/Project-Types/Transportation-Projects/NCS-Shared-Street-Pilot/NCS-N.-Wakefield-Street>

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