

SAFE OMAHA STREETS



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ROAD SAFETY AUDIT - OCTOBER 2023

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INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND:

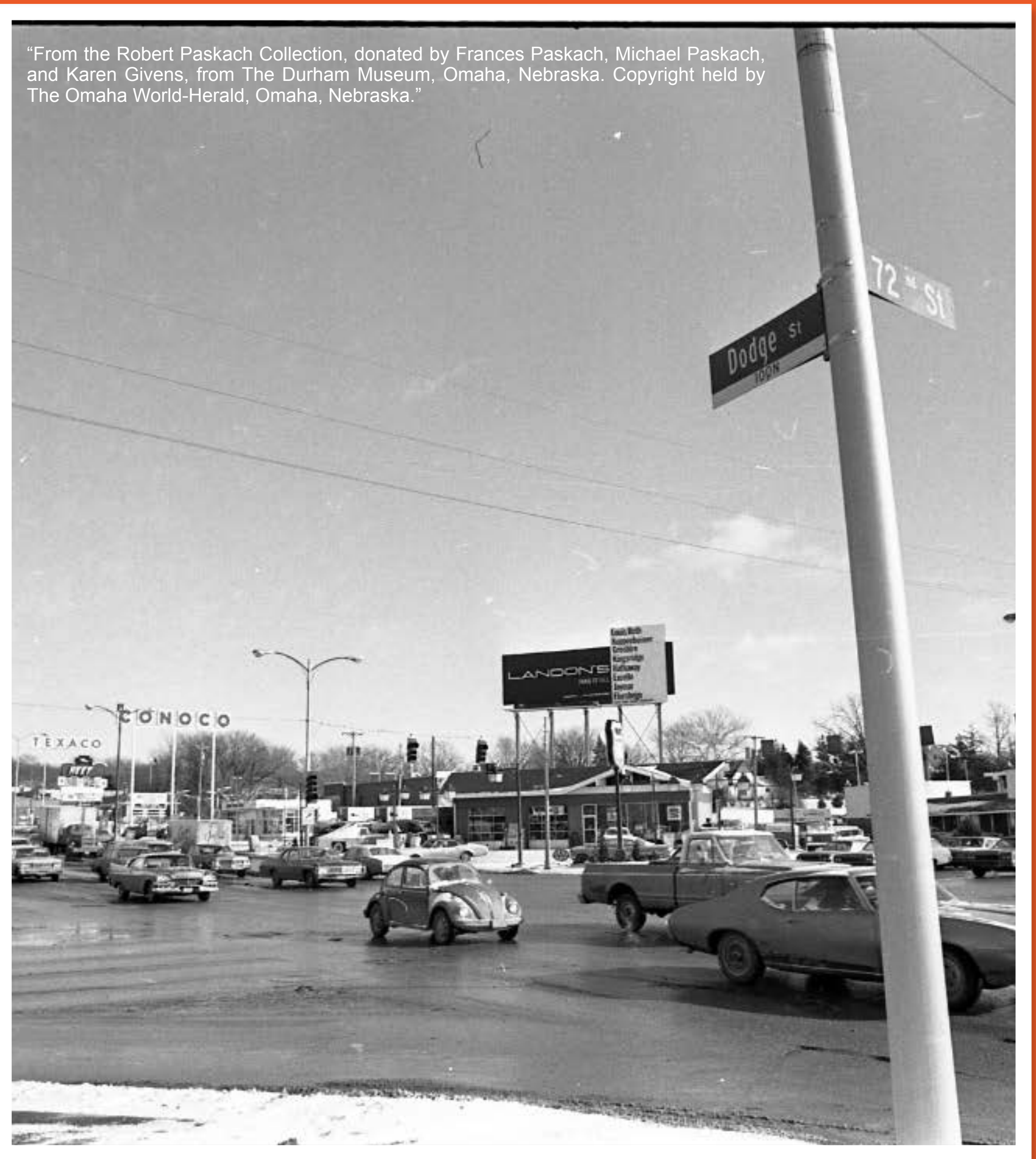
Welcome to the Road Safety Audit report for 72nd Street between Dodge & Pacific Streets by Safe Omaha Streets (SOS). <https://www.safeomahastreet.com/>

SOS is an Omaha-based safe streets advocacy group. Our mission is to make Omaha's streets safe for ALL users through **education, advocacy, projects, and collaboration** with local governments and agencies.

WHAT FOR?

Our primary goal for this Road Safety Audit is to **gather qualitative and quantitative data** for 72nd Street from road users, including **drivers, pedestrians, cyclists, and vulnerable users**, that can be used to advocate for safety improvements along this 1-mile stretch of road and in other road corridors in the city.

Our secondary goal is to create a **generalizable Road Safety Audit template** that can be modified and applied elsewhere in the city so that neighborhood associations, non-profits, and advocacy groups can conduct their own scalable Road Safety Audit events.

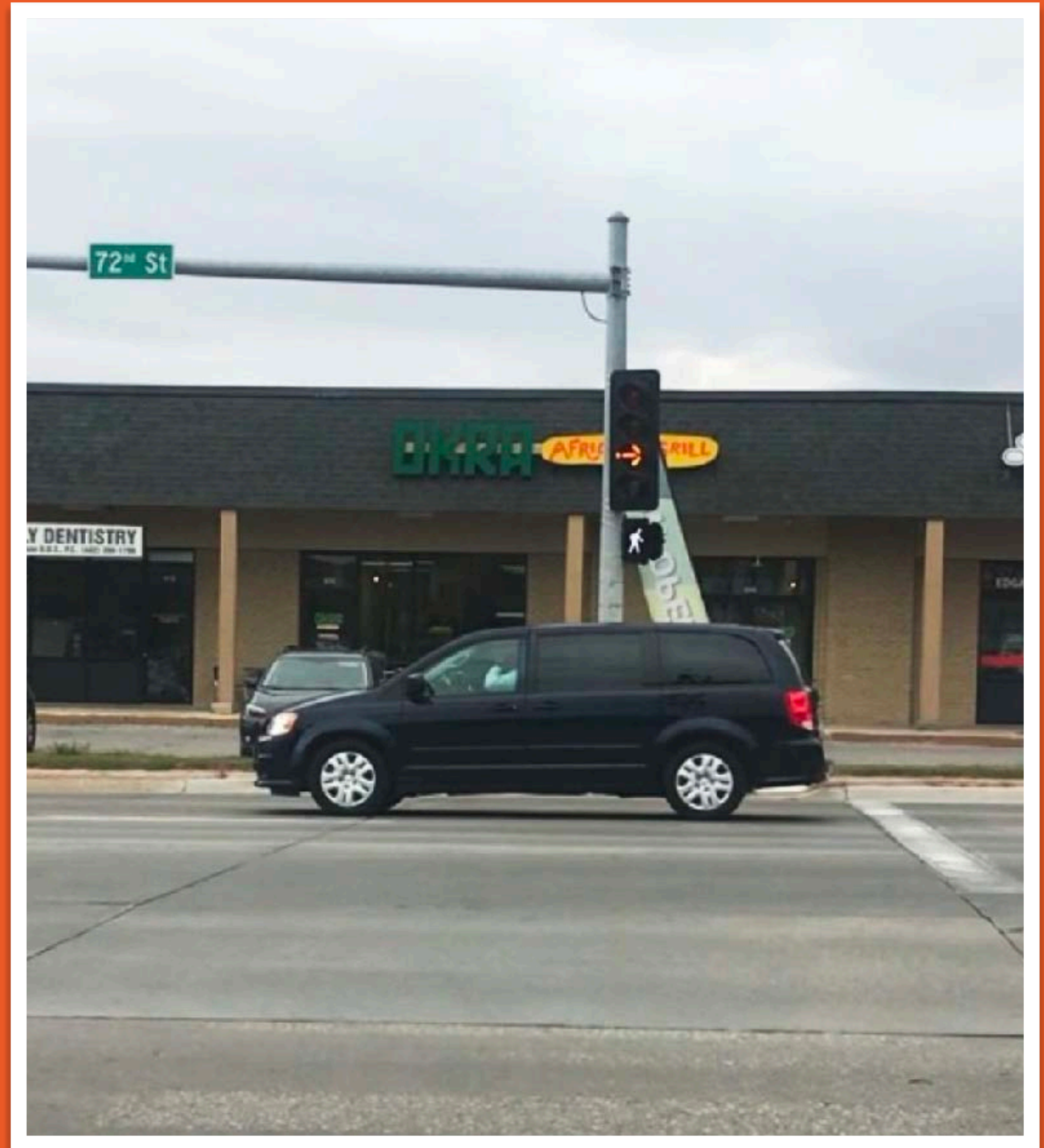


WHY HERE?

1) **One of the SOS co-founders has worked along this corridor for three years and has seen first-hand the dangerous driving that impacts all road users, including motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians. Jim interacts with the intersections, as both a driver and pedestrian, multiple times a day. Here's what he has to say about his experience.**

“I feel less safe on the streets of Omaha than I have in any other city I’ve lived, including the New York City metro area. I interact with all intersections along the audit area on a daily basis, including walking across 72nd Street at Jones Circle and Jones Street. Just in those interactions alone, I see 2 or 3 people running red lights, making illegal u-turns, racing, and stopping in the middle of the intersection. If we aren’t making our roads safe in a self-declared “car city,” then even the “car people” won’t drive. It takes everybody to make change!”

2) **Sections of the Road Safety Audit area are already primed for future improvement as they are zoned as TOD (Transit Oriented Development) and ACI (Areas of Cultural Importance).**



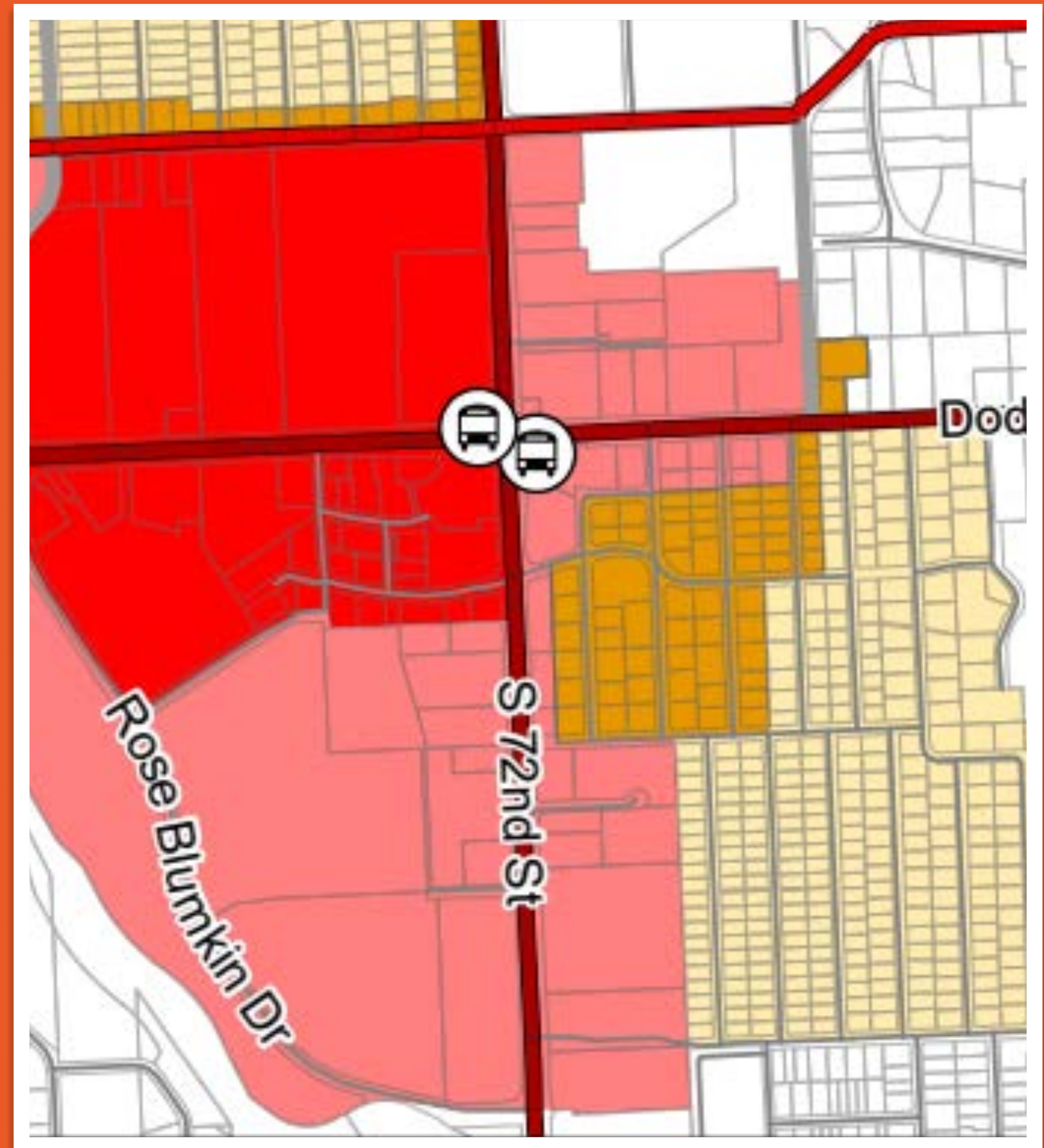
TOD:

All corners of the 72nd & Dodge Intersection are designated as TOD. Additionally, both sides of 72nd Street, from Farnam Street south to Rose Blumkin Drive, are designated as TOD. See the image below for details of boundaries, and **remember that higher density means busier streets and sidewalks.**

“Transit Oriented Development (TOD) is development centered around or located within walking distance of a transit station. TOD includes quality connections, mix of uses, greater density, and pedestrian scale design.

Uses should further walkability, transit use, and pedestrian activity and safety. Design should create and / or reinforce a safe and comfortable pedestrian oriented environment. Key components of a pedestrian oriented environment include wide sidewalks, landscaping, buildings and entrances, fronting sidewalks, facades of quality durable materials and windows, active ground floor uses, and limited conflict points between pedestrians and automobiles.”

The importance of TOD is explained in the City of Omaha’s [TOD Zoning Summary & Guide](#).



ACI:

Area of Cultural Importance (ACI) is a zoning overlay district that **promotes the principles in the Urban Design Article of the Omaha Zoning Code**. The regulations associated with the ACI Overlay are only applicable at the time of new development or when new construction occurs and require **minimum sidewalk widths (7-10' depending on location) and minimum landscaping (shade trees, etc)**.

The entirety of the Road Safety Audit area lies within an ACI Overlay, designated specifically as ACI-2, which you can see to the right.



WHY NOW?

The intersection of 72nd & Dodge is undergoing an immense change. See below for some of the upgrades that are happening in this area and what local leaders have to say about it.

(Swivel) The recently completed Swivel apartments near the northeast corner of 72nd & Dodge added 158 rental units and commercial office space to this area. (Open)

(Crossroads) The new Crossroads development, scheduled to open in 2024, is under construction at the northwest corner of 72nd & Dodge (adjacent to the Target store) and, per their website, will add:

- 150 hotel rooms
- Approximately 400 residences (apartment homes/senior living)
- 150,000 SF of entertainment/lifestyle uses
- 200,000 SF of retail
- Up to 500,000 SF of office space

(Central Library) Omaha's new central library is currently being built at the southwest intersection of 72nd & Dodge where the former Do Space center was. This new 96,000-square-foot building will include outdoor landscaping, a multi-story glass building, a two-story parking garage, and bike parking. Do Space saw an average of 475 visitors per day, and the old Main Library saw 250,000 visits per year, that's an average of 684 visitors per day. The new Central Library is expected to see more than that once it opens. (Scheduled to open in 2026)

Lockwood Development, the lead on The Crossroads, explains the importance of the project:

*“Opening 2024, The Crossroads development will transform central Omaha as we know it. This project creates a dynamic connection between downtown and west Omaha and will merge retail, business, art, entertainment, education, health care, and more, breathing life back into the heart of our city. **72nd and Dodge will thrive again.**”*

Tom Trenolone, Vice President of HDR, was quoted at the July 19th, 2022 Omaha City Council meeting during a hearing on the central library as saying:

*“Downtown is the heart of the city but something like **72nd and Dodge represents our soul,**” (Per Fox 42 article)*

Per the City of Omaha’s website, Mayor Stothert said this about the library and its location:

*“The vision and commitment of our partners and donors make this uniquely Omaha attraction possible, adding a learning destination to the commercial, residential, and entertainment **revival underway at 72nd and Dodge.**”*

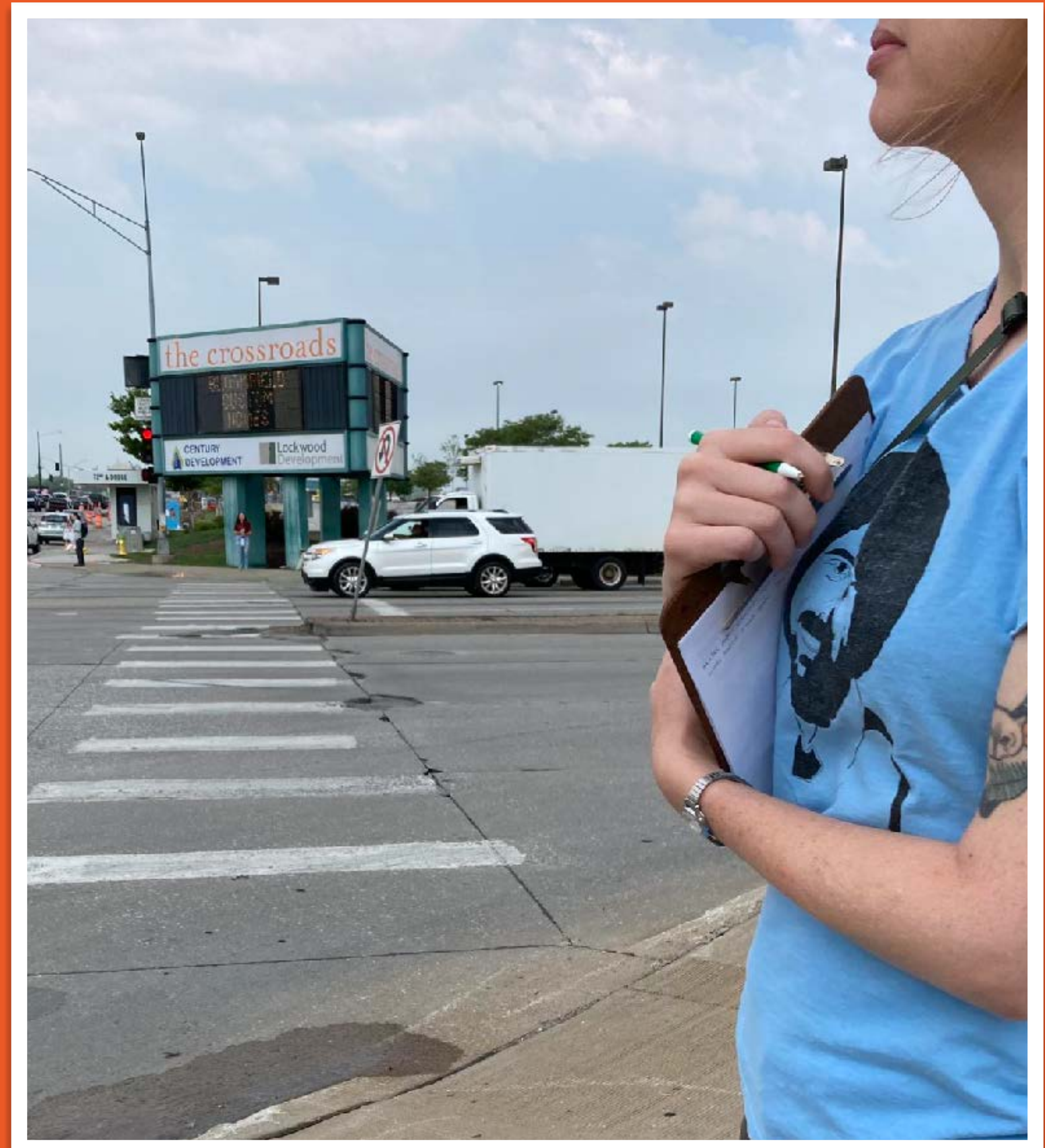
Per the Library’s [website](#), the centralized location of the new library was also chosen due to its historical and cultural significance:

*“In addition to 72nd and Dodge being a functional choice, it is also a nod to the intersection’s storied history and the vision for the library. **The intersection has served as a natural gathering place for people to express themselves throughout the city’s history.** The new Omaha Central Public Library will do the same, providing a space for connection, collaboration, and community.”*

A COMMON THEME...

The revivification of 72nd & Dodge is a common theme among Omaha's business, development, and municipal leaders. While we look forward to 72nd & Dodge "thriving again," it needs to happen equitably and beyond the confines of this one intersection.

In July of this year, Mayor Stothert announced a complete overhaul to the City's 30-year Master Plan which, if approved by the City Council, will take 3 years to complete and will focus on **infill development, transportation, the environment, and active mobility**. Existing, less welcoming infrastructure needs to be connected to new infrastructure to make all of Omaha safer and more inviting for ALL, and **we hope the updated Master Plan does just that.**



THE SURVEY:

The SOS Road Safety Audit was developed for participants to do on their own time over a period of about one month (from June 20 to July 31st, 2023). In contrast to traditional “walk audits” or “road safety audits,” which are scheduled for a specific time with a specific group of people, we wanted to give participants ample time to **maximize feedback from as many road users as possible.**

The following road users were invited to participate in this crowdsourced event: **motorists, motorcyclists, bicyclists, pedestrians, and vulnerable users.**

VULNERABLE USERS:

You'll find a variety of definitions for "vulnerable road users," some of which are rather contradictory. The US Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration defines a vulnerable user as a non-motorist such as pedestrians, bicyclists or other cyclists, or persons on personal conveyance (ie scooter).

"A vulnerable road user may include people walking, biking, or rolling. Please note that a vulnerable road user:

- *Includes a highway worker on foot in a work zone, given they are considered a pedestrian.*
- *Does not include a motorcyclist."*



Road Safety Audit participants, Nancy and Martha, women who wheel.

SURVEY BOUNDARIES & DESCRIPTION:

The audit area is bounded on the north by the 72nd & Dodge intersection, on the south by the 72nd & Pacific intersection, and on the west and east by adjacent sidewalks and private property. The posted speed limit along this portion of 72nd Street is 35 mph.

Sidewalks along the audit area are contiguous. The average width of the sidewalks along the majority of this audit area is 3 feet, with the exception of a couple of segments of newly constructed sidewalk. For example, the sidewalk adjacent to the Kum & Go at the northeast corner of 72nd & Pacific is 7 feet wide.

Omaha metro buses travel along 72nd Street every 15 minutes Monday through Saturday and every 20 minutes on Sunday. Specifically, 72nd Street is served by Route 18 buses which pass along 72nd Street:

- 131 times a day on weekdays
- 102 times a day on Saturdays
- 73 times a day on Sundays

For a total of 830 bus trips per week along the audit area!

ORBT buses do not run on 72nd Street but do run through the 72nd & Dodge Street intersection. Specifically, the ORBT buses pass through the 72nd & Dodge Street intersection:

- 196 times on weekdays
- 130 times on Saturdays
- 106 times on Sundays

For a total of 1,216 trips per week. There are 10 transit stops on 72nd Street from Dodge to Pacific and two ORBT stations at 72nd & Dodge.

Dodge Street (the north boundary) is designated as Highway 6 and is a six-lane road with dedicated turn lanes and an average daily traffic volume of **50,000 vehicles**.

At the intersection with 72nd Street, Dodge Street has three through lanes in each direction, dual left turn lanes for all directions, and dedicated right turn lanes for eastbound and northbound.

72nd Street is a major arterial that runs north/south through the City of Omaha with an average daily traffic volume of **40,000 vehicles**.

72nd Street, within the boundaries of this audit, is a six-lane road with a median from Pacific to Dodge. There is no on-street parking, no bike lanes, protected or otherwise.

Pacific Street (the south boundary) is a four-lane road with dedicated turn lanes.

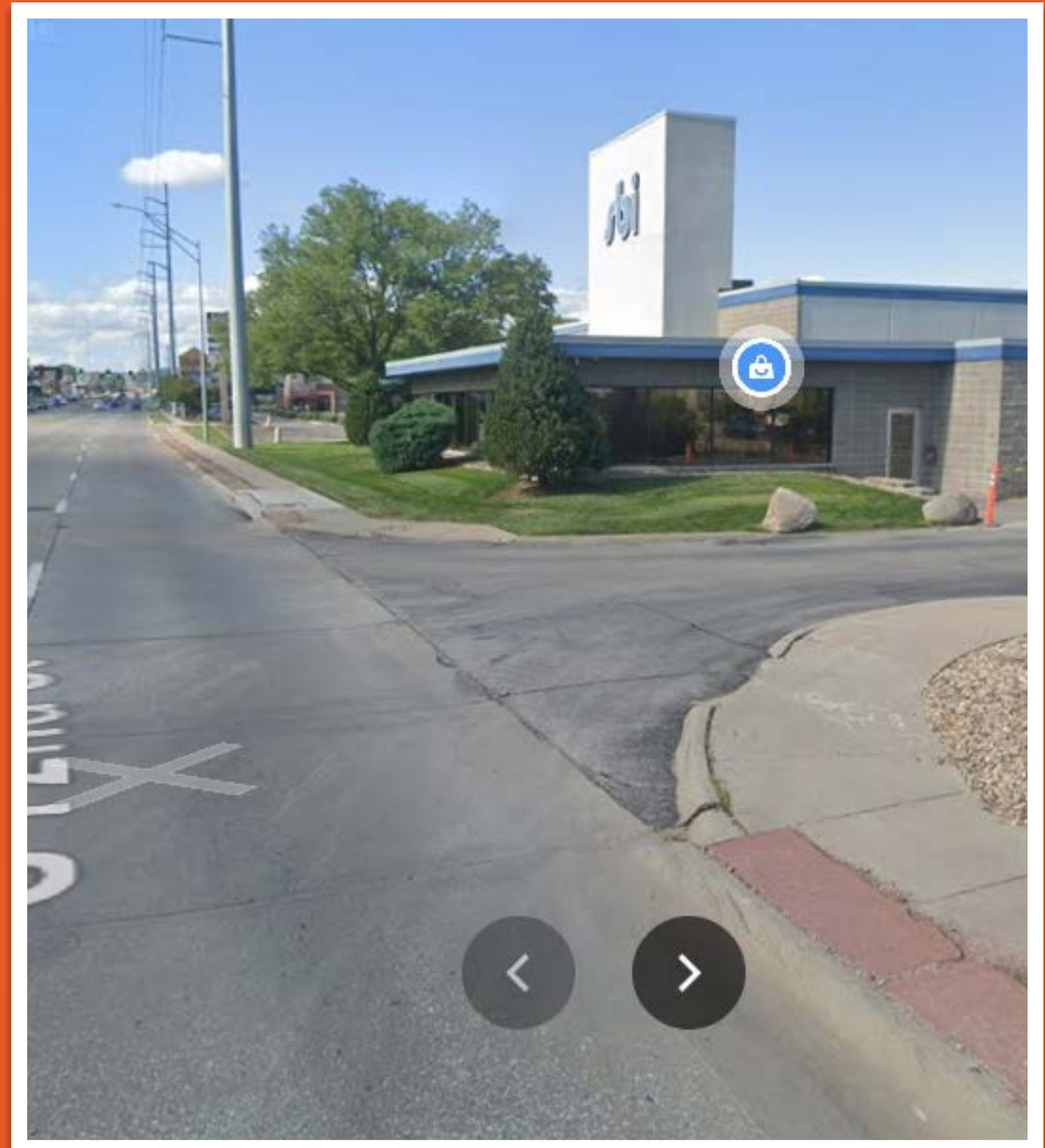
At the intersection with 72nd Street, Pacific has two through lanes in each direction, dual left turn lanes for all directions, and dedicated right turn lanes for all directions.

Pacific Street west of 72nd Street, as well as 72nd Street and Dodge Street, are all **designated truck routes**.

DRIVEWAY CUTS:

Driveway cuts are un-signalized roadway entrances and exits. **Driveway cuts are potential conflict points between motorists, pedestrians, cyclists, etc.** The number of driveway cuts can affect the safety of a roadway, and access should be balanced between safety for all and efficiency of entrances and exits.

The audit area is characterized by numerous driveway cuts. The east side of the audit area (along 72nd) has 11 driveway cuts and the west side of the audit area (along 72nd) has 14 driveway cuts.



INTERSECTIONS:

A total of six intersections are included in the audit area. They are described below.



72nd & Pacific Street - (south boundary of the audit area)

- A typical 4-way, signalized intersection - maximum width is $\cong 120$ feet
- 7 travel lanes on west/east legs
- 9 travel lanes on north/south legs
- Crosswalks are **not marked/painted**
- Estimated Average Daily Traffic (EADT) - **78,150** (based on 2021 counts)



72nd & Rose Blumkin Drive

- A typical 4-way signalized intersection - maximum width is $\cong 109$ feet
- 7 travel lanes on north leg
- 8 travel lanes on south leg
- Crosswalks are **not marked/painted**
- EADT - **55,648** (based on 2021 counts)

INTERSECTIONS:

A total of six intersections are included in the audit area. They are described below.



72nd & Jones Street

- A typical 4-way signalized intersection- maximum width of intersection is \cong 97 feet
- 7 travel lanes on south/north legs
- Crosswalks are **not marked/painted**
- EADT 32,644 (based on 2021 counts)



72nd & Jones Circle

- A 3-way “T”, signalized intersection with north, east, and south legs, and NO west leg.
- Maximum width of intersection is \cong 92 feet
- Crosswalks are **not marked/painted**
- 7 travel lanes on south/north legs
- There is a painted stop bar/stop line on the southbound lanes
- This intersection differs from the rest because it is a “T” intersection and has one painted stop bar
- EADT 30,682 (based on 2021 counts)

INTERSECTIONS:

A total of six intersections are included in the audit area. They are described below.



72nd & Farnam Street

- A 4-way, signalized intersection - maximum width of intersection is \cong 117 feet
- This intersection differs from the rest because it was built with Farnam Street intersecting 72nd Street at a diagonal. This makes the crossing distance farther for pedestrians and is more difficult to cross intuitively due to the angled layout and no marked crossings.
- Crosswalks are **not marked/painted**
- 7 travel lanes on south/north legs
- EADT 35,310 (based on 2021 counts)



72nd & Dodge Street - (north boundary of the audit area)

- A large 4-way signalized intersection - maximum width of intersection is \cong 120 feet
- Crosswalks ARE marked/painted in a longitudinal bar pattern with closely spaced white parallel lines, and the crossing signal is audible as well as visible
- 9 travel lanes in all directions
- This intersection differs from the others because it is **the only intersection in this audit area with marked/painted crosswalks** AND it is the only intersection with an audible crossing signal.
- EADT 85,584 (based on 2021 counts)

PIVOTS?

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the word “pivot” gained popularity. The ability to pivot and change course when needed is an essential but difficult skill. SOS had to pivot twice during the audit period

UPDATED FORMAT:

During the first week of the audit period, we received feedback from participants that the audit forms, specifically the pedestrian forms, were difficult to fill out. In response to that feedback, we reformatted the audit forms to make them less burdensome and more user-friendly.



CYCLISTS QUESTIONS:

As we promoted the audit to the cycling community, we noticed a common response from local cyclists. . .

- *“I won’t ride 72nd Street”*
- *“I avoid that area like the plague”*
- *“I don’t need to risk my life.”*

While there are some intrepid folks who ride 72nd Street (and thanks to those who completed the audit!) we realized that gathering feedback from cyclists on a road they would never ride would be unproductive.

So we pivoted and created a short questionnaire of six questions for local cyclists who ride and/or commute but avoid the audit area, and we sent those questions directly to cyclists in the community and also posted them on the Road Safety Audit page of our website. See Appendix #4 for a list of the questions.



“local citizen (who prefers bikes over cars) and Audit participant, Joe Ranne. Photo credit - Brandon Knickerbocker”

THE SURVEY QUESTIONS:

There were 3 separate audit forms for 3 categories of users, specifically 1) **motorists & motorcyclists**, 2) **pedestrians & vulnerable users**, and 3) **bicyclists**. Survey forms were fillable PDF forms that respondents could fill out online and email to us, or print out and mail to our PO Box address.

MOTORISTS & MOTORCYCLISTS:

Questions on this form focused on the **conditions, design, and use of the roadway** and individual intersections, **construction, enforcement, and ideas for improvement**. *Please go to Appendix #2 to see the 4-page Motorists/Motorcyclists Survey form.*

PEDESTRIANS & VULNERABLE USERS:

Questions on this form focused on the **conditions, design, and use of the sidewalks, transit stops**, and individual intersections, as well as **enforcement and ideas for improvement**. *Please go to Appendix #3 to see the 4-page Pedestrian & Vulnerable User Survey form.*

BICYCLISTS:

Questions on this form focused on the **conditions, design, and use of the roadway** and individual intersections, as well as **enforcement and ideas for improvement**. *Please see Appendix #4 to see the 4-page Cyclist Survey form, including additional cyclist survey questions.*

STAKEHOLDERS & OUTREACH:

WE IDENTIFIED THE FOLLOWING STAKEHOLDERS FOR THIS SURVEY:

- Omaha Public Library & library users
- City of Omaha
- Road & Infrastructure users, including drivers, passengers, pedestrians, cyclists, transit users, vulnerable users
- Businesses/employees along 72nd Street

OUTREACH: Methods of Outreach for the Road Safety Audit (RSA) included. . .

- **MEDIA:** Press releases were sent to local print and news media entities, including – WOWT Channel 6, Omaha World Herald, Fox 42 News, the Reader, Flatwater Free Press, and Nebraska Examiner. (See Appendix #5 for copy of the press release)
- Two separate new stories, on WOWT Channel 6 and KMTV Channel 3, highlighted our Road Safety Audit.

Grassroots group engaging Omaha residents about safe roads

Safe Omaha Streets offering form to gather input through July 20



Trilety Wade and her boyfriend founded Safe Omaha Streets, or SOS, a grassroots group that wants people to feel safe on Omaha's roads.

STAKEHOLDERS & OUTREACH:

SOCIAL MEDIA:

- Thirty (30) promotional posts on X, formerly known as Twitter
- Twenty-two (22) promotional Facebook posts
- Twenty-two (22) promotional Instagram posts
- Posted in the Dundee-Memorial Park Neighborhood Association FB page

NEWSLETTER:

- The Road Safety Audit was promoted twice in the SOS e-newsletter

DIRECT EMAIL:

- The Road Safety Audit was promoted via direct email to the following organizations, entities, and individuals:

STAKEHOLDERS & OUTREACH:

The Vision Zero Technical Advisory Committee, which includes representatives from: KKAD25, National Safety Council – NE Chapter, UNMC Trauma, CHI Trauma, Project Extra Mile, Heartland Bike Share, Creighton – Sociology & Social Science Data Lab, Sherwood Foundation, South Omaha BID, Benson BID, Old Elkhorn BID, North 24th Street BID, Downtown BID, Blackstone BID, N Saddle Creek BID, Verdis Group, Omaha Public Works Department (Traffic; Design), Omaha Police Department, Omaha Fire Department, Omaha Parking and Mobility Department, Omaha Public Schools, Office of the Mayor, Mayor’s Active Living Advisory Committee, Mayor’s Advisory Commission for Citizens w/ Disabilities, Metro Area Planning Association, Douglas County Department of Health, and Metro Transit

Omaha Public Library, Green Omaha Coalition, Mode Shift Omaha, Bike Walk Nebraska, Omaha Pedalers, Local insurance agencies, Omaha City Council: Festersen, Melton, Johnson, Palermo, Harding, Rowe, Begley, State Senators (VonGillern, McDonnel, Frederickson, Hunt, Vargas, M Cavanaugh, J Cavanaugh, DeBoer, Mckinney, Riepe, Wayne, Walz, Armendariz, Kauth, Linehan), Mayor’s Active Living Advisory Committee – emails to all members, The Library Board of Trustees – emails to all members, The Mayor’s Commission on Citizens with Disabilities – emails to two members, College of Communications at UNO, Omaha World-Herald – Jessica Wade, One Omaha, Sherwood Foundation, Representatives from Nebraska Furniture Mart, Omaha Community Foundation, Elmwood Neighborhood Association, Aksarben-Elmwood Neighborhood Association, Peony Park Neighborhood Association, Country Club Neighborhood Association, Representatives of Peter Kiewit Institute, Verdis Group, Omaha Documenteers, Nancy Berg at Accesible402, Local commuter cyclists, Ponderosa Cyclery, Trek Bicycle Omaha, Samuel Bak Museum (UNO), Two representatives from OPPD’s Board of Directors, Harley Davidson store representative, Omaha chapter of Antique Motorcycle Club of America, 100+ personal contacts

POSTCARDS:

- Distributed around town, ie coffee shops, etc
- Handed out to folks around town such as motorcyclists, cyclists, etc
- Handed out to folks waiting at transit stops
- Distributed to 30+ businesses along the Audit area

**WHAT DO YOU THINK
WOULD IMPROVE 72ND STREET?**

We have created a Road Safety Audit for 72nd Street between Dodge Street and Pacific Street because we want to know what YOU think!

It's easy to participate. All you have to do is DRIVE, BICYCLE, WALK, or ROLL down 72nd Street's lanes or sidewalks then fill out the form and submit it to us.

Find the forms here

We have forms for:

- Drivers & Motorcyclists
- Bicyclists
- Pedestrians & Vulnerable Users

SAFE OMAHA STREETS

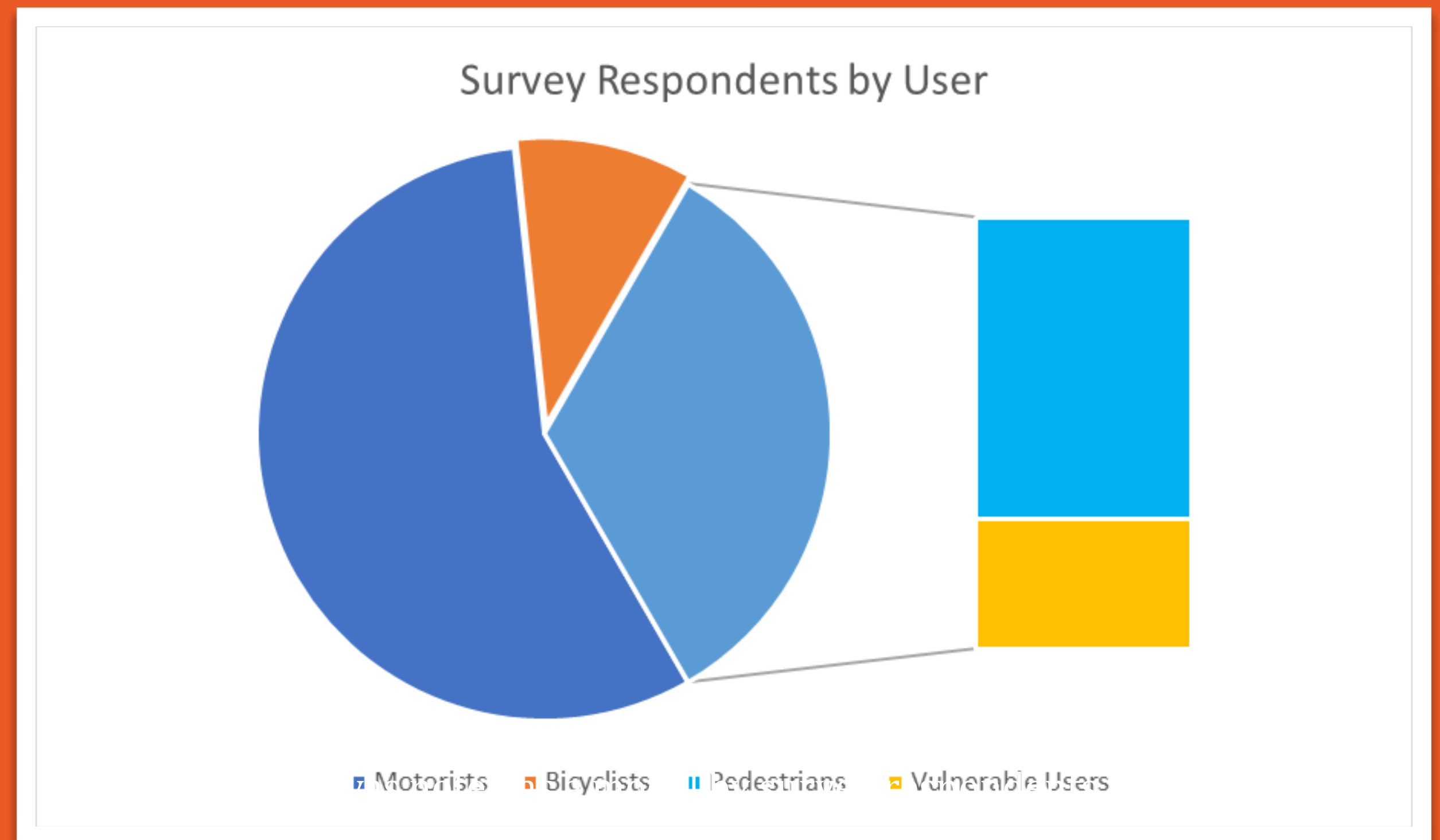
Email SOS with any questions or comments at safeomahastreet@gmail.com

LET'S TRY AND TURN 72ND STREET AROUND!

SAFE OMAHA STREETS THE RESULTS

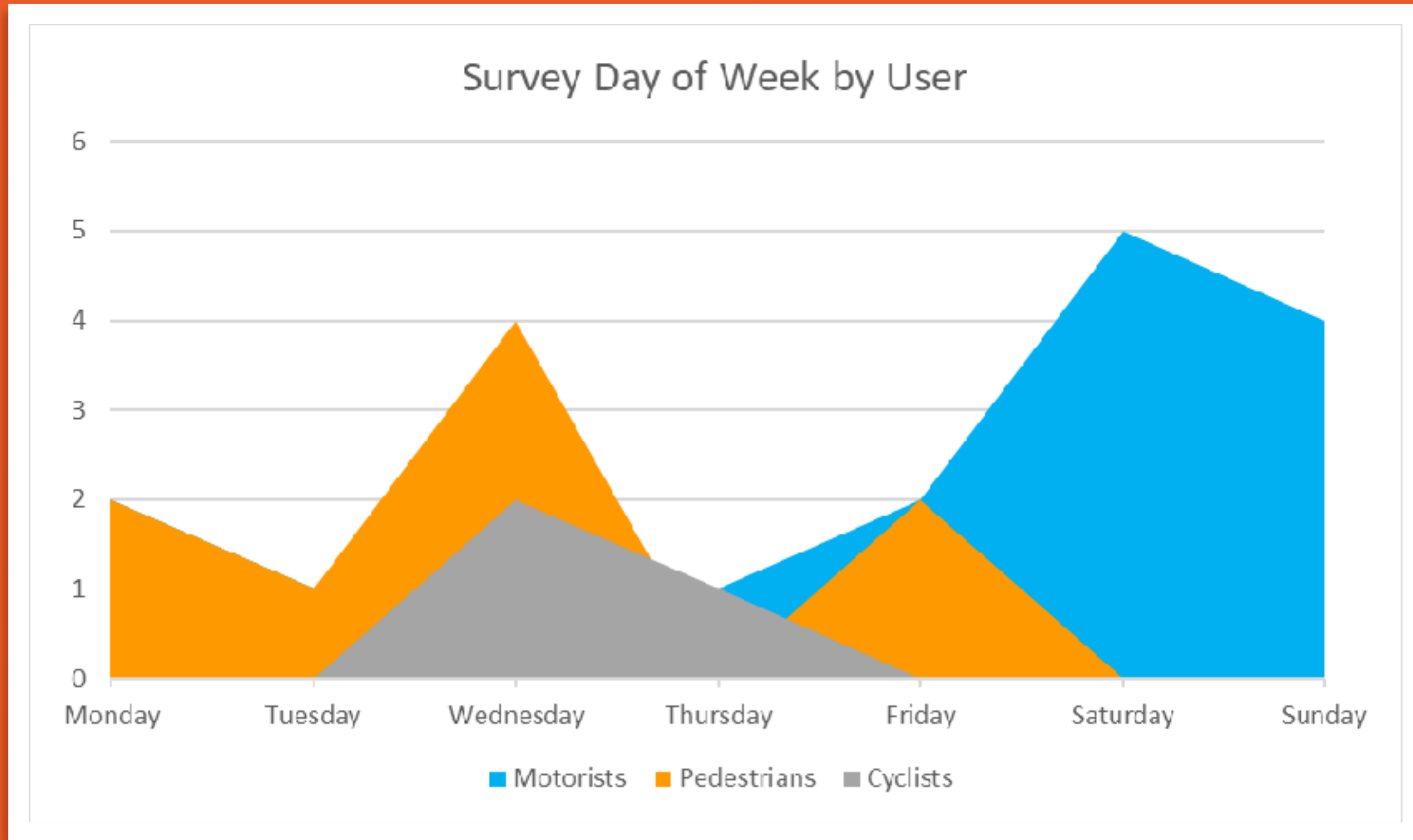
RESPONDENTS:

This section summarizes the results from the Motorist Surveys, Pedestrian Surveys, Cyclist Surveys and the Cyclist Questionnaire.

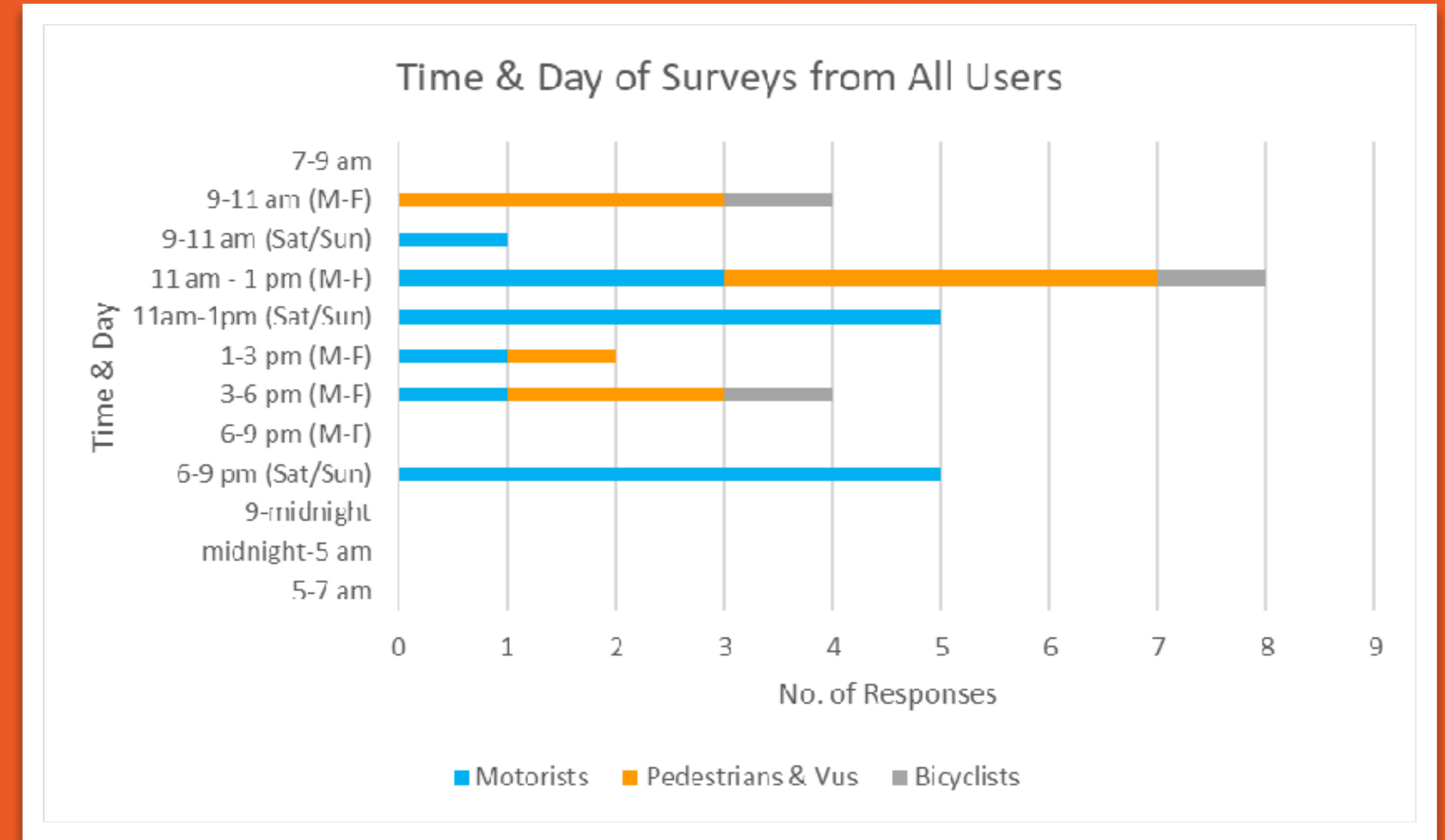


The chart above shows the breakdown of the 30 survey participants.

TIME & DAY:



The chart above shows the breakdown of the days of the week the surveys were done. Notice the bulk of the motorist surveys were conducted on weekends, thus their responses do not reflect typical weekday or rush hour traffic. Whereas the bulk of the pedestrian and cyclist surveys were conducted during the week.

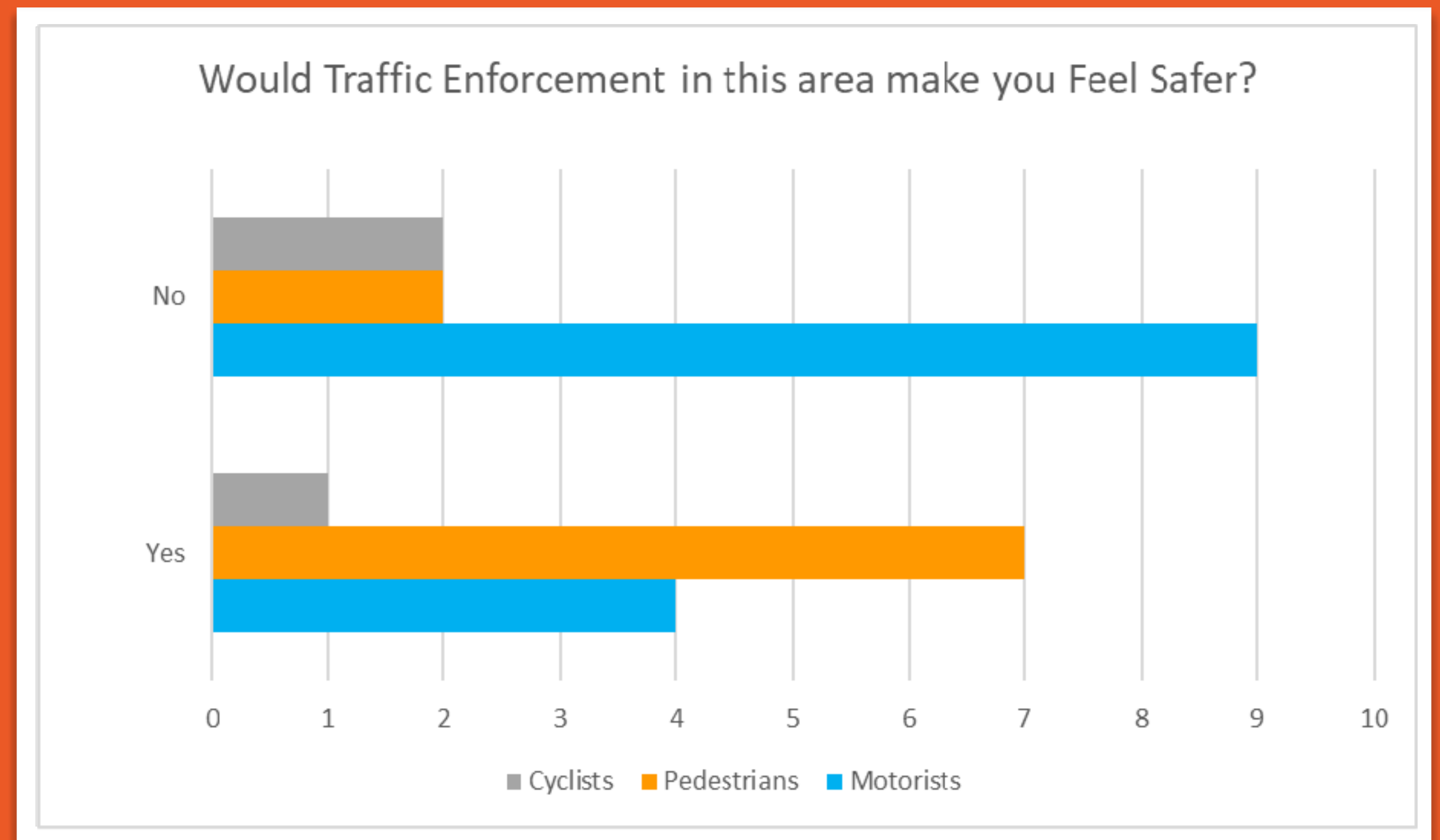


The chart above provides the approximate times the surveys were conducted. Note that no surveys were conducted after dark or during morning rush hour.

ENFORCEMENT:

The one question that was universal to all survey forms was, “Would traffic enforcement in this area make you feel safer?” Overall, motorists were more inclined to answer “no” while pedestrians were more inclined to answer “yes.”

One person conducted the survey twice, once as a motorist (where they answered “no” to the enforcement question) and once as a pedestrian (where they answered “yes” to the enforcement question).



RESULTS OF THE MOTORIST SURVEY:

SAFE BUT STRESSFUL, AN AREA OF AVOIDANCE:

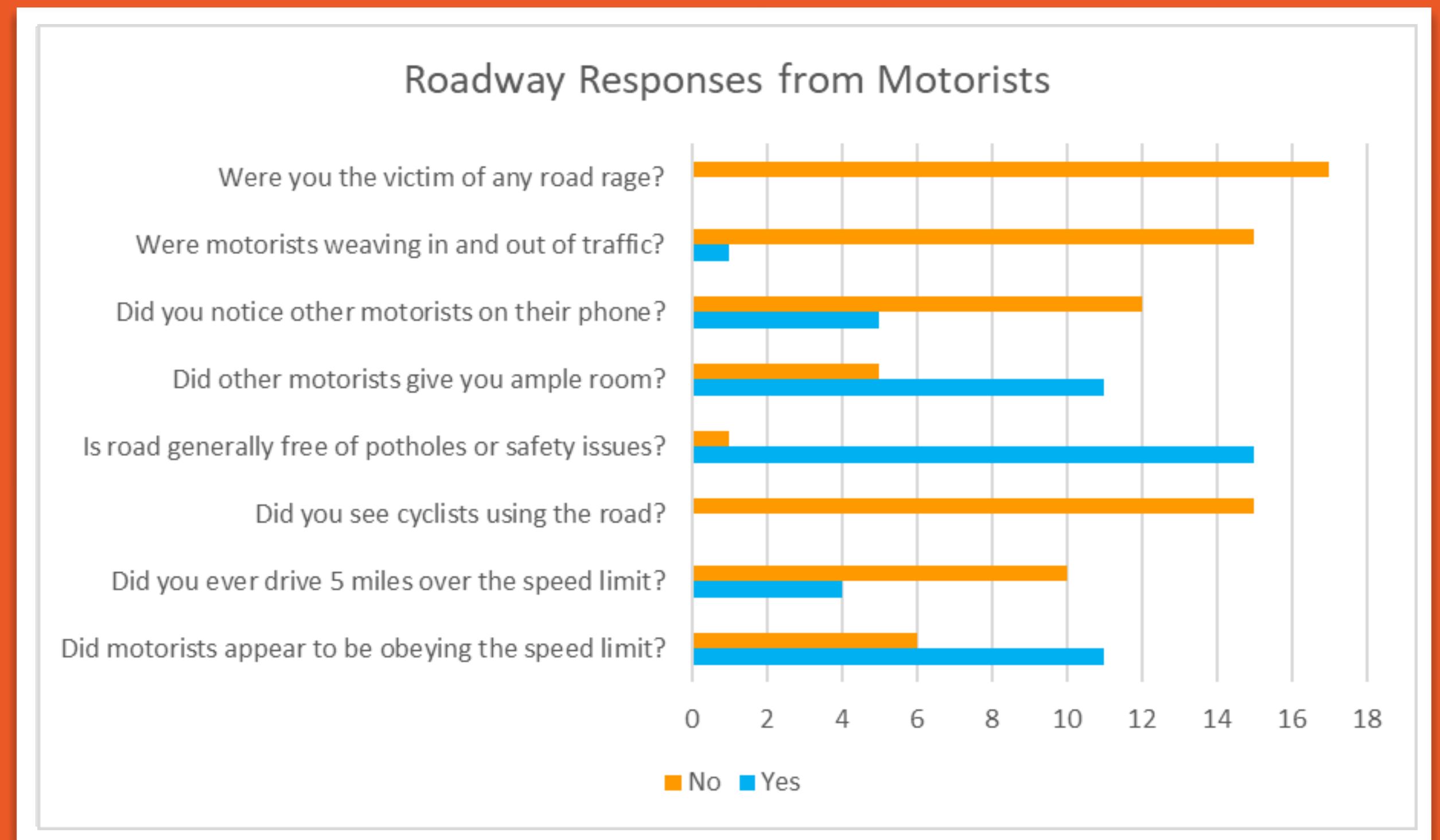
The questions on the motorist/motorcyclist survey focused on **the use and design of roadways, intersections, and construction**. A total of 17 people participated in the audit, none of whom were motorcyclists.

You can find the detailed breakdown of all the results from the Motorists' audits in Appendix #6.

ROADWAYS:

Respondents were asked a number of questions about the roadways, from condition to the behavior of users. The table to the right gives a summary of some of the responses. **Overall, the condition of the roads and the behavior of other drivers was perceived as generally good.**

Note that few of these surveys were conducted during the weekdays or during rush hour traffic, thus results may not reflect typical conditions.



FEEDBACK ON ROADWAY DESIGN:

Each survey participant was asked: *“How do you think the design of this road affects how you or others drive?”* A common theme was that while their actual audit experience was overall good, their **“typical”** experience on this section of roadway is often frustrating or dangerous, and many just avoid this area.

Here are some of the responses:

*“This was an uneventful trip, but there are **def** times where I see people doing their best to swerve in and out of lanes avoiding cars that are slowing down to turn into businesses.”*

*“I drove this on a **Saturday** and experienced a small amount of traffic, so the street was ok for handling cars.”*

“This road encourages higher speeds, congestion, and weaving.”

*“I think all the **businesses** in such a tight space **def** encourage people to **weave around a lot** in order to get where they want to go.”*

*“This specific experience was fine: not crowded, people didn’t run red lights, no weaving, the speeding was minimal. **However, I usually avoid this road** because it’s usually crowded, people run red lights, and there’s weaving.”*

*“Design encourages high speed and efficiency for motor vehicles. Cycling on lanes feels unsafe. **Crosswalks are long distances and feel intimidating.** Minimal landscape/ugly.”*

*“It probably **encourages lower speeds just simply due to the number of stop lights.**”*

“This area can be stressful and crowded, so I probably drive more cautiously here than on other ‘easier’ stretches of road.”

*“Busy road that can be crowded with lots of people turning into the businesses there, so **I tend to avoid it, but I also drive more cautiously there because I trust the other drivers there less.**”*



Probably not the safest driving condition, but a survey respondent got a kick out of this dog.

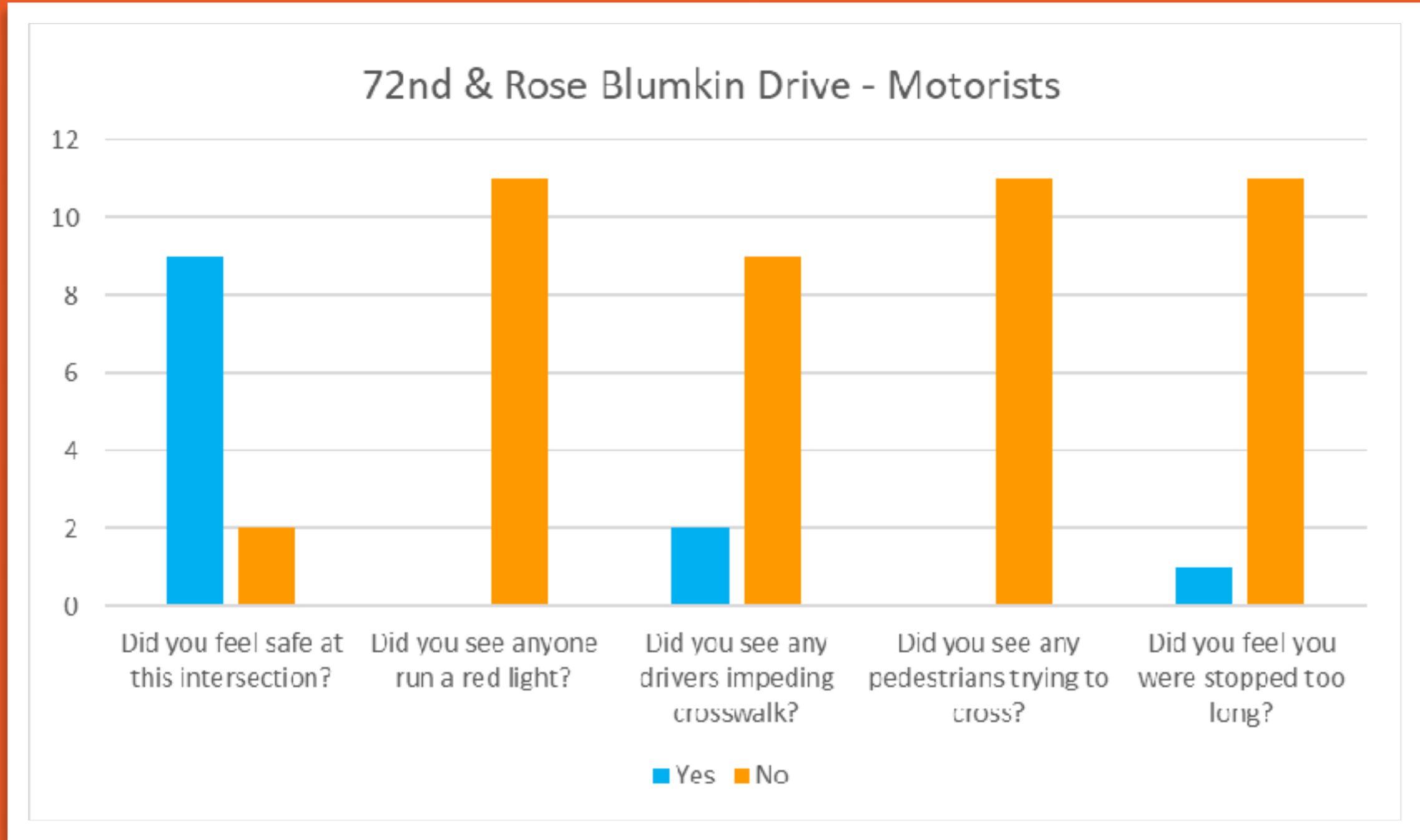
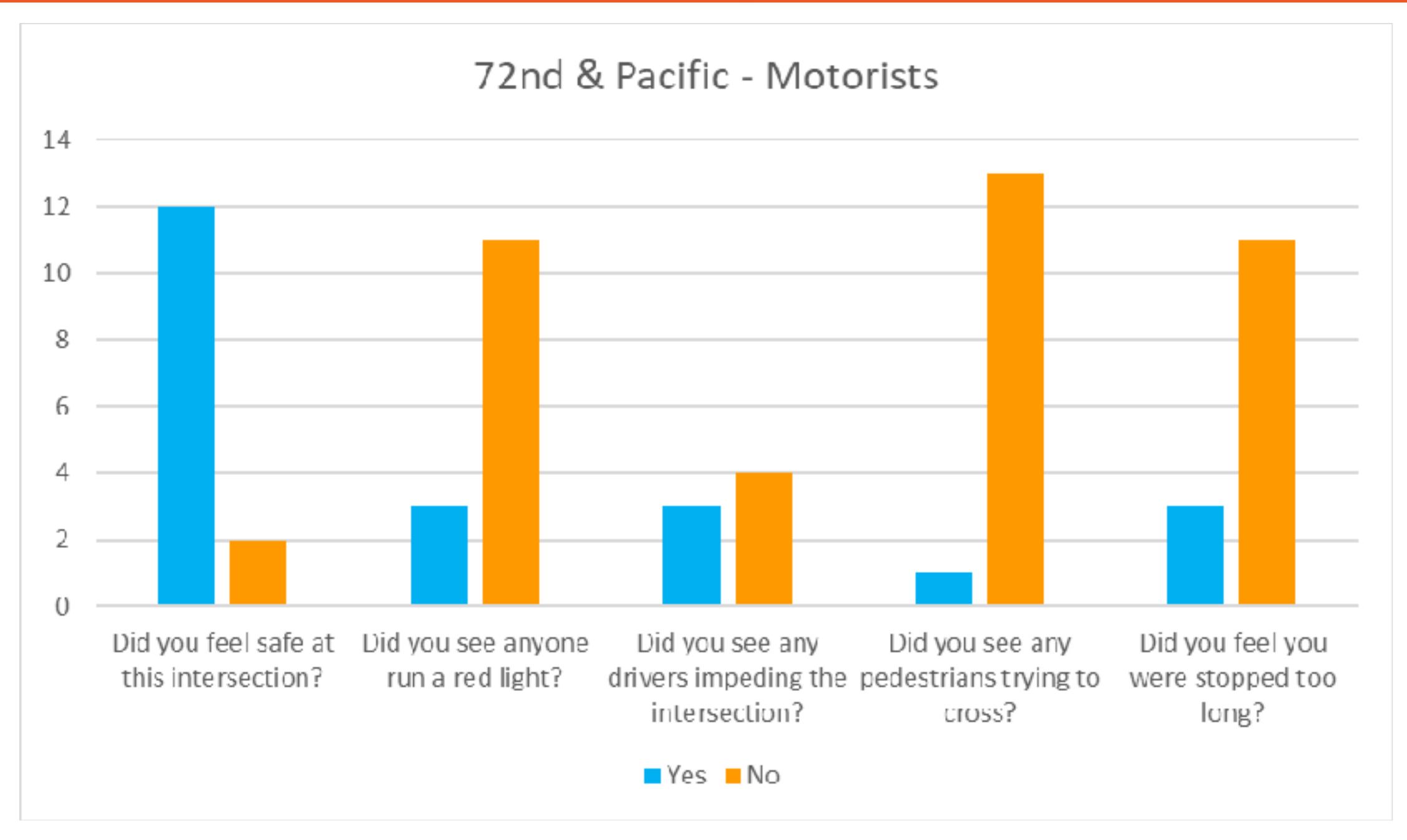


This survey respondent said *"I need to get over to the left but I can't get over,"* which is a common complaint not just in the audit area but in Omaha as a whole. Drivers settle into the left lane and either force drivers to illegally pass on the right, or force other drivers to also queue up in the left lane just to turn left in a mile - it becomes a negative feedback loop of left-lane congestion.

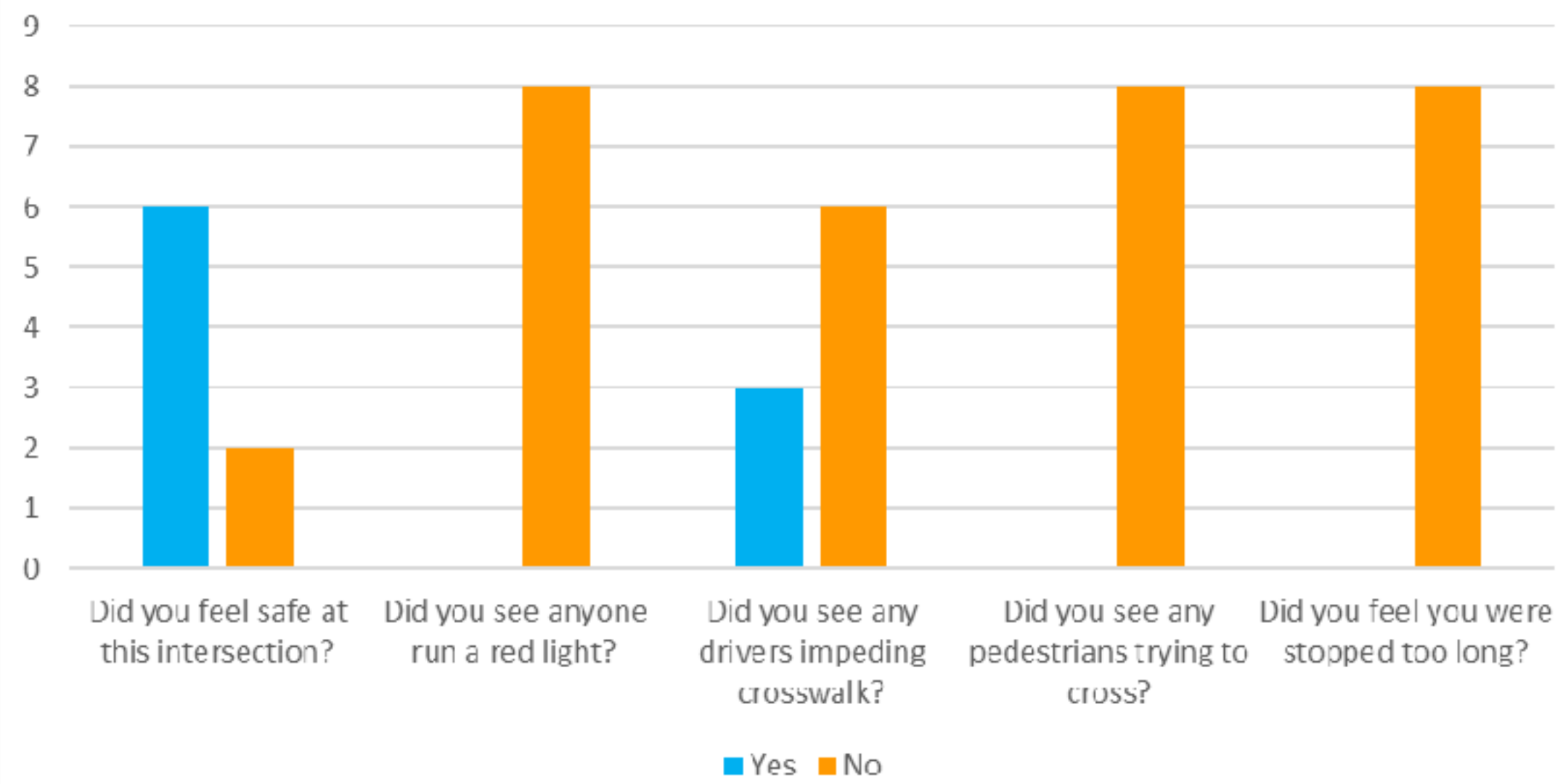
INTERSECTIONS:

As you'll see in the summary of responses below, motorists generally felt safe at the intersections along the audit area. However, all motorists did note that vehicle encroachment into the intersection was an area of concern.

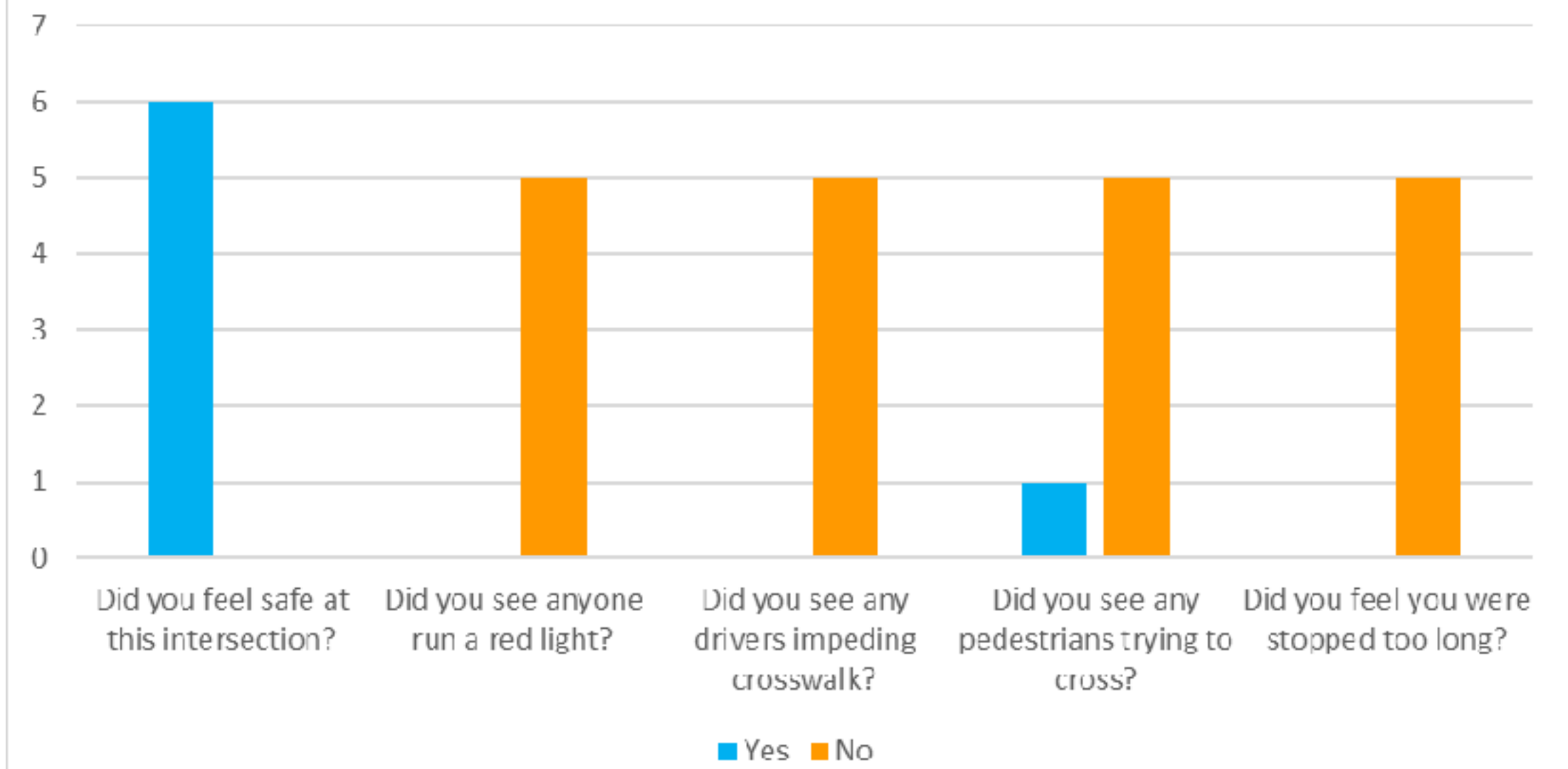
Survey participants only answered questions for intersections where they stopped.



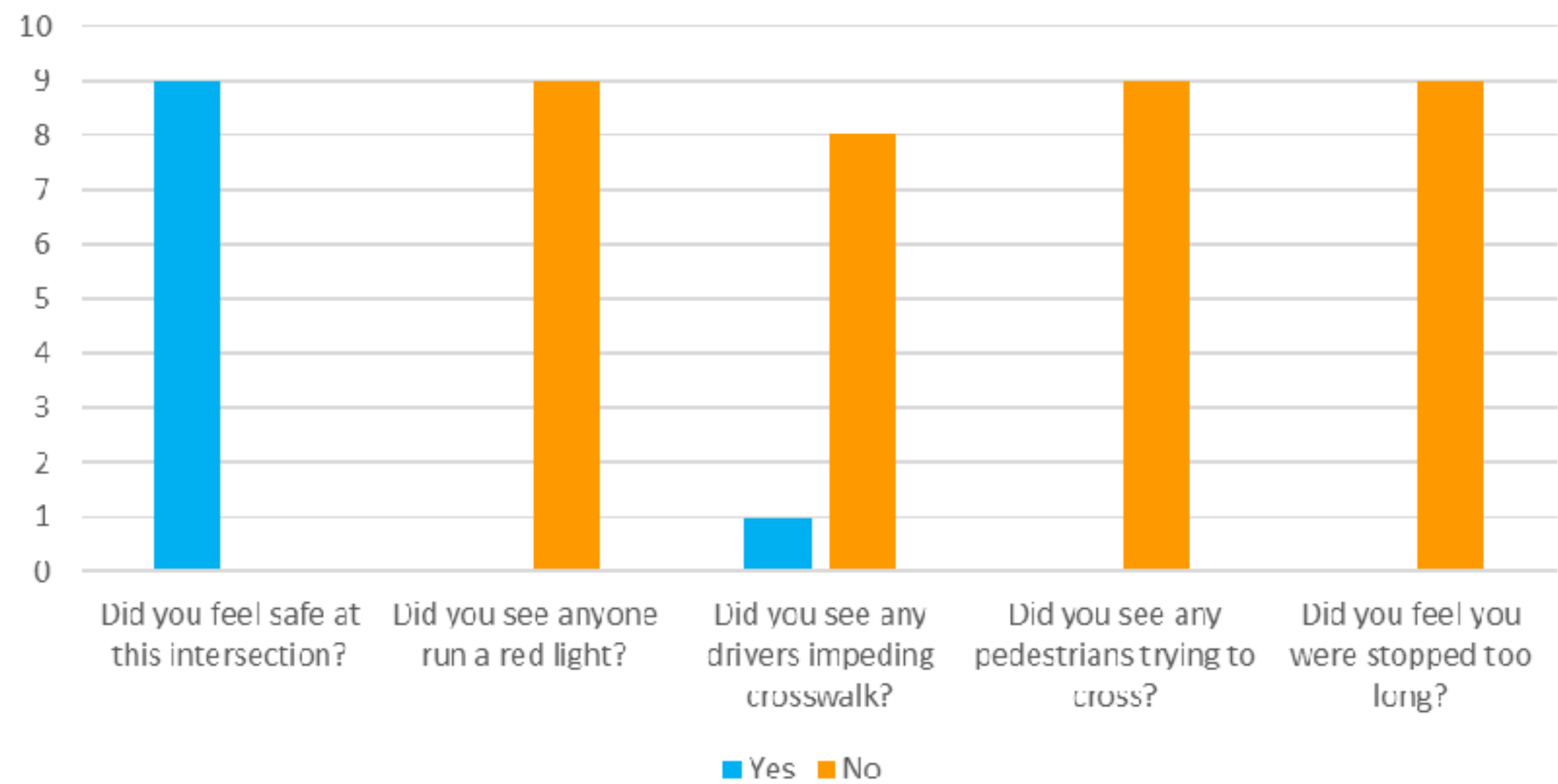
72nd & Jones Street - Motorists



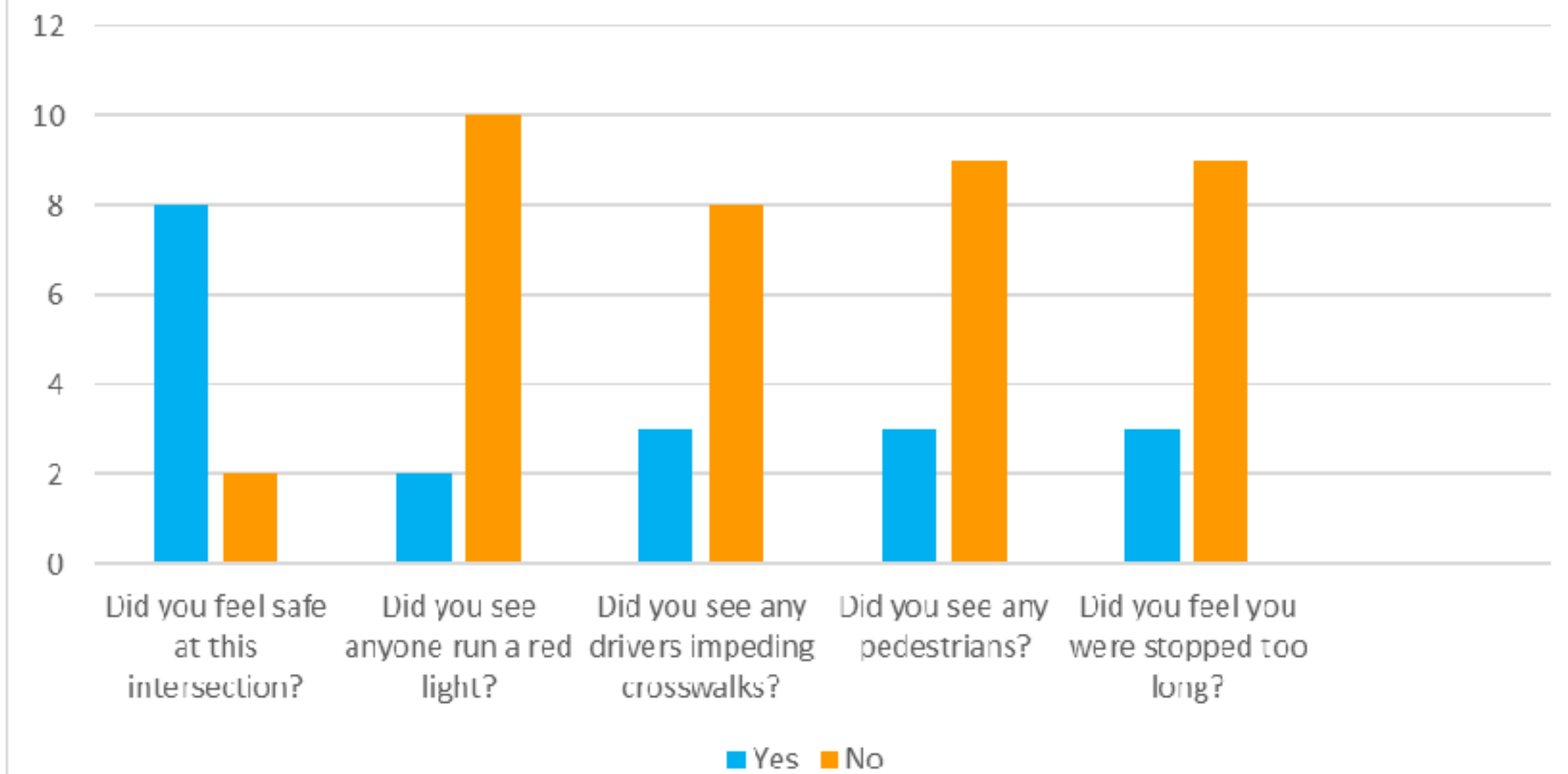
72nd & Jones Circle - Motorists



72nd & Farnam - Motorists



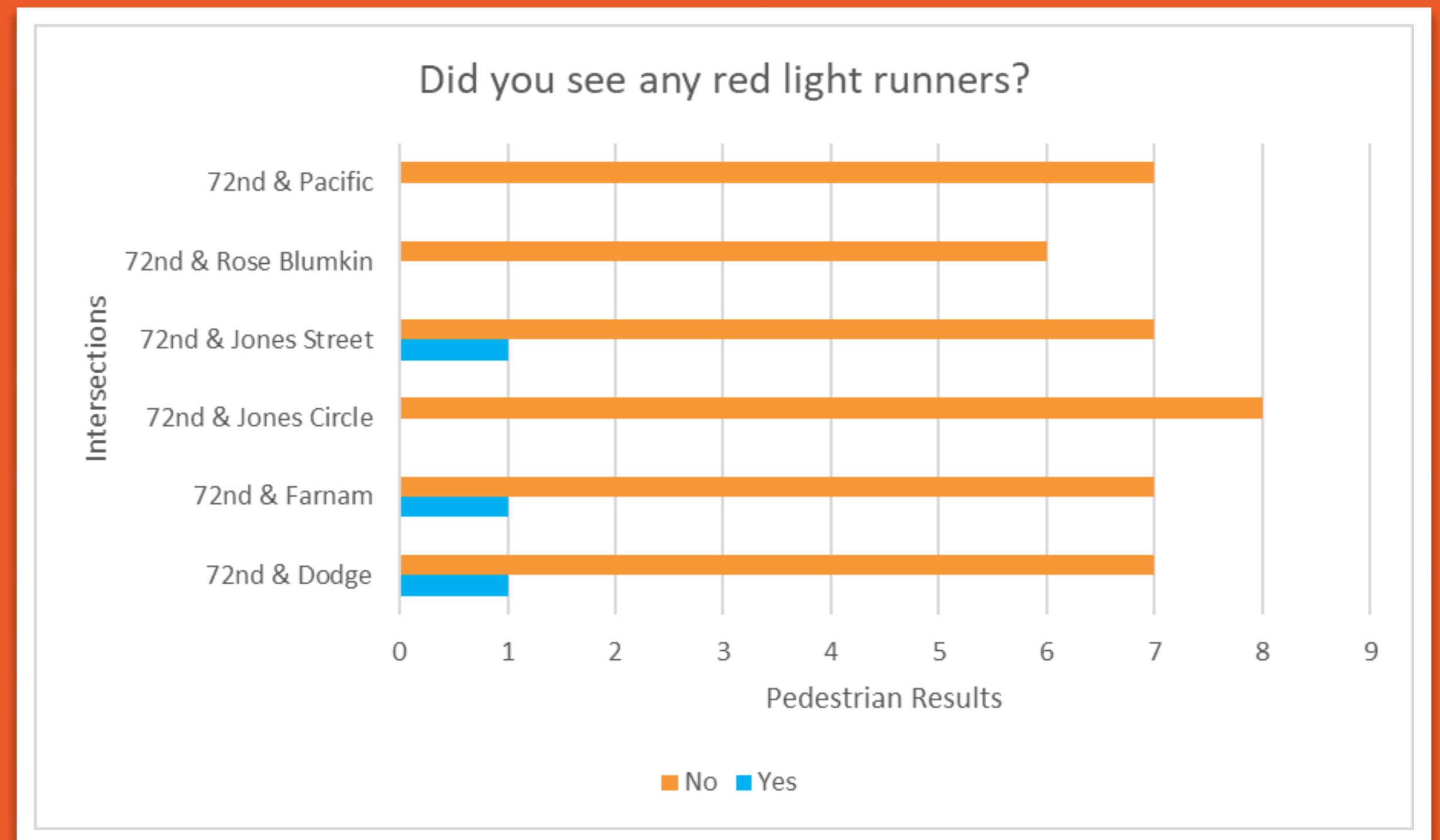
72nd & Dodge - Motorists

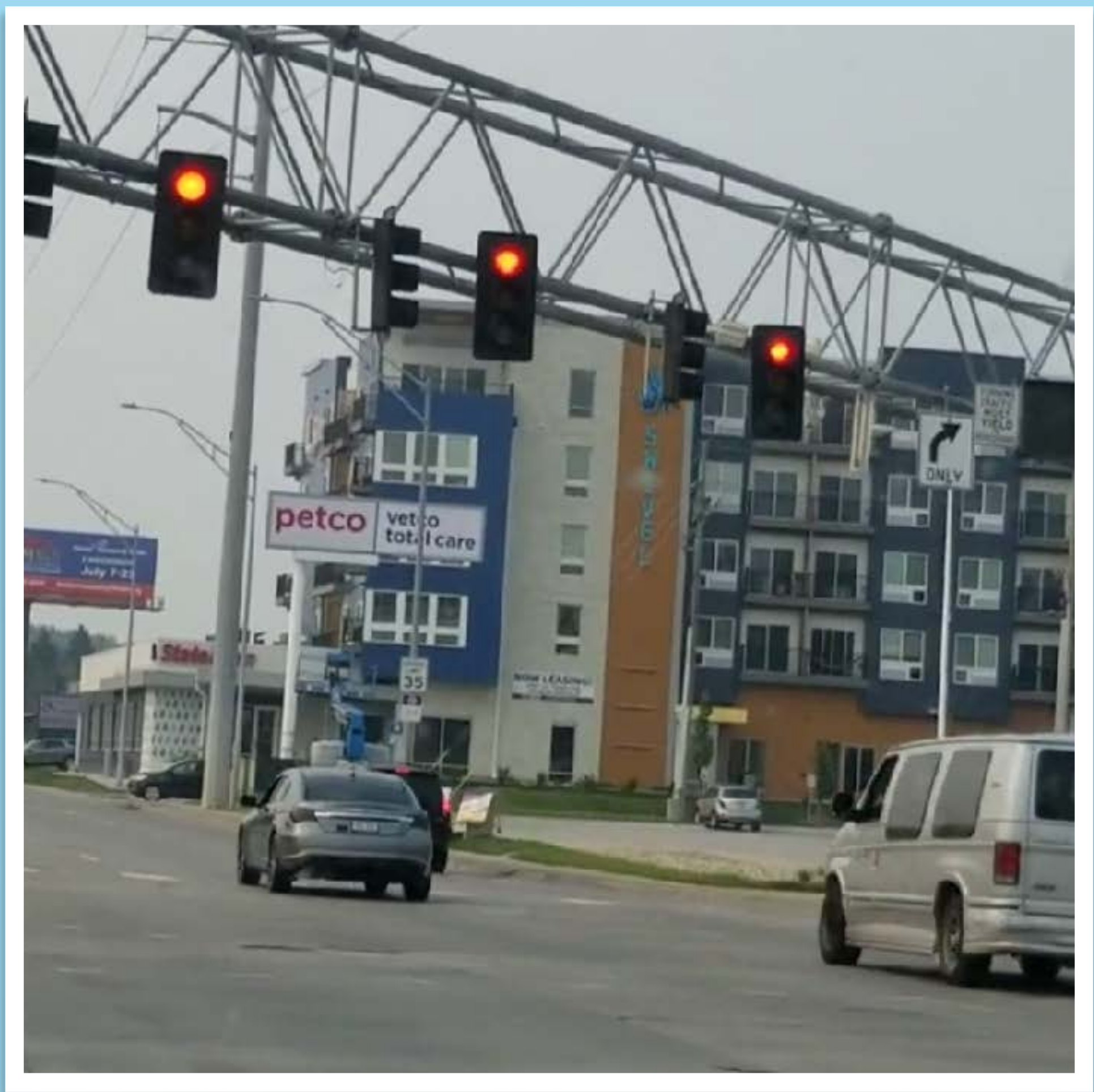


RED LIGHT RUNNING:

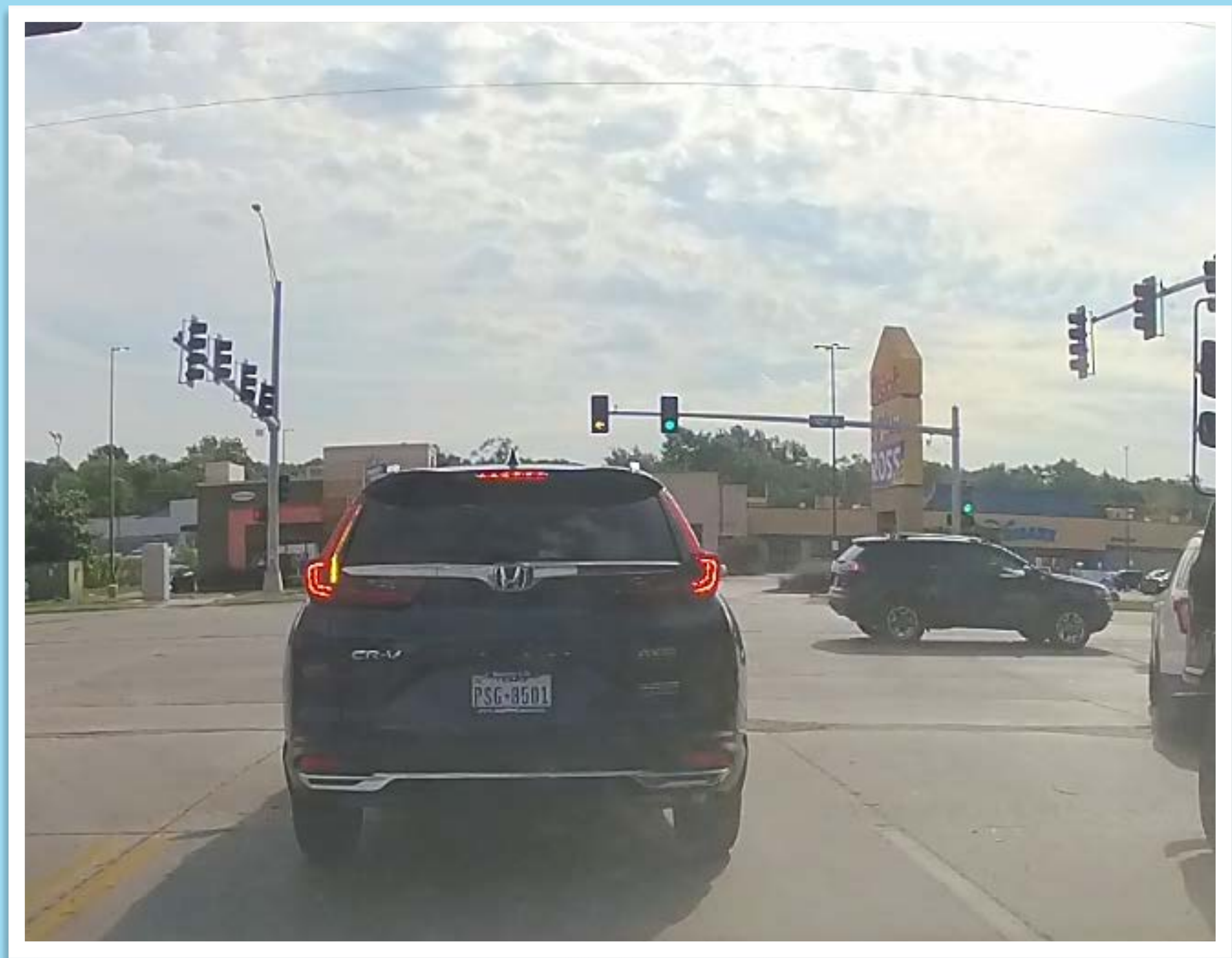
Red light running was NOT noted by survey respondents as a major concern. However, one multi-vehicle crash, due to a red-light runner, was documented during the audit period.

Further, SOS has reported and recorded red light running as a problem over the years along the audit area. See section SOS OBSERVATIONS for documentation.





The photo above is a screenshot from a video submitted by a survey respondent at 72nd & Dodge where 3 cars ran the red light heading northbound on 72nd Street.



Screenshot of a video from a dashcam capturing a blatant red light runner at 72nd & Jones Street. Cars were starting to move into the intersection when this SUV ran through.

CRASHES/TRAFFIC CALLS:

One survey respondent noted seeing a multi-vehicle crash at 72nd & Pacific on 23 July 2023. SOS contacted the Omaha Police Department's Traffic Unit for the details of this crash:

- “There were 5 vehicles involved. Veh #1 was EB on Pacific and had a red light. Veh's 2, 3 and 4 were SB on a green light. Veh #5 was stopped in a turning lane. **The driver of Veh #1 made statements that his brakes failed and that's why he ran the red light. Whether that's true or not I don't know. Driver #1 was cited for failure to yield.** No serious injuries.”
- 6/24/23 - 965 South 72nd Street - Hit and Run, vehicle struck a parked vehicle in the Runza parking lot.
- 7/23/23 - 72nd & Pacific - (crash above) at-fault driver cited for failure to yield

CRASHES/TRAFFIC CALLS:

Eight other calls regarding traffic infractions were referred to the Telephone Report Unit - no corresponding report was found either because a report was never made or was made several days later. Note, that **5 of the 8 calls were in the area of 72nd & Dodge.**

- 6/21/23 1547 hrs, 72 & Dodge (afternoon)
- 6/22/23 1841 hrs 72 & Dodge (evening)
- 6/23/23 2026 hrs 72 & Dodge (evening)
- 6/23/23 13:27 hrs 72 & Jones (afternoon)
- 6/25/23 1938 hrs 7201 Dodge (evening)
- 7/1/23 10:09 hrs 700 s 72nd (morning)
- 7/20/23 1734 hrs 7202 Pacific (evening/rush hour)
- 7/24/12 1741 hrs 72 & Dodge (evening/rush hour)



Five days after the audit period ended, Omaha Scanner noted an injury crash along the audit area at 72nd & Rose Blumkin Drive:

IMPROVEMENTS:

We asked survey respondents what improvements could be made to 72nd Street and the intersections along 72nd Street (within the boundaries of the audit) that would make the area safer and more efficient for motorists and motorcyclists.

MARKED CROSSWALKS: There was an overall 100% consensus among audit participants that ALL the intersections along the audit area, not just 72nd & Dodge, should have marked and well-maintained crosswalks. Marked crosswalks can visually let drivers know where to stop to keep other road users, such as pedestrians, safe. Some respondents also suggested other crosswalk amenities such as flashing beacons/lights and signs to alert drivers to the possible presence of pedestrians.

- “Clearly marked stop lines and crosswalks, better crossing lights.”
- “Definitely painted stop lines and crossing paths. Plus better cross lights.”
- “Painted crosswalks and stop lines making it easier for motorists to know where to stop.”
- “Seemed really safe for motorists. More markings for pedestrians. Sidewalks were really close to the street in the ROW.”
- “Bright crosswalks, pedestrian crossing lights, signs, stop bars.
- “Paint is cheap. Why isn’t the city repainting these necessary lines at every intersection crosswalk more often?”
- “FRESH PAINT!! A simple sign to remind people to stop in front of the crosswalk areas, add a flashing light to make it more noticeable.”
- “I always assumed there was some law stating all city crosswalks at lights needed to have painted crosswalk lines, but that must not be the case in Omaha. You’d never know there were crosswalks on 72nd here outside of the crosswalk lights attached to the streetlight.”

IMPROVEMENTS:

PEDESTRIAN OVERPASS: Multiple survey respondents suggested a pedestrian overpass for 72nd & Dodge specifically. These bridges are often cost-prohibitive and difficult for vulnerable users to navigate. Further, there is a common belief that pedestrian overpasses actually prioritize cars over people because it makes the crossing longer and more difficult (due to elevation) for users to cross. Often, safe-traffic advocates promote safe pedestrian infrastructure that is on-street/at grade over separating the infrastructure.

PLANNING/DRIVEWAY CUTS/DENSITY: Multiple survey respondents noted that the past planning decisions for this corridor make the drive less pleasant, specifically regarding the number of businesses, lights, and driveway cuts.

- *“I think it’s just a perfect storm of being ALL businesses (I don’t believe there’s a school or residential house the whole way right?) and one of the businesses is even one of the biggest in town. I can’t think of another stretch of road so tightly packed with stores. It just adds up to a ton of lights and different streets. And some of the lots are even vacant right now!”*
- *“I usually avoid this stretch of 72nd Street because traffic can be very erratic. There are a lot of stores and restaurants with many exits and entrances. I think it would be safer if we reduced the number of exits from 72nd Street into the businesses and the number of entrances back onto 72nd Street and synch them up with the traffic lights that are already in place.”*
- *“The roads feel safe enough. . .just sort of a depressing street to drive down anymore with some run-down properties and businesses.”*
- *“Streamline cross-traffic. Access road for motorists going to businesses along 72nd.”*

IMPROVEMENTS:

SIGNAL TIMING: A few respondents noted frustration with signal timing along the audit area. The topic of signal timing is complex, and one that SOS will not provide recommendations on, however, SOS plans to include the topic of signal timing in their educational focus for 2024!

- *“Improve the traffic signal timing. I will speed just to get through all the lights, especially going north, otherwise you’re stopped at all the lights.”*
- *“Better timing of stop lights.”*

EDUCATION & ENFORCEMENT: Other respondents noted that the design of the roads is less of an issue than the people driving on those roads. A need for enforcement and education was suggested.

- *“Honestly, I think it has more to do with WHO is on the road that day than anything else. Changing people’s hearts and minds on how we drive is the real key in my opinion. . .so I guess brainwashing people to drive better.”*
- *“More attentive drivers!!”*
- *“Add cameras for speeding and traffic violations.”*

BUS STOP BACK-UP: One respondent offered this clever idea to attempt to reduce back-ups in the intersections:

- *“Move bus stops farther past or just before major intersections because traffic backs up behind them, or maybe an area for buses to pull over and pick up/drop off passengers.”*

MOTORIST SUMMARY:

Overall survey respondents noted that the **audit area is safe but stressful**. Since most of the surveys were conducted on the weekends, and none were conducted during morning rush hour, it's hard to say how "typical" of an experience these drivers had.

The one thing **all respondents agreed on however was the need for marked crosswalks** (and additional crosswalk amenities) at all intersections along the audit area.

PEDESTRIAN SURVEY RESULTS UNSAFE & STRESSFUL

The questions on the pedestrian survey focused on **sidewalks, transit stops, intersections, and construction.**

A total of 10 people participated in the audit, but only 9 surveys were submitted. Three of the participants were vulnerable users, specifically people who wheel.

You can find the detailed breakdown of all the results from the Pedestrian audits in Appendix #7.

OTHER PEDESTRIANS:

Eight respondents answered the question *“Did you see other pedestrians or vulnerable users?”*
A total of 7 respondents noted seeing a total of 43 other pedestrians.

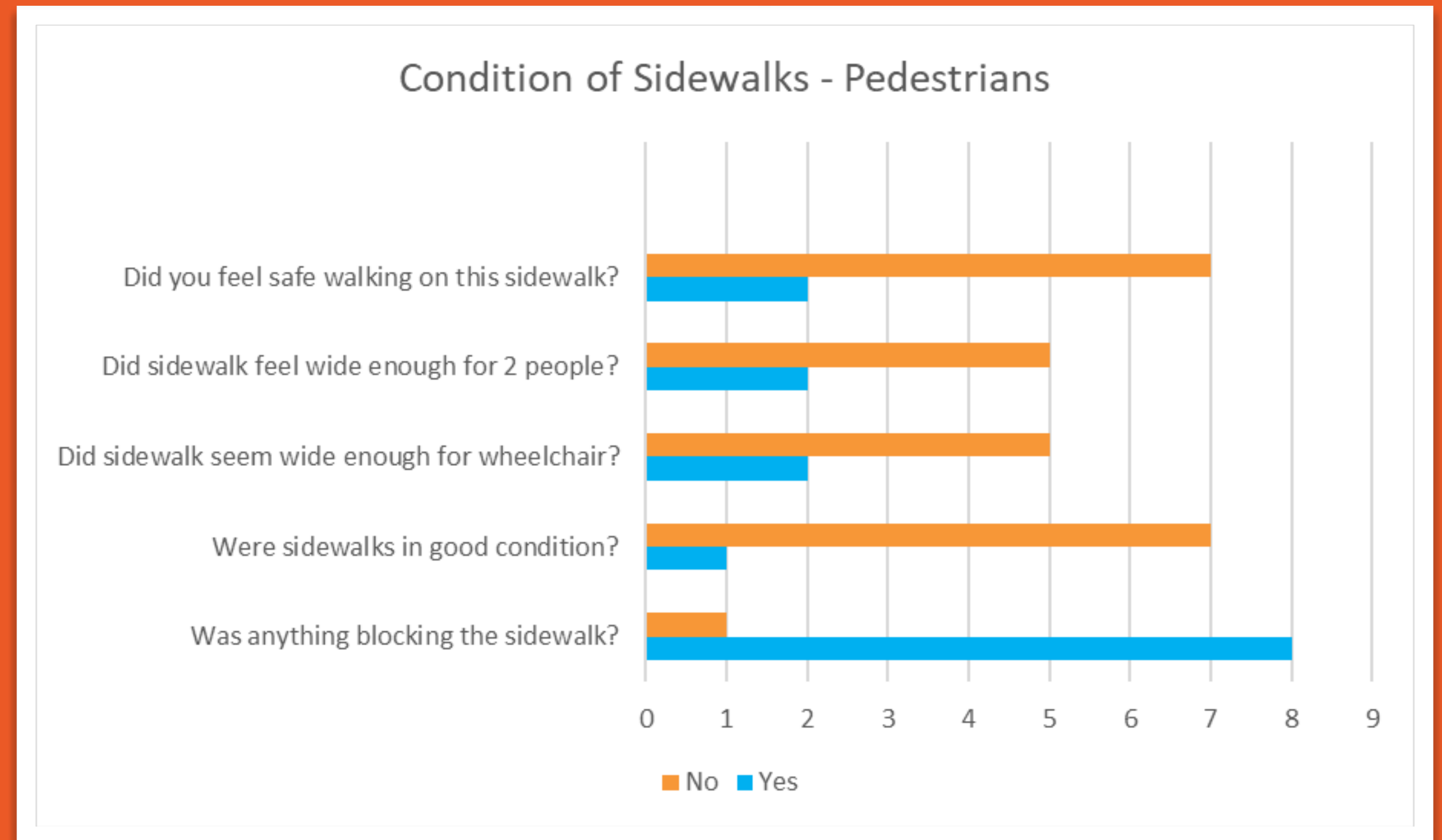
SIDEWALKS:

Respondents were asked a number of questions about the sidewalks, from condition to perception of safety.

The graph to the right gives a summary of some of the sidewalk conditions. **Overall, the sidewalks were perceived poorly by respondents.**

In comparison to the motorist survey, where the **majority of motorists said the road surfaces were generally free of potholes or other safety issues, the same was not the case for the condition of sidewalks.**

Pedestrian feedback on the sidewalks noted issues with **design** (narrow width, narrow buffer, too many driveway cuts), **maintenance**, and **blockage**.



DESIGN: SIDEWALK WIDTH, BUFFER WIDTH, DRIVEWAY CUTS:

The existing width of the majority of the sidewalk in the audit area is 3 feet wide. One portion of an improved sidewalk, adjacent to the Kum & Go at 72nd & Pacific, is 7 feet wide.

WIDTH OF SIDEWALK & WIDTH OF BUFFER:

Quotes from Pedestrians About Condition of Sidewalks

*“I am a manual wheelchair user. I did the assessment with a power chair user. There were only 2 places that the sidewalk was wide enough for 2 wheelchair users to wheel next to each other. It was in front of the Pepper Jax and the Kum & Go. These were the best sidewalks during the assessment. **Otherwise, the sidewalks were too narrow, or they had uneven surfaces because of the grey cement and this brick-colored pavement that went along the sidewalk next to the street. The brick-colored pavement needs to be replaced on both the west and east side of 72nd.**”*

*“**Most of this sidewalk is just not built for pedestrians at all!** The street is too close to the sidewalk with not enough of a buffer between curb and sidewalk. I don't feel safe being that close to a street where people are speeding. I wished I was wearing reflective gear cuz it requires a neon vest to feel safe.”*

*“More distance between edge of sidewalk and street. Sidewalks with grass and trees **separating sidewalk from traffic would make me feel safer.** More shade by way of trees would make a much more pleasant walk.”*

*“Buffer between sidewalks and motorists (grass strip, trees, metal railing, etc), better maintenance (weeds, cracks, etc), trees to provide shade and dampen noise - **I felt very exposed and vulnerable as a pedestrian with so much car traffic right next to me.**”*

EXAMPLES OF NARROW SIDEWALKS AND NARROW BUFFERS:



Narrow sidewalk right up against a retaining wall - an area where pedestrians noted not feeling safe (east side of 72nd btwn Jones Circle and Farnam Street)



Two slim women walk side by side, but essentially up against the road (east side of 72nd, btwn Dodge & Farnam Streets)



Narrow sidewalk and narrow buffer butted right up against the heavily traveled 72nd Street (east side of 72nd btwn Jones Street and Rose Blumkin Drive)

EXAMPLE OF A SECTION OF SIDEWALK WITH MAINTAINED LANDSCAPING AND WIDER BUFFER:



East side of 72nd just south of 72nd & Jones (adjacent to the parking lot for Michael's & Petsmart - facing south.) Notice the next section of sidewalk in the background of the photo has a reduced buffer of colored pavement vs. the wider buffer of vegetation in the foreground.

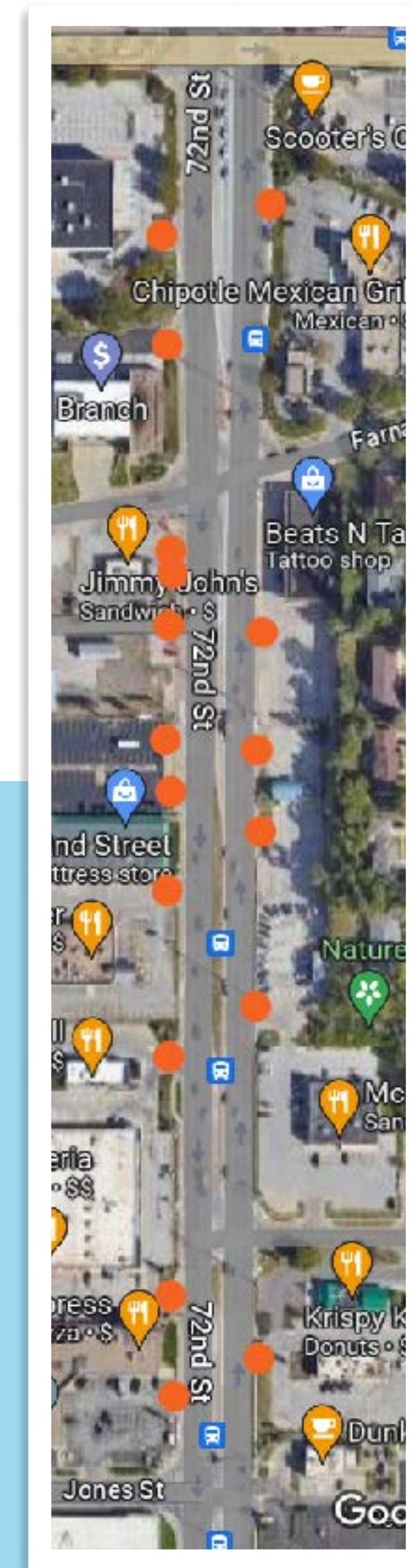


Same location as above, just facing north. An example of a section of sidewalk that was wider with a vegetated buffer and received better feedback than any other portions of sidewalk along the audit area.

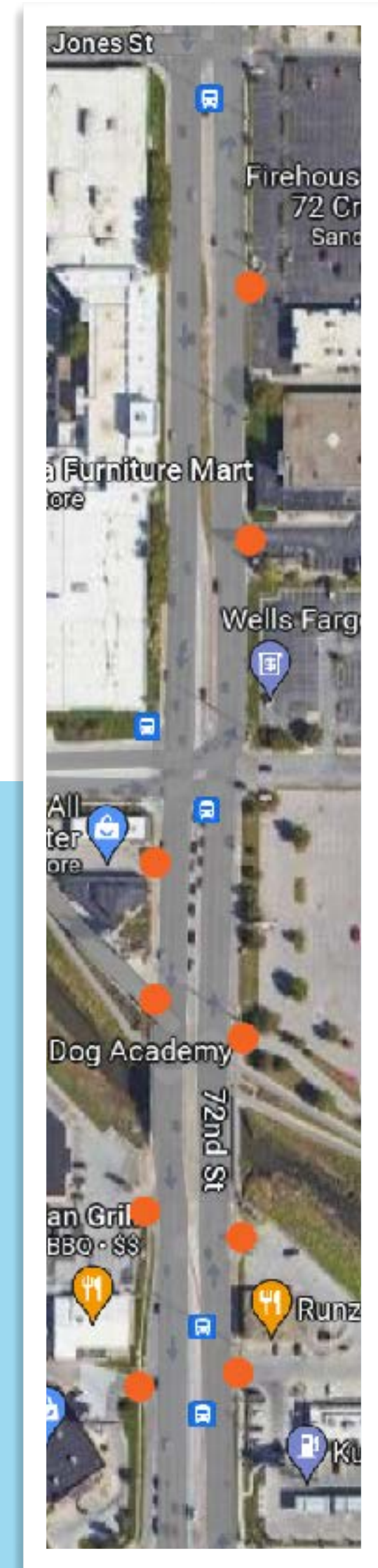
DRIVEWAY CUTS/ACCESS POINTS:

Driveway cuts are the non-signalized entrances and exits off 72nd Street into private businesses. The audit area is characterized by 25 driveway cuts, all of which are considered potential conflict points between sidewalk users and motorists.

Survey respondents noted the predominance of potentially dangerous driveway cuts in multiple areas along the audit. Respondents also noted having to be vigilant about watching for vehicles entering and exiting these areas as vehicular drivers cut off or impeded the path of pedestrians.

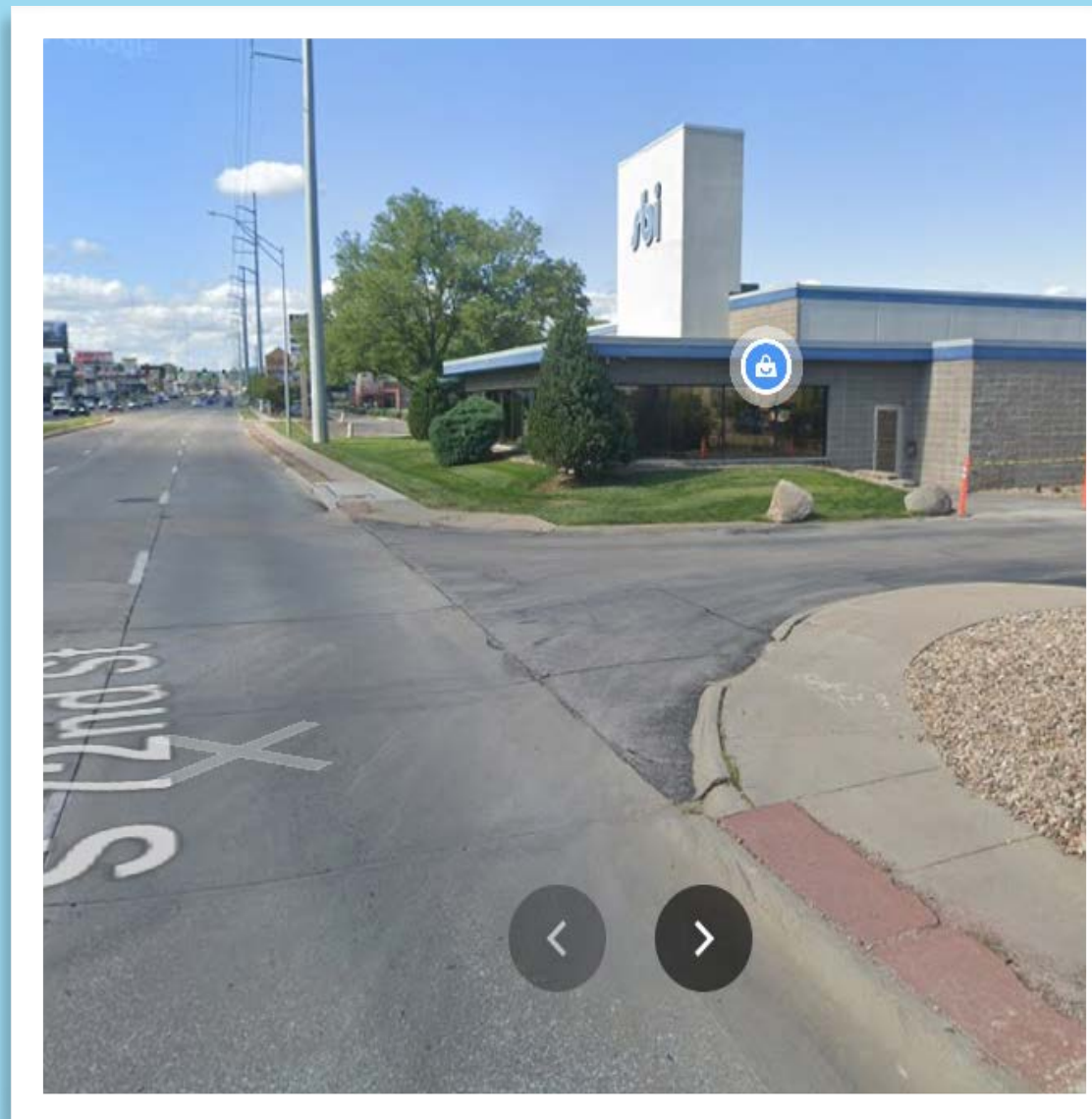


Driveway Cuts - South Section of Audit Area from Jones Street to Pacific Street

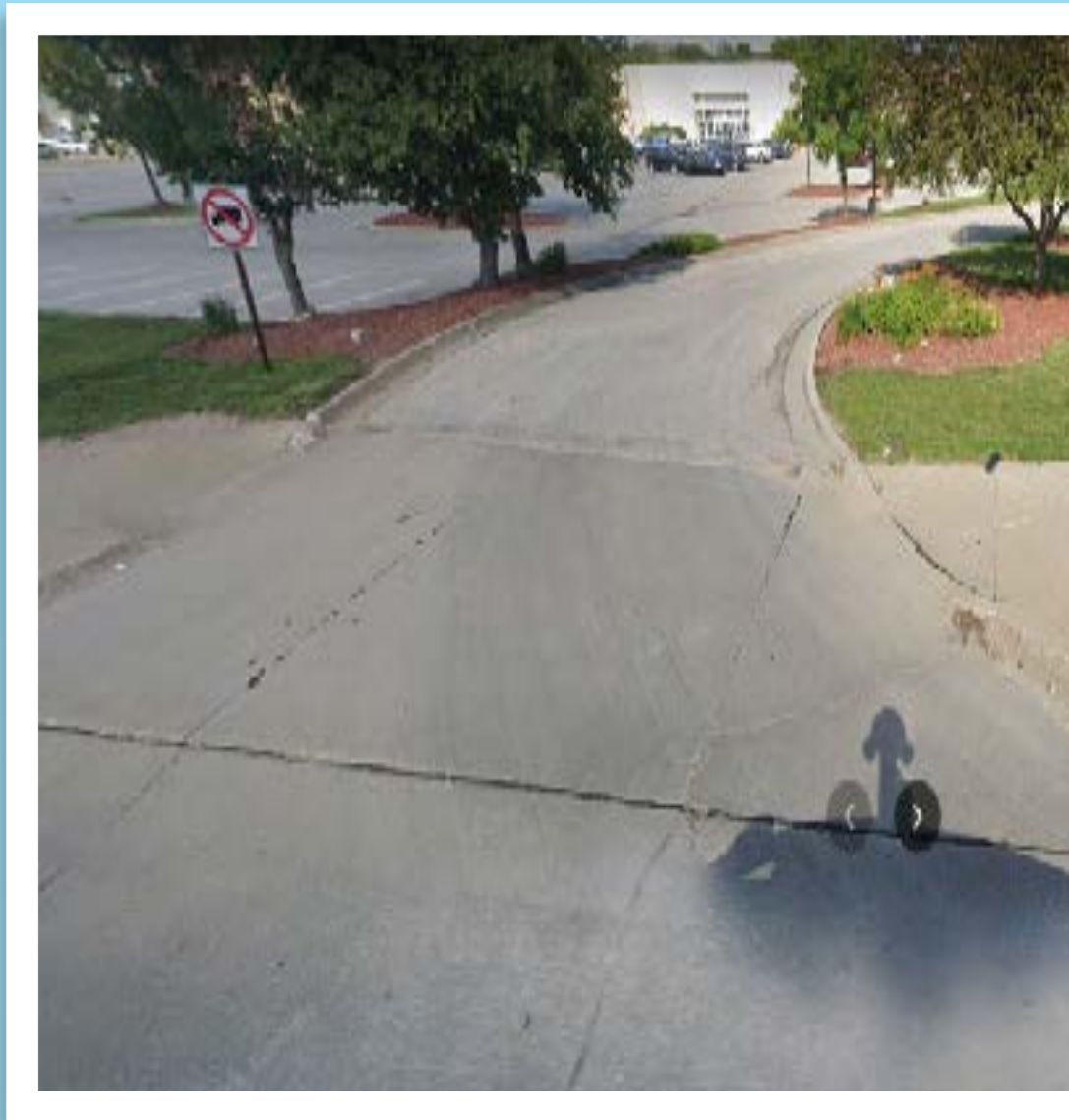


Driveway cuts - north section of Audit Area from Dodge Street to Jones Street

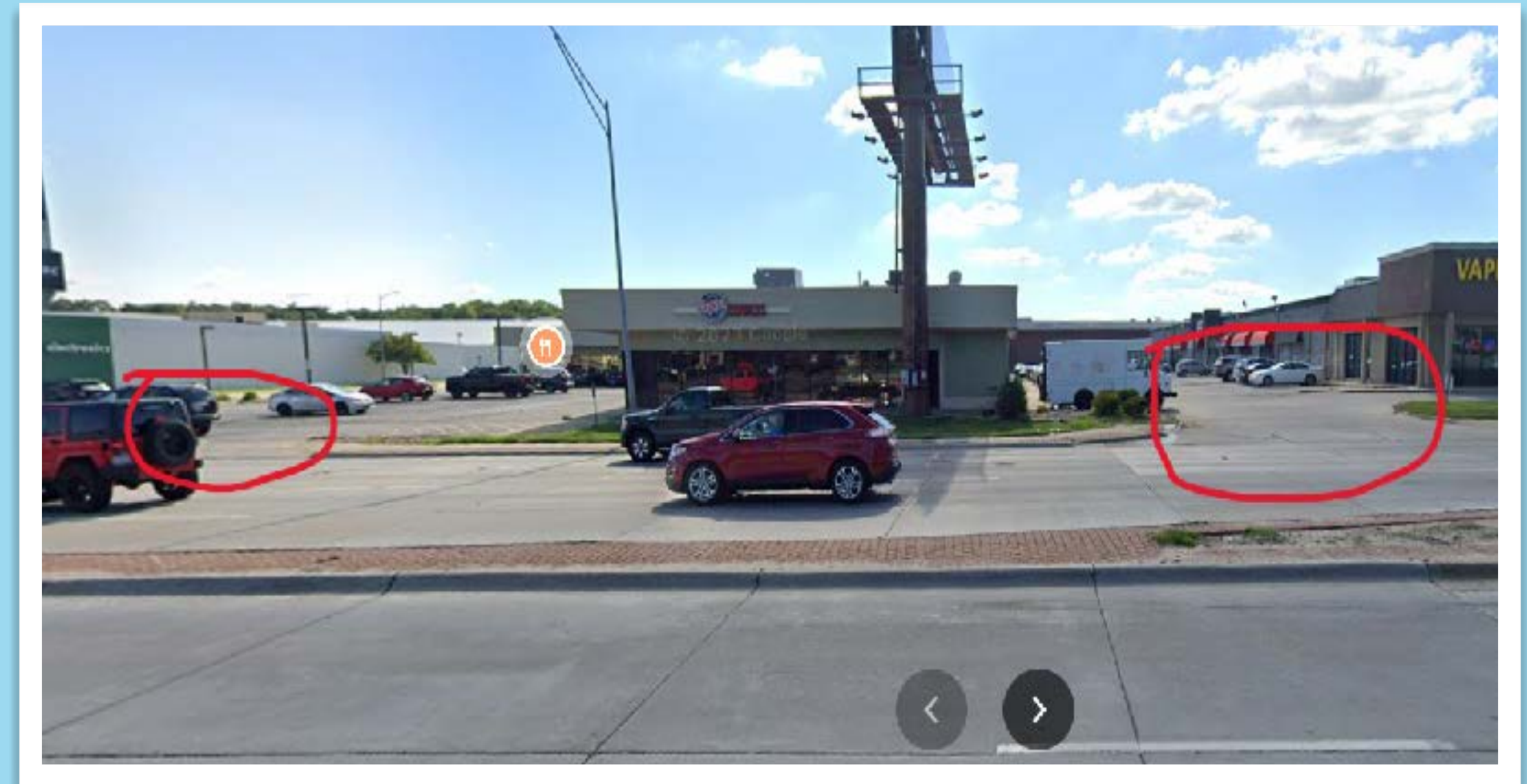
EXAMPLES OF DRIVEWAY CUTS:



Example of an access point/driveway cut from Google Street view (east side of 72nd Street between Rose Blumkin Drive and Jones Street)



Another driveway cut that leads into Kohl's parking lot. The Rose Blumkin Drive intersection which is 350-feet to the north is another access point into the same Kohl's/Aldi/Cavender's parking lot.



Two driveway cuts/access points 131 feet apart between Jones Street & Jones Circle on the west side of 72nd Street.

SIDEWALK MAINTENANCE:

Survey respondents noted the poor condition of some of the sidewalks as well as the need for more consistent maintenance of sidewalks, especially in a high pedestrian area.

The following issues of maintenance were noted on the sidewalks: **heaving, cracking, crumbling, uneven surfaces, weeds, low spots where water collects, debris, and gravel, etc.**



West side of 72nd, south of Rose Blumkin, at the entrance to the bridge - standing water and weeds.



West side of 72nd, south of Rose Blumkin Drive.



Southwest corner of 72nd & Rose Blumkin - missing/crumbling concrete.



Crumbling concrete on east side of 72nd Street just south of Dodge, looking south.



Respondent noted the fire hydrant partially blocking the sidewalk and turned it into a hilarious photo opportunity.



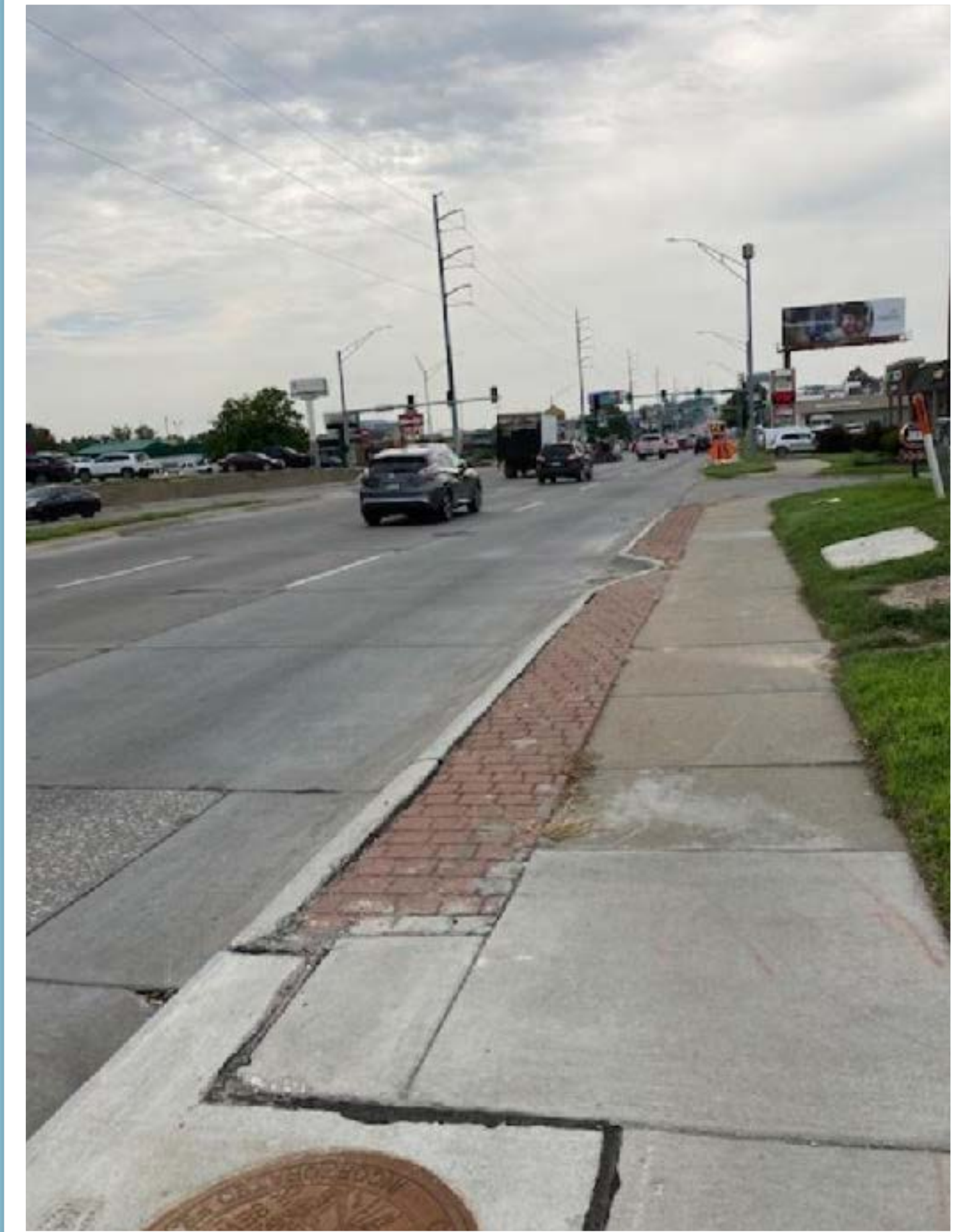
Crumbling concrete on east side of 72nd just north of bridge entrance, facing southwest. Marked with paint by City in July, by September, the property owner had still not been notified.



Heaved concrete in the same location as the previous photo, facing north. Marked with paint and barricade by the city in July, by September the property owners were still not notified. The barricade went missing in August and the City was notified.



Narrow sidewalk and narrow buffer with an abundance of weeds and bent metal railing leaning into a pedestrian path.



While the sidewalk and buffer are still narrow, this stretch of sidewalk was free of weeds, debris, sand/gravel, trash or other major maintenance issues. North of Jones Circle, facing south.

BLOCKED SIDEWALKS:

Many survey respondents noted that sidewalks were blocked. The following blockages were noted: **tipped-over barricades, scooters, bus benches, tipped-over signs, metal construction debris, a merge sign, tree branches, and sand and gravel.**

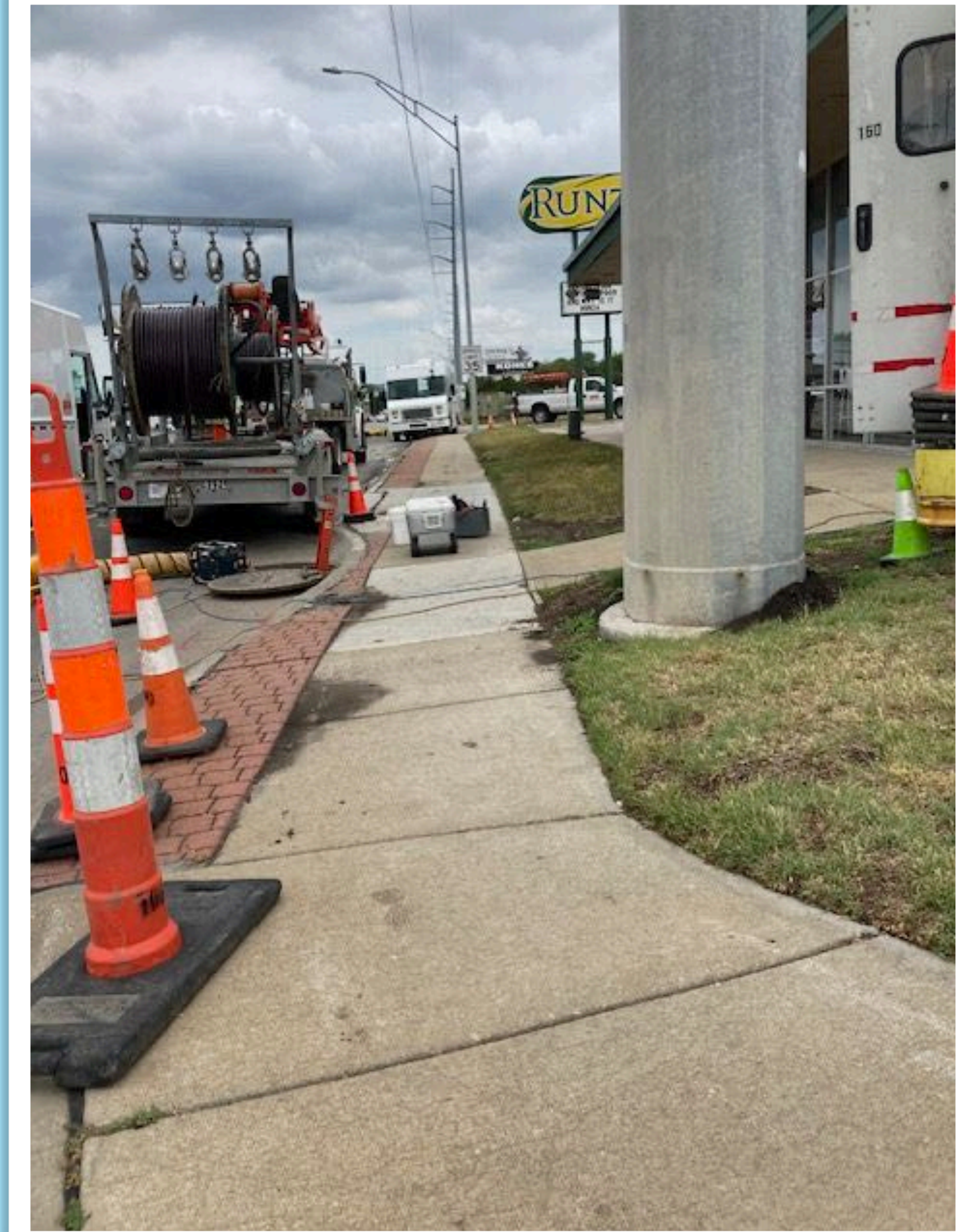
The following photos were submitted by survey respondents:



A city employee was notified about this sign placement and they immediately contacted the sign company. The sign was moved to an appropriate spot.



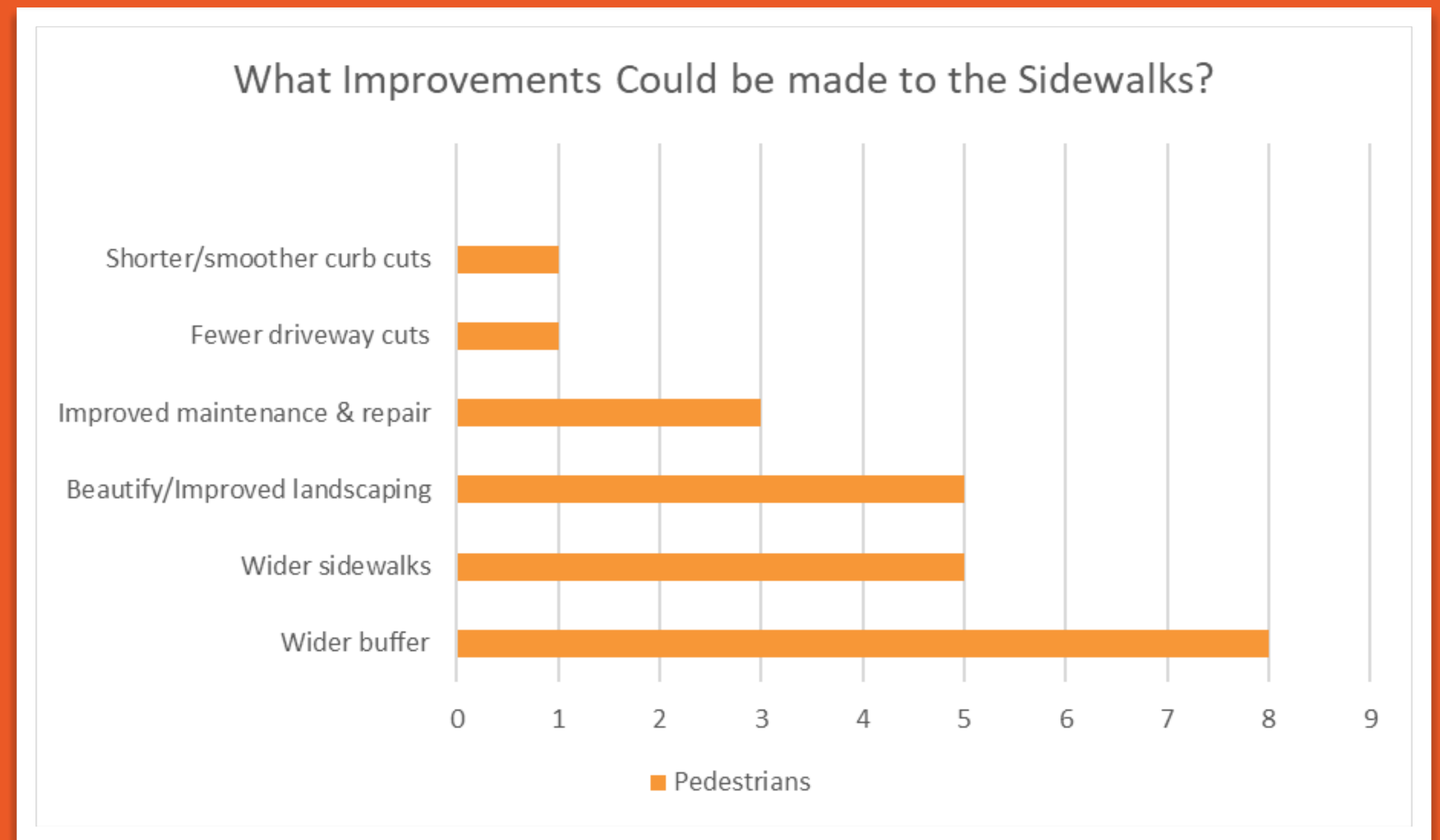
Respondent noted this was an example of "good sign placement."



Tools from OPPD maintenance crew blocking the sidewalk. OPPD was alerted via Twitter by SOS and the issue was resolved.

IMPROVEMENTS:

We asked survey participants what they thought would improve the sidewalks in this area. The solutions of **wider sidewalks, wider buffers, better landscaping** and **improved maintenance** were most commonly offered.



THE MODEL OF THE KUM & GO:

Overall feedback about the sidewalks along this route was negative, with one exception. Many respondents pointed to the sidewalk adjacent to the Kum & Go (NE corner of 72nd & Pacific) as a model for what the rest of the sidewalks along this area should be.

This sidewalk is wide, in great condition, and set far back from the road with a buffer of well-maintained landscaping and even trees!

“Wider sidewalks, especially with green space between the pedestrian and the traffic. If the sidewalks could all look like the one in front of the gas station near Pacific that would be a great model.”

“Overall, I would say that 95% of it was rollable. I wish all the sidewalks were like the one in front of Kum and Go. That is where I felt the safest. There was grass on both sides of the sidewalk instead of the red brick pavement.”



Survey respondents were thrilled about the width and setback of the sidewalk adjacent to Kum & Go.

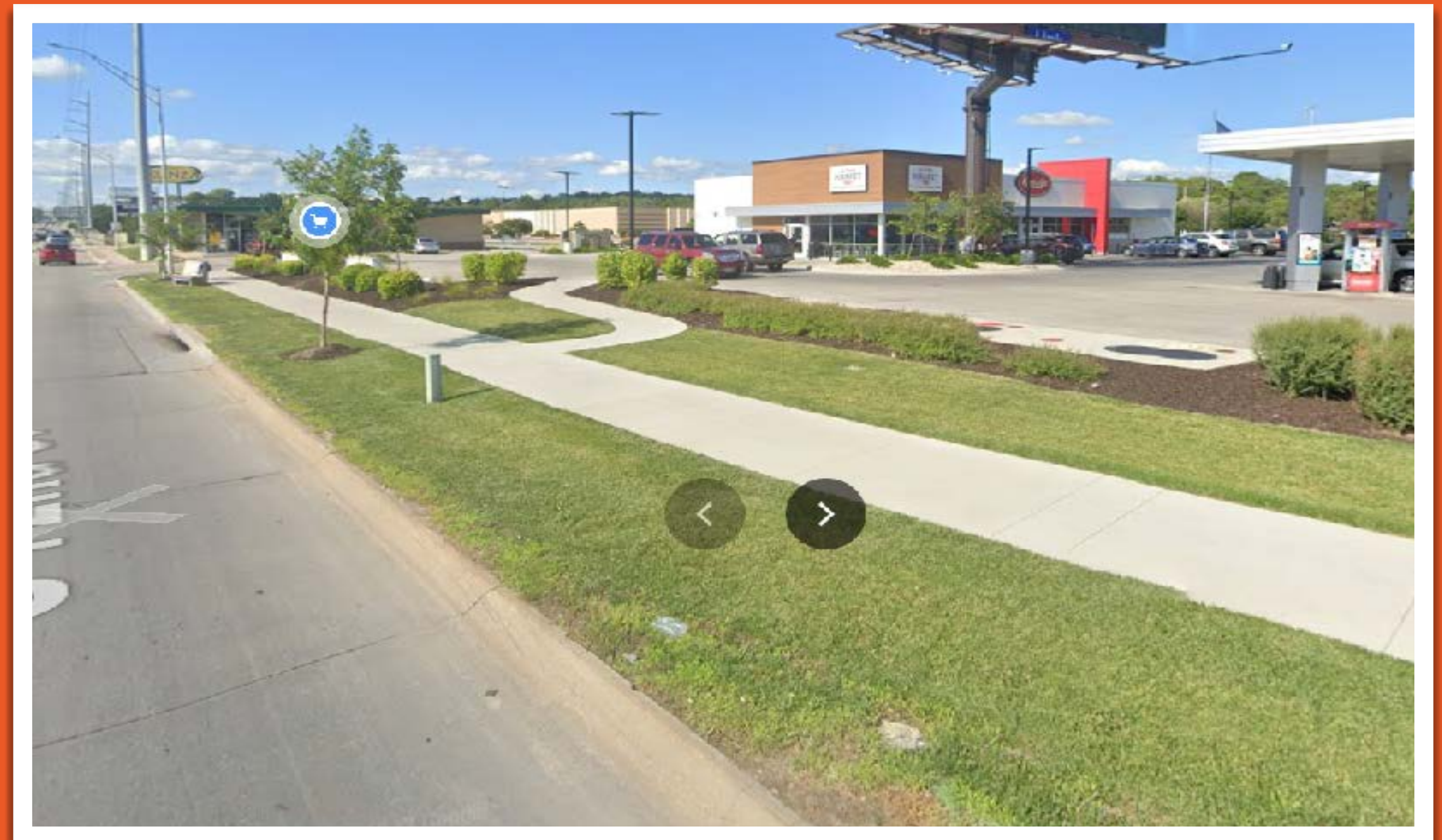


A 7-foot wide sidewalk and ample buffer made survey respondents feel safe and protected .

KUM & GO:

WHY IS THE KUM & GO SIDEWALK SO GREAT?:

The sidewalk next to the Kum & Go is wide and landscaped because it is an area of ACI (Area of Civic Importance) development, which requires wider sidewalks and more landscaping.

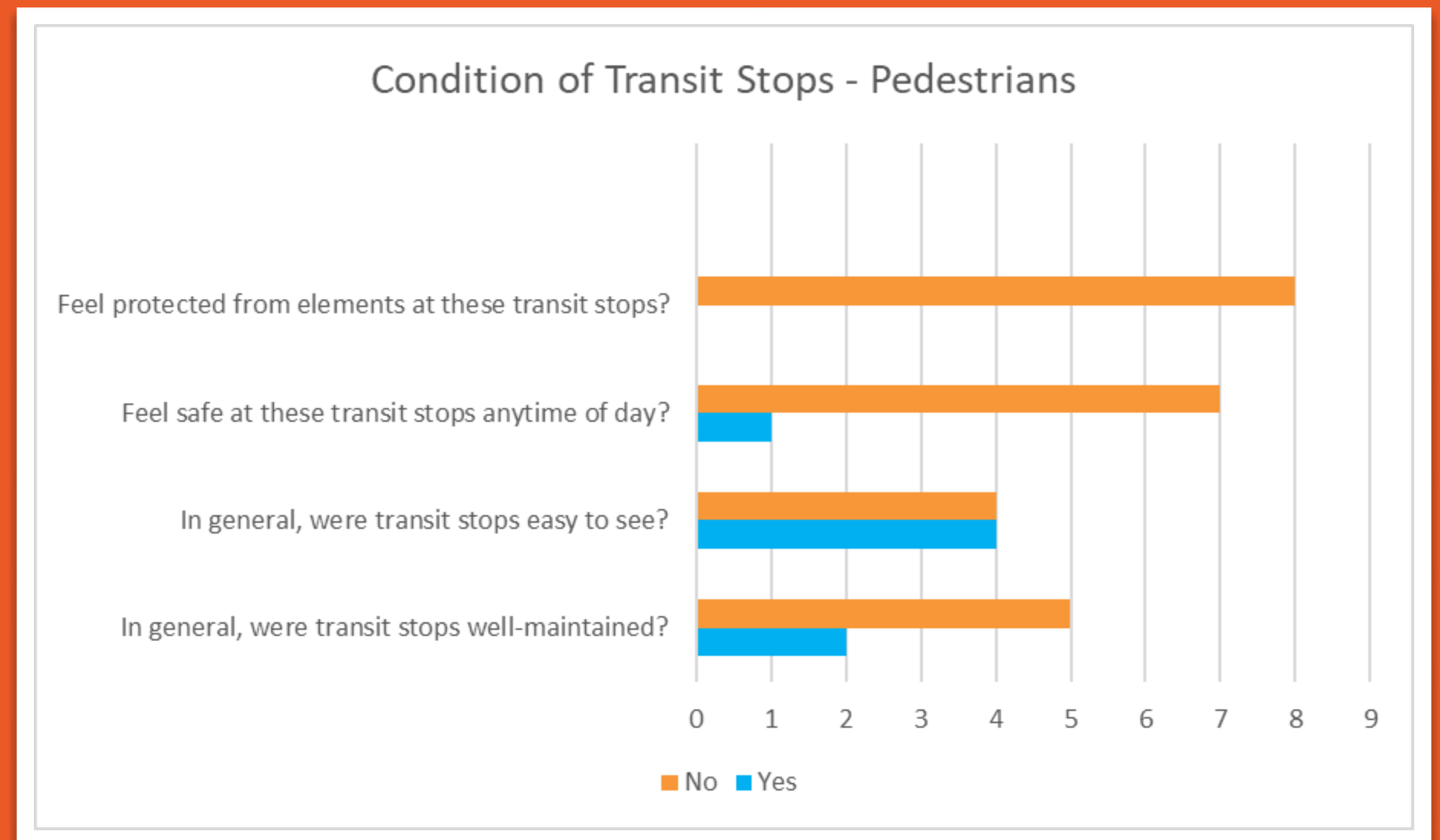


TRANSIT STOPS:

There are a total of 10 Transit stops along this route, with 5 on each side of 72nd between Dodge & Pacific. This does not include the ORBT stops at 72nd & Dodge. Overall feedback on the transit stops was negative from survey respondents.

The major issues respondents had were with the **maintenance, location, and amenities** of the transit stops.

- Many of the transit stops were surrounded by trash.
- None of the 10 transit stops along this audit route, with the exception of the ORBT stops, had shelters.
- Only 8 of the 10 transit stops had benches. Some benches are located too close to the sidewalk, on uneven ground, far away from the bus stop sign, or blocked by unmowed grass (an issue for wheelchair users).



*“They are **not well designed or well maintained** and most had zero amenities. The only amenity at most was a bench.”*

*“Not a regular transit rider on this road. There appear to be a reasonable amount of stops with the current development. **Most lack benches and none have shelters.**”*

*“They are **lacking in every sense of the word.** They are placed away from the actual transit stop, there is no place for vulnerable users, no trees, no shelter from the elements.”*

*“These bus stops **discourage usage** for me.”*

*“Transit stops **need better signage.** One I saw the bench but couldn’t find the transit sign but finally did. They are supposed to be 20 feet or less apart.”*

“Bus signs did not include times and some did not include route number, benches oddly placed, some in puddles of mud or right against the sidewalk, no shelter, no trash cans, very poor.”

“Many were muddy in areas, one was tipped over.”

“They need a shelter since our weather is so much fun!”



Bus stops sitting in mud surrounded by trash. Southeast corner of 72nd & Jones Street.



Bus benches on an incline in the grass, directly next to the sidewalk - with no setback - which means people waiting for a bus are also partially blocking the sidewalk.



Transit stop just south of the audit area (south of 72nd & Pacific) where bus benches are located in the grass. One person notified us that these benches are also in the path of sprinklers!



Signs are not next to benches. Municipal code requires signs to be within 20-feet of the bench.



Location of bus stop causing an obstruction to the pedestrian push signal.

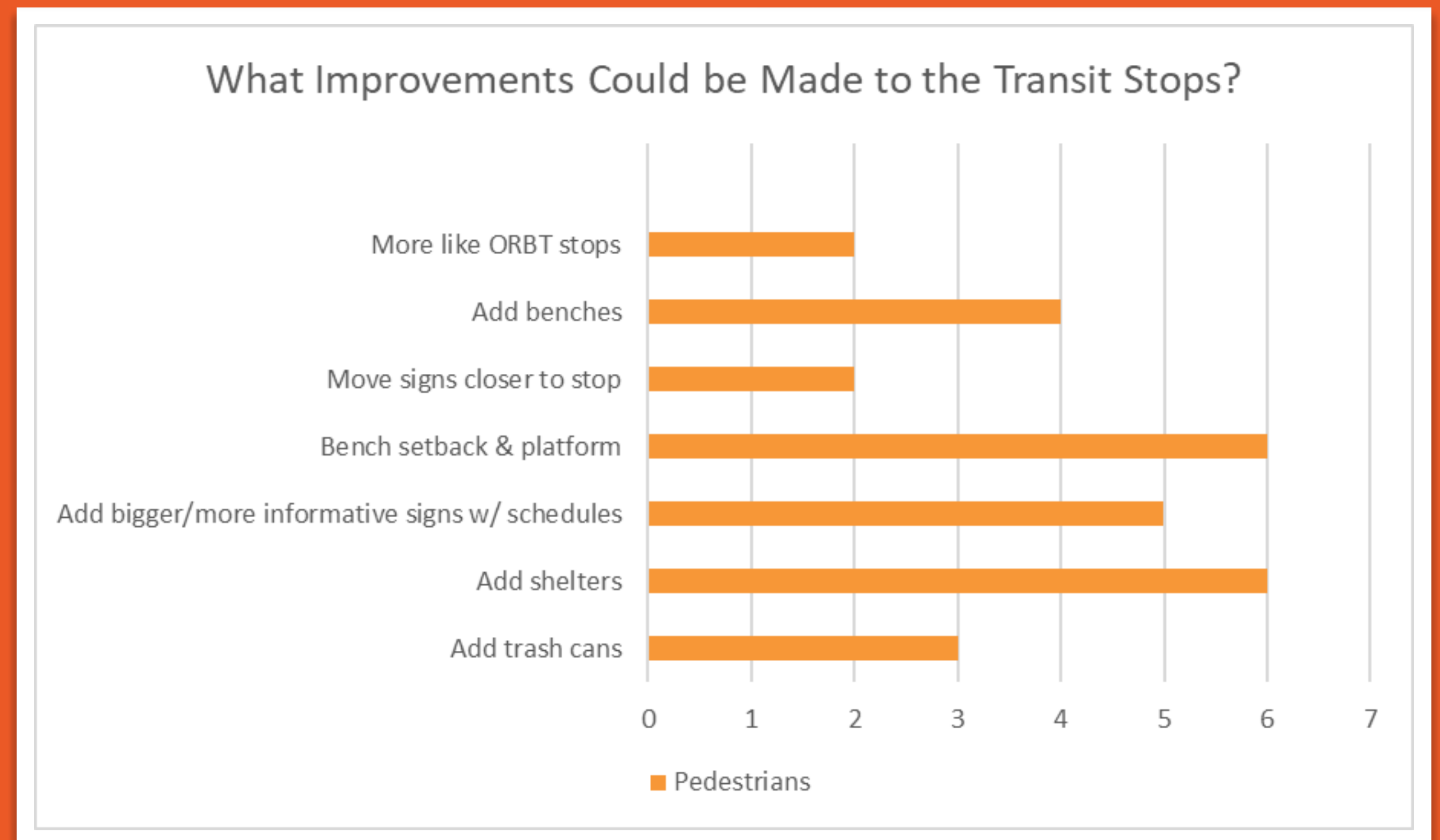


Respondent photo of bus bench tipped over. Other bench is precariously placed on an incline.

IMPROVEMENTS:

“Please note, Metro is NOT the responsible authority when it comes to location and maintenance of bus benches. The City of Omaha Parks Department oversees the City’s Bus Bench Program which is contracted through a third-party vendor.”

We asked survey respondents what they thought could be done to improve these transit stops for public transit users. Amenities, location, and maintenance were popular responses as you can see in the table to the right.



“Based on the amount of trash, these transit stops could benefit from trash cans, PLUS if someone is responsible for emptying them then the public would be assured that issues would be identified and reported immediately. Benches should have shelters. The bus schedule and route maps should be posted. Some benches were so close to the street that it wouldn't feel safe to wait for the bus.”

*“Partially enclosed shelters with available trash cans (that get emptied) and nice seats with a hard surface entrance, **not just sitting in middle of grass** - everything that requires good planning, thoughtfulness, and money.”*

*“It's my opinion that all stops should have benches and shelters and adequate space for those with bikes, wheelchairs, etc to be at the stop **without blocking the sidewalk.**”*

*“Few had benches. Bench in front of Kum and Go was in the grass space between the sidewalk and road. **There is no space for those with wheelchairs to wait at a stop without blocking the sidewalk path.**”*

*“**Clearer signs about the route and times of the buses.** I think it's bad planning to spend money on a fancy street car when our public transportation system for our regular citizens is in such bad shape.” (The streetcar and buses are funded by different revenue streams, but this quote speaks to the perception of some in the public.)*

“I think ORBT bus stops should be considered an example of what all stops should be - well lit, sheltered, safe, route information, plenty of seating on a designated platform, maintained, etc”

*“The **ORBT system is a great model for all transit stops.** They are large and very visible, covered from the elements, seating, and has a schedule.”*

INTERSECTIONS:

As with the motorist survey, the pedestrian survey asked questions about six intersections.

WAIT TIME AT INTERSECTIONS:

We realized during data analysis that while we asked the motorists if they **felt** their wait at the signal was too long, we failed to ask that same question of pedestrians.

We did ask how long pedestrians had to wait, and the average wait time was 45 seconds with the exception of the 72nd & Dodge Street intersection which had an average wait time of 60 seconds.

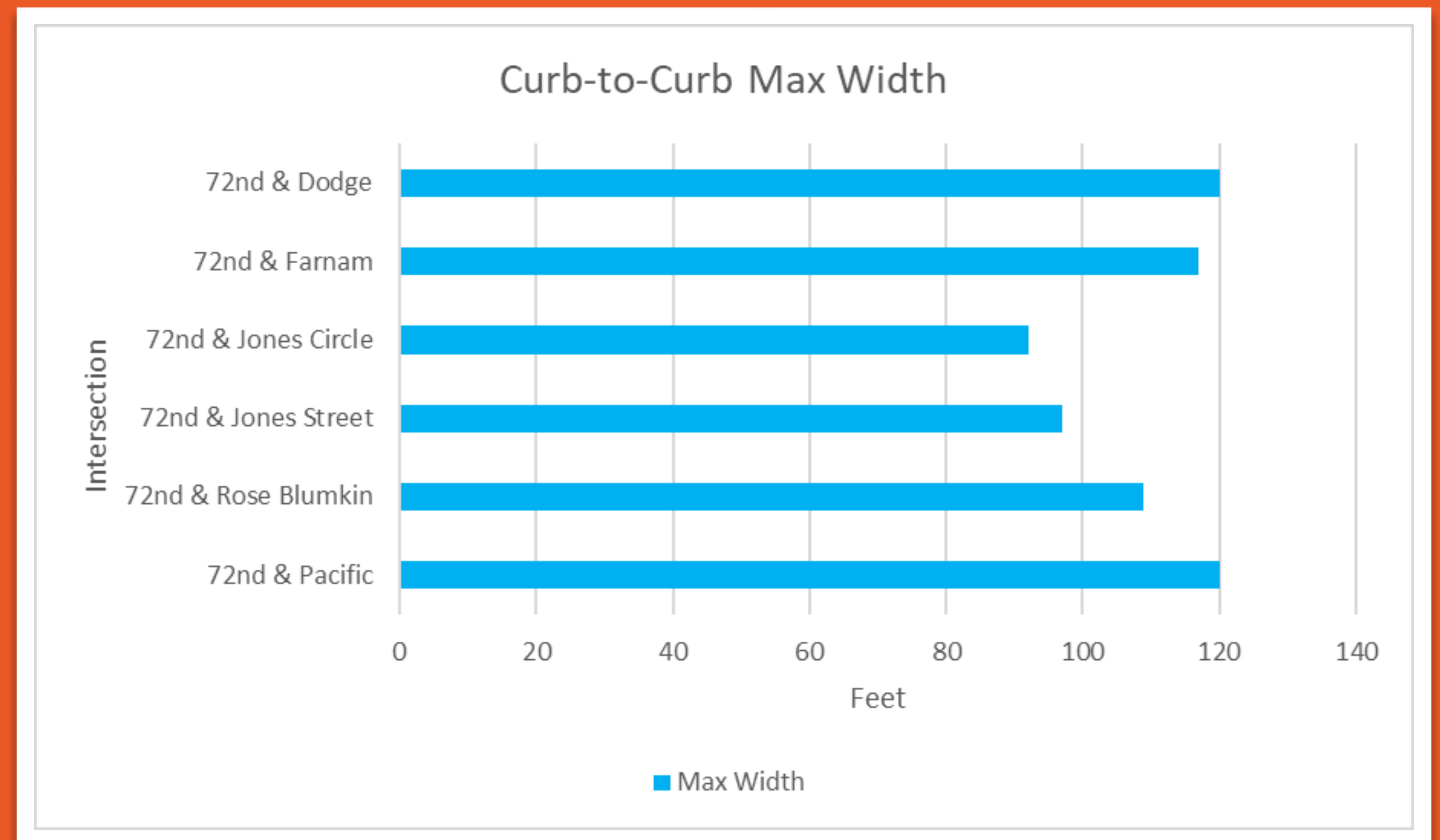
SOS has noted wait times to cross 72nd Street at Jones Circle are up to 2 minutes. That can feel like a long wait in the snow or a heat wave. See the signal timing chart below provided by the Public Works Department that shows the summary to cross 72nd Street on a typical weekday (delays can vary from cycle-to-cycle because pedestrian arrivals are random).

- 7-9 am - delay will be between 0 and 120 seconds with an average of 60 seconds
- 9-11 am - delay will be between 0 and 90 seconds with an average of 45 seconds
- 11 am - 3 pm - delay will be between 0 and 120 seconds with an average of 60 seconds
- 3 - 6:30 pm - delay will be between 0 and 150 seconds with an average of 75 seconds
- 6:30 - 10 pm - delay will be between 0 and 90 seconds with an average of 45 seconds
- overnight - delay will likely be between 0 and 60 seconds with an average of 30 seconds

If you think you've waited to cross the street for upwards of a minute, you were not crazy, this is accurate depending on the time of the day.

WIDTH OF INTERSECTIONS:

The intersections along the audit route are wide, which is an issue for pedestrians crossing at street level. See the maximum widths for each intersection in the graph to the right.



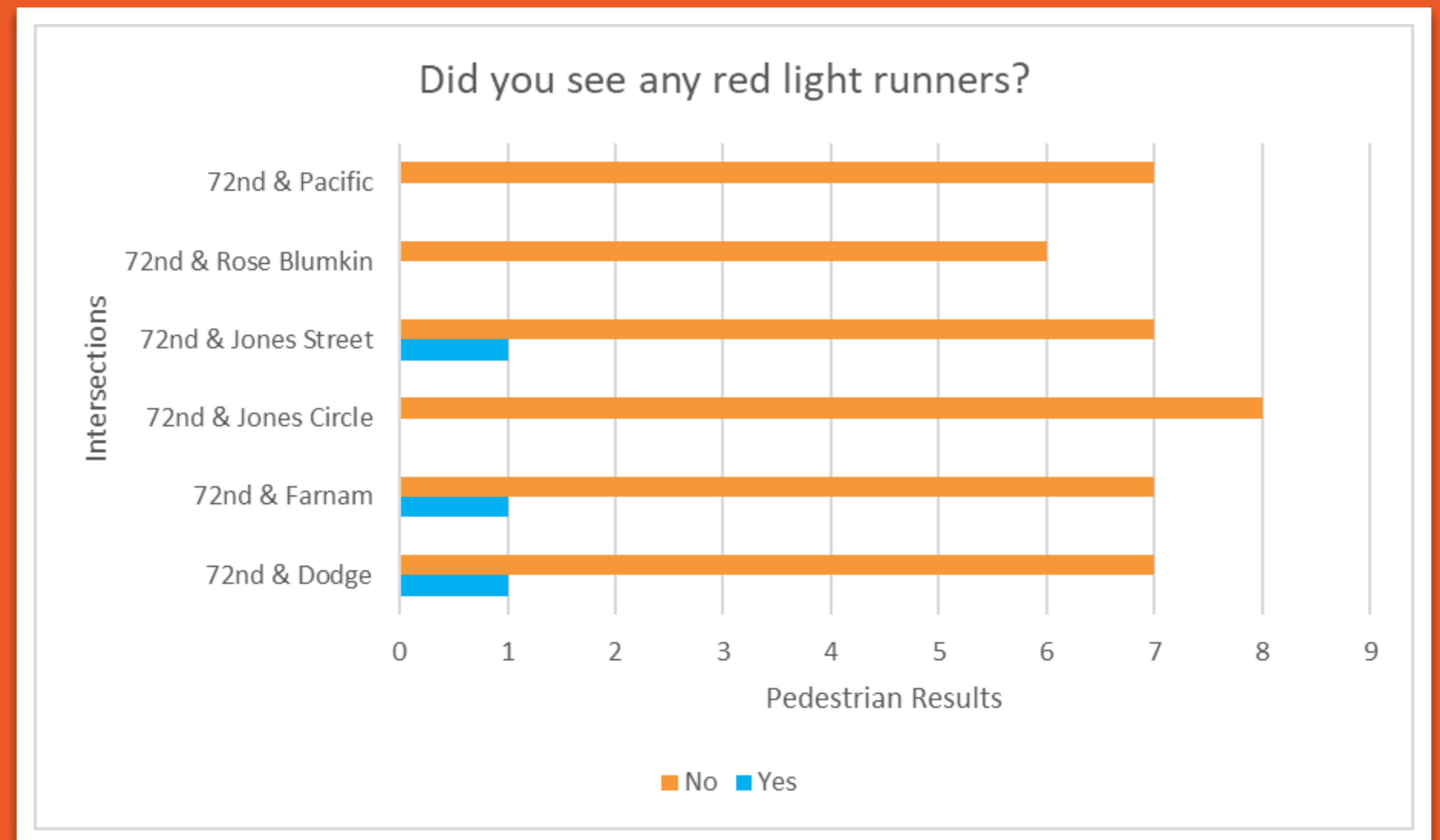
MAXIMUM TRAVEL LANES:

- 72nd & Dodge Street has 9 travel lanes in all directions.
- 72nd & Farnam Street has 7 travel lanes on the north and south legs of the intersection.
- 72nd & Jones Circle & Jones Street both have 7 travel lanes on the north and south legs of the intersection.
- 72nd & Rose Blumkin Drive has 8 lanes on the north leg of the intersection (only 7 for travel) and 8 travel lanes on the south leg of the intersection.
- 72nd & Pacific Street has a maximum of 9 travel lanes on the north and south legs of the intersection, with 7 travel lanes on the west/east leg.

RED LIGHT RUNNING:

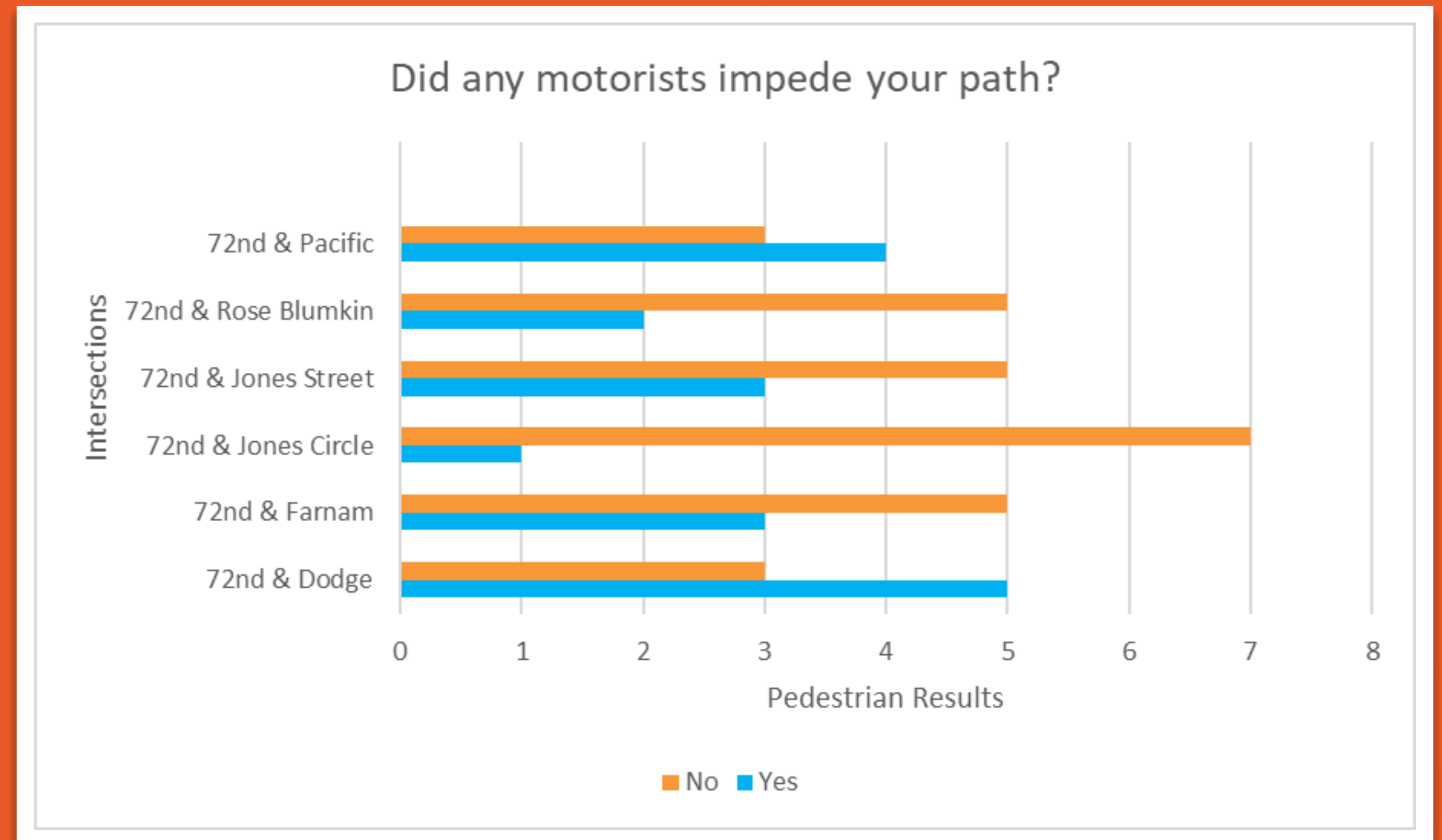
Red light running was noted once each at 3 intersections. SOS has observed red light running at all intersections along this corridor, especially at Jones Circle, Dodge Street, and Pacific.

Please see section SOS OBSERVATIONS for documentation.



MOTORISTS IMPEDING:

Based on survey feedback, motorists entered the unmarked pedestrian crosswalks at all intersections.



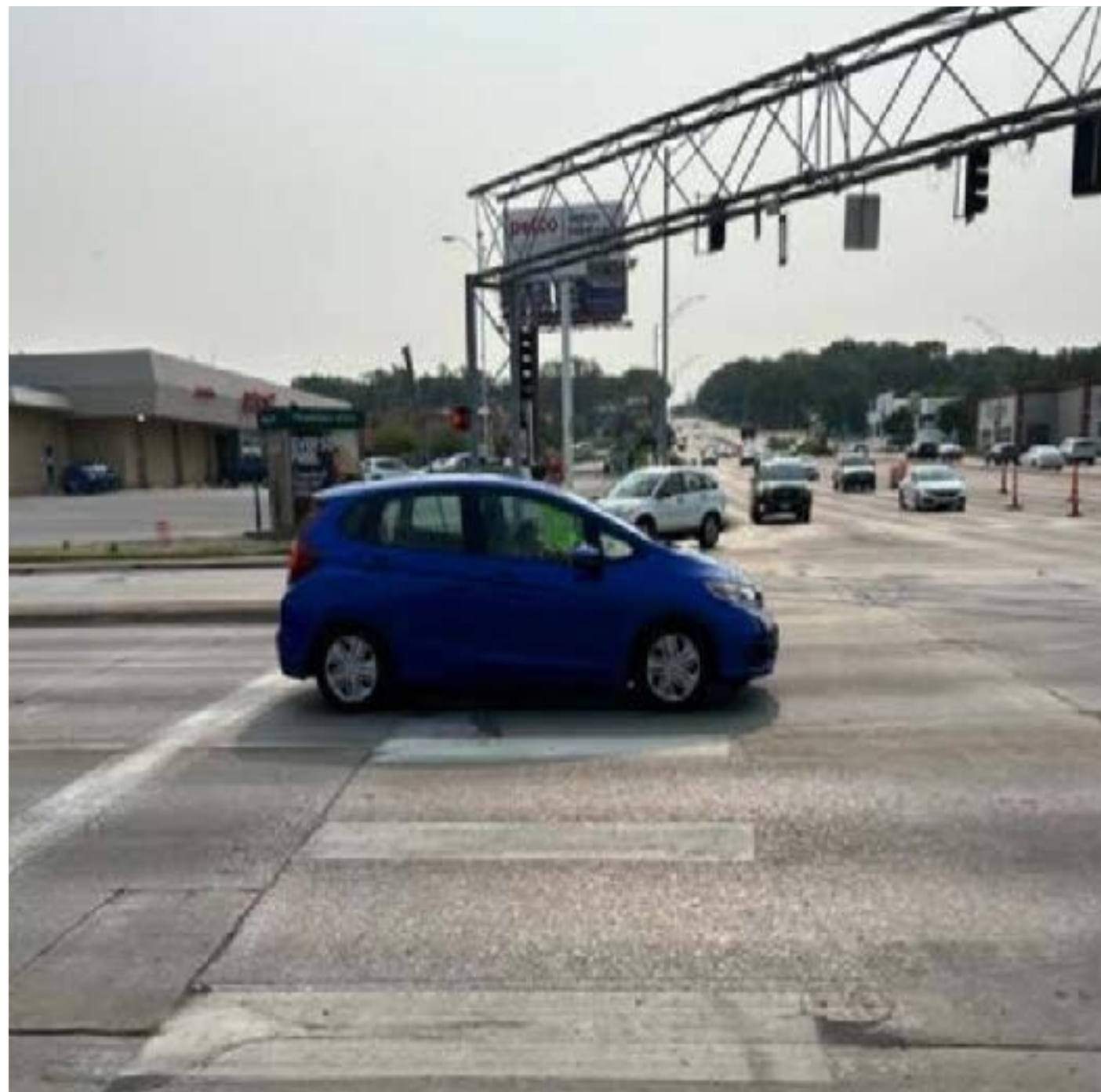


Photo by Survey Respondent: Btwn 9 and 10 am on Saturday 15 July at north leg of 72nd & Dodge intersection, facing east. Notice the pedestrian trying to cross.

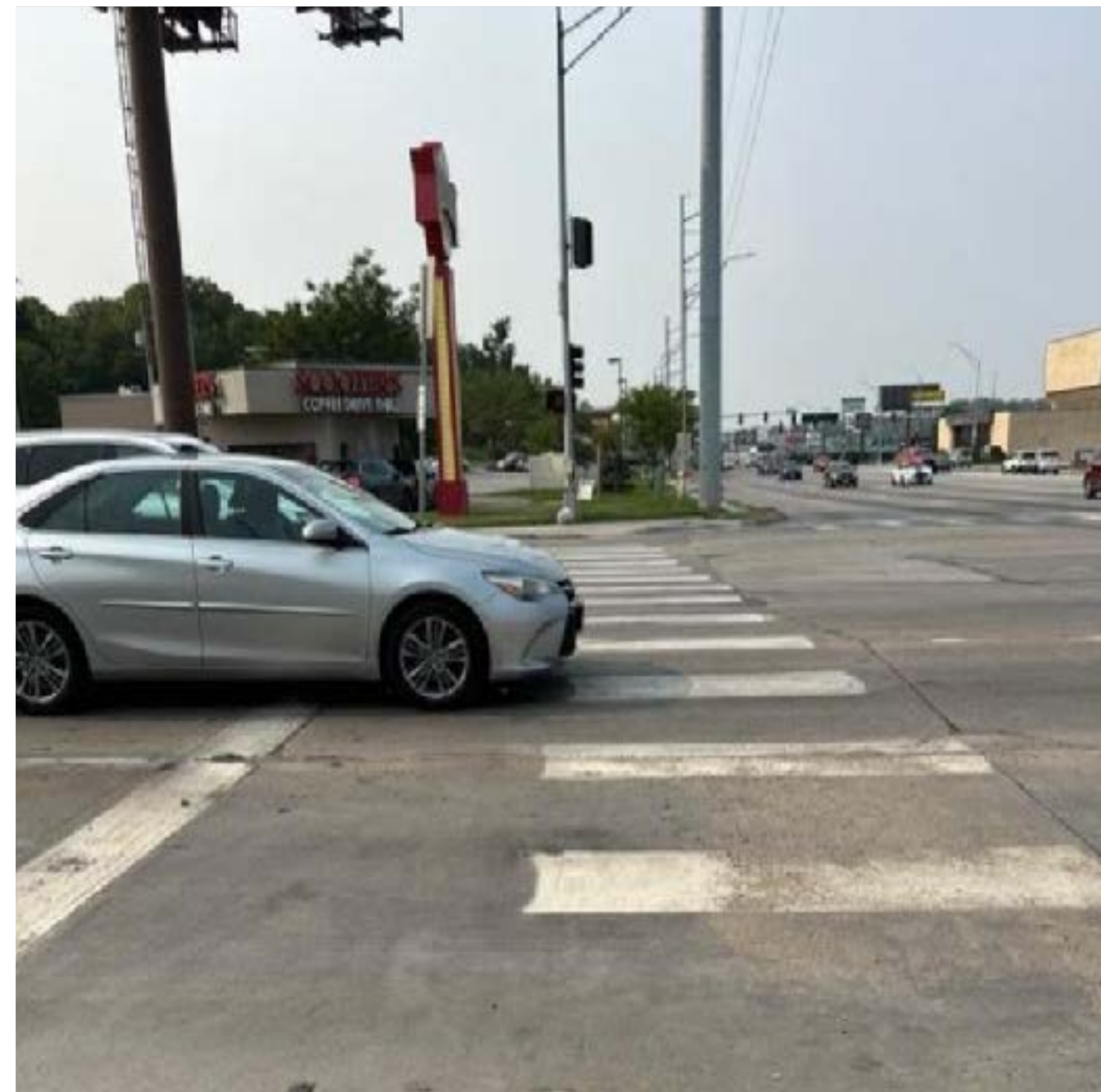


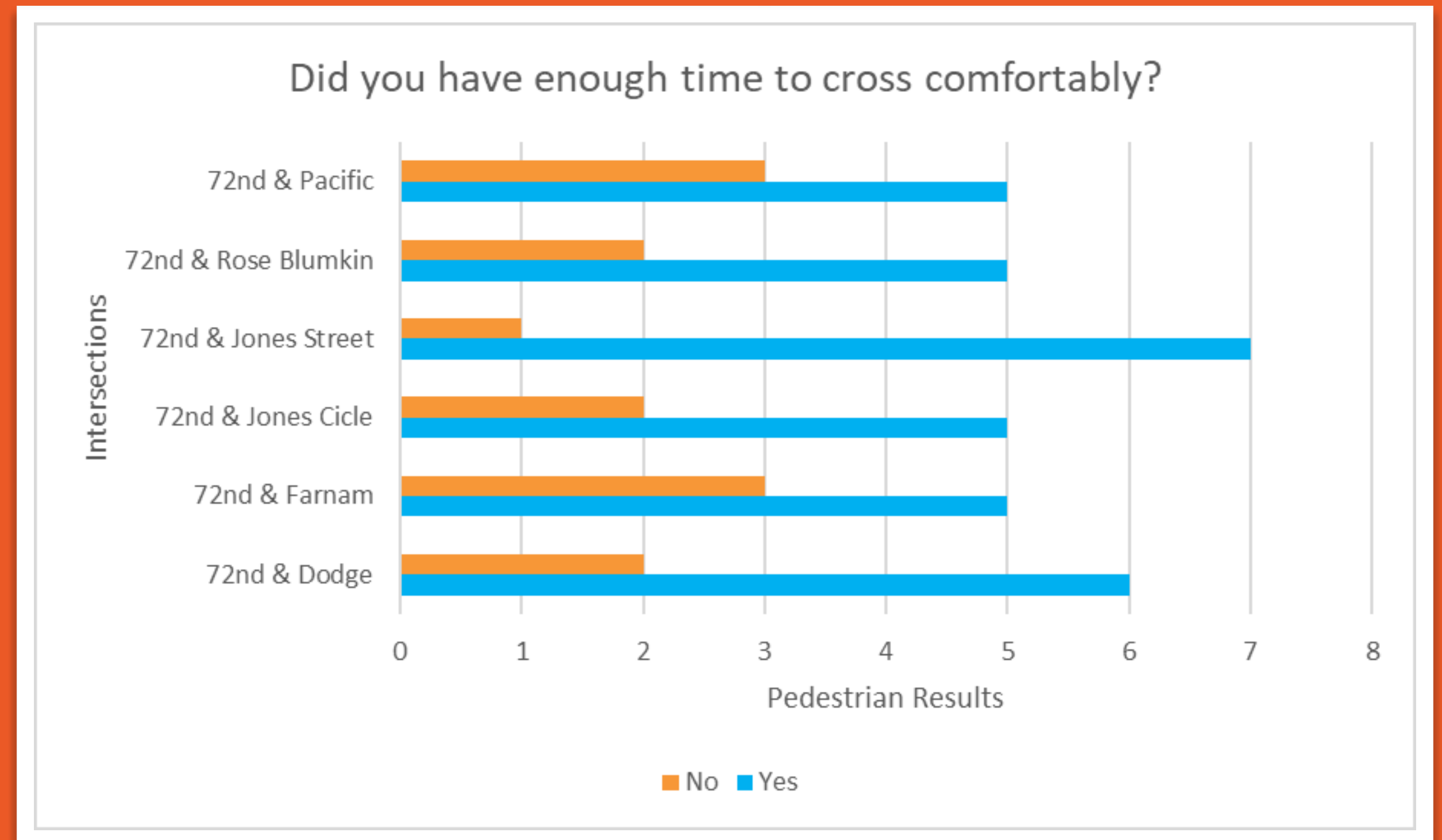
Photo by Survey Respondent: Btwn 9 and 10 am on Saturday 15 July at east leg of 72nd & Dodge intersection, facing south.



Photo by Survey Respondent: Btwn 9 and 10 am on Saturday 15 July at east leg of 72nd & Dodge intersection, facing north.

TIME TO CROSS:

The time it takes to cross the street is less of an issue along this corridor except, based on the survey respondents, sometimes for people who wheel or who are in the 65+ age group.

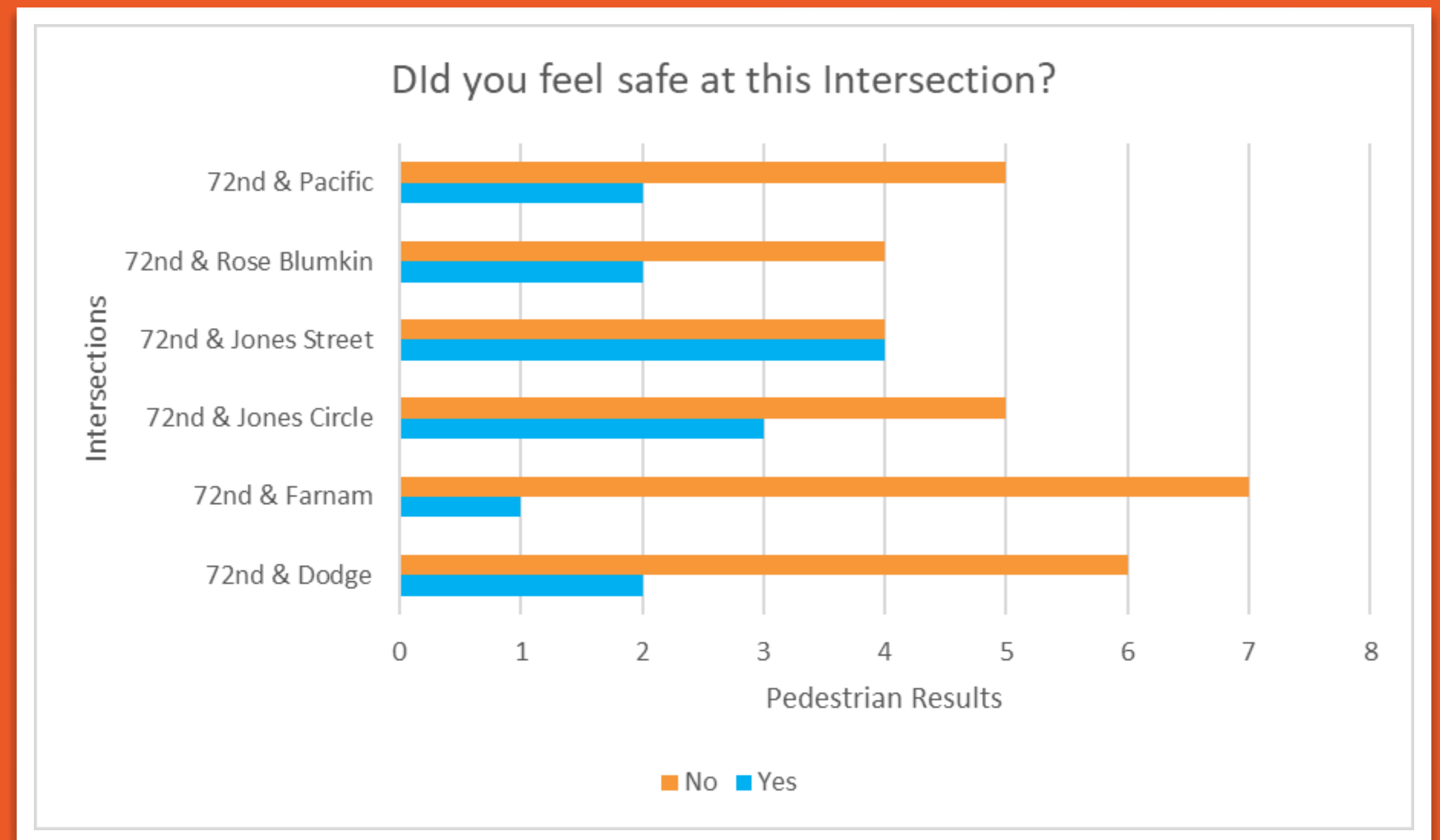


SAFETY:

While some respondents did feel safe at the intersections, over 50% of respondents did not feel safe.

The entire city should strive to maintain intersections where 100% of people feel safe. Solutions could include design, behavior, and enforcement.

Many felt unsafe due to the encroachment of vehicles into the intersection.



IMPROVEMENTS:

We asked survey respondents what improvements could be made to each intersection to make it safer and/or more efficient for pedestrians and vulnerable users.

- **Marked crosswalks** were suggested multiple times for all five intersections that do not currently have marked crosswalks: 72nd & Pacific, 72nd & Rose Blumkin, 72nd & Jones Street, 72nd & Jones Circle, and 72nd & Farnam. Other crosswalk amenities, such as signs and flashing lights/beacons were also recommended. *“I think that all the major intersections need to have lines painted, so that cars know where to stop. We noticed that vehicles didn't know where to stop when there was a red light.”*
- **No right-turn-on-red** was suggested for 4 of the 6 intersections, specifically 72nd & Pacific, 72nd & Rose Blumkin, 72nd & Jones Street, and multiple times for 72nd & Dodge.
- **90° turn radius on curbs** was suggested to make the turning radius on vehicles tighter (thus slow them down) as well as reduce the crossing width for pedestrians.
- **Talking Signals** are active at 72nd & Dodge and were suggested by a wheelchair user along the rest of the audit area.
- **Scramble Crosswalks** were suggested for the larger intersections, ie 72nd & Dodge and 72nd & Pacific.
- **The 72nd & Farnam intersection** is constructed at a diagonal, which leads to a wider crossing for pedestrians. Respondents were adamant that due to the design of this intersection, it warrants a crosswalk to communicate to pedestrians where/how to cross and to communicate to vehicles where to stop.

SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS TO 72nd & FARNAM:

*“This intersection is diagonal and the intersections **NEED** a painted crosswalk on the road.”*

*“It’s **not straightforward where to cross** here because the intersection is at an angle, this definitely needs a marked crosswalk with signs.”*

“Adding tactile paving at all curbs at intersection. Painted stop lines. Adding painted crosswalk to better know where the destination ramp is on the other side of the street.”

“Talking signals and better/smoothier curb cuts.” “Very confusing diagonal markings - make them more clear so pedestrian understands which direction to move safely - make xing signs larger.”

“This intersection is at an angle and many people run the light or pull way into the intersection. This must have stop lines and crosswalks put in. There are dash lines on the east side of 72nd that are confusing.”

*“**The only intersection that we really felt unsure about crossing was on 72nd and Farnam.** It was at an angle, and we just didn't know where the cars were going to stop. Otherwise, cars saw us and gave us enough room to cross, and we always seemed to have more than enough time crossing the street.” (response from person who uses a wheelchair)*

SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS TO 72nd & DODGE:

“No right turn on red as cars ALWAYS block this crosswalk. I did have a car back up for me :). Speed limits are way in excess of 35 mph.”

“Smoother curb cuts”

“Not sure. Drivers notoriously stop on crosswalk just to see when they can make a right turn on red.”

“More time and the audible needs to be louder so the pedestrian doesn't think it is just a random person chatting. Make xing signs larger.”

“Scramble crosswalk.”

“The voice on the speaker is NOT clear, it should be clear and loud for people to hear.”

PEDESTRIAN SUMMARY:

Survey respondents noted issues with feeling unsafe and vulnerable on narrow, poorly maintained sidewalks located close to the street. Overall, the transit stops received negative feedback. The issue of motorists illegally entering intersection crosswalks was a common complaint.

Similar to the motorist survey, there was an overall consensus for more crosswalks and crosswalk amenities along this audit area. The need for improved and better maintained sidewalks and transit stops was also a common request among survey respondents.

If you haven't walked the Audit Area, check out these incredible 360° videos from local pedestrian advocate, Alex Mendoza @GATOmahaNE. If viewing on your phone, you can move the phone, or your finger on the phone, to see all views. And if viewing from your computer, just use your mouse to pan around. These two videos will give you an idea of the infrastructure of the Audit Area as well as the "experience" of the area.



CYCLIST SURVEY RESULTS

72ND NOT MEANT FOR CYCLISTS, PLEASE
ADD ACCESS OR INFRASTRUCTURE

The questions on the bicyclist survey focused on the **condition, use, and design of the road and intersections, the behavior of drivers, and perceptions of safety.**

A total of three cyclists participated in the Road Audit Survey.

As explained in the Pivot Section on Page 17, we discovered many cyclists avoid this stretch of 72nd, thus we pivoted and also distributed a 6-question survey about cycling in Omaha. The questions in that survey focused on the conditions of **72nd Street, improvements to roads and intersections, and opinions on enforcement.** A total of 10 people responded to the 6-question survey.

You can find the detailed breakdown of all the results from the Road Safety Audit for Cyclists and the 6-Question Cycling Survey in Appendix #1.

Similar to feedback from pedestrians, cyclists did not feel that anything about the audit area was intended for them or their safety

RIDE THE SIDEWALK:

Two of the three Road Audit participants found 72nd Street so dangerous or intimidating that they rode on the sidewalk.

Seven of the 10 respondents to the 6-Question Cycling Survey also mentioned only using the sidewalk in this area.

While riding on the sidewalk is technically illegal, it was the only way that even some seasoned commuters would ride along 72nd Street if they were not using the Keystone Trail. The sidewalks did NOT receive glowing feedback.

*“I used the east sidewalk for biking. **The roadway is not safe for biking.** Although segments of the sidewalk are narrow and curb walk, it’s safer than biking in the street.” - Audit Respondent*

“I do not feel safe on any part of this stretch of 72nd St, so I chose to ride the sidewalk, which is littered with glass, rocks, and gravel.” - Audit Respondent

“I felt unsafe riding my bike on the sidewalk and was happy to get back on the keystone trail.” - Survey Respondent

“I plan to get an e-scooter for my commute in the future and would always route around 72nd because there’s just no way I’d ride in the street. The sidewalks aren’t a viable backup (even if it were legal) as they are too close to the road, are in terrible repair, and are covered in road debris that makes it dangerous for bikes and scooters.” - Survey Respondent

FEEDBACK ON DESIGN:

All respondents noted that this area is NOT designed for ALL users of the road, however some found that acceptable due to the proximity of the Keystone Trail. Issues of **traffic congestion, lane volume, driveway cuts, and unsafe sidewalks** were identified by survey and audit respondents. Participants were asked about their thoughts on 72nd Street:

“It's pretty awful. But, you just do what you gotta do. At least the traffic is relatively slow because of all the lights.” - Survey Respondent

*“I do believe there are some streets that should just be left to cars and we should not spend time trying to mix vehicle and cycle traffic. Dodge is one. 72nd street is another. If I am going to travel on 72nd street with my cycle, I'm going to put the cycle on the bus and travel that way. More likely, I'm going to take the Keystone trail between Pacific and Dodge. **No way in h*ll I'm going to trying to cycle on 72nd street between Pacific and Dodge.**” - Survey Respondent*

“I cannot imagine riding on 72nd street as the cars drive pretty fast and there is no additional space on the side of the road for bikes to move over. I haven't been on the sidewalk in years there but last I was there it was uneven and not maintained.” - Survey Respondent

“It's designed as a highway for cars.” - Audit Respondent

“Way too much traffic in both lanes in both directions.” - Audit Respondent

“This area is not designed for alternative modes of transportation.” - Audit Respondent

“Bad. The sidewalks are not that great. (FYI, 84th and 60th are worse.)” - Survey Respondent

*“I think "hostile" is the most appropriate word. Not enough room to comfortably bike near traffic, there are often power poles in the way, curb cut outs are crumbling, blind corners in and out of businesses, etc. **I strategically plan my route to spend the least amount of time on 72nd as possible.**” - Survey Respondent*

DRIVER BEHAVIOR:

Beyond road design, many respondents cited driver behavior as a reason for avoiding 72nd Street. The Road Audit survey asked respondents what they felt drivers need to be educated about:

“Since I was southbound on the east sidewalk, I had to watch for southbound motorists making left-hand turns into my path.”

“Basic driving laws.”

“Cars in Omaha are not looking for bicycles. A vehicle cut through the gas station at full speed in order to avoid the red light.”

“WB vehicles on Farnam turning right (north) onto 72nd Street often don’t yield to sidewalk traffic. Cars turning north from west-bound Farnam are not watching for pedestrians/cyclists.”

DRIVER BEHAVIOR:

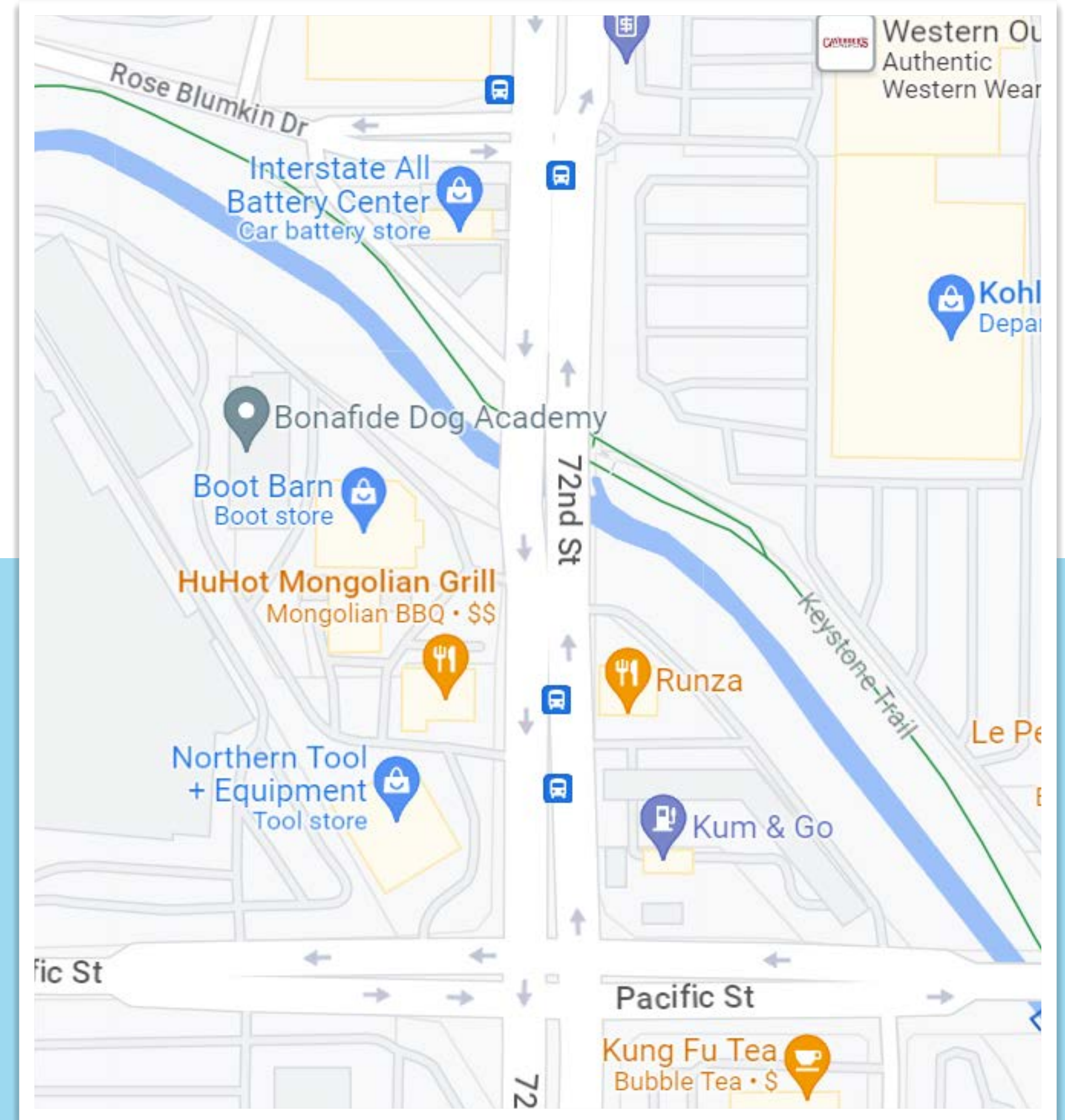
Respondents to the 6-Question Cycling Survey also cited issues of driver behavior:

“I take the sidewalk to avoid motorists hostile to cyclists for slowing them down to 15mph. Cycling on sidewalks requires some next-level skills because traffic rules are working against you (cf why it’s not allowed). I need to dismount or clear the walk for pedestrians. I also have to triple check each driveway & intersection, basically assuming that cars would not stop for me.”

THE KEYSTONE TRAIL:

The Keystone Trail bisects the south section of the Road Audit area UNDER 72nd Street between Pacific Street and Rose Blumkin Drive.

We asked Road Audit and Survey participants if they use the Keystone Trail instead of 72nd Street. 100% of the respondents said they do.



“I typically avoid this intersection and take the trail, even though it adds time to my commute.” - Audit Respondent

“I usually do. I'll cut through UNO, or use the Keystone, or cut through Kohl's parking lot and use Rose Blumkin. Or stay on Pacific.” - Survey Respondent

“Yes, except for the one thing I said above. 60th, 72nd, 84th are insane and nobody in their right mind would be on the street, and nobody in their semi-right mind would even do the sidewalk.” - Survey Respondent

“For sure. Doesn't everyone?” - Survey Respondent

“Yes. Frequently” - Survey Respondent

“Yes, 9 times out of 10.” - Survey Respondent

“Normally yes.” - Survey Respondent

“Most days I have to detour off of the trail through the NFM parking lot to avoid geese.” - Survey Respondent

*“The Keystone Trail only works as a substitute for a very small chunk of 72nd. It's nice for recreation **but in general the trails are not that helpful for getting around town because you typically have to go far out of your way to use them.** The bike traffic is often too dense and aggressive for the Keystone to be a primary route for pedestrians. We even tried to look for a house with easy access to the Keystone for bike commuting but there weren't enough adjacent residential areas with available housing within a reasonable radius.” - Survey Respondent*

IMPROVEMENTS:

We asked Road Audit respondents what improvements could be made to **72nd Street** and **the intersections** along 72nd Street (within the boundaries of the audit) that would make the area **safer and more efficient for bicyclists**.

DESIGN IMPROVEMENTS:

- *“Replace the existing narrow curbswalks with wider sidewalks that have a setback from the traffic lanes. When they did repairs to 72nd 2 to 3 years ago, they removed the sidewalk ramps on the east sidewalk at Jones Street. Although not a problem for normal pedestrians and bikers, it is a problem for wheelchairs and other handicapped sidewalk users.”*
- *“Improve the sidewalk along the street into multi-use trails.”*
- *“Link the bike path, which is behind Nebraska Furniture Mart, to the Dodge/72nd Street intersection.”*

Similarly, in the 6-Question Cycling Survey, we asked a more general question, **“What would make you feel safer as a cyclist on roads with 2 or more lanes?”** A call for protected bike lanes in Omaha was the most common answer, with “access,” “more trails,” and “alternative routes,” coming in second. See below for some of the direct quotes from the survey:

IMPROVEMENTS:

PROTECTED BIKE LANES:

- *“Obviously a dedicated bike lane is ideal. I would certainly use this frequently if there was a protected bike lane. Otherwise I’m not sure, given the speeds at which cars travel in 72nd and in dodge, that much would make me feel comfortable.”*
- *“**A physical barrier, period. Not painted lanes on the road, not even those little cones or sticks.** If I’m riding on the road with cars, I take up the whole lane, no questions asked. If you ride close to the edge of the road, there can be dangerous road debris, snow build up, sand, and cars straying into that lane, turning into parking lots, etc. If I ride on the road like I’m a car, people are annoyed at me, but at least I’m visible.”*
- *“Because this is actually bad design for all modes, **major infrastructure should have separate facilities** for pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists. This can be accomplished by reducing land width and adding protected bike lanes.”*
- *“Protected bike lane or a WIDE shoulder sidewalk with enough room for bicycles and pedestrians of all abilities.”*

EDUCATION:

- *“**Also, not sure if you can change any of this since it’s so pervasive, but a shift in the culture and attitudes toward cyclists in this town would help a lot.** I’ve been yelled at by people in cars when I ride on the road, people have swerved to scare me, etc because they somehow think roads are only for cars.”*

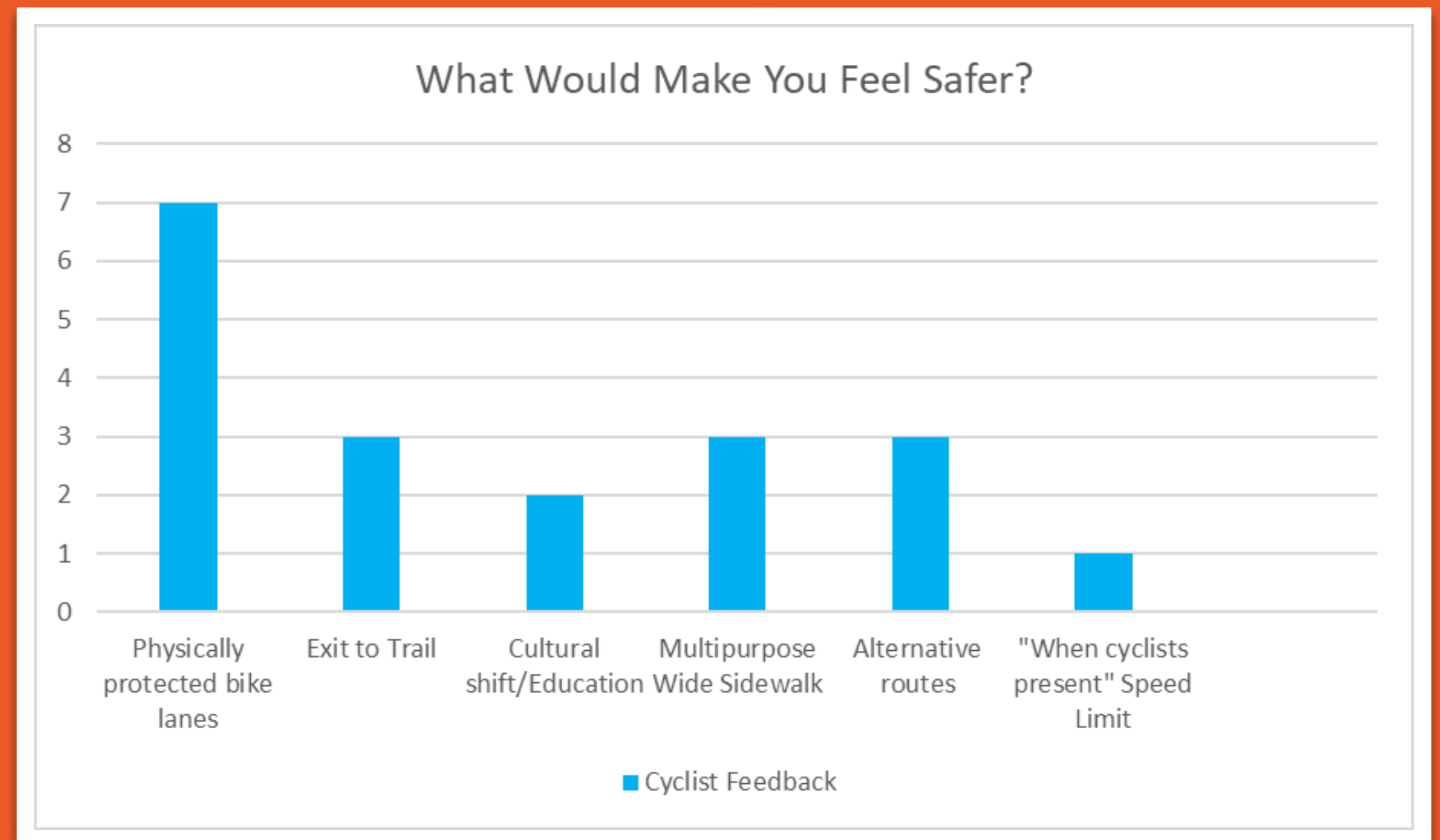
MOST UNIQUE IDEA:

*“These facilities are designed for cyclists to use the right lane, except when turning left. However, motorists are not generally aware that this is how the facility is intended to be used. **Like we have signage in school zones for reduced speed, all speed limit signs could carry a secondary limit when cyclists are present (eg 40 MPH (25 MPH Right Lane with Cyclist).**”*

INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS:

We asked the Road Audit respondents what would improve the intersections along the Audit route.

- 72nd & Pacific: *"I honestly have no idea. I typically avoid this intersection and take the trail, even though it adds time to my commute. Educating drivers would be a great start. Install a bike only lane or extend the bike path that is nearby."*
- 72nd & Rose Blumkin Drive: *"A purpose-built multiuse trail on both sides of 72nd Street."*
- 72nd & Jones Street: *"A painted pedestrian crossing and multi-use trails."*
- 72nd & Farnam Street: *"Prohibit right turn on red or better enforcement. Painted crosswalk and multi-use trails."*
- 72nd & Dodge : *"Better crosswalk markings and enforcement. A painted crosswalk and multi-use trails. Construction makes it even less safe."*
- *"I skipped the intersection and used the parking lots to get to the multi-use trails by UNO."*

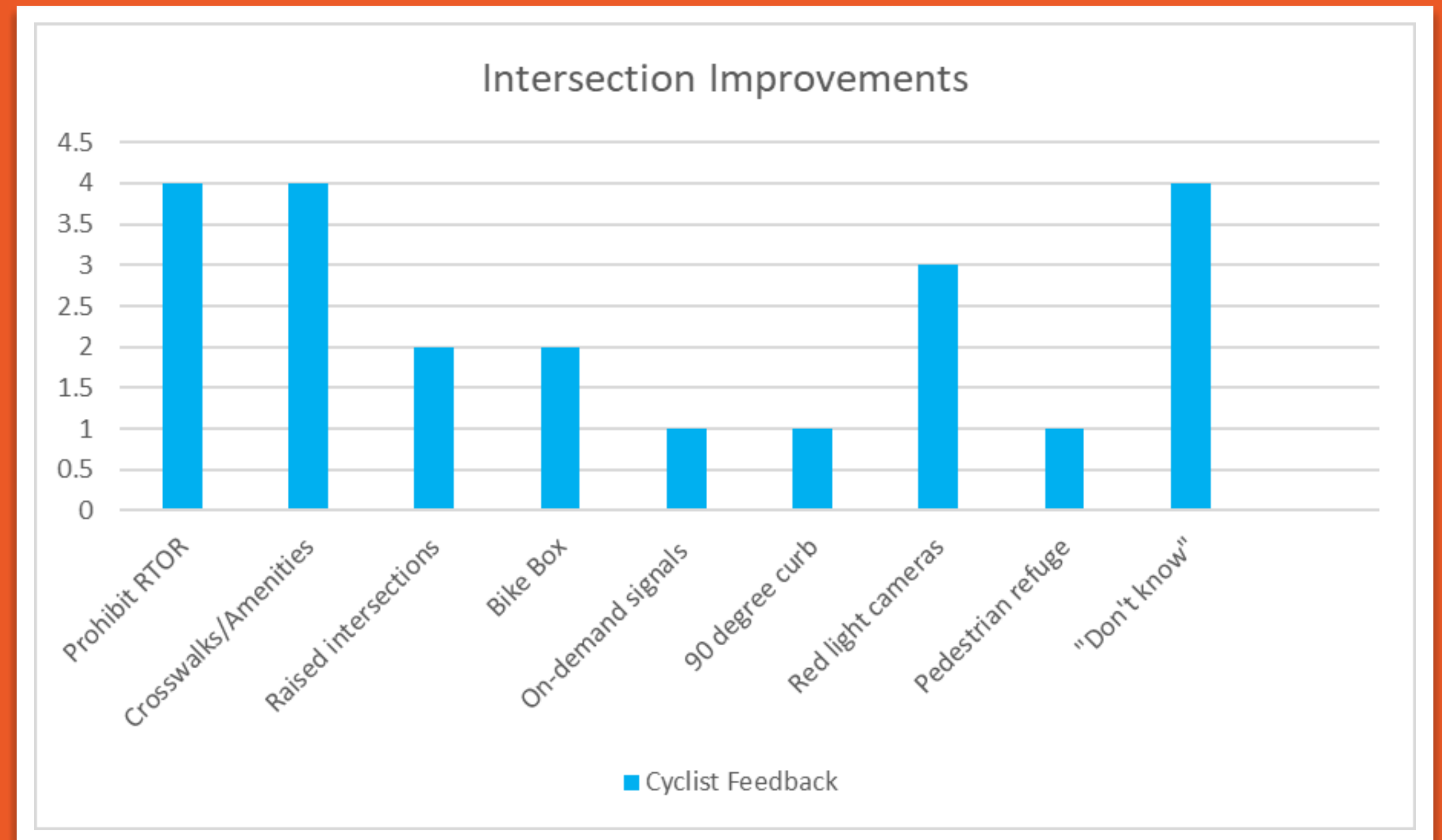


INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS:

On the 6-Question Cycling Survey, we asked “What changes could be made to intersections to make you feel safer as a cyclist in Omaha?”

You can see the Summary of Results in the table below as well as a few direct quotes from the surveys:

- “Ban right turn on red.”
- “Raised continuous curbs, harsher turning angles via bump outs or chicanes to curb driver speed, a "bike box" in the front of the intersection opening to ensure driver visibility, and reactive traffic control (lights acknowledge peds and bikes as much as cars via sensory equipment).”
- “When intersections are this wide, they should have a ‘safe’ space of refuge in the median. This is inclusive design for slower crossers and visually impaired. This type of amenity also supports left-turn cyclists by anchoring a bike box.”
- “At intersections, I would feel safer if there were red light cameras for automated ticketing of stoplight violations.”
- “Usually drivers 1) don’t stop at the stop line and typically stop in the crosswalk, if at all, 2) are not paying attention to monitor for cyclists or pedestrians, and 3) are sometimes unable to see the crosswalk because through traffic (especially oversized vehicles) is not stopping at the stop line either. Eliminating the right turn lane would help immensely as right turn traffic habitually stops much further past the stop line than through traffic.”



ENFORCEMENT:

Road Audit participants were asked if more enforcement along the audit area would make them feel safer. Two of the three respondents answered “No,” with the third answering “Yes.”

The question of enforcement was also posed to the people who took the 6-Question Cycling Survey, and many of the answers were nuanced like these examples:

*“Generally safer. They **need to direct traffic especially where there is construction or closures.** This is mandatory in Massachusetts, for example. If there is power-line work being done, there is always at least 1 cop there too.”*

“More, but that won’t happen as there’s a lot of intersections and not a lot of traffic enforcement people.”

“I don’t think that more police vehicles on the road necessarily makes things better. After all, that’s literally putting more cars on the roads which is the problem. If there were traffic cams on the intersections that I was talking about (67th and Pacific) that automatically took pictures of people’s license plate who are breaking the rules and then mailing them a ticket, maybe that could work.”

“Neither safer nor less safe. Law enforcement cleans up after a problem has occurred. They don’t prevent the problem in the first place, usually. A better solution is structural change: protected lanes, traffic calming infrastructure, pedestrian-friendly timing on lights.”

“Generally, safer. But I feel policing roadways is racist due to historic practices. I feel technology can be used to penalize those who speed or drive recklessly. Proceeds from this could support better public transit – to accommodate those unable to drive at the standard of quality”

“Safer, but not as much as better infrastructure. Ideally, traffic behavior should be enforced via the road/intersection design, not by a LEO”

“neither? In my past experience, the OPD does not care to follow-up with any cyclist-related issues.”

BICYCLIST SUMMARY:

Overall, respondents to the Road Audit Survey and to the 6-Question Cycling Survey found the audit area unsafe and unwelcoming to cyclists, due to both design and driver behavior. Many cyclists will ride on the sidewalk instead of the road, however the sidewalks consistently received negative feedback. This finding reflects those from the Pedestrian Surveys as well.

Suggestions for improvement focused on on-road cycling infrastructure as well as alternative routes via multipurpose trails or wider sidewalks. The proximity of the Keystone Trail to the audit area is a prime opportunity for cyclists and pedestrians, however issues of connectivity and access were brought up by respondents. Driver behavior was cited as an issue as much as road design, pointing to a common theme throughout this Road Audit.

Lastly, similar to other findings, the issue of enforcement is not clear-cut in people's minds. But people want to feel safer, whether that means automated enforcement (currently illegal in the State of Nebraska), traffic control via non-vehicular officers, or more equitable enforcement.

SAFE OMAHA STREETS

OBSERVATIONS FROM BUSINESSES

FEEDBACK FROM BUSINESSES & EMPLOYEES ALONG 72ND STREET:

SOS personally talked to employees and pedestrians along the Road Audit corridor. We asked the people working and walking daily along this route what they thought of the 72nd Street corridor and if they thought any improvements were needed. Due to corporate policies, some employees were not allowed to give opinions.

"Everywhere in this city is unsafe for pedestrians. People don't care; they run red lights, turn right on red, and speed."

~ pedestrian at 72nd & Dodge on 7/5/23

"72nd Street is Gross."

"72nd is a nightmare. Lots of traffic congestion."

"Crossing 72nd Street is like taking your life into your own hands."

"With so many bus stops and a high percentage of pedestrians, plus the trail, there should be improvements for pedestrians."

FEEDBACK FROM BUSINESSES & EMPLOYEES ALONG 72ND STREET:

AVOIDANCE

We heard from employees from multiple businesses (Boot Barn, SBI, Jock & Jill's Popcorn, etc) that they avoid 72nd altogether and access their businesses from the west or east.

- *"I avoid 72nd street and come in the back way from the west because I don't want to start my day in a negative way."*

DRIVER BEHAVIOR

Many people complained about illegal and dangerous driver behavior such as speeding, red light running, and aggressive driving.

- *"People drive a million miles an hour."*
- *"Need to slow traffic down."*
- *"I've been treated aggressively by drivers, cut off, the energy is not good."*
- *"Drivers speed all day long."*

CUT-THROUGH

Two businesses adjacent to the west leg of Rose Blumkin Drive complained that drivers race through their parking lights to avoid the intersection light. Interstate Battery had to install - at their own expense - a speed bump just to slow down traffic that uses their driveway as a cut-through.

FEEDBACK FROM BUSINESSES & EMPLOYEES ALONG 72ND STREET:

INTERSECTIONS

People's main complaint about intersections was crosswalk encroachment.

- *“Vehicles ignore pedestrians regularly. I live close and walk a lot, so I see it all the time.”*
- *“There are so many cars in the crosswalks that pedestrians will smack the hoods of cars who have encroached.”*
- *“Cars regularly pull into the crosswalks because there aren't markings.”*

One person who takes the bus to work chooses to cross from the bus stop rather than go to the intersection of 72nd & Pacific because so many drivers turn right and nearly hit him.

- *“I feel safer running across traffic than crossing at 72nd & Pacific”*

UNHOUSED

Two businesses mentioned negative interactions they'd recently had with people experiencing homelessness.

- *“I walk a lot and lately homeless people have been approaching me from behind and asking for money.”*
- *“Agitated people will bang on our windows and yell at customers and traffic.”*

FEEDBACK FROM BUSINESSES & EMPLOYEES ALONG 72ND STREET:

YELLOW FLASHING LIGHT

While some motorists noted liking the recently upgraded yellow-flashing left-turn lights, some of the businesses find them distressing.

- *“If the traffic is light, the lights are fine, but when it’s congested or people are speeding it’s frustrating, time-consuming, and feels unsafe to turn without a green arrow.”*
- *“The yellow flashing lights feel dangerous. Our trucks don’t have enough time to turn without a dedicated green light so they have to reroute.”*

ENFORCEMENT

The topic of enforcement along 72nd Street came up multiple times.

- *“Some enforcement along here would help.”*
- *“We don’t see a lot of OPD presence but we do see UNO police.”*

FEEDBACK FROM BUSINESSES & EMPLOYEES ALONG 72ND STREET:

CONSTRUCTION

- *“Construction occurs often along 72nd, and the cones are placed to make lanes really narrow, and there are no signs about how to merge.”*
- *“My main problem with 72nd is it’s torn up constantly.”*
- *“People need to learn to zipper merge with all the construction.”*

POSITIVES

Two people we surveyed offered positive feedback about the Road Audit corridor:

- *“Mostly it’s good. The potholes were bad but are getting better.”*
- *“I really like the extended pedestrian signals.”*

SAFE OMAHA STREETS

OBSERVATIONS FROM SOS

OBSERVATIONS FROM SOS:

SOS has a history with the Road Audit area as one of the SOS co-founders works, walks, and drives along this corridor 5 days a week.

While red-light running and speed infractions were documented in the Road Audit surveys, they were not noted as major or consistent. Part of this could be due to the times and days the motorist road audits were conducted.

SOS, however, has noted issues with both speed and red light running. In March of 2022, we requested special enforcement for red light running at the area of 72nd & Jones. In 10 hours, 7 citations were issued.

MARCH 2022 INPUTS Police Monthly Special Enforcement Requests

<u>Northwest</u>	1) Speeding – Templeton Drive and Keystone Drive, Keystone Neighborhood (CM Festersen). 10 Hrs worked with 8 citations issued 2) Speeding – Northwest Radial Highway, Fontenelle Blvd. to 52nd Street (CM Johnson). 7 Hrs worked with 11 citations issued
<u>Northeast</u>	None.
<u>Southeast</u>	None.
<u>Southwest</u>	1) Red Light Violation – 52nd and Dodge Streets (CM Begley). 6.5 Hrs. worked – 5 citations 2) Red Light Violation – 72nd and Jones Streets (CM Begley). 10 Hrs. worked – 7 citations
<u>West</u>	1. Speeding – South 107th Street, between “P” Street and “L” Streets (CM Rowe). 12 Hrs. worked – 14 citations 2. Skyline and Pacific – Speeding and Stop Sign 10 Hrs. worked – 28 citations

VIDEO DOCUMENTATION:

See the videos below to understand how a pedestrian experiences a “typical” day at 72nd & Jones Circle & Street.



CARS IMPEDING PEDESTRIAN IN THE INTERSECTION: The intersection of 72nd & Jones Circle has a painted white stop-line, but no painted crosswalk. Whether drivers impede this intersection due to lack of marked crosswalks, lack of enforcement, or lack of driver education is unknown, but it is still a common and constant problem.



TRUCK SKIDS TO A STOP IMPEDING INTERSECTION: Occurrences like this are what caused SOS Cofounder, Jim, to begin recording his walks to lunch. He records for documentation, but mainly because he is concerned for his safety and believes that if he is hit, he will at least have a record of the perpetrator.



RED LIGHT RUNNING & MAN IN WALKER: In this video, you'll notice two driver infractions at an intersection with two pedestrians, one of them an older male with a walker.

VIDEO DOCUMENTATION:

See the videos below to understand how a pedestrian experiences a “typical” day at 72nd & Jones Circle & Street.



LONG WAIT JUST TO BE BLOCKED: Watch this video to get a feel for being a pedestrian along the Road Audit Area. You wait 1 minute and 45 seconds just to get the pedestrian signal, ONLY to be blocked by a motorist.



BLATANT RED LIGHT RUNNER AT 72ND & JONES ST: This light typically requires up to a 2-minute wait, so we didn't include the whole video, but notice the vehicle just sailing through the red light.



RIGHT ON THROUGH: This driver apparently has no clue where to stop. Could a painted crosswalk help?

WHY CROSS HERE?

You may ask yourself,

“If Jones Circle is so dangerous, why doesn’t Jim cross at the Jones Street intersection just a couple hundred feet away?”

While Jim notes feeling threatened and unsafe at the Jones Circle intersection, he also notes that it is his preferred intersection for crossing 72nd Street because it is a “T” intersection, thus it has one less intersection leg and reduces a potential conflict point.

SPEED:

The posted speed limit along the Road Audit corridor is 35 mph. SOS recorded speeds along the Road Audit Corridor on 5 different days in the two months (August & September) following the Audit period. The device we used was a Pocket Radar Classic Model PR1000. Speed variability - motorists driving in a wide range of speed limits - was the most noted observation.

The Road Audit area isn’t characterized by one constant speed so much as a variable range of speeds. We recorded a range of speeds from 25 mph to 65 mph.

PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS:

One of the most surprising takeaways we noticed during the Road Audit Survey was the number of people experiencing homelessness along the Road Audit corridor. So we contacted the recently hired Homeless Services Coordinator, Tamara Dwyer, to find out more about homelessness along this corridor as well as in all of Omaha.

72ND STREET HOMELESSNESS & WHAT YOU CAN DO:

While Dwyer mentioned that 72nd Street has historically experienced panhandling, she reminded me that panhandling and homelessness do not always go hand in hand.

A few businesses and employees along the Audit route mentioned issues with people experiencing homelessness, such as people sleeping on public or private property, people asking for money, or people acting erratically.

For instances like this, Dwyer suggested people can:

Call the Mayor's Hotline at (402) 444.5555.

Contact Tamara directly at (402) 444-5038 or tamara.dwyer@cityofomaha.org.

Or contact the Street Outreach team at (402) 957.1747

You should call 911 if you are worried for someone's immediate safety. And if you observe a person experiencing homelessness who appears to be in a mental health crisis, communicate that when you call 911 and ask for a mental health co-responder to accompany the officers.

MAACH:

Dwyer works directly with the local Metro Area Continuum of Care for the Homeless (MACCH) Street Outreach team, which is a collaborative effort made up of about 6 different agencies. The Street Outreach folks, including Dwyer, will go out and connect people experiencing homelessness with needed services before involving enforcement authorities. The most important goal of Street Outreach is to build relationships with people.

If people are sleeping somewhere overnight, that location will be added to the Street Outreach list. If someone isn't in danger or a safety hazard, Tamara recommends involving Street Outreach first, via the hotline or direct contact with her. The solution won't be immediate but the City can mediate with outreach usually within 24 hours.

SOS encourages businesses to display these helpful flyers in their windows or on their community bulletin boards. Spanish versions of each of these flyers are also available from the City of Omaha's Homeless Services Coordinator.



OMAHA METRO COORDINATED ENTRY ACCESS POINTS

Serving Douglas & Sarpy Counties in Nebraska and Pottawattamie County in Iowa



Coordinated Entry (CE) connects people experiencing homelessness or those at risk of becoming homeless with available resources. CE includes various Access Points in the community. Access Point staff help assess a person's needs and connect them to the appropriate resources. The purpose of CE is to ensure people are receiving needed resources within a consistent and streamlined approach.

When you connect with a Coordinated Entry Access Point, trained staff will:

Listen as you share your current situation



Help you problem solve and support you in finding a safe & appropriate alternative to shelter

Work through some housing questions with you



Support you in identifying a safe place to sleep tonight

Help connect you to community resources



For Street Outreach services call 402-957-1747
For rental assistance or other resources call 2-1-1



OMAHA METRO COORDINATED ENTRY ACCESS POINTS

DOUGLAS COUNTY, NEBRASKA



COMMUNITY ALLIANCE
4001 Leavenworth Street Omaha, NE 68105
402-341-5128

Access Point open hours:
10 am - 4 pm Monday through Friday
*Walk ins and phone calls are welcome during these times



EADAN
East African Development Association of Nebraska
4735 NW Radial Highway Omaha, NE 68104
402-706-4106

Access Point open hours:
9 am - 5:30 pm Monday through Friday
1 pm - 5 pm Saturday and Sunday
*Walk ins and phone calls welcome during these times



SIENA FRANCIS HOUSE
1117 North 17th Street Omaha, NE 68102
402-341-1821

Access Point open hours:
24 hours every day, 7 days a week
*Walk ins and phone calls welcome during these times



STEPHEN CENTER
2723 Q Street Omaha, NE 68107
402-731-0230

Access Point open hours:
8 am - 4 pm Monday through Friday
*Walk ins and phone calls welcome during these times



WCA
Women's Center For Advancement
3801 Harney Street Omaha, NE 68131
402-345-6555

Access Point open hours:
8 am - 5 pm Monday through Friday
*Walk ins and phone calls welcome during these times



VA CRRC
Nebraska Western Iowa Veteran Administration Health Care and Community Resource and Referral Center
825 Durbin Street Omaha, NE 68108
402-977-4444

Access Point open hours:
8 am - 4:30 pm Monday through Friday
*Walk ins and phone calls welcome during these times



YES
Youth Emergency Services
2602 Harney Street Omaha, NE 68101
402-502-1636

Access Point open hours:
1 pm - 5 pm Monday through Friday
*Walk ins and phone calls welcome during these times



ST. VINCENT DE PAUL
Society of St. Vincent de Paul Omaha
1715 Izard Street Omaha, NE 68102
402-779-8499

Access Point open hours:
9 am - 3 pm Monday through Thursday
*Walk ins and phone calls welcome during these times

SARPY COUNTY, NEBRASKA



BELLEVUE HUMAN SERVICES
City of Bellevue, NE Human Services
1500 Wall Street Bellevue, NE 68005
402-682-6602

Access Point open hours:
1 pm - 4 pm Tuesday only
*walk ins and phone calls welcome during these times

POTTAWATTAMIE COUNTY, IOWA



NEW VISIONS
New Visions Homeless Services
1435 North 15th Street Council Bluffs, IA 51501
712-322-7570

Access Point open hours:
9 am - 4 pm Monday through Thursday
9 am - 12 pm on Friday
*Walk ins and phone calls welcome during these times



SARPY HUMAN SERVICES
Sarpy County, NE Human Services
1261 Golden Gate Drive Suite 5E Papillion, NE 68046
402-593-4414

Access Point open hours:
1 pm - 4 pm Thursday only
*Walk ins and phone calls welcome during these times

ARE YOU SLEEPING OUTSIDE, LIVING IN YOUR CAR, OR STAYING IN AN ABANDONED BUILDING?

Our team helps meet the needs of people living on the streets in our community.

Teams go out Monday-Friday in Douglas, Sarpy, and Pottawattamie counties. We can meet you where you are at!

Referrals To: Outdoor Supplies Housing/Shelter, Food/Water Mainstream Benefits, Case Management Primary Health Care, Mental Health Care Substance Use Care

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL:

 **(402) 957-1747**

Please leave a message with your name and the best way to contact you. A team member will reach out to you within 3 business days.



PLEASE CALL 2-1-1 IF:
You need to speak with someone before a member of the team is able to connect with you. For shelter and a full list of community resources.

SHELTERS

Open Door Mission/Lydia House
402-422-1111 / 2323 N 23rd St. E | Omaha

Siena Francis House
402-341-1821 / 1117 N 17th St. | Omaha

Stephen Center (Clean & Sober)
402-731-0288 / 2723 Q St. | Omaha

Catholic Charities Omaha (Domestic Violence)
24 Hour Crisis Line - 402-558-5700

Catholic Charities Council Bluffs (Domestic Violence)
712-378-0766 or 1-888-612-0766 (toll free)

HFS Safe Haven (Domestic Violence)
1-800-523-3666

Sanctuary House (Serves those that have experienced trafficking/exploitation)
402-597-1009

MICAH House (Families & Women)
712-323-4416 / 1415 Ave. J | Council Bluffs

MOHM's Place/Joshua House (Men only)
712-256-3940

1435 N 15th St. | Council Bluffs

Youth Emergency Services (YES) (Ages 16-24)
402-345-5187 / 2566 Farnam St. | Omaha

FREE MEALS

St. Vincent de Paul Holy Family
Monday-Friday • Sack Lunch
1715 Izard St. | Omaha

Salvation Army North Corps
Monday-Friday • 11:30am-1pm
2424 Pratt St. | Omaha

Open Door Mission Men's Center
Monday-Friday • Lunch 11am-1pm

Siena/Francis House
Served Daily / Dinner 5pm-6:30pm

MOHM's Place
Served Daily
Breakfast 8am-9am | Dinner 5pm-6:30pm

Community Food Servings (Gene Leahy Mall area)
Wednesday • 9am-11am

FOOD NOT BOMBS (Gene Leahy Mall area)
Sunday • 2pm-3pm

Least of My Brethren
2nd Saturday • 9am-10am
Holy Family Church
1715 Izard St. | Omaha

4th Saturday • 8am-9:30am
McMahon Hall
723 S 27th St. | Omaha

1th Sunday • 12:15pm-2pm
New Vision Parking Lot
1435 N 15th St. | Council Bluffs

Charles Drew Health Center
402-451-3553 / 2915 Grant St. | Omaha

Community Alliance (Mental Health)
402-341-5128
4001 Leavenworth St. | Omaha

Lasting Hope Recovery Center
402-717-1673 / 415 S 25th Ave. | Omaha

Nebraska AIDS Project (NAP)
402-552-9250 / 250 S 77th St. | Omaha

One World Community Health Center
402-734-4110

NOAH Clinic
402-933-0737
5620 Ames Ave. | Omaha

Safe Harbor (Peer Support)
Next to Lasting Hope
402-715-4226

HOUSING-RELATED SERVICES

Bellevue Housing Authority
402-734-5448
8214 Armstrong Circle | Bellevue, NE
www.sarpyhousing.org

Central Park Tower (62+ or disabled)
402-341-5130 / 1511 Farnam St. | Omaha

Douglas County General Assistance
402-444-6215 (opt 5)
1111 S 41st St. | Omaha

Douglas County Housing Authority
402-444-6203
5404 N 107th Plz. | Omaha
www.douglascounty.com

Durham Booth Manor (62+)
402-898-5880 / 923 N 38th St. | Omaha

Family Housing Advisory Services
402-934-7921 / 2401 Lake St. | Omaha
www.fhassist.org

Heart Ministry Center
402-451-2321 / 2727 Binney St. | Omaha

Housing Search Engine
www.housing.ne.gov

Municipal Housing Agency
712-322-1491 / 505 S 6th | Council Bluffs
www.mhacb.org

Omaha Housing Authority
402-444-6900 / 1823 Harney St. | Omaha
www.ohauthority.org

Park East (62+ or disabled 50+)
402-345-3168 / 539 S 26th Ave. | Omaha

St. Vincent de Paul Omaha
402-346-5445 or call the local Catholic Parish in your area

Thrifty Nickel Omaha
Sleeping Rooms & Affordable Apts
omaha.thrifynickel.com

CLOTHING

ODM Timberlake Outreach Center
Monday-Saturday • 10am-5pm
2107 E Locust St. | Omaha

Society of St. Vincent de Paul Omaha
Helpline - 402-346-5445
1715 Izard St. | Omaha

HEALTH CARE

All Care Health Center
712-325-1990
902 S 6th St. | Council Bluffs

Beautiful Gate Food and Clothing
Tuesday-Friday • 11am-2pm
402-686-5695 / 623 S 24th St. | Omaha

DAY CENTERS

MOHM's Place/Joshua House
1435 N 15th St. | Council Bluffs

WINTER Warming Center
Monday-Friday • 9am-4pm
1607 Ave. I | Council Bluffs

Salvation Army North Corps
On Site Showers / 2424 Pratt St. | Omaha

Siena/Francis House
1702 Nicholas St. | Omaha

Generation Diamond
Monday-Friday • 9am-4pm
1825 S 25th St. | Omaha

Beautiful Gate (See info under Clothing)

OTHER ESSENTIAL SERVICES

Access Nebraska
402-595-1258 (SNAP)
402-595-1173 (Medicaid)
www.accessnebraska.ne.gov

Centro Latino Council Bluffs
300 W Broadway Suite 40

ENOA (Senior Services)
402-444-6535
402-672-7118 (Español)

Free Pet Clinic and Pantry
ODM Timberlake Outreach Center
3rd Sunday • 9am-11am

Heartland Workforce Solutions (American Job Center)
402-444-4700 / 5752 Ames Ave. | Omaha

Immigrant Legal Center (Justice for Our Neighbors)
402-898-1349 / 4223 Center St. | Omaha

Juan Diego Center
402-731-5413 / 5211 S 31st St. | Omaha

Midlands Humane Society
712-396-2270
1020 Railroad Ave. | Council Bluffs

Nebraska Humane Society
402-444-7800 / 8929 Fort St. | Omaha

Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation
402-595-2100
1313 Farnam on the Mall | Omaha

Salvation Army Emergency Community Support
402-898-6094

Salvation Army SAFE-T Program
1-888-373-7886

VA Homeless Outreach (CRRC)
402-977-4444
875 Dorcas St. Suite 200 | Omaha

Women's Center for Advancement (WCA)
402-345-6555 / 3801 Harney St. | Omaha

YES Drop-In Center (Ages 12-24)
Monday-Friday • 1pm-5pm
402-502-1636 / 2502 Harney St. | Omaha

POINT-IN-TIME COUNT:

Every year, any community that receives federal funding for homelessness must conduct an annual count of people experiencing homelessness. This count takes place on one night during the winter and is called a “point-in-time count.” This count captures a snapshot of homelessness. Annual counts are included in the HUD’s Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) that is presented to Congress. You can learn more about the [point-in-time count here](#).

Omaha goes beyond the annual winter count and conducts its own Summer count as well. A summer count of people experiencing homelessness was conducted in Omaha in July of 2023. The Road Audit area was included in this count. The count should be made public sometime this fall.

OMAHA PUBLIC LIBRARY & ITS UNHOUSED PATRONS:

Public Libraries have long played an important and supportive role for people experiencing homelessness. The City, via the Homeless Services Coordinator, connects and works with public libraries to address issues of homelessness. The Executive Director of the Omaha Public Libraries, Laura Marlane, explained the services they supply to patrons experiencing homelessness:

- OPL provides access to community information so that patrons know where to find clothes, food, and shelter.
- OPL registers voters and provides voter information, especially during election years.
- OPL offers computers with internet and wireless printing so patrons can print and research.
- OPL also offers charging lockers so patrons can charge their devices while keeping them safe.

Lastly, she said she'd love to have a social worker on staff and is hoping that is something that could be done prior to opening the new Central Library. Staffing a social worker at libraries is common practice in other growing cities.

Homelessness is a complex issue and requires multiple solutions. Dwyer relayed that if we want to end homelessness, and not just manage it, we need to all work together to meet people's needs. To end homelessness in Omaha, we need buy-in from the community to support permanent housing and services that will support people experiencing homelessness and prevent them from being further disconnected from their communities.



SAFE OMAHA STREETS

ADDITIONAL CITY & AGENCY INFO

SIDEWALKS & TRAIL COUNTS:

Currently, the City operates a sidewalk program in which staff compile and respond to citizen complaints, notify responsible property owners, and conduct their own inspections around town. The list of complaints is continuously being updated and prioritized. However, the City currently has a large backlog of complaints that they are trying to address.

Did you know that all repairs on city sidewalks are done ENTIRELY at the expense of adjoining property owners? So if the sidewalk is broken in front of the Kohl's store, then it is the Kohl's property owner who is responsible for paying for the repair.

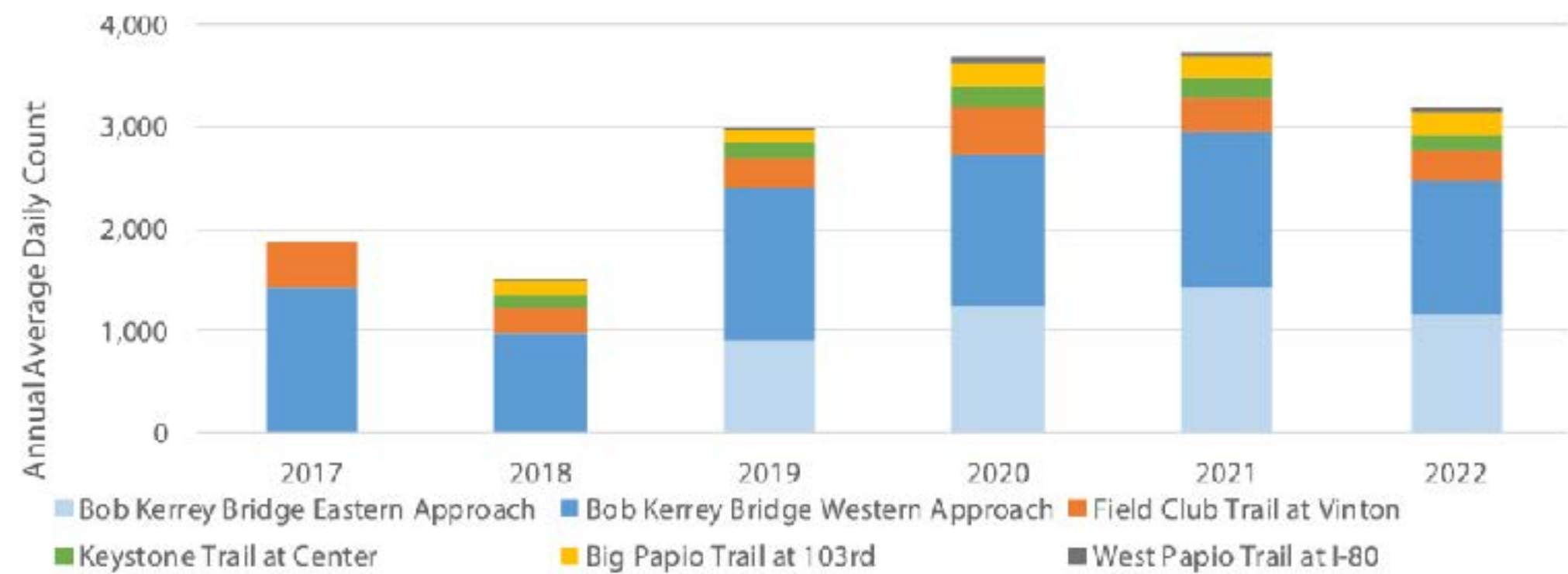
Many factors are taken into account when the City decides what items need to be addressed, such as contractor availability, concrete supply, weather, etc. The fact that adjoining property owners are responsible for the entirety of the cost can result in the city making choices that may seem conservative to the public.

PEDESTRIAN & BICYCLIST COUNTS ON KEYSTONE:

The City of Omaha maintains a counter along the Keystone Trail just south of Center Street, about 1 mile south of the Road Audit area. In 2022, an average of 357 trail users per day (159 pedestrians and 198 cyclists) were counted!

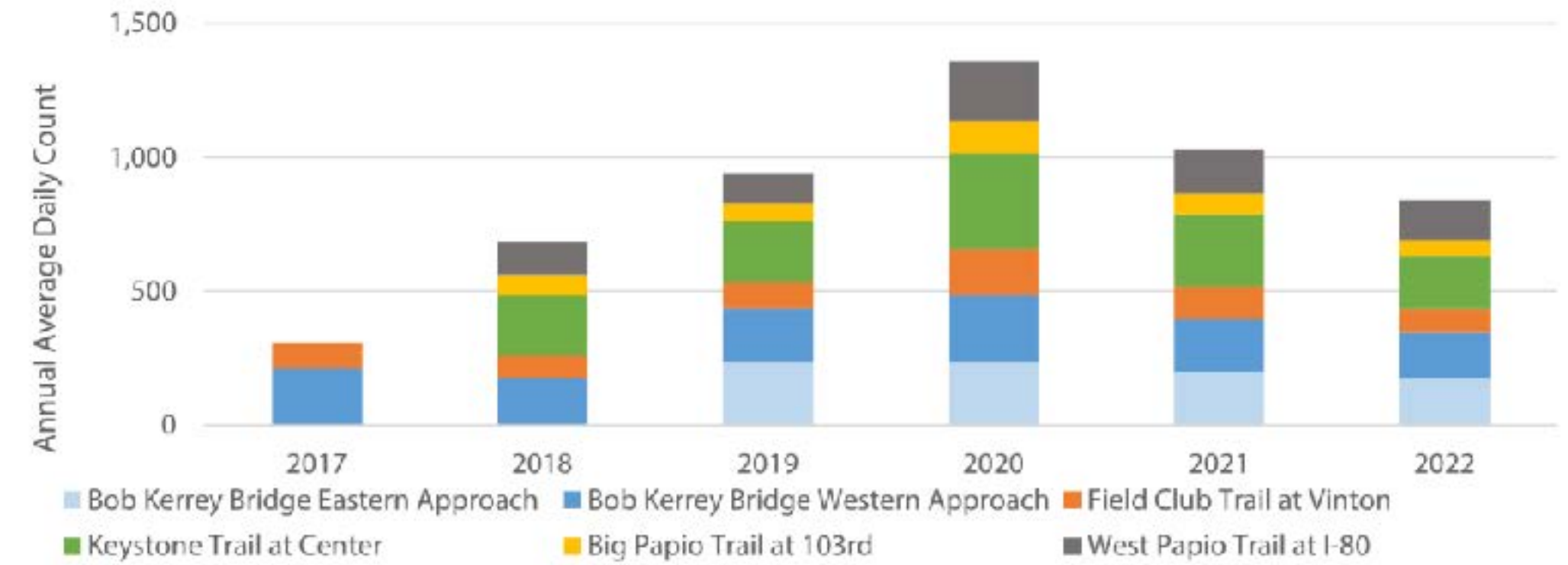
You can find the entire 2022 City of Omaha Automated Pedestrian & Bicycle Counter Program Report in Appendix #9.

Figure 1.4: Estimated Annual Average Daily Pedestrian Volume by Year and Location



	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Bob Kerrey Bridge Eastern Approach	n/a	n/a	898	1,232	1,416	1,142
Bob Kerrey Bridge Western Approach	1,427	964	1,510	1,482	1,529	1,341
Field Club Trail at Vinton	449	246	277	480	337	288
Keystone Trail at Center	n/a	142	167	199	197	159
Big Papio Trail at 103rd	n/a	126	104	221	203	215
West Papio Trail at I-80	n/a	26	29	61	43	39
TOTAL	1,876	1,504	2,985	3,674	3,725	3,184

Figure 1.6: Estimated Annual Average Daily Bicycle Volume by Year and Location



	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Bob Kerrey Bridge Eastern Approach	n/a	n/a	234	235	198	172
Bob Kerrey Bridge Western Approach	211	173	201	249	199	172
Field Club Trail at Vinton	99	88	98	174	121	89
Keystone Trail at Center	n/a	222	230	357	269	198
Big Papio Trail at 103rd	n/a	80	67	118	76	54
West Papio Trail at I-80	n/a	121	112	224	167	152
TOTAL	310	683	942	1,357	1,031	839

BUS STOP AUTHORITY:

BUS STOP AUTHORITY: The transit stops received overall negative feedback from survey respondents, so SOS met with representatives of Metro to find out more about bus stop location, maintenance, etc.

The first thing we found out is that **Metro is currently reviewing its bus stops** to identify opportunities for future improvements.

Many survey respondents, as well as SOS, were under the mistaken assumption that Metro oversees and is solely responsible for public transit stops, including location, maintenance, etc. However, it's more complex and complicated than we thought.

The City's Bus Bench Program, overseen by the Parks Department, is outlined in Chapter 3, Articles III and IV of the City's Municipal Code.

This relationship with the City is also echoed by Metro on page 40 of its MetroNEXT Strategic Plan: Although Metro does not typically own or maintain bus benches, Metro staff should coordinate with other organizations to ensure benches are properly located for the benefit of riders in the community. Advertising benches are located throughout the city of Omaha by a private advertising contractor overseen by the City of Omaha Parks and Recreation Department.

The Bus Bench Maintenance & Advertising Program is contracted through a third-party vendor via a competitive bidding process. Agreements are awarded for four-year terms with the option for a four-year extension, dependent on approval from the City. The current Request for Proposal (RFP) period just closed with three companies providing proposals, all of which will be evaluated by the Review Committee in the next several weeks. There is no Metro representative on the Review Committee, however, the City asked for Metro's input on drafting the RFP.

A LITTLE MORE INFO ON METRO...

TRASH: The issue of trash at transit stops has been an ongoing concern, and presently, the outside contractor (Best Buy Signs) manages the maintenance of the bus stops, but only when they receive a complaint. Best Buy Signs are currently NOT required to conduct regularly scheduled maintenance. However, the City did state that **maintenance of the areas surrounding the bus benches will be a criterion** that will be evaluated by the Review Committee for the upcoming contract.

AD REVENUE: You may think Metro receives the revenue from advertisements on bus stops, however **all revenue generated** from the Bus Bench Maintenance & Advertising Vendor - per the agreement - goes to the **City's General Fund**.

Both the Parks Department and Metro noted they work together, however representatives of Metro also noted that their participation in the decision-making process can be – at times – limited.

So, when you use or pass a bus stop in Omaha, don't immediately think that Metro is the ultimate authority, instead, it seems to be a convoluted triumvirate of the Parks Department, Metro, and an outside contractor.

MetroNEXT & ORBT:

Many survey respondents pointed to the ORBT stations as a model for what all bus stations should look like. ORBT is just one of the services that Metro operates, including its MOBY paratransit system and regular routes. ORBT is the premium service and is intended to offer a light-rail or subway type of experience with buses as the vehicle.

Funding for ORBT, per the email from **Metro** below, was multi-sourced:

“In 2014, Metro was awarded a highly competitive TIGER grant for \$14.9 million from the U.S. Department of Transportation to help fund this project.

We also received generous contributions from local partners, including The Peter Kiewit Foundation, The Sherwood Foundation, Mutual of Omaha, Nebraska Environmental Trust and Metropolitan Utilities District.

These, as well as in-kind contributions from the City of Omaha, the Metropolitan Area Planning Agency (MAPA) and Heartland B-cycle, successfully led to the launch of ORBT.”

Future ORBT lines would be dependent on Metro’s ability to obtain similar grants. At this time, Metro’s limited resources means they must make sure to optimize their finances for the most effective use. Beyond financial feasibility, the construction of ORBT stations causes roadway closures, utility relocation, and months of construction.

Speaking of future ORBT lines. . . Metro’s strategic plan, **MetroNEXT**, evaluated a dozen corridors and identified 24th Street & 72nd Street as the highest priority for consideration of ORBT in the future.

MetroNEXT also highlighted the aim to improve signage and way-finding:

FINAL PROJECTS

Through careful analysis and consideration, the following projects have been selected for the final plan based on their ability to advance the goals of MetroNEXT and public support.

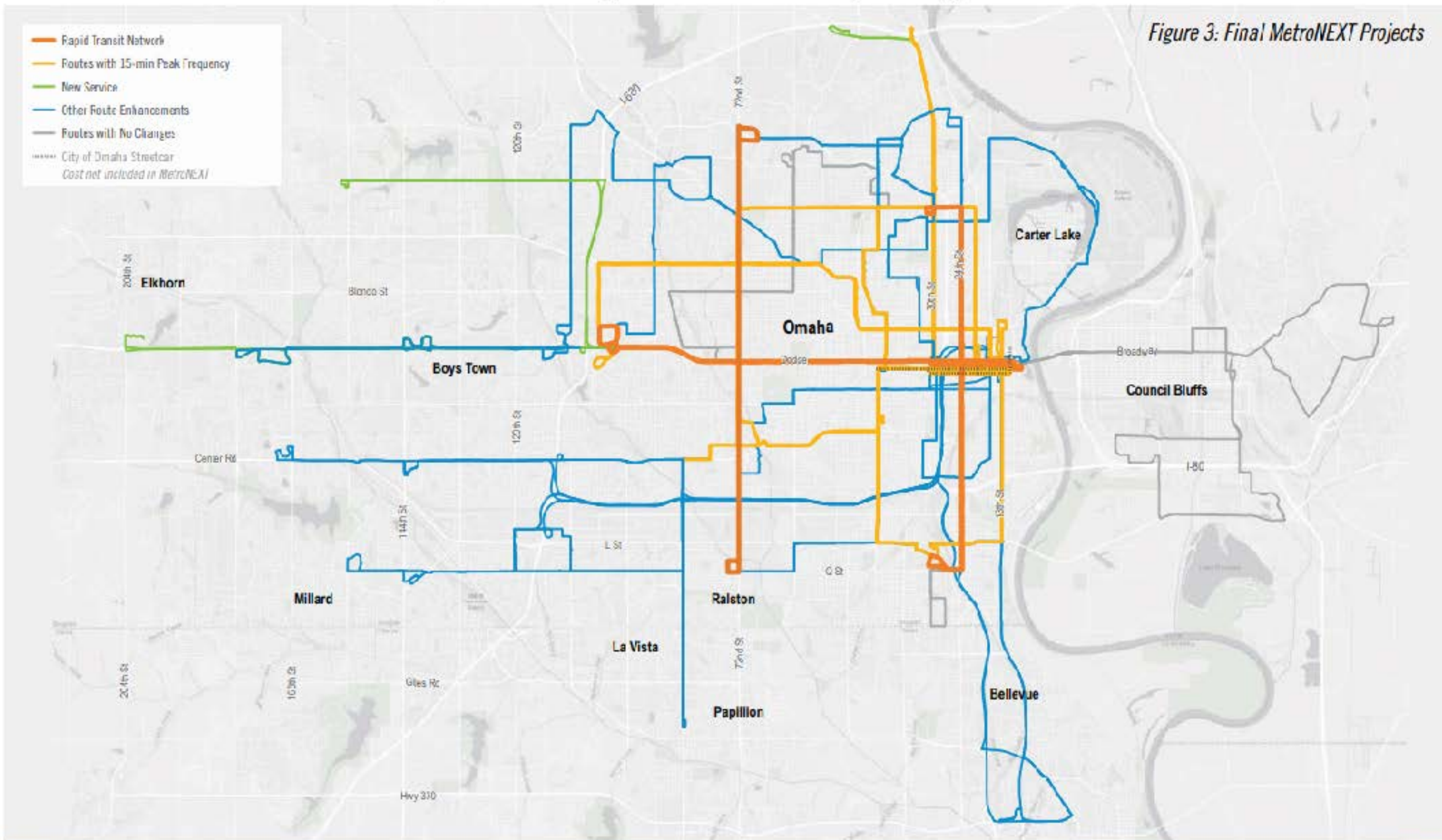


Figure 3: Final MetroNEXT Projects

- Improved signage at all bus stops
- Permanent funding for K-12 Rides Free program
- Policy allowing MOBY clients to ride the bus fare-free
- Coordination of regional vanpooling
- 50 new bus shelters with real-time arrival
- Return of most routes to pre-COVID schedules
- Expanded evening and weekend service
- 24th St transit corridor enhancements
- Frequency Improvements on Routes 3, 4, 13, 15, 30
- Extension of Route 30 to serve McKinley Road
- Expansion of service to Eppley Airport
- Extension of 92 Express service to Elkhorn
- Fort Street Express Route
- Study of 72nd St transit corridor enhancements



STUDY OF 72ND STREET TRANSIT CORRIDOR ENHANCEMENTS

Knowing the community wants to see the development of a rapid transit network, Metro will study and identify enhancements to service along 72nd Street, including consideration as a future ORBT line. In order to operate levels of service comparable to the Dodge Street ORBT line, it is estimated that additional operating funds may be necessary, which should be considered in the study process.

Check out their full MetroNEXT report for all Metro's thoughtful plans for a sustainable and equitable transit future!



IMPROVED SIGNAGE AT ALL BUS STOPS

This project will upgrade bus stop signage on all routes to include helpful rider information such as the route number(s), stop ID, website and customer service information, as well as instructions for receiving text alerts about next bus arrivals.

SAFE OMAHA STREETS

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATIONS

SUMMARY:

The SOS Road Safety Audit for 72nd Street between Dodge and Pacific ran from June 20th to July 31, 2023. This Audit area is adjacent to the future site of the new Central Library as well as the new - currently under construction Crossroads Development. The following road users participated in the Road Safety Audit: motorists, pedestrians, cyclists, and vulnerable users.

ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE NOT BUILT FOR ALL

Overall, the feedback from the Road Audit participants showed that this area of 72nd Street is built for motorists, while leaving other users feeling unwelcome and unsafe. Roads were generally considered to be in good condition by motorists, while sidewalks were considered in poor condition by pedestrians, vulnerable users, and cyclists. Participants also noted the poor condition of transit stops along this area.

COMMON THEME OF AVOIDANCE

Another common theme was that people avoid this area. This was noted by motorists, pedestrians, and cyclists. Even employees of businesses along the Audit area will access their businesses by side roads rather than drive on 72nd Street.

SUMMARY:

100% DESIRE FOR MARKED CROSSWALKS

One consistent theme across all Road Audit Surveys (motorists, pedestrians, cyclists) was a need for marked crosswalks at the 5 intersections without painted crosswalks. There was also a request for improved crosswalk amenities at the 72nd & Dodge intersection.

ENFORCEMENT

The topic of enforcement was complex with many motorists responding that more enforcement is not needed, while other road users called for more enforcement. Even those who support increased enforcement, support types of enforcement with reduced conflict between officers and the public, such as automated enforcement which is currently illegal in the State of Nebraska.

POLICY & POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS:

We are not traffic engineers or planners but we are asking for equitable and creative ideas from all leaders – here are some starting points.

Great change can come from thoughtful policy. See the 4 policy recommendations below:

SIDEWALK PROGRAM SUPPORT: More funding for additional staff or resources for the City's Sidewalk Program so that notices can be sent and work can be started in a timely manner.

- We also recommend a public/private collaborative Sidewalk Task Force to support the City in its sidewalk program, ie identifying problem areas, etc.
- Debris and blockages (including snow) of pedestrian infrastructure are most dangerous for vulnerable users such as the elderly and people who use wheelchairs. A Sidewalk Task Force could help to identify and report these problems in real-time so that issues can be remedied quickly.

POLICY & POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS:

BID: Omaha currently has 8 Business Improvement Districts/Areas. Per the Federal Highway Administration, BID's can provide sanitation support (sidewalk and public space cleaning), capital improvements (landscaping and storefront renovations), as well as work to attract consumers, commercial tenants, etc. We recommend consideration for a BID to be started along this corridor could provide the support needed to help improve this Road Audit area.

Nebraska Furniture Mart and other lucrative businesses along this corridor could provide the support needed to help improve this Road Audit area.

CROSSWALK POLICY: The City of Omaha's Crosswalk Policy (found in appendix #10) was established in 2016 and states that crosswalks are prioritized for "*designated school crossings, downtown signalized intersections, major signalized intersections in areas with heavy pedestrian activity (South Omaha, Benson, Old Market, etc), Mid-block crossings, where warranted, Intersections with high crash rates involving pedestrians, Locations where an engineering study recommends crosswalk markings.*"

While the City does not plan to update the Crosswalk Policy, it does have a goal to add more crosswalk features around the City based on both resources and engineering guidance documents.

SOS supports this goal and recommends the City also applies some type of matrix, like the Federal Highway Administration Crosswalk Matrix to the right, to further bolster their existing “warrant” and “point” evaluation system. While this matrix is from a document specific to unsignalized intersections, it’s a great resource in general.

Source: “Guide for Improving Pedestrian Safety at Uncontrolled Crossing Locations”

STATE LEVEL CHANGE:

Advocate for policy change at the State level, such as increased requirements for licensing, automated enforcement, primary distracted driving law, etc. Local leaders and advocacy groups should advocate for change at the State level to help curb poor driving behavior in their own municipalities.

Table 1. Application of pedestrian crash countermeasures by roadway feature.

Roadway Configuration	Posted Speed Limit and AADT								
	Vehicle AADT <9,000			Vehicle AADT 9,000–15,000			Vehicle AADT >15,000		
	≤30 mph	35 mph	≥40 mph	≤30 mph	35 mph	≥40 mph	≤30 mph	35 mph	≥40 mph
2 lanes (1 lane in each direction)	① 2	①	①	①	①	①	①	①	①
	4 5 6	5 6	5 6	4 5 6	5 6	5 6	4 5 6	5 6	5 6
3 lanes with raised median (1 lane in each direction)	① 2 3	① ③	① ③	① 3	① ③	① ③	① ③	① ③	① ③
	4 5	5	5	4 5	5	5	4 5	5	5
3 lanes w/o raised median (1 lane in each direction with a two-way left-turn lane)	① 2 3	① ③	① ③	① 3	① ③	① ③	① ③	① ③	① ③
	4 5 6	5 6	5 6	4 5 6	5 6	5 6	4 5 6	5 6	5 6
4+ lanes with raised median (2 or more lanes in each direction)	① ③	① ③	① ③	① ③	① ③	① ③	① ③	① ③	① ③
	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
4+ lanes w/o raised median (2 or more lanes in each direction)	① ③	① ③	① ③	① ③	① ③	① ③	① ③	① ③	① ③
	5 6	5 6	5 6	5 6	5 6	5 6	5 6	5 6	5 6

Given the set of conditions in a cell,
 # Signifies that the countermeasure is a candidate treatment at a marked uncontrolled crossing location.
 ● Signifies that the countermeasure should always be considered, but not mandated or required, based upon engineering judgment at a marked uncontrolled crossing location.
 ○ Signifies that crosswalk visibility enhancements should always occur in conjunction with other identified countermeasures.*
 The absence of a number signifies that the countermeasure is generally not an appropriate treatment, but exceptions may be considered following engineering judgment.

1 High-visibility crosswalk markings, parking restrictions on crosswalk approach, adequate nighttime lighting levels, and crossing warning signs
 2 Raised crosswalk
 3 Advance Yield Here To (Stop Here For) Pedestrians sign and yield (stop) line
 4 In-Street Pedestrian Crossing sign
 5 Curb extension
 6 Pedestrian refuge island
 7 Rectangular Rapid-Flashing Beacon (RRFB)**
 8 Road Diet
 9 Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon (PHB)**

*Refer to Chapter 4, "Using Table 1 and Table 2 to Select Countermeasures," for more information about using multiple countermeasures.
 **It should be noted that the PHB and RRFB are not both installed at the same crossing location.
 This table was developed using information from: Zegeer, C.V., J.R. Stewart, H.H. Huang, P.A. Lagerwey, J. Feggans, and B.J. Campbell. (2005). Safety effects of marked versus unmarked crosswalks at uncontrolled locations: Final report and recommended guidelines. FHWA No. FHWA-HRT-04-100, Washington, D.C.: FHWA. Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices, 2009 Edition, (revised 2012). Chapter 4F, Pedestrian Hybrid Beacons. FHWA, Washington, D.C.; FHWA. Crash Modification Factors (CMF) Clearinghouse. <http://www.cmfclearinghouse.org/>; FHWA. Pedestrian Safety Guide and Countermeasure Selection System (PEDSAFE). <http://www.pedbikesafe.org/PEDSAFE/>; Zegeer, C., R. Srinivasan, B. Lan, D. Carter, S. Smith, C. Sundstrom, N.J. Thirst, J. Zegeer, C. Lyon, E. Ferguson, and R. Van Houten. (2017). NCHRP Report 841: Development of Crash Modification Factors for Uncontrolled Pedestrian Crossing Treatments. Transportation Research Board, Washington, D.C.; Thomas, Thirst, and Zegeer. (2016). NCHRP Synthesis 498. Application of Pedestrian Crossing Treatments for Streets and Highways. Transportation Research Board, Washington, D.C.; and personal interviews with selected pedestrian safety practitioners.

DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS:

Possible design recommendations are below.

KEYSTONE ACCESS: Add an access/connection point from the vicinity of 72nd & Dodge to the existing Keystone Trail, to protect cyclists from having to ride along 72nd Street to access the new Central Library and the Crossroads development.

Similar ideas were discussed on July 12, 2023 (during the Road Audit period) at an HDR-hosted design charrette for 72nd & Dodge Street.

SPEED FEEDBACK: Add speed feedback signs along 72nd Street as an enforcement-free reminder of the speed limit and drivers' own speeds.

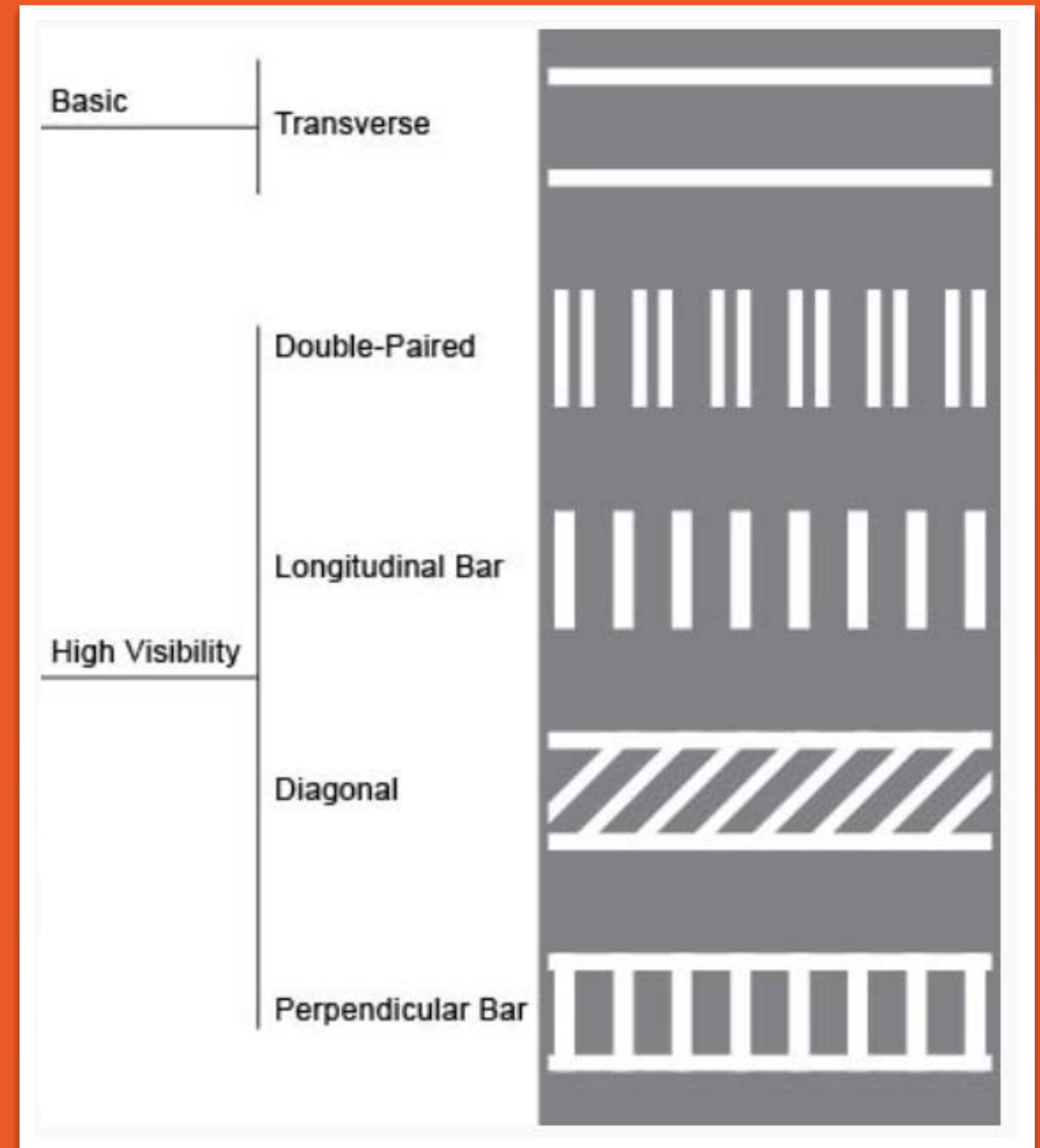
ADD CROSSWALKS: Add marked crosswalks to the five intersections along the audit area that currently have none: 72nd & Pacific, 72nd & Rose Blumkin, 72nd & Jones Street, 72nd & Jones Circle, and 72nd & Farnam. Many respondents specifically pointed to 72nd & Farnam as an intersection in dire need of a marked crosswalk due to its diagonal design.

IMPROVE CROSSWALK:

Review improvements to the existing marked crosswalk at 72nd & Dodge and consider adding two parallel lines to the existing crosswalk lines so it's more of a ladder style, similar to the "Perpendicular Bar" image to the right. The parallel lines serve as a visual cue for motorists to STOP.

72nd & Dodge includes ORBT stops and is the most pedestrian-heavy intersection along the route, thus would benefit from an improved crosswalk with a clear stop line for vehicles, as well as possibly additional lights or signage.

Source: Kittelson & Associates ["A New FHWA Guide on Why Crosswalk Marking Design Matters."](#)



DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS:

Possible design recommendations are below.

WIDER SIDEWALKS & BIGGER SETBACK: This recommendation is already covered by the requirements for new development along this corridor which will require sidewalks of at least 7 feet with an ample setback. While we wish the sidewalks could be improved immediately for all those traveling the audit area, we will have to wait for new construction. However, the ACI ensures improvements are coming.

PEDESTRIAN REFUGE MEDIANS (CONSIDERED, NOT RECOMMENDED AT THIS TIME): There are both benefits and drawbacks to refuge medians, but challenges of space are especially acute when dealing with an existing (vs new-construction) intersection such as the ones along 72nd Street. Additionally, pedestrian refuge medians are often constructed at mid-block crossings, such as the one below at 192nd & Farnam in Omaha. Notice, that this was a new construction project, thus space was less of an issue. Further, the refuge below is not located on a State Highway, like Dodge.

SOS is a proponent of refuge medians, however an immediate and less costly solution for this intersection would be to make the crossing safer for all with improved markings, possibly lights/signs, and some type of enforcement.

A pedestrian refuge SHOULD be considered as a design alternative during any possible future redesign efforts of large intersections along this corridor if space allows.



DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS:

Possible design recommendations are below.

NO RIGHT TURN ON RED (CONSIDERED, BUT NOT RECOMMENDED WITHOUT ENFORCEMENT): NRTOR signs would prevent drivers from creeping into the intersection/crosswalk. However, drivers in Omaha typically appear to ignore these signs, thus to make them truly effective, some form of enforcement would be needed.

CURB BULB-OUTS OR 90° TURNS (CONSIDERED, BUT NOT RECOMMENDED AT THIS TIME): Many respondents suggested curb bulb-outs or 90-degree turns, both of which slow down the speeds of turning drivers. Curb bulb-outs also lessen the distance pedestrians have to walk to cross the intersection. This type of design is often used on roads with parking lanes. Further, they can often be restricted to roads that are not truck routes. 72nd Street and Dodge Street are both designated truck routes and neither have parking lanes.

TRAFFIC SIGNAL TIMING ADJUSTMENT (CONSIDERED, BUT NOT RECOMMENDED AT THIS TIME): The topic of signal timing is a beast and one that SOS will not attempt to tackle in this report. Many of us don't understand signal timing, yet it affects us every day, making us angry, confused, or emotional. SOS plans to include Traffic Signal Timing as an educational topic for 2024.

FYI: All signals along the audit route have been upgraded by the City. Road users will notice the following upgrades: 1) a flashing yellow arrow in left lanes (a permissive left turn) and 2) Leading Pedestrian Interval (LPI), which brings the walk signal up for pedestrians a few seconds before ANY vehicle gets a green light. Beyond that, there are other "unseen" upgrades to the signals that provide the City with more tools for improved monitoring and management of signals and the roadway.

DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS:

Possible design recommendations are below.

PROTECTED BIKE LANE - (CONSIDERED BUT NOT RECOMMENDED): Omaha needs more protected bike lanes. However, SOS is not recommending a protected bike lane for this section of 72nd Street due to the close proximity of the Keystone Trail. To make this trail a true alternative, it needs to have more connections to businesses, infrastructure, etc.

ADD ACCESS ROAD TO REDUCE DRIVEWAY CUTS - (RECOMMENDATION FOR FUTURE): Consider adding an access road along 72nd that would reduce the number of driveway cuts, thus protecting pedestrians and vulnerable users as well as helping reduce the incidence of variable speeds due to turning vehicles.

ROAD DIET - (NOT CONSIDERED): The FHWAY typically recommends road diets for roads carrying fewer than 15,000 vehicles per day, whereas the Road Audit area carries upwards of 35,000 vehicles per day.

TRANSIT RECOMMENDATIONS:

Please see section BUS STOP AUTHORITY for more information on Metro and bus bench authority, and see our recommendations below.

Many of the recommendations suggested by survey respondents are already being considered or planned by Metro: **ORBT expansion, way-finder and sign improvement, bus review**, etc.

Some suggestions, i.e. regarding trash maintenance etc, are being considered by the City in the upcoming Bus Bench & Advertising Program contract.

Keep in mind, the problem of trash at bus stops is about more than just bags and wrappers; it's about the perception it gives to transit riders... *"You are not worthy of a clean place to wait for your bus."*

PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS: Encourage public/private partnerships to improve bus stops and shelters by sponsoring amenities at transit stops. This is already normal practice for some neighborhood groups, so why not extend the reach deeper into the corporate and business community?

TRANSIT RECOMMENDATIONS:

TRASH BINS: Because Metro typically does not allow food or drink on its buses, riders must dispose of food/beverages prior to boarding the bus. Locating trash bins at bus stops (whether at the cost of the city or at the cost of an approved private sponsor) may lessen the issue of trash. However, responsible parties must be identified to empty the trash on a regular basis.

REVENUE TO METRO: SOS is not well-versed in city finances or economic laws, but we are making a bold recommendation that all or some of the ad revenue generated from bus benches goes to Metro, the transit authority.

VOLUNTEER!: Respondents noted trash at some of the bus stops, and while the new contract with the outside vendor may require more trash pick-up, it may not be enough to keep all transit stops in a clean state. Consider volunteering for one of the established groups that work to clean up bus stops.

- The mission of the BlueBucket Project is *“to increase individual or family engagement and motivation to keep our community litter-free by providing equipment, resources and opportunity.”* The BBP includes transit stops in its clean-up efforts.

KeepOmaha Beautiful's mission is to foster environmental and community stewardship through education, service, and advocacy. KOB includes transit stops in its clean-up efforts.

ADOPT-A-BUS STOP: Beyond the organizations mentioned above, there is currently no established "Adopt-A-Bus-Stop" program, but this type of program would fill a great need in the City of Omaha.

AUTHORITY & PARTICIPATION: Last, but not least, SOS recommends that Metro's role in the process of decision-making be bolstered. One specific recommendation is to invite a Metro representative to be on the Review Committee for the Bus Bench Maintenance & Advertising Contract.



Photo courtesy of The Blue Bucket Project - location 72nd & Dodge

BEHAVIOR CHANGE RECOMMENDATIONS:

While some driver behavior can be improved by road design, oftentimes a cultural shift is needed to change bad driver behavior.

EDUCATIONAL CAMPAIGNS: Driving around Omaha, you may wonder sometimes if anyone actually knows the rules of the road. The City, local leaders, and local advocacy groups should continue to educate residents on the rules of the road. SOS, the Nebraska Chapter of the National Safety Council, Project Extra Mile, Modeshift Omaha, and many other organizations work hard to fill in the gaps in driver knowledge. Let's keep it up!

ENCOURAGE MORE PUBLIC TRANSIT USE: Encouraging residents to be more multimodal can reduce traffic congestion along the audit area and throughout the city, as well as boost ridership and thereby improve opportunities for public transit.

MAKE YOURSELF HEARD: Whether it's notifying the Police Department about reckless drivers or notifying the City about infrastructure, residents should be a part of the solution and notify the City and Police Department about complaints. Keep in touch with your city council representatives too! Use the avenues to make your voice heard.

ENFORCEMENT & RECOMMENDATIONS:

Even with the best road design, there are still times when enforcement is warranted, especially when it comes to red light running, speed infractions (both driving too slow and too fast), and impairment. All the rules in the world won't make a difference in safety if people aren't incentivized to follow them.

INCREASED FUNDING FOR THE TRAFFIC UNIT: As of August 2023, the Omaha Police Department is currently down by 99 officers. Additionally, the Omaha Police Department's Traffic Unit currently (as of July 2023) employs 34 traffic officers whereas in 2014, the traffic unit had 39 officers. As Omaha's population increases, the size of the Traffic Unit has decreased. If increased funding is going to the Omaha Police Department, staffing for the Traffic Unit should be a priority.

ON-FOOT INTERSECTION ENFORCEMENT: There is often mistrust or fear between residents and police, thus we recommend enforcement events at intersections with known multimodal activity where uniformed officers are on foot patrol. Officers could encourage motorists to not enter the crosswalk, assist pedestrians and vulnerable users while crossing, and be generally visible to ALL road users. An event like this could include issuing citations or it could simply be a visibility event, similar to when the Traffic Unit directs traffic during large events, but with more of an emphasis on driver infractions in intersections. The intersection of 72nd & Dodge would be a great place for a pilot project such as this.

ENFORCEMENT & RECOMMENDATIONS:

ENCOURAGE MORE PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN OPD & PUBLIC: Oftentimes, there is an “us vs them” mentality when it comes to citizens and police. Encouraging more dialog and events between the OPD and local citizens and advocacy groups will help educate all parties as well as potentially mollify any tensions.

MORE HIGH VISIBILITY ENFORCEMENT: It wasn't until SOS was appointed to the Vision Zero Technical Advisory Committee that we learned about High Visibility Enforcement. HVE is as much educational as it is enforcement. In opposition to traditional enforcement strategies, HVE is designed to make enforcement efforts obvious to the public via media publicity, electronic message boards, road signs, etc.

PLANNING & PLANNING RECOMMENDATIONS:

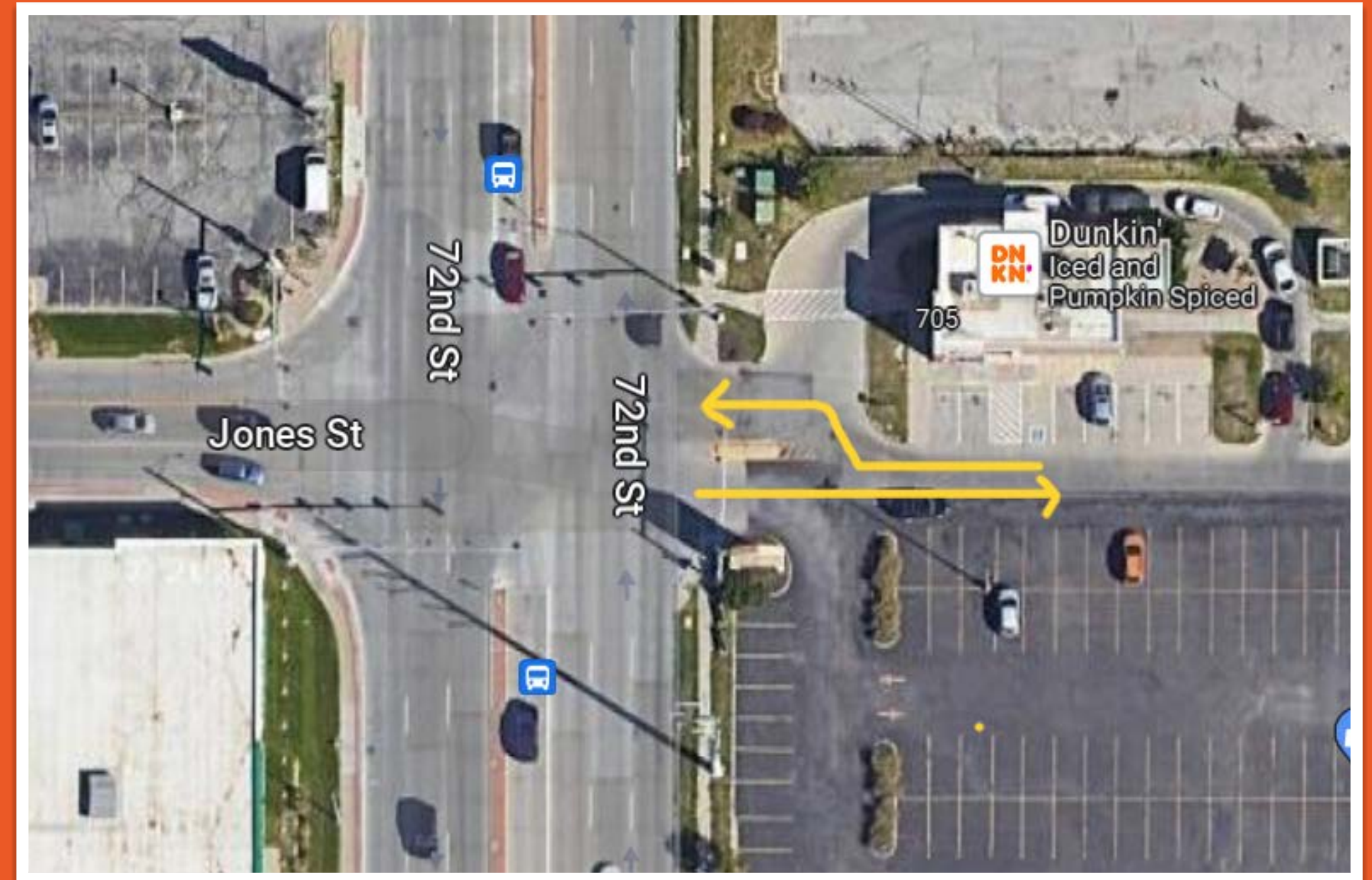
Many survey participants noted issues of planning along the Audit Area, including vacant or run-down properties, too many driveway cuts, and the awkward siting of the Dunkin Donuts building at 72nd & Jones Street.

The ACI overlay district, discussed earlier in this report, will ensure improvements to this area are conducted when properties are redeveloped or when new construction occurs. This overlay district requires wider sidewalks and other enhancements based on urban design principles that encourage an active pedestrian environment.

A couple of survey respondents commented on the awkward placement of the Dunkin Donuts near 72nd & Jones Street which causes motorists to jog to the north when exiting the parking lot.

The Dunkin Donut business was properly zoned for use, and the property didn't need to be subdivided, thus the project did not require City Council approval. However, the Omaha Planning Department recommended **against** the location of this building, but the developers did not follow suit.

HEED RECOMMENDATIONS: When the Planning Department offers sound and reasonable guidance, the developers should heed the guidance of the Planning Department.



STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS:

FULL ROAD SAFETY AUDIT ON 72ND CORRIDOR AND ACROSS CITY: A complete road safety audit that includes all stakeholders can reduce crashes by 10 to 60%. We recommend that the City or other agencies spearhead comprehensive road safety audits, and include aspects such as how actual speeds affect the effectiveness of traffic signal timing, permissive yellow arrows, and other aspects of design etc.

SPEED AUDIT ALONG 72ND CORRIDOR AND ACROSS CITY: Conducting a speed audit - rather than a full road safety audit - is an effective and efficient way to collect important data. This could be done by the City, local agencies, or local advocacy groups. If the majority of drivers are not going the speed limit, then the infrastructure cannot work the way it was intended. Speed Audit results should be shared with OPD.

VISION ZERO RECOMMENDATIONS:

The City of Omaha's Vision Zero Action Plan is nearing completion (as of October 2023) and will be presented to the Omaha City Council in Fall of 2023. As SOS is represented on the Vision Zero Technical Advisory Committee, we are aware of the recommendations that will be included in the forthcoming action plan. Many of our recommendations for 72nd Street overlap with city-wide recommendations in the Vision Zero Action Plan.

LIMITATIONS:

Like any research project, our Road Safety Audit had some limitations, such as:

PARTICIPATION: While we were THRILLED to have 30 Road Safety Audit forms submitted, that's a tiny percentage of the several thousand drivers and several dozen pedestrians who use the road audit area on a daily basis.

PARTICIPANTS: No Motorcyclists: We had motorists, pedestrians, vulnerable users, and cyclists all participate in our Road Safety Audit. However, we had zero motorcyclists participate, which is a limitation when considering we received no feedback from that particular user group. We hope that more motorcyclists will be encouraged to give feedback on their experience as riders around Omaha. Omaha has lost 5 residents this year in motorcycle fatalities!

SURVEY TIMING: None of the Road Safety Audit surveys were conducted outside of daylight hours, and the majority of the motorist surveys were conducted on weekends. Thus, feedback for the road audit area for nighttime hours and weekday rush hour was lacking. Further, our audit took place during the Summer, thereby limiting feedback on how snow removal policies in the City affect the road audit area.

DESIGNATIONS: Dodge Street is designated as a State Highway, which means the Nebraska Department of Transportation needs to be involved in any design changes. Both 72nd Street and Dodge Street are designated as Truck Routes. Both of these designations can restrict possible design options.

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We are incredibly proud of this report, but we didn't - and couldn't have - done it alone. Below is a list of folks who made this report possible, whether by participating in the audit, replying to the cyclist survey, or providing informative feedback. Thank you to all for being generous with your time and knowledge!

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Kelechi Chibuikem (Metro)
Alicia Andry (Metro)

The Durham Museum

*Employees of Shepphard's Business Interiors,
Boot Barn, Interstate Batteries, B Collision,
Mattress Firm, Aksarben TV, Trek, Brick Oven
pizzeria, Bike & Trike Outlet, Ponderosa
Cyclery, and Jock & Jill's Popcorn*

Matt Sinor (our web wizard)

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1	<u>6-Question Cycling Survey</u>
Appendix 2	<u>Motorists & Motorcyclists Audit Survey Form</u>
Appendix 3	<u>Pedestrian & Vulnerable Users Audit Survey Form</u>
Appendix 4	<u>Cyclists' Audit Survey Form</u>
Appendix 5	<u>Press Release</u>
Appendix 6	<u>Complete Results from the Motorists' Audits</u>
Appendix 7	<u>Complete Results from the Pedestrian & Vulnerable Users' Audits</u>
Appendix 8	<u>Complete Results from the Cyclists' Audits & the 6-Question Cycling Survey</u>
Appendix 9	<u>2022 City of Omaha Automated Pedestrian & Bicycle Counter Program Report</u>
Appendix 10	<u>Crosswalk Policy</u>