REIMAGINE MONTCLAIR

an initiative led by Bike & Walk Montclair
Overview

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“Covid Streets” - The New Normal

We are living through unprecedented and uncertain times. Times that have disrupted society in countless ways and forced us to ask questions that are long overdue. One of the many critical questions being, “What (and who) are streets for?” For three months, we have observed a dramatic increase in the number of people getting around town by means other than their car. As we transition slowly from Covid response to recovery, and perhaps back into covid response next Fall, our streets must provide better, safer options for those living, working and playing across all four wards.
PURPOSE OF PRESENTATION

Over the past two weeks, Bike & Walk Montclair circulated "Reimagine Montclair", a Covid-19 Street Response and recovery-focused survey to over 3,000 people and as of tonight is approaching 1000 respondents. The survey sought feedback and public opinion on renderings and visuals depicting ways in which other towns have repurposed their streets, sidewalk and public spaces to address the on-going pandemic.

This presentation to the council seeks to accomplish 3 things.

1. **Provide background information**, evidence and local context that establishes the urgency of the moment and the role that our streets, sidewalks and public spaces need to play to meet that urgency.

2. **Communicate the results** and key findings of the Reimagine Montclair survey.

3. **Present a call-to-action** that asks this council to quickly form an Emergency Covid Street Response Committee.
“Reimagine Montclair” is an ongoing initiative led by Bike and Walk Montclair that educates and advocates for streets, sidewalks and public spaces that balance the amount of space dedicated to the movement and storage of cars with that of pedestrians and bikes.

As our campaign logo seeks to portray, Reimagine Montclair recognizes that a truly equitable system of mobility will only come about through street designs and infrastructure that allows for a coexistence of ALL modes of transportation.
THE URGENCY OF NOW

In this time of Covid-19, which has witnessed a dramatic increase in both walking and biking along with decrease in car traffic, many other towns in New Jersey (Metuchen, Red Bank, Princeton, Ridgewood, have responded by passing emergency “Covid-street resolutions.” It is imperative that Montclair **reimagine** our streets in ways that meet the demands of this increase while also supporting the need for proper social distancing.

**Princeton Resolution**
In an effort to gauge our community’s interest in trying some of these covid-related emergency street responses, Bike & Walk Montclair distributed a survey seeking reactions to renderings of designs similar to the re-designs currently being implemented in other municipalities.
It is our best estimate that the survey was delivered to close to between 3,500 and 4,000 people. Some of the recipients include:

- Aging in Montclair
- Montclair Center BID
- Bike & Walk Montclair
- Watchung Business District
- Euclid Pl. Neighborhood Assoc.
- Montclair Planning Board
- Montclair YMCA
- The Montclair Times
- Montclair Literary Festival
- Dance on The Lawn
- Highland Ave Neighborhood Assoc.
- Make Music Day
- Montclair Local
- Department of Parks & Recreation
- Dept. of Senior - Lifelong Montclair
- Arterial Street Design
- Montclair Bounce
- Montclair Design Week
- Montclair High School
- South End Business District
- Upper Montclair Business District
- Montclair Town Council
- Montclair State University
- Cloverhill St. Neighborhood Assoc.
- Department of Environmental Affairs
- Department of Rec and Cultural Affairs
- Pedestrian Safety Advisory Committee
- Montclair Film Festival
- Montclair Public Library
- Montclair Planning Board
- Montclair Department of Land Use
- Dept. of Health and Human Services
- Montclair Brewery
- Fresh Air Montclair
In distributing our survey, we sought opinions and feedback from anyone, of any age who either lives, works, plays or visit Montclair.

Question 1. What is your relationship to Montclair?

922 responses

- I live here: 731 (79.3%)
- I work here: 195 (21.1%)
- I operate a business here: 138 (15%)
- Other: 191 (20.7%)
Respondents had the option to identify their age bracket.

What is your age?

776 responses
On business district or commercial streets, temporary redesigns can allow for comfortable and safe mobility, increased foot traffic, calmed car traffic, open air socializing and seating, and convenient socially distanced curbside pick-up.
80% of respondents say the temporary changes to business districts are either extremely or very appealing.
Respondents were then shown images that: through temporary redesigns can allow for parking, and local automotive traffic, while discouraging thru traffic and high speeds to empower residents to use the public space for socially-distant exercise, transportation, or leisure. Different potential solutions could be adopted, including:

- Removal of some or all of on-street parking from either one or both sides of the street.
- Making certain streets only one-way roads.
- Closing streets to only allow local car travel.
80% of respondents found the changes extremely or very appealing for residential streets in Montclair.
Montclair Reimagined

Finally, respondents were shown images “closer to home”. They were shown ideas of how these concepts could be applied to residential streets, Bloomfield Ave and other business districts in town. They were told the renderings were NOT specific proposals, but would help them to **imagine** what it could feel like to walk, bike and get around in Montclair during the Covid-19 recovery period.

Euclid Place  
Walnut Street  
Bloomfield Avenue
Question #4 - How appealing is this type of temporary change to a Montclair residential street to?

889 responses

- Not at all appealing: 84 (9.4%)
- Somewhat Not Appealing: 60 (6.7%)
- Neutral: 116 (13%)
- Somewhat Appealing: 147 (16.9%)
- Very Appealing: 462 (54.2%)

What if...
Question #5 - How appealing are these temporary changes to Bloomfield Avenue to you?

909 responses

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Not at all appealing | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Very Appealing | 5 |

Survey results
Question #6 - How appealing are these temporary changes to a Montclair Business District (Walnut-Watchung-Upper Montclair) street to you?

918 responses

Not at all appealing

1 2 3 4 5

Very Appealing

652 (60.1%)

58 (6.1%) 44 (4.8%) 90 (9.8%) 176 (19.2%)

0 200 400 600
In summary, Bike & Walk Montclair is calling on the council to...

1. **Review the results** of our Reimagine Montclair Survey and the supporting documents and use their findings in your decision making processes.

2. **Create an “Emergency Covid Street Response Committee”** with members from varying levels of municipal leadership as well as local leaders and community organizations, including Bike and Walk Montclair and set a date for the first meeting.

We thank you for your time and look forward to hearing the council’s thoughts on our survey as well as how BWM can best provide assistance as Montclair transitions from response to recovery…and beyond. - Be well  BWM.
Right now, our town is in need of its leadership to “RE-imagine Montclair”. This remagination will need to be bold, forward-thinking and fully inclusive in its response. The grassroots community of Montclair is truly like no other, the number of local, volunteer-driven initiatives is remarkable. These hyper-local groups, like Bike and Walk Montclair, along with all the other advocates, innovators, and designers tirelessly working out “in the trenches”, are what make Montclair, “Montclair.” If even a fraction of that cumulative energy, knowledge and passion is harnessed by this incoming council, we will look back upon this incredibly challenging moment as one that was truly transformative for Montclair.