

City of Bellevue

# **CURB MANAGEMENT PLAN**

## **Appendix C: Engagement Summary**

2023



DRAFT 2023-04-07

# ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

## Bellevue Curb Management Plan

### OVERVIEW

The Curb Management Plan (CMP) aims to establish new policies and guidance on how curb areas should be designed, maintained, allocated, and operated over time. A series of public engagement activities were conducted from January through April 2022 to inform the development of the CMP and ensure that it reflects the community's goals and vision.

Curb management is a broad, intersectional area of planning that has the potential to impact many different types of people and activities. Nonetheless, it can be a challenging topic to engage general members of the public. Jargon can create a barrier to people who aren't familiar with the topic, and curb-related challenges can often seem less urgent than other topics of community concern.

Given these typical challenges, the project team devised a targeted engagement approach to support the CMP. In addition to broad community outreach, the project team sought to engage subject matter experts, City decision-makers, and vested stakeholders who could provide a perspective of broader audiences and populations. Since the project focuses attention on the Urban Core neighborhoods of Bellevue, much of the targeted outreach was focused on how to best manage high-demand curb locations and situations, rather than address concerns in less dense areas of town. As the City moves forward with priority initiatives following the completion of the CMP, there will be ongoing opportunities to directly engage key members of the public about specific aspects of curb management.

### Engagement Activities Conducted in early 2022

Engagement activities conducted in support the CMP included:

- A series of six **focus groups**, each of which covered a key theme or topic area related to curb management. Focus groups were conducted virtually. Each group included 5 - 10 participants and 1 - 2 facilitators from the CMP team. Groups were customized to represent a broad range of curb users.
- An online **curb management questionnaire**, which was hosted on the EngagingBellevue.com platform. The questionnaire was open from February 17 through April 15, 2022, and included a series of text-based multiple-choice questions and a mapping component.
- A **Curb Summit**, which was a full-day virtual event held on March 29, 2022, that included informational segments, panels of local and national curb experts, and collaborative breakout group sessions. The summit included a morning session

that was open to members of the public and an afternoon practitioners' workshop for invited stakeholders and City staff.

## **Key Themes**

### **The Curb Management Plan should make the curb safer and more equitable**

- Equity was identified as a top priority for curb management in Bellevue across many different stakeholder groups and within many different discussion topics.
- Stakeholders also emphasized the importance of safe curb access for all modes and curb users. Some stakeholders, including transportation advocates, voiced support for a “vision zero” approach to curb safety in Bellevue.
- Stakeholders identified improved lighting and reduced speed limits as two opportunities to improve safety for pedestrians.
- Participants in several of the focus group conversations expressed the desire for safe and separated bicycle facilities to support safe bicycling and to encourage mode shift from single occupancy vehicles to sustainable modes.
- Stakeholders underscored the importance of supporting safe access to transit and recognized the variety of safety challenges that can arise in areas where transit vehicles, pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers all intersect. Accessible transit stop design and safe bicycle facility treatments were identified as opportunities to create safer curb environments near transit services.

### **The allocation of space at the curb in Bellevue does not adequately balance the needs of all users**

- Focus group discussions highlighted the need to better address the needs of freight and delivery services. Creating additional designated loading zones in strategic areas could reduce double parking, streamline commercial freight operations, and create a safer environment for drivers, pedestrians, and cyclists.
- Survey respondents expressed strong support for converting some on-street parking spaces to outdoor dining areas, green spaces, and seating areas.
- Local business owners and survey respondents expressed a vision for a more vibrant, welcoming curb environment that included a variety of uses and activities.
- Focus group participants and curb summit attendees recognized the need for the curb to better address the needs of all travel modes to meet growing demand and pressures.
- Some stakeholders recognized the potential for designated passenger pickup/drop-off locations to alleviate some congestion and confusion. However, they also noted that TNC users and other customers who have grown accustomed to unrestricted access may see the change as an inconvenience.

**Bellevue’s approach to the curb should be equitable and inclusive**

- The permitting process for alternative curb uses was noted in both focus groups and the Curb Summit as a barrier to inclusive curb use. Participants felt that streamlining the permit process for developers, restaurant owners, and employee shuttles to utilize the curb would improve curbside outcomes and operations.

**Pricing and equitable enforcement could help Bellevue achieve its curb goals**

- Curb summit attendees recognized the important role that curbside pricing plays in managing demand at the curb, especially for on-street parking.
- Transportation advocates expressed desire for a consistent and standardized permitting and pricing structure that includes all curb uses.
- Focus group participants and curb summit attendees identified clear and consistent signage as a tool to support more equitable enforcement at the curb.
- Survey respondents and members of focus groups emphasized the potential public pushback of moving to a paid parking model but were excited by the potential to have revenues potentially be used to improve enforcement operations and create more vibrant streetscapes.

**New technologies and digital tools will present new opportunities for curb management, but many stakeholders urged caution**

- Curb summit attendees identified a range of potential applications for digital curb management tools, including helping people find available parking, managing payments and permits, and creating an online marketplace for publicly available private parking spaces.
- Some stakeholders identified the potential for digital tools to help make curb management and enforcement more efficient.
- Stakeholders also recognized that many curb users prefer to interact with people rather than digital or automated systems, and that digital-only systems could be inaccessible for some users.
- While many stakeholders identified the need for better data to support equitable enforcement and inform decision-making, they also recognized the potential for data to mislead, misinform, and exacerbate inequality.
- Engaging Bellevue survey respondents indicated very low interest in leveraging new technologies or tracking autonomous vehicle development for curb management.

## DETAILS: FOCUS GROUPS

The project team convened six virtual focus groups between March 1 and March 24, 2022. Each group addressed a different curb management topic and perspective. Table 1 summarizes the topic areas, dates, and attendees for each of the six focus groups.

All six of the focus group conversations were structured in three parts:

1. **Level-setting** – how participants relate to the curb and what outcomes they would like to see from the curb management plan
2. **The curb today** – impressions and assessments about how the curb is working today and what curb-related challenges stakeholders are facing
3. **The curb tomorrow** – impressions and assessments about what changes stakeholders are anticipating and what new challenges or opportunities could arise in the next 0-5 years

**Table 1 Focus group topics and invitees**

Topic	Date	Groups Represented
Mobility service perspective	3/1/2022	Lime, Delivery Express, Veo Ride, King County Metro, Lyft, Uber, Green Cab Taxi, Gig Car Share, Spin, Sound Transit
Local business perspective	3/3/2022	Kemper Development/Bellevue Collection, Visit Bellevue
Developer perspective	3/10/2022	Bellevue Collection, General Contractors Wright Runstad & Co, Vulcan, GLY Construction, Wallace Properties, GIS International
Transportation advocates	3/15/2022	Bellevue Downtown Association, Move Redmond, Complete Streets Bellevue (written feedback)
Regional employers	3/18/2022	TransWest, Bellevue Downtown Association, Microsoft Commute Team, JLL, Meydenbauer Center, Symetra. PACCAR
Residents	3/24/2022	Bellevue residents (downtown and elsewhere), Bellevue Towers HOA

### Notes and themes: mobility service providers

#### OPERATIONAL NEEDS

- Accessible features (landing pads, ramps) needed for transit bus riders boarding/alighting
- Bus layover spaces needed at the curb
- Short time-limited parking needed for passenger and delivery loading
- Vehicle queuing needed for taxi and ride-hailing services
- Designated parking and charging needed for shared micromobility devices

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- Fleet electrification support will be needed

**SUCCESS MEANS...**

- No impediments to boarding/alighting the bus
- Lower single-occupancy vehicle dependency
- Seamless passenger and goods loading
- Safe interactions between biking and buses

**FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES**

- More partnerships among public agencies, private sector solutions, and researchers
- Repurposing traditional on-street vehicle parking
- More regional grant opportunities for multimodal facilities (bike lanes, sidewalks, enhanced bus stops)
- Electrification
- District parking model that consolidates on-site and off-site parking inventory

**Notes and themes: local businesses**

**OPERATIONAL NEEDS**

- Designated passenger pickup/drop-off zone needed for customers riding Uber/Lyft
- Walkable connections across districts and neighborhood needed for residents and customers
- Events and programming like art performances needed for the vitality of Bellevue

**SUCCESS MEANS...**

- More people walking on the sidewalk
- Welcoming and vibrant public space (sidewalk space)
- Accessible (ramps, unobstructed) curb and sidewalk space

**FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES**

- More programming and events on the sidewalks
- More street level mixed use needs mixed use curbs
- More flexible use of the curb to encourage turnover, balance costs with risks

**Notes and themes: developers**

**OPERATIONAL NEEDS**

- Safe pedestrian access and use of sidewalk needed during construction

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- Streamlined approval process for day-to-day operations needed for property managers
- Active enforcement needed for vehicles parking in the travel lane for passenger and delivery loading

**SUCCESS MEANS...**

- Embracing and managing future innovations like autonomous vehicle
- Ability to change use accordingly
- A "playbook" - clear path to how to apply and find permits

**FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES**

- More street vibrancy from outdoor dining
- More population growth management from the city
- New technology that brings about shared and real-time information
- More information about long-term parking

**Notes and themes: transportation advocates**

**OPERATIONAL NEEDS**

- Build separated and designated bike lanes to connect to Link Stations
- Establish consistent and standardized permitting and pricing arrangement needed for all uses
- Develop extended bus platforms that are integrated with bike lanes for a better transit experience

**SUCCESS MEANS...**

- Integrating with Vision Zero safety programs
- Creating well-maintained bus stops with shelters
- Marketing the fact that the curb is for public use

**FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES**

- Create more universally accessible transportation options for people with disabilities
- Lessen focus on vehicle parking
- Create more bikeable and walkable streets
- Prioritize pedestrians using buses

**Notes and themes: regional employers**

**OPERATIONAL NEEDS**

- Designate shuttle pickup/drop-off zone needed for large employer shuttles

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- Prompt city announcements about street and sidewalk closure needed for employees
- Establish clear path to "renting" curb space via a fee or permit needed for shuttle service and queuing for employees

**SUCCESS MEANS...**

- Creating consistent signage and enforcement for designated curb use
- Creating multiple curb uses designated at different times of the day
- Creating shared employer shuttle and transit stop locations

**FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES**

- More employee travel demand management from the city
- More multi-tenant offices that have varying and aggregated curb use
- More mode shift from driving alone to transit, biking, and walking
- More first-last-mile connections

**Notes and themes: residents**

**OPERATIONAL NEEDS**

- Separate/designated bike lanes
- Easy and available parking spaces
- Walkable sidewalk space (unobstructed from constructions)
- Organized use at the curb needed to prevent traffic congestion

**SUCCESS MEANS...**

- No excessive delays or wait times at the curb
- Safety and clarity for what's allowed and not allowed

**FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES**

- More population growth management from the city
- Increased retail and commercial opportunities outside of Downtown core
- More parking garages
- More electric vehicle charging stations
- More services and activities like nightlife, walkable streets, and other activities accommodated by densified downtown core

**DETAILS: QUESTIONNAIRE**

The project team developed and administered a public questionnaire about curb management topics, perceptions, and priorities. The questionnaire, which was hosted on EngagingBellevue.com, included a series of text questions as well as a map-based



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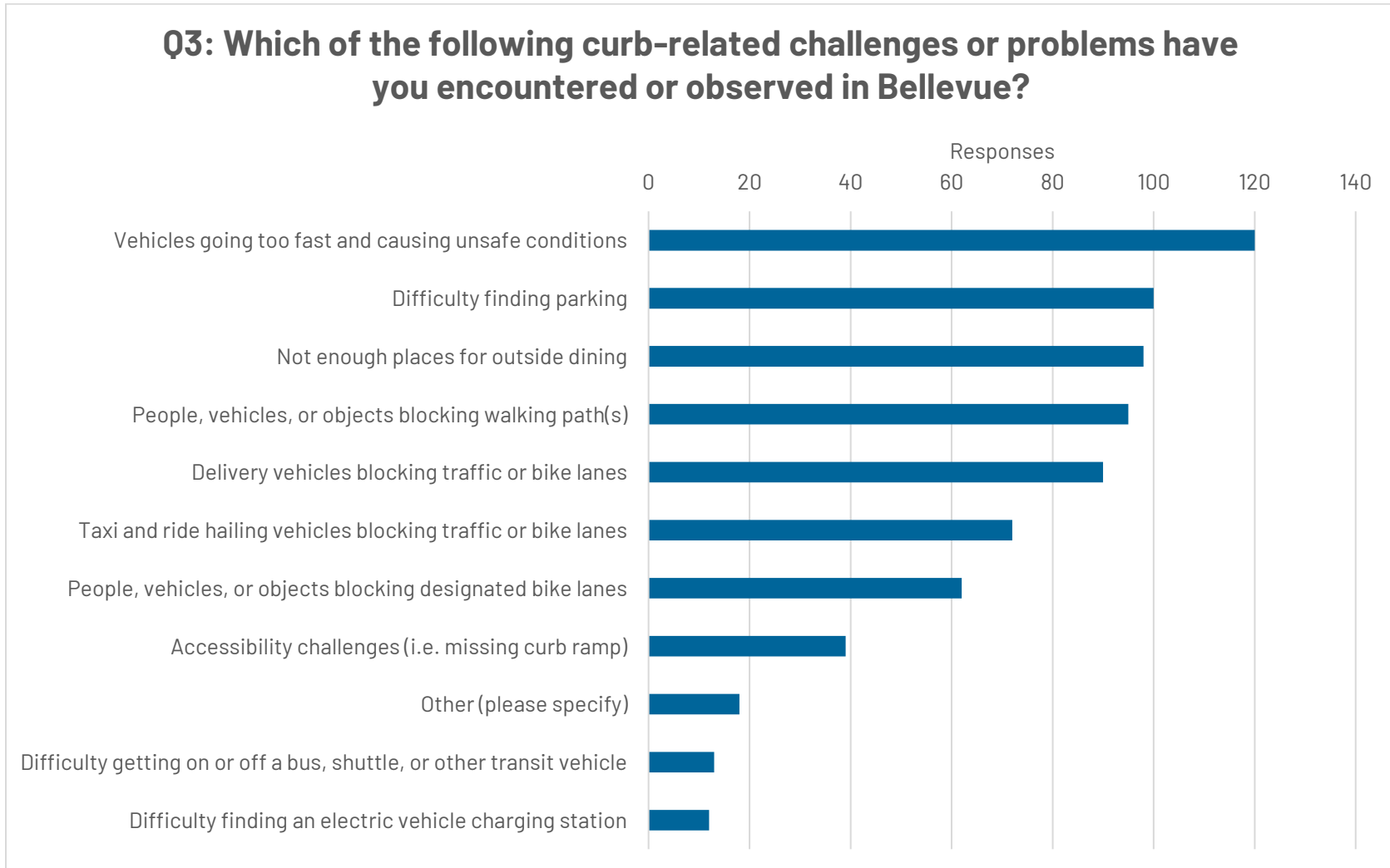
component. Between February 17<sup>th</sup> and April 15<sup>th</sup>, the questionnaire received 196 responses. A selection of responses is summarized in Figure 1- Figure 3. The complete results for all survey questions are included in the [summary report](#).

Themes observed in survey responses included:

- **Pedestrian safety** - Respondents expressed concern for unsafe conditions caused by fast-moving vehicles (Figure 1), support for wider sidewalks (Figure 2), and interest in curb management strategies that would support safety for all modes including pedestrians (Figure 3).
- **Parking supply vs. information** – Although respondents cited difficulty finding available parking as a common challenge (Figure 1), respondents expressed strong support for converting on-street parking to other uses and limited support for converting travel lanes to parking during off-peak hours (Figure 2).
- **Space for freight and loading** – Respondents expressed limited interest in creating more space for commercial loading and freight. This contrasts with findings from focus group discussions, which identified a strong need to better support of commercial loading and freight services.
- **Future challenges and opportunities** – Respondents identified growth and new development as the greatest curb-related challenge in the next five years and identified the potential to make Bellevue less car-centric and more people-centric as the greatest opportunity (questions 6 and 8).
- **Low interest in new technology** – Respondents expressed low interest or support for technology-driven curb solutions or opportunities such as drones, autonomous vehicles, and curb information systems (questions 5 and 6).

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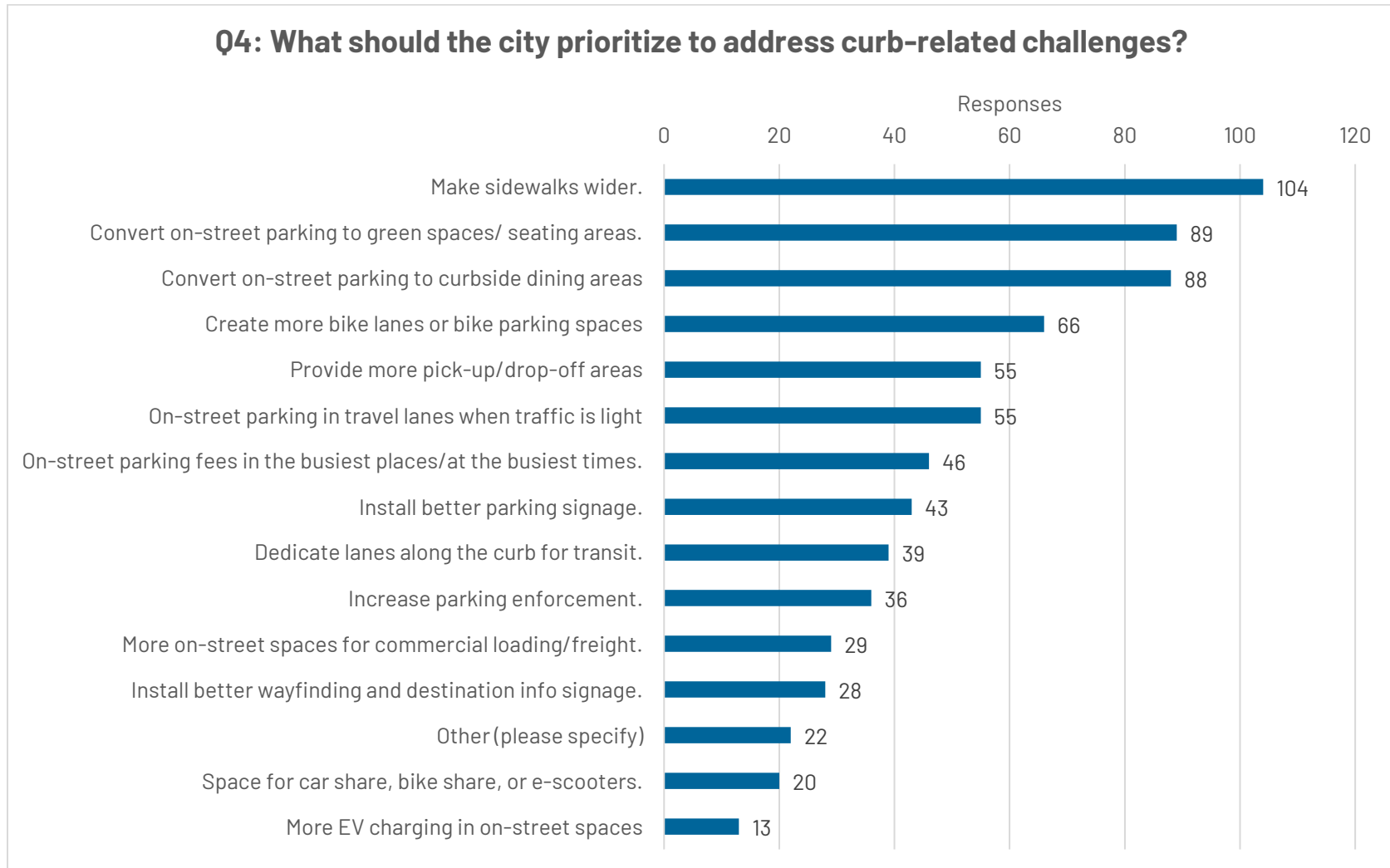
**Figure 1** Question 3 results



Note: responses have been simplified to fit chart format. For original text and full results, see [Summary Report](#).

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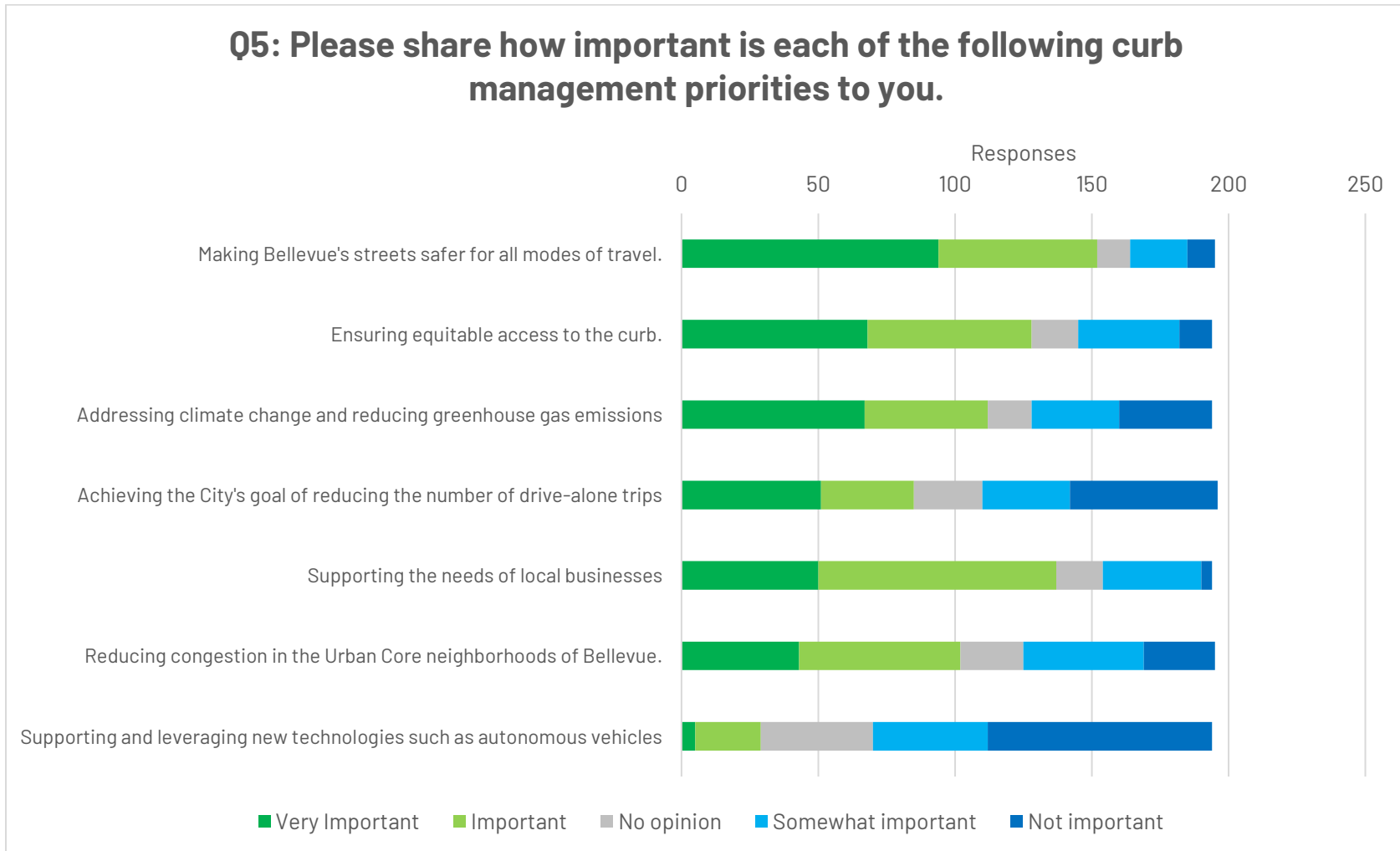
Figure 2 Question 4 results



Note: responses have been simplified to fit chart format. For original text and full results, see [Summary Report](#).

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**Figure 3 Question 5 results**



Note: responses have been simplified to fit chart format. For original text and full results, see [Summary Report](#).

## DETAILS: CURB SUMMIT

The project team facilitated a virtual Curb Summit event on March 29<sup>th</sup>, 2022. over Zoom. The goal of the Curb Summit was to convene representatives from cities, agencies, community organizations, and other curb-related stakeholder groups and facilitate discussion about curb management challenges and opportunities, best practices, policy approaches, and potential partnerships.

The curb summit was divided into two sessions. The morning session was open to general members of the public and focused on building a common understanding of curb management goals, challenges, and opportunities. 74 people, including facilitators, participated in the morning session. The agenda for the morning session included:

- A presentation of initial findings about the state of the curb in Bellevue
- A curb users perspective panel, which focused on the challenges and experiences of different types of curb users and included a question-and-answer session with representatives of different types of curb user groups
- A city showcase, which included brief presentations and a question-and-answer session with curb practitioners from other cities across the country

The afternoon session was a practitioners' workshop and was open to invitees only. The practitioners' workshop was focused on curb policy development and implementation. 32 people, including facilitators, participated in the afternoon session. The agenda for the afternoon session included:

- A real-time poll of participants using Mentimeter
- A set of four breakout sessions to crowdsource curb management strategies and policy ideas
- A collaborative report-out and prioritization session to share breakout session findings and identify priority actions
- A check-out process to encourage curb summit participants to commit to carrying forward action items and next steps

## Breakout Session Notes

Breakout sessions conducted during the afternoon session were focused on four topic areas: flexible curb use, digital curb, optimized curb use, and the curb experience. Policy priorities and implementation considerations for each session are summarized below.

### Flexible Curb Use

#### POLICY/MANAGEMENT TOOL

- Create mechanism to inform the allocation of curb space based on need – each block/zone is different
- Create user-friendly guidebook for determining treatments and permit systems at any given curb space

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- General need to have "a plan" for managing a variety of curb uses (e.g., employer shuttles)
- Add activation and connection/walkability as goals

**IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS**

- "Reliability among flexibility" – the curb will evolve as the city evolves
- Note what can and cannot be controlled – and "defensively" design around the latter to prioritize safety
- Create tools to measure curb supply and demand, and find new ways to monitor curb needs or use over time as it evolves
- Determine short, medium, and long-range curb allocation needs
- Create physical and digital infrastructure pairs that provide clear operational rules
- Ensure resiliency in digital infrastructure systems (i.e., ensuring information is up to date)
- Ensure "Connective tissue" between certain active nodes that help make superblocks in downtown more connected to nearby streets, areas, and destinations
- Establish real-time curb usage tools
- Create better enforcement
- Anticipate increased pedestrian flow around new stations
- Incorporate redundancies
- Make it easy to follow rules

## **Digital Curb**

**POLICY/MANAGEMENT TOOL**

- Parking Availability Tools
  - Research Public and Private (lots and loading bays) systems
- Enforcement Tools
  - How do you ensure equitability in enforcement?
- Data Collection and Decision-Making Tools (and Merging Datasets)
  - How do we focus on and measure outcomes?
  - How do we bring data sets together to make decisions (i.e. – congestion, emissions, safety, static asset data, etc.)?
- Payment Marketplace
  - Can we create a parking marketplace that crosses public and private sectors (covers both on-street and off-street parking supply)?

**IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATION**

- Privacy and Security

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- How do we use tools but avoid surveillance?
- Operational Updates
  - How do we make sure that the digital and physical are always in alignment?
- Coding Bias
  - How do we make sure that any biases we might already have aren't digitized into the system?
- Human Interaction
  - How do we make sure there is still some level of redundancy and human interaction?

**PRICING TOOLS**

- Pricing
  - Establish clear goals and communication strategies, including messaging how revenues will be used
  - Coordinate with off-street parking areas
  - Develop dynamic system which is data-driven and reflects time-of-day needs
  - Distinguish permitting (temporary) & curb allocation (permanent) needs
  - Develop a clear prioritization framework
  - Streamline internal decision-making process
  - Establish consistent and fair pricing model, and incentivize what we want to see more of
  - Note the “art” of public policy: create rules that are clear and consistent, yet allow for appropriate amount of flexibility and judgement

**IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATION**

- How do we address spillover parking? How much might this happen?
- Note potential demand shift to off-street parking sites. How much will this happen? What are the impacts?
- Explore possibility of public/private management

**Better Curb Experience**

**POLICY/MANAGEMENT TOOL**

- Create multi-functional, context sensitive curb elements
  - Planter design: continuous landscape planter vs. space between planters
  - Lighting
  - Artwork
- Develop prioritization framework for modal considerations
- Develop clear, easy to understand signage/explanations for all users

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- Develop thoughtful and consistent wayfinding/navigation tools
  - Color-coding for uses
  - Thematic blocks/streets vs. Predictability
- Ensure ADA and accessibility needs

**IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATION**

- Communicate clearly with the community during both major curb changes and regular use
- Think about dynamic physical elements: seasonality, special events
- Balance private parcel use with curb expectations (off-street parking, loading, etc.)
- Develop “futureproof” curbs: lay conduit for future power needs, anticipate EV charging potential, etc.
- Focus on the “curb feeling” we're trying to create, and how to link elements together