



# “COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IS THE WORST!” and Other Planning Myths

Presented by: Rachael Bronson, AICP and Katherine Amidon, AICP  
*SC Bike Walk Trails Summit*  
June 8, 2023

Est. 1989  
**TPD** TRAFFIC PLANNING  
AND DESIGN, INC.



Real People. Real Solutions.













# HI, I'M RACHAEL!



TRAFFIC PLANNING  
AND DESIGN, INC.

## Services We Offer

-  Highway Design
-  Bridge Design & Inspection
-  Traffic Signals & ITS
-  Transportation Planning
-  CM/CI
-  Multimodal Design
-  Municipal Design
-  Environmental
-  Expert Witness

## Multimodal Transportation Planner

**15 years of experience**

**I love:** Being outside  
A cup of tea  
A good laugh



### Active Transport Services we offer:

- Greenway Planning & Design
- Safe Routes to School
- Stakeholder & Community Engagement
- Pedestrian Bridge & Structural Design
- Construction Administration & Inspection
- Project Funding Support
- ADA Transition Plans
- Water Resources Engineering
- Highway & Street Corridor Studies
- Wayfinding & Monumentation
- Landscape Architecture & Streetscape Design
- Traffic Safety, operations & Vision Zero

# Hi! I'm Katherine!

*Senior Environmental Planner, AICP*

12 years of experience

Loves breaking down silos

Gets outside whenever possible

Is obsessed with her bike







# OVERVIEW

**WHY TRUST ME?**

**WHY DOES THIS MATTER?**

**WHAT CAN WE DO? (TIPS)**

**CASE STUDIES**



# WHY TRUST ME?



This was a very poorly presented survey. I hope this is not an indication of future project.

May 1, 2023 1:45 pm ~~redacted email address~~

May 2, 2023 4:51 pm  
Agree



Why  
does this  
matter?





# Equality



# Equity





Getting  
around is  
not the  
same for  
everyone





**Getting  
around is  
not the  
same for  
everyone**





Getting  
around is  
not the  
same for  
everyone



Source: Carrie Turner Photography





# Why does this matter?

Some communities have been left out and under served.







*"...it's mostly poor people who walk on this road and they don't have as much internet access as you and I do to see and fill out these surveys."*





# Why does this matter?

There is distrust  
in the process.





# Nasty Branch name restored to proposed greenway in Asheville's Black Southside community



**Karen Chávez**

Asheville Citizen Times

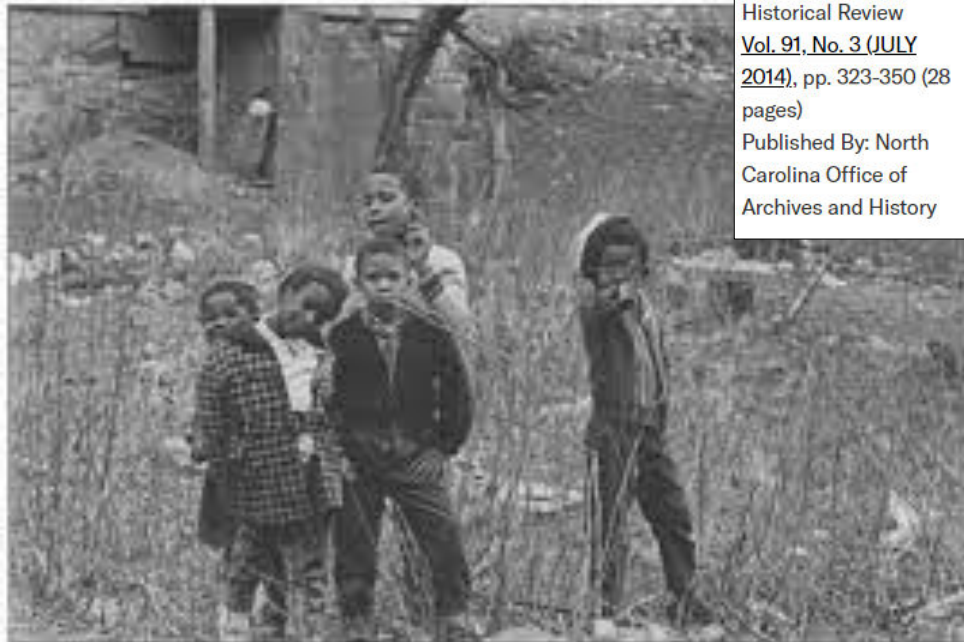
Published 5:01 a.m. ET Feb. 18, 2021 | Updated 2:31 p.m. ET Feb. 18, 2021

[View Comments](#)



It might not have the most pleasant ring to outsiders, but for many locals of their heritage and of home.

The stream that runs through the historically Black south of downtown Asheville, according to water quality reports, is polluted in the region and how it most likely derived



"I Am a Nasty Branch Kid": Women's Memories of Place in the Era of Asheville's Urban Renewal

Sarah Judson

The North Carolina Historical Review  
Vol. 91, No. 3 (JULY 2014), pp. 323-350 (28 pages)  
Published By: North Carolina Office of Archives and History



**Understand  
& Honor  
History**



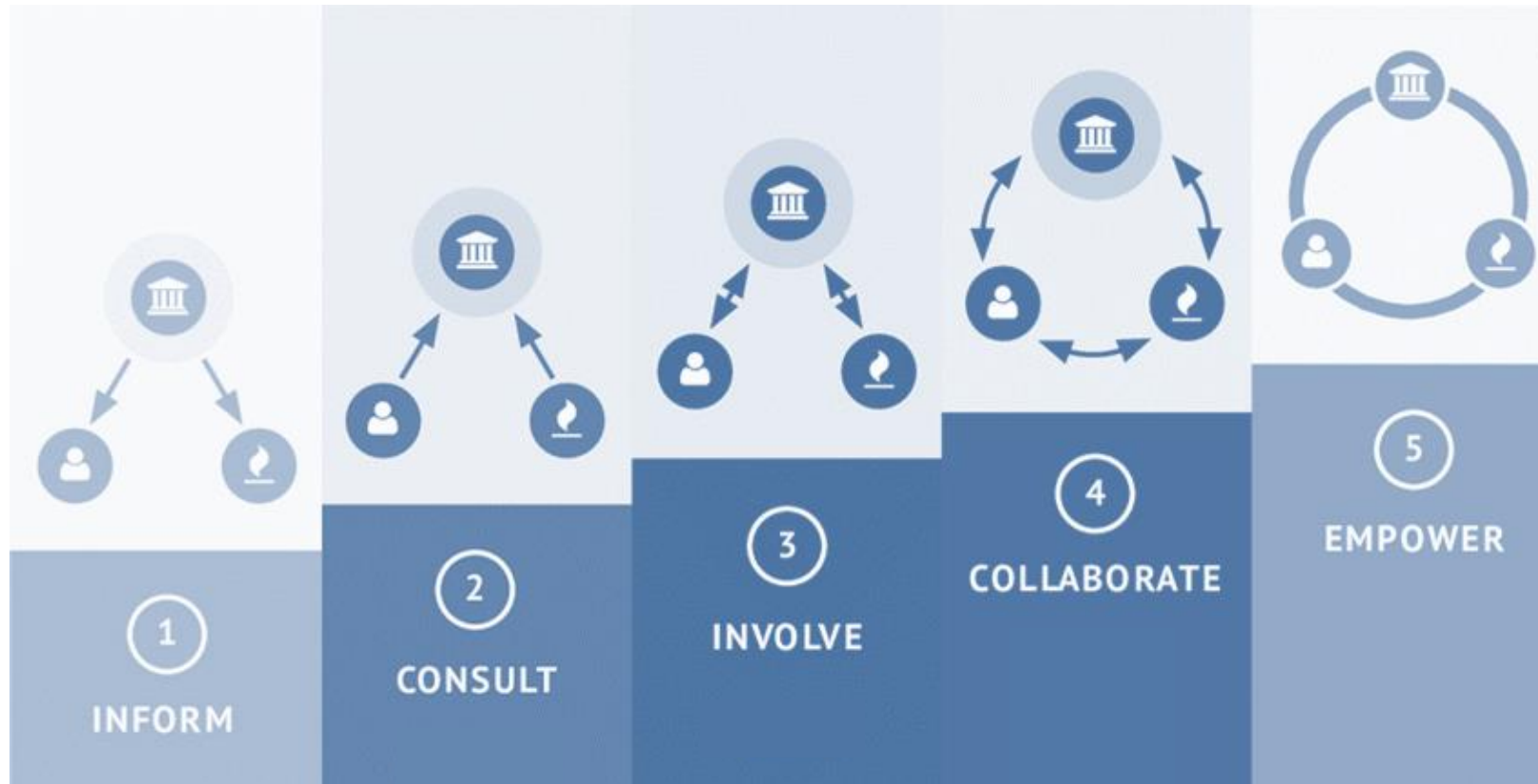
# Foster a Culture of:

- Trust
- Communication
- Collaboration





# IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation

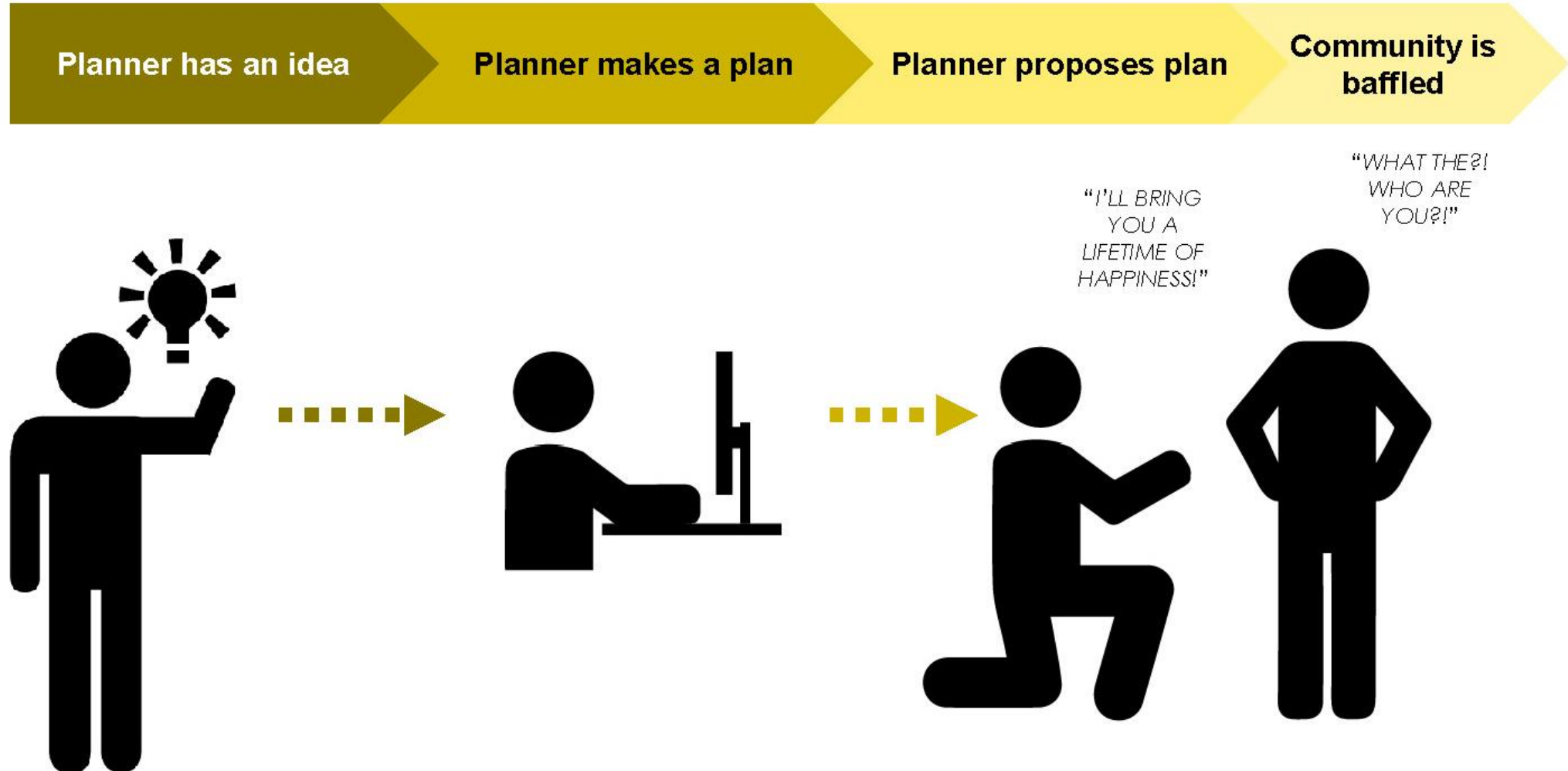


**We will  
keep you  
informed**

**We will  
implement  
what you  
decide**



# Traditional Outreach Strategy





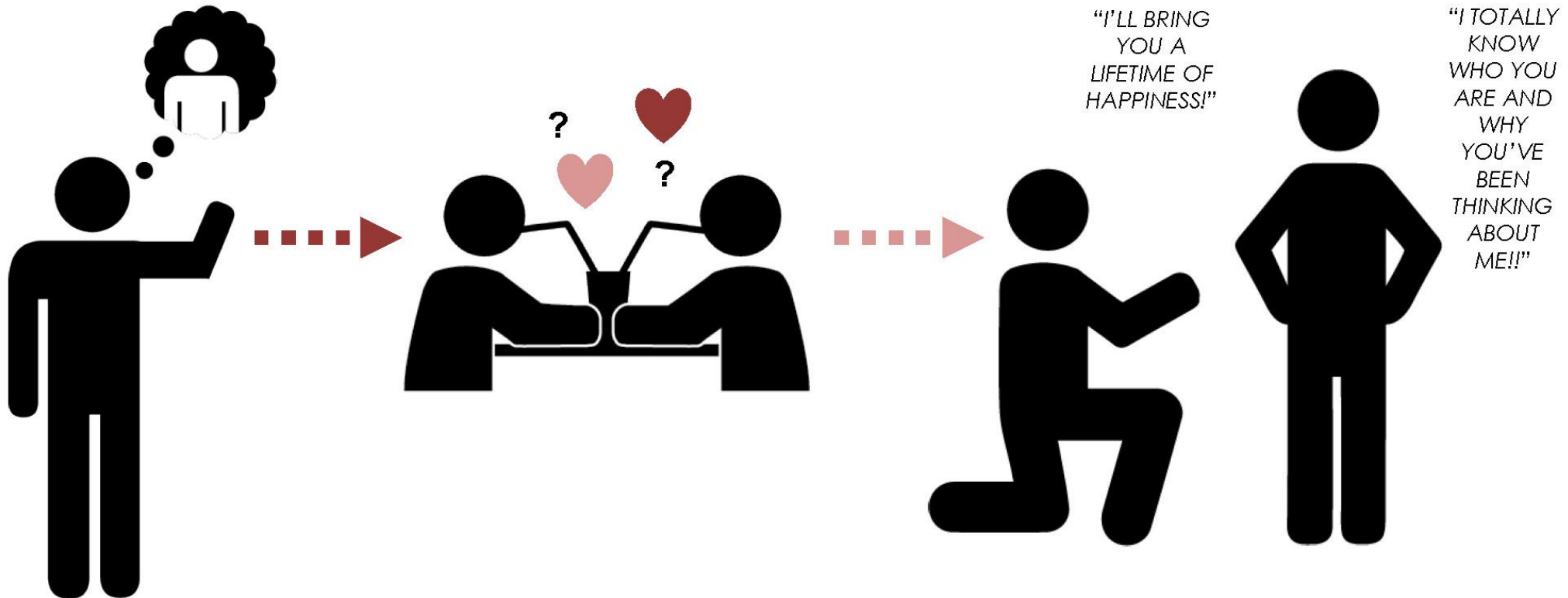
# Equitable Outreach Strategy

Planner wonders  
about community

Planner dates  
community

Planner  
proposes plan

Community makes  
an informed choice!







Source: Carrie Turner Photography

“Just remember that your ***real job*** is that if you are free, you need to free somebody else.

If you have some power, then your job is to empower somebody else.”

-Toni Morrison





# What Can We Do (Tips)?







**Meet  
People  
Where  
They Are**

**Do Things  
Differently**



**Meet  
People  
Where  
They Are**





A community meeting in a room with wooden floors. In the foreground, a woman in a pink shirt and a woman in a black jacket with a blue face mask are looking at a large map on a table. The woman in pink is holding a plate of food. To the left, a man in a blue shirt is looking at a small object. In the background, several other people are standing and talking. There are posters on the wall, including one with a circular diagram and another with sticky notes. A white pillar is in the center of the room.

**Translation**

**Tasty  
Food**





## Activities for Kids





LEAS DE PRIORIDAD PARA LA PLANIFICACIÓN  
PLANNING PRIORITY AREAS  
EDUCATION  
UCACION  
UPWARD  
MOBILITY  
MOVILIDAD  
SUSTAINABILITY  
SOSTENIBILIDAD

FOR SALE



PODER  
EMMA  
COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

Remember:  
They are  
the Experts



**Low &  
No Vision  
Accommodation**







**Giveaways**





Make  
it Fun







**Get  
Outside**

**Make  
it Fun**





**Don't Meet  
at a  
Brewery**



A woman wearing a grey vest and a purple helmet is riding a scooter on a city street. A young girl in a pink shirt and a pink helmet is riding a balance bike in front of her. The street is lined with orange traffic cones and orange and white striped barriers. In the background, there are parked cars, including a silver sedan and a dark SUV, and buildings. A sign on the left side of the street reads "MAYOR'S OFFICE" and "CITY OF BALTIMORE".

**Do More  
of This**



A photograph showing a person's hand, wearing a blue shirt and a black watch, placing a silver pushpin on a map. The map is a detailed street grid of a city, with various roads and landmarks labeled. A blue circular overlay with the text "Be a Steward of Information" is positioned over the map. To the right, a box of "ALUMINUM PUSH PINS" is visible. The background is a blurred office setting.



**Be a  
Steward of  
Information**







**Get Good at  
Asking  
Questions**



**When it Comes  
to Mobility:  
Don't Try to  
Gain Consensus**

**(You won't  
Convince  
Everyone)**





**Don't  
Underestimate  
the Love of  
Parking, Even  
when it is  
Under-utilized**



**Perception  
-vs-  
Reality**



# One Last Tip...

**ADMIT ONE**

**February 19, 2019**

**"DOG & PONY SHOW"**

**Sponsored by**

**THE CITY OF ASHEVILLE  
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & URBAN DESIGN**

**A "Show & Tell" Presentation featuring**

**"The Already Done-Deal Charlotte Street 3-Lane Road Diet"  
and**

**"A New Multi-Story Zoning Plan for the Charlotte St. Corridor"**

**All proceeds dedicated solely for the benefit of cyclists and developers**



DON'T TRY TO WIN OVER  
THE HATERS: YOU'RE NOT  
THE **JERK** WHISPERER.

-SCOTT STRATTEN, UNMARKETING

@itsilpeanut



DON'T TRY TO WIN OVER  
THE HATERS: YOU'RE NOT  
THE JACKASS WHISPERER.

-SCOTT STRATTEN, UNMARKETING

@itslippeanut



# Thank You!



**Rachael Bronson, AICP**

*Multimodal Transportation Specialist*

*[rbronson@trafficpd.com](mailto:rbronson@trafficpd.com)*



Source: Carrie Turner Photography



# Mad Libs – Bike Walk Trails Summit

## The Prompt

You are scrolling the news via LinkedIn on your phone 20 years from now and you come across an article about mobility in the Upstate of SC. Help us fill in the blanks for the article title!

1. Transportation in the Upstate now includes more \_\_\_\_\_.  
(noun)
2. Upstate of South Carolina makes national top 25 list for best place to \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_.  
(verb) (noun)
3. \_\_\_\_\_ brings \_\_\_\_\_ of people to participate in \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_.  
(Noun (event)) (number) (verb) (noun)





# Post 2020 Engagement

PLANNING MAGAZINE

## Lessons From Transportation Planners' Pivot to Virtual Engagement

*Forced to innovate by the Covid-19 pandemic, experts say these public participation innovations are here to stay.*

***"There is a certain irreplaceable messiness to robust, in-person meetings that contributes to more inclusive, thoughtful, and deeper feedback from the community,"*** says Jennifer Dougherty, AICP, manager of Long Range Planning at Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA)."

## Online Public Engagement



Image by storyset on [Freepik](#)

PLANNING MAGAZINE

## Equitable Community Engagement Requires Learning, Self-Reflection, and Transparency

*Five ways planners, engineers, and other allied professionals can establish a long-term, measurable approach to equitable planning.*

***"Three Essential Questions for Better Planning" ....Who is helped? Who is harmed? Who is missing?***



# Today's discussion

1

**Who?, When? How?**  
stakeholders, steering  
committees, technical  
committees, the  
public...oh my!

2

**Selecting** the right  
tools and strategies

3

**Lessons learned** be  
willing to change

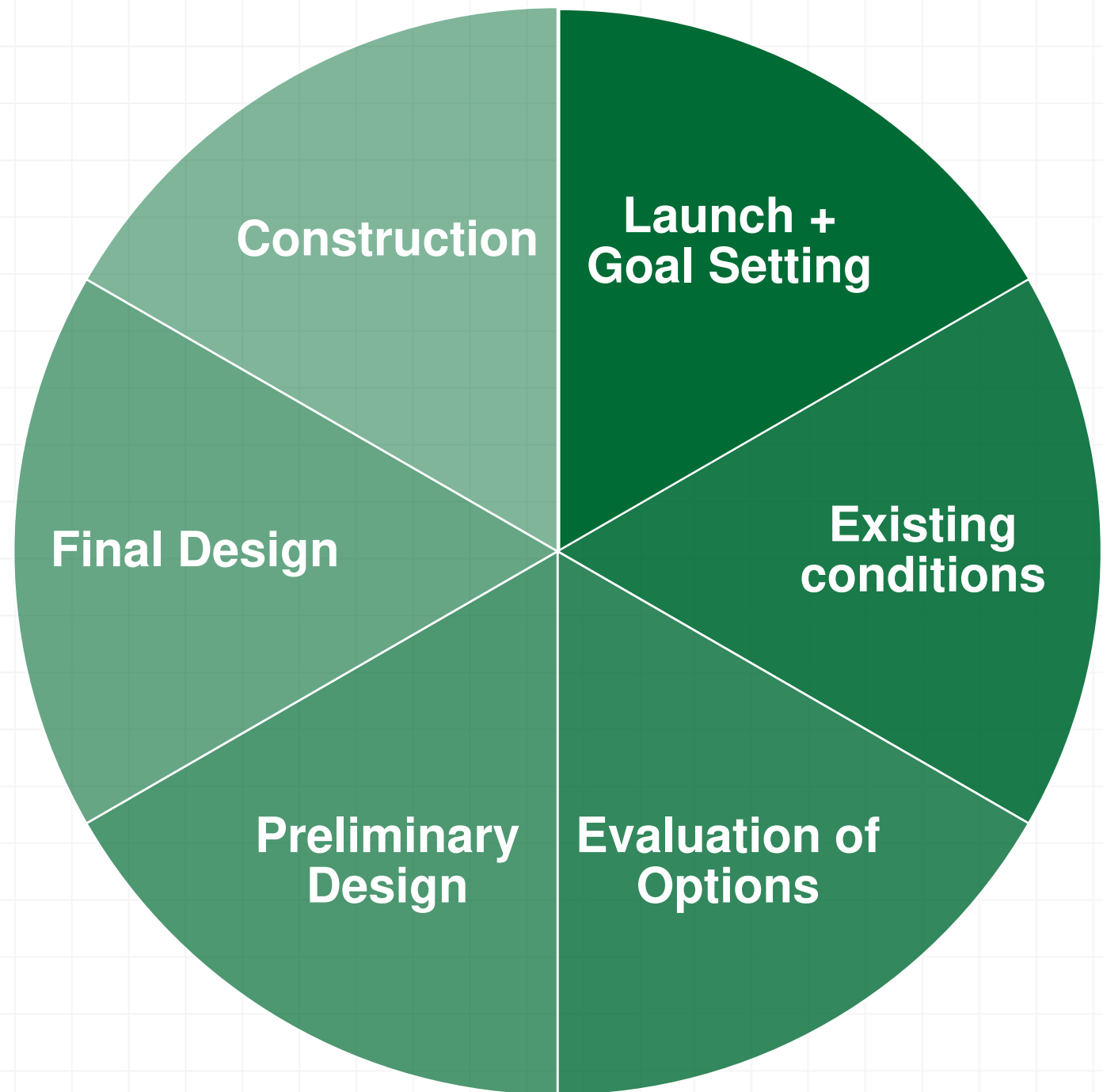


# Rice Street



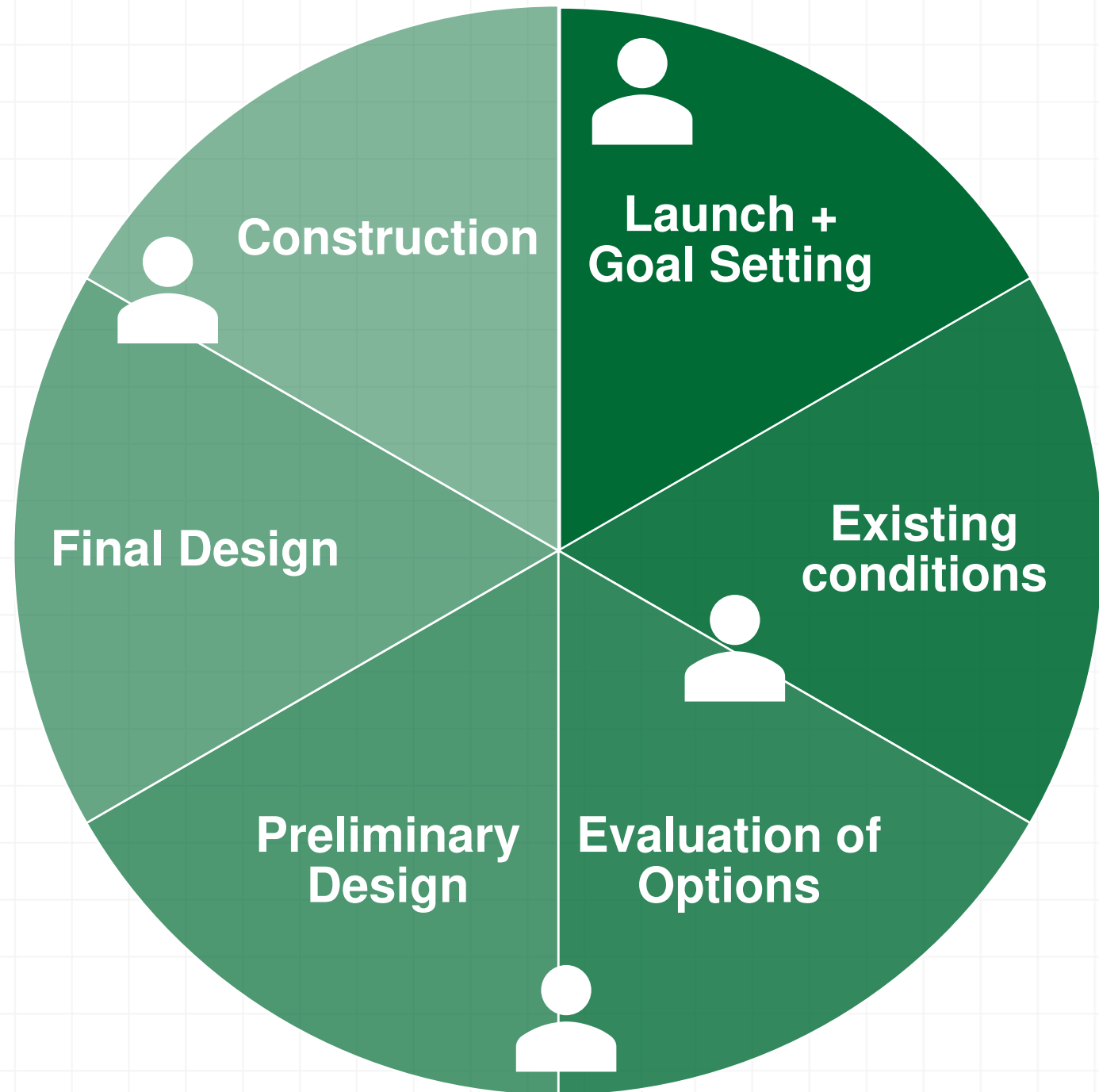


**The project  
life cycle  
should inform  
engagement  
strategies.**



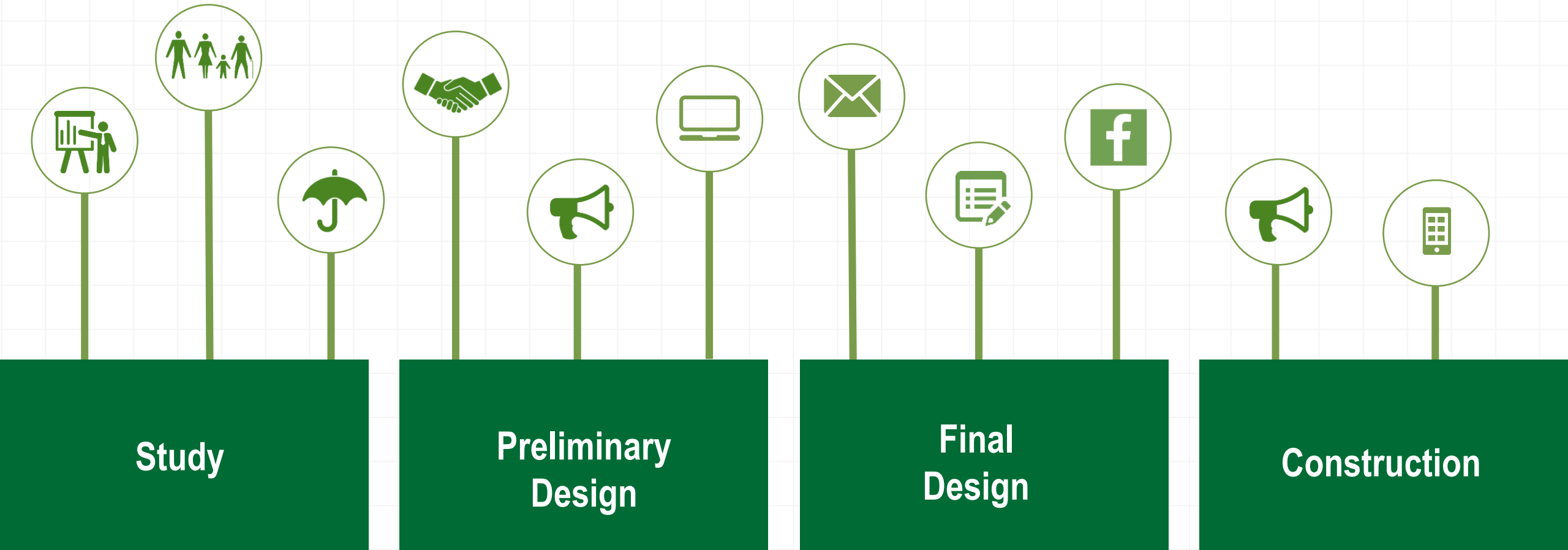


**Not everyone  
joins the  
conversation  
at the same  
time.**



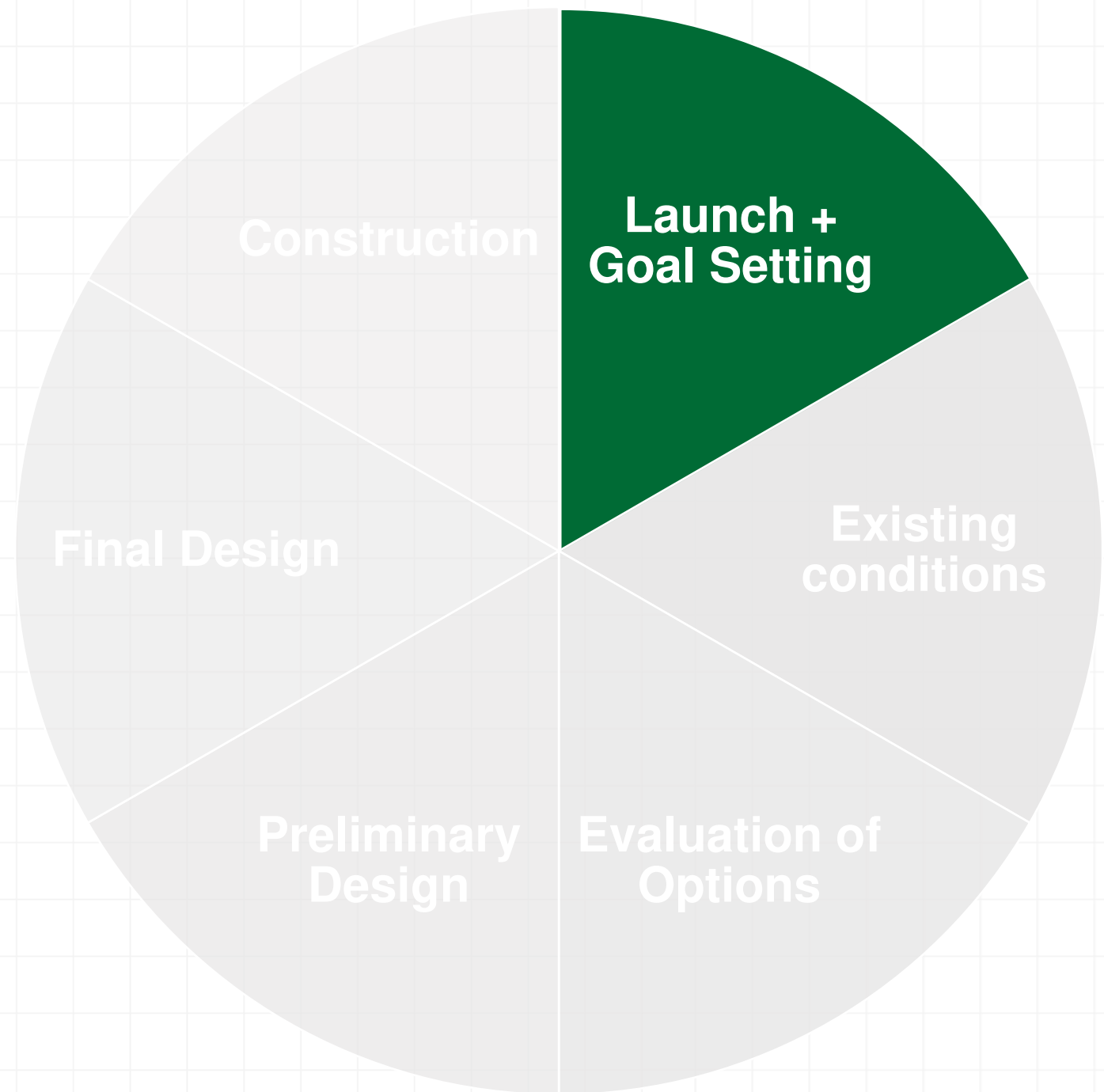


# How do we use the right tools at the right time?





# Phase 1





Launch and  
goal setting

Existing  
conditions

Evaluate  
options

Preliminary  
Design

Final  
Design

Construction

## Goals for this phase

- ✓ Identify engagement goal
- ✓ Identify key audiences
- ✓ Create engagement plan
- ✓ Complete fact finding and due diligence



Launch and  
goal setting

Existing  
conditions

Evaluate  
options

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Design

Final  
Design

Construction

# Identify Key Audiences

**Project Importance**

Community leaders

**Community Leaders**

Community organizations

**Demographics**

Census

**Community History**

Project Team

**Behaviors**

Business Analyst



Launch and  
goal setting

Existing  
conditions

Evaluate  
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Preliminary  
Design

Final  
Design

Construction



## Key Tools

- ✓ ESRI's Business Analyst
- ✓ Publicly Available Data





# Key Tool: Business Analyst

## 2016-2020 Transportation to Work, Age 16+



82%

Drove Alone



11%

Carpooled



0%

Public Transportation



0%

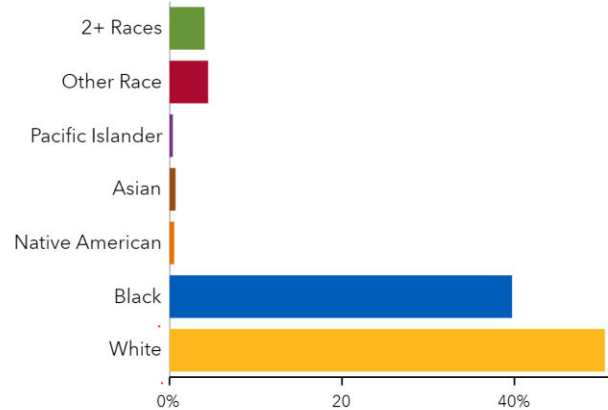
Bicycled



4%

Walked

## 2020 Population 18+ Years by Race



## Employment



White Collar

49%



Blue Collar

36%



Services

15%

5.0%

Unemployment Rate

## Local Interest



14%

2022 Social Media: Find Local Information Very Important (%)

## Poverty Status

16%



2016-2020 Households Below the Poverty Level

## Food Stamps

21%



2016-2020 Households Receiving Food Stamps/SNAP

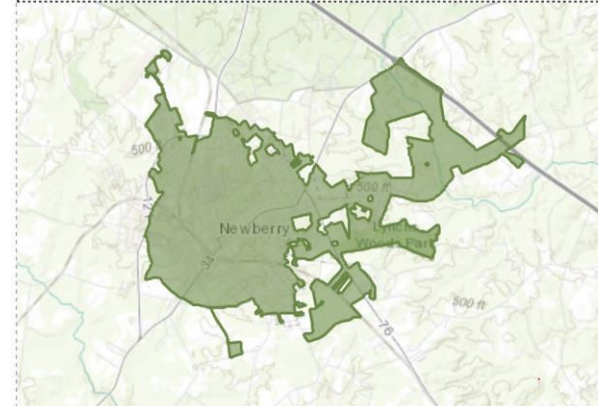
## Persons with a Disability

27%



2016-2020 Households with 1+ Persons with a Disability

## Community Profile



## Key Facts



10,585

2022 Total Population



3,963

2022 Total Households



588

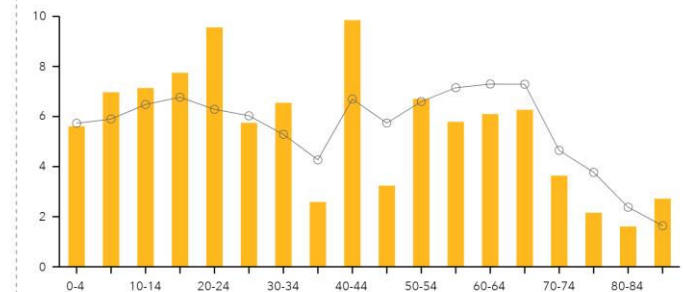
2022 Total (SIC01-99) Businesses



\$43,356

2022 Median Household Income

## 2020 Population by Age: 5 Year Increments (U.S. Census)



Dots show comparison to Newberry County

## Education

21%

No High School Diploma



37%

High School Graduate



24%

Some College



18%

Bachelor's/Grad/Prof Degree

## Housing Stats



\$97,616

2022 Median Home Value



1,833

2020 Renter Households (ACS 5-Yr)



\$609

2016-20 Median Contract Rent

## Internet and Social Media (2022)



89%

Have a smartphone



90%

Have internet access at home



89%

Used internet in last 30 days



16%

Follow local groups on social media



65%

Used Facebook in last 30 days



14%

Used Twitter in last 30 days



28%

Used Instagram in last 30 days



23%

Used Snapchat in last 30 days





# Key Tool: Business Analyst

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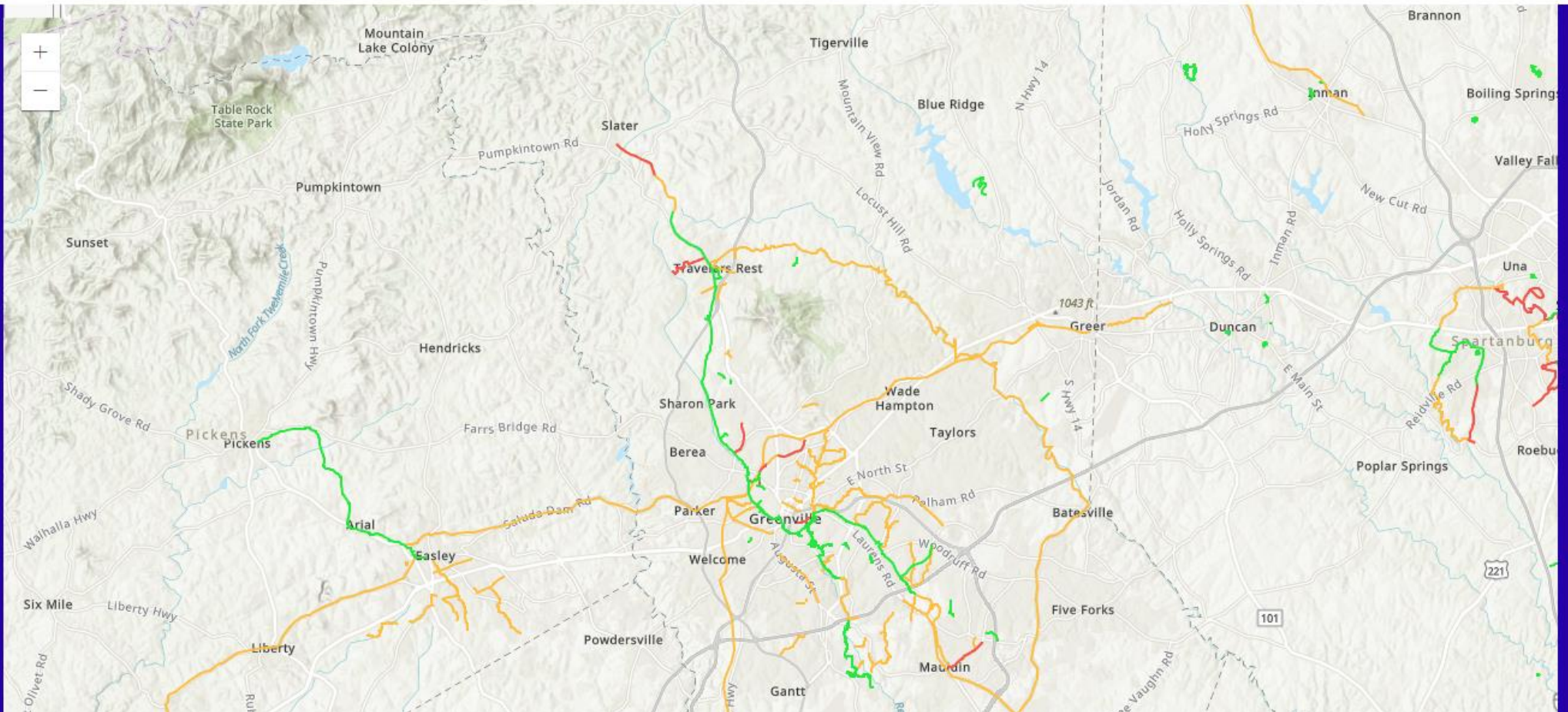
23%

Used Snapchat in  
last 30 days





# Key Tool: Publicly Available Data

[About](#)[Our Work](#)[Resources](#)[News](#)[Join](#)



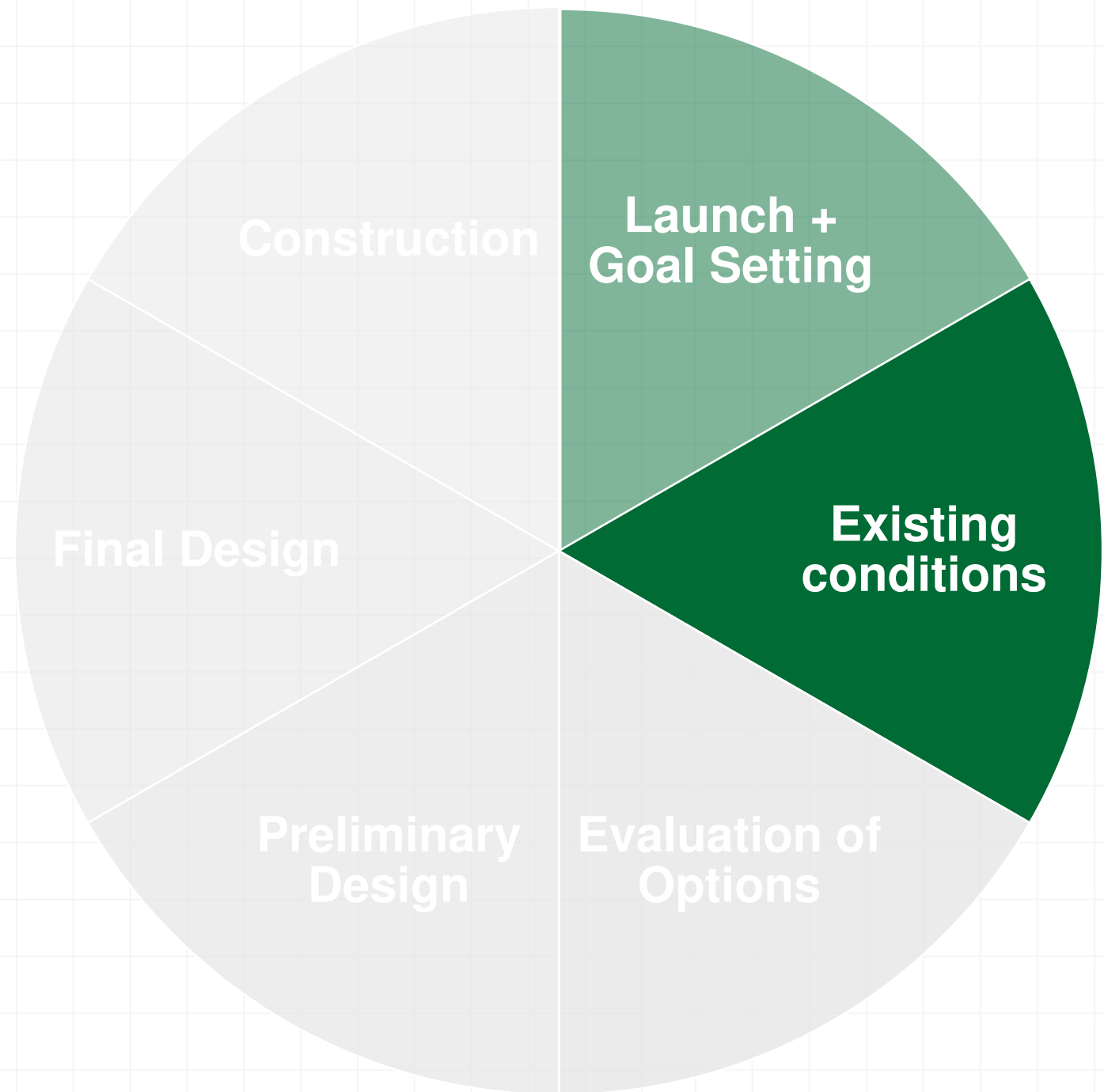
# Don't forget about qualitative research

- Community leaders
- Trusted partners
- Client resources
- Key community groups





# Phase 2





Launch and  
goal setting

Existing  
conditions

Evaluate  
options

Preliminary  
Design

Final  
Design

Construction

## Goals for this phase

- ✓ Share key existing conditions data
- ✓ Listen to the community's perspective
- ✓ Report what we heard to the project team AND community



Launch and  
goal setting

Existing  
conditions

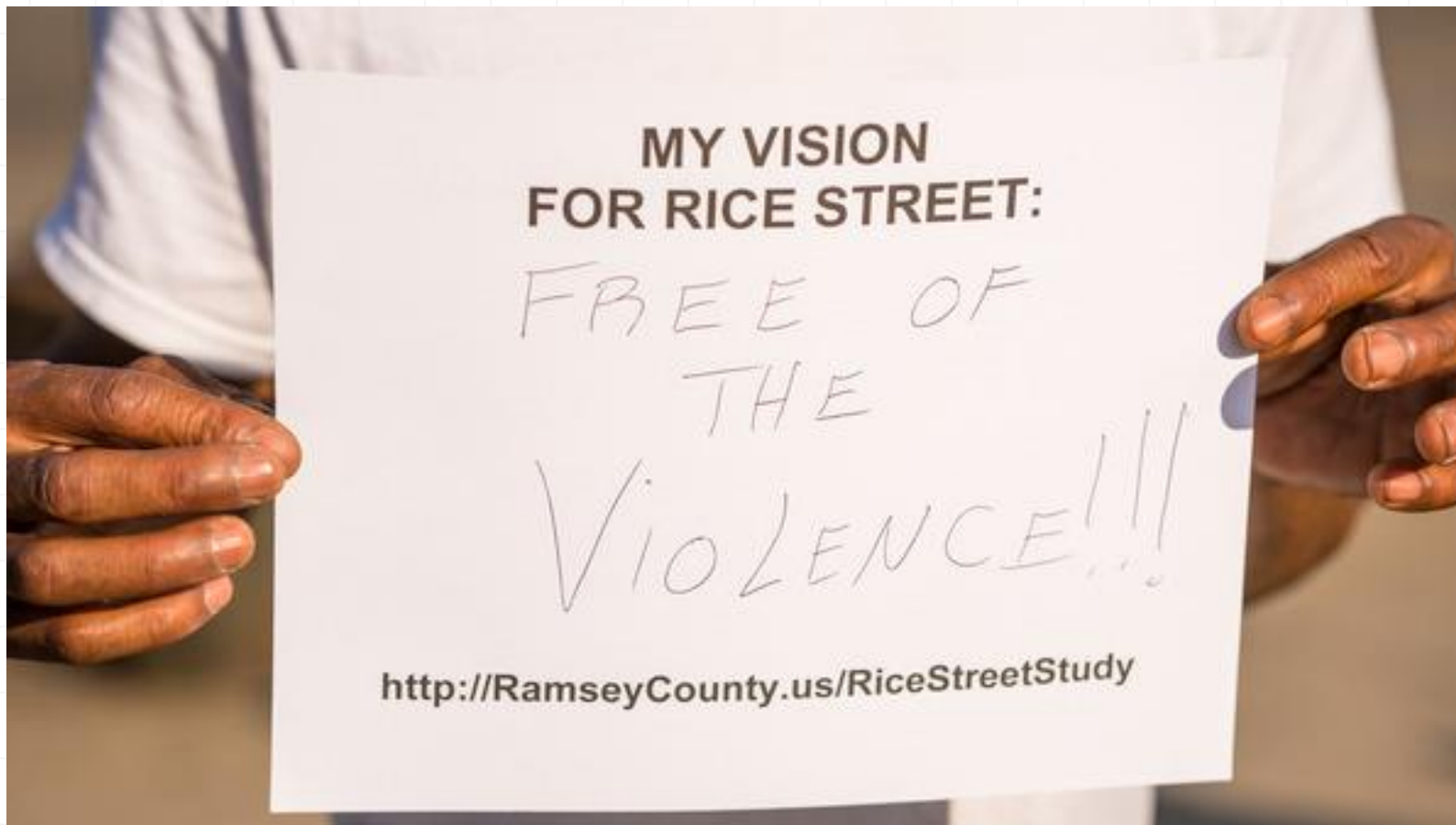
Evaluate  
options

Preliminary  
Design

Final  
Design

Construction

# Acknowledging lived experiences





# Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

*Sometimes we skip to the top and need to come back down to the foundation*





Launch and  
goal setting

Existing  
conditions

Evaluate  
options

Preliminary  
Design

Final  
Design

Construction



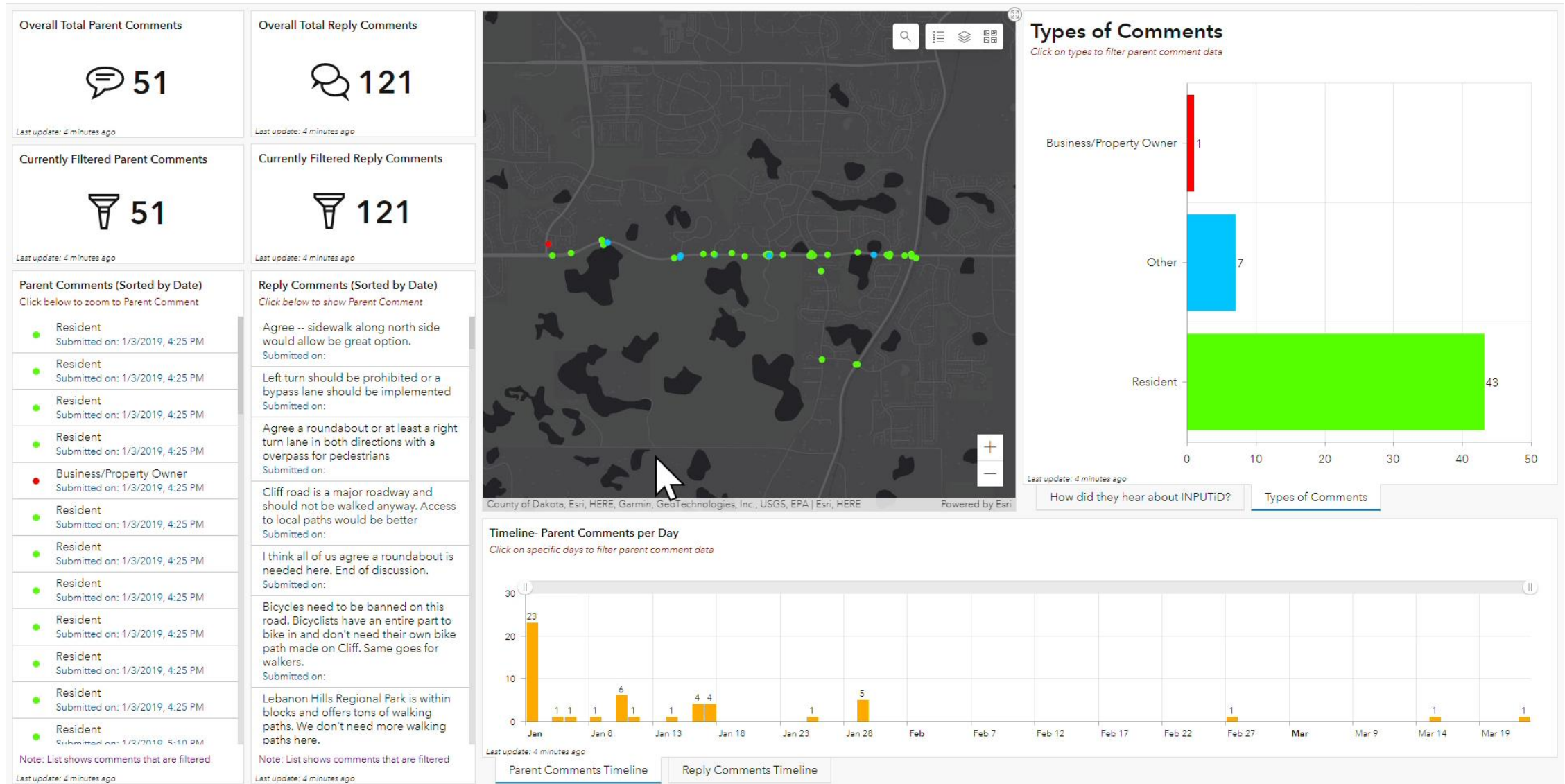
## Key Tools

- ✓ StoryMap
- ✓ Comment Mapping
- ✓ Signage and Decal





# Key Tool: Comment Mapping





Launch and  
goal setting

Existing  
conditions

Evaluate  
options

Preliminary  
Design

Final  
Design

Construction

# Signage and Decal





Launch and  
goal setting

Existing  
conditions

Evaluate  
options

Preliminary  
Design

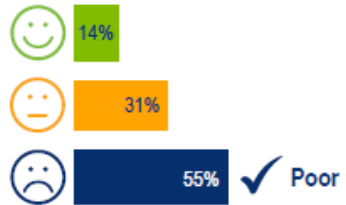
Final  
Design

Construction

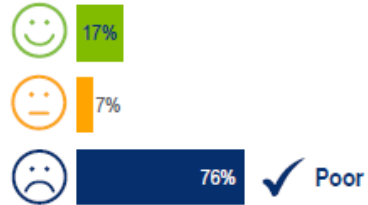
# Don't forget to report back

## FACILITY RATINGS SURVEY

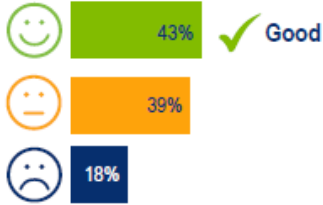
### Pedestrians



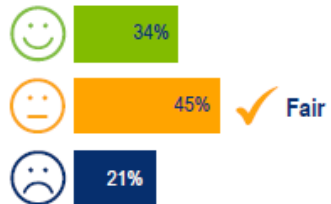
### Bicyclists



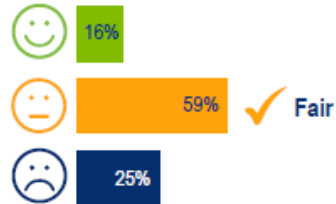
### Transit



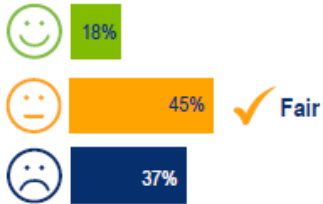
### Passenger vehicles



### Freight



### Parking



## PROJECT GOALS SURVEY

### How do you travel on Rice Street?



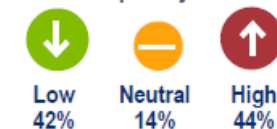
### Are the current street crossings a safety concern for pedestrians?



### How would you like to travel on Rice Street?



### Should encouraging bicycle traffic on Rice Street be a low or high priority?



### Should a more walkable corridor that encourages people to walk between destinations be a low or high priority?

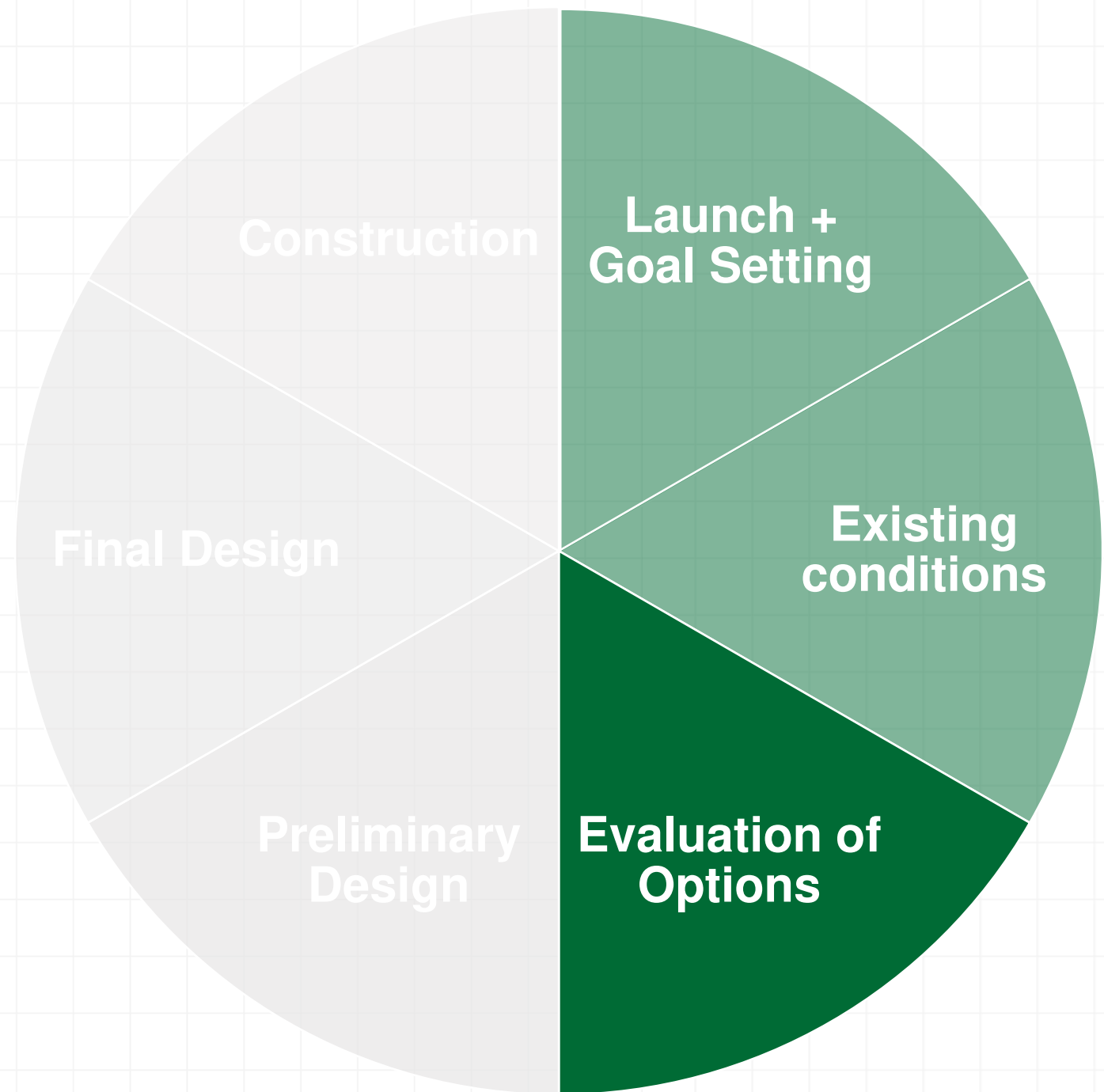


### What are your top three priorities for Rice Street?





# Phase 3





Launch and  
goal setting

Existing  
conditions

Evaluate  
options

Preliminary  
Design

Final  
Design

Construction

## Goals for this phase

- ✓ Share easy-to-understand, plain language concepts
- ✓ Gather concept feedback
- ✓ Share how feedback will influence the design



Launch and  
goal setting

Existing  
conditions

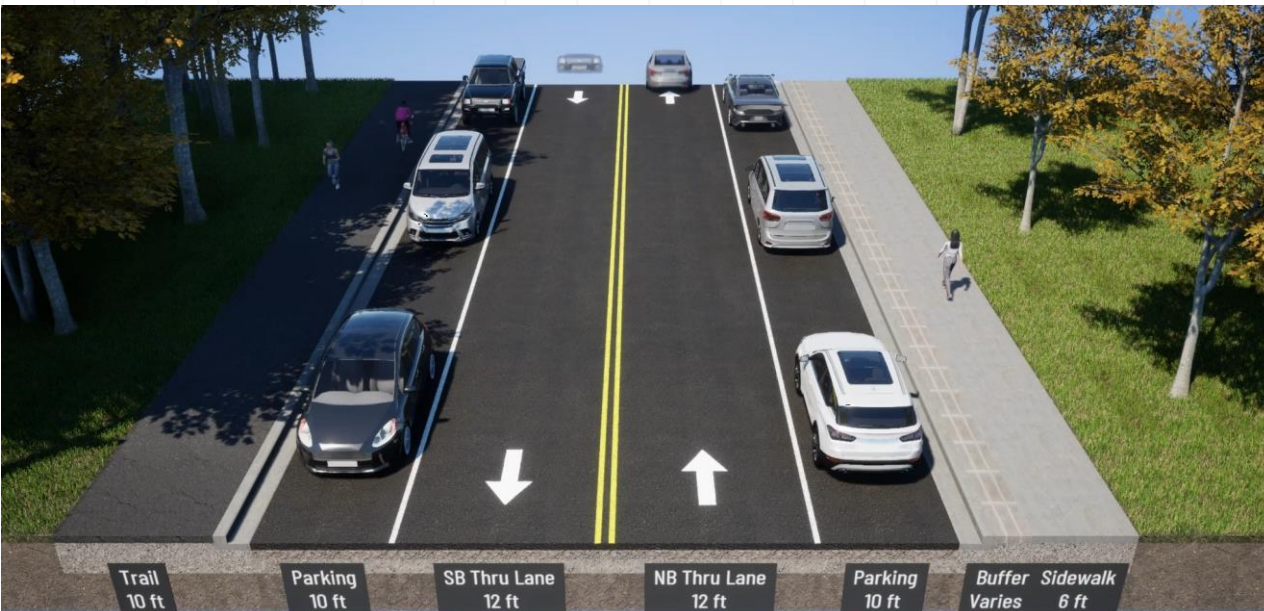
Evaluate  
options

Preliminary  
Design

Final  
Design

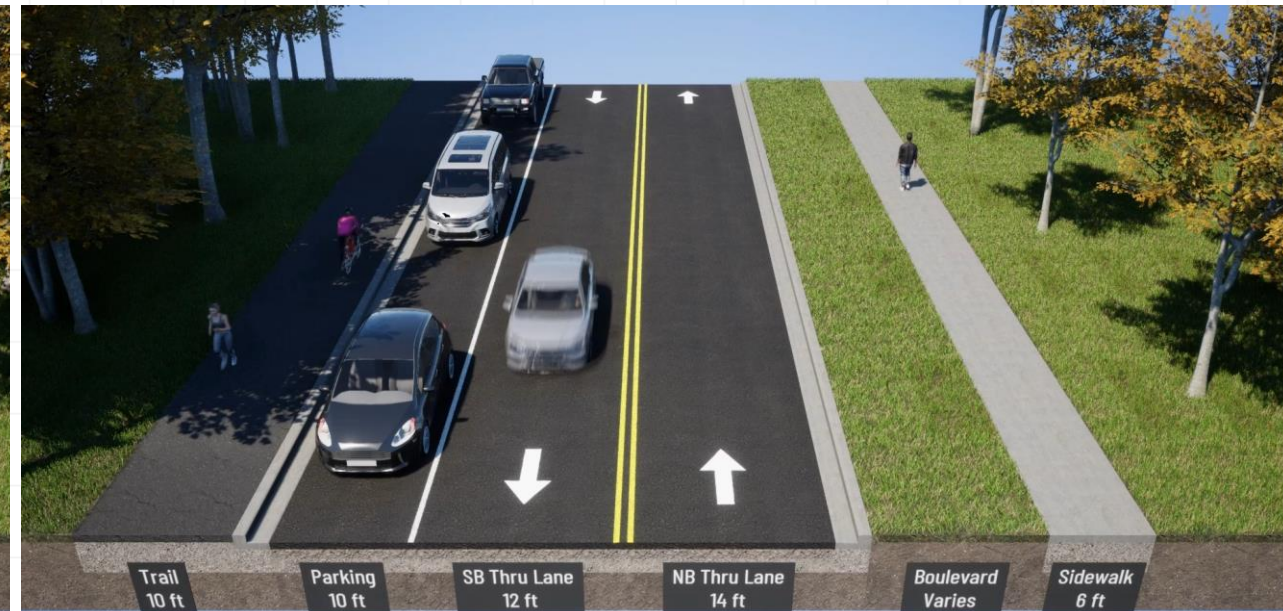
Construction

# Make concepts easy to understand



## Option A: Pedestrian Movement Layout

County Road 66, South of Echo Drive



## Option B: Alt Pedestrian Movement Layout

County Road 66, South of Echo Drive





Launch and  
goal setting

Existing  
conditions

Evaluate  
options

Preliminary  
Design

Final  
Design

Construction



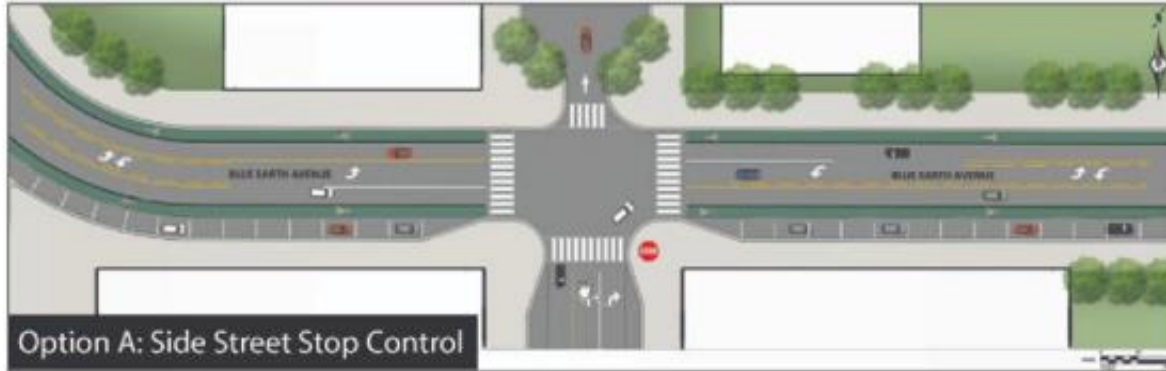
## Key Tools

- ✓ Comparative Comment Mapping
- ✓ Visual Preference Survey
- ✓ Pop-ups



## Downtown Plaza Redesign

The traffic signal at the intersection of Blue Earth Avenue and Downtown Plaza is aging and no longer serviceable. The traffic volumes at this intersection do not meet current criteria for a signalized intersection. Therefore, the City is evaluating options other than replacing the signal. Please select your preferred option.



To learn more about mini-roundabouts, watch this [Mini-Roundabout Video](#).

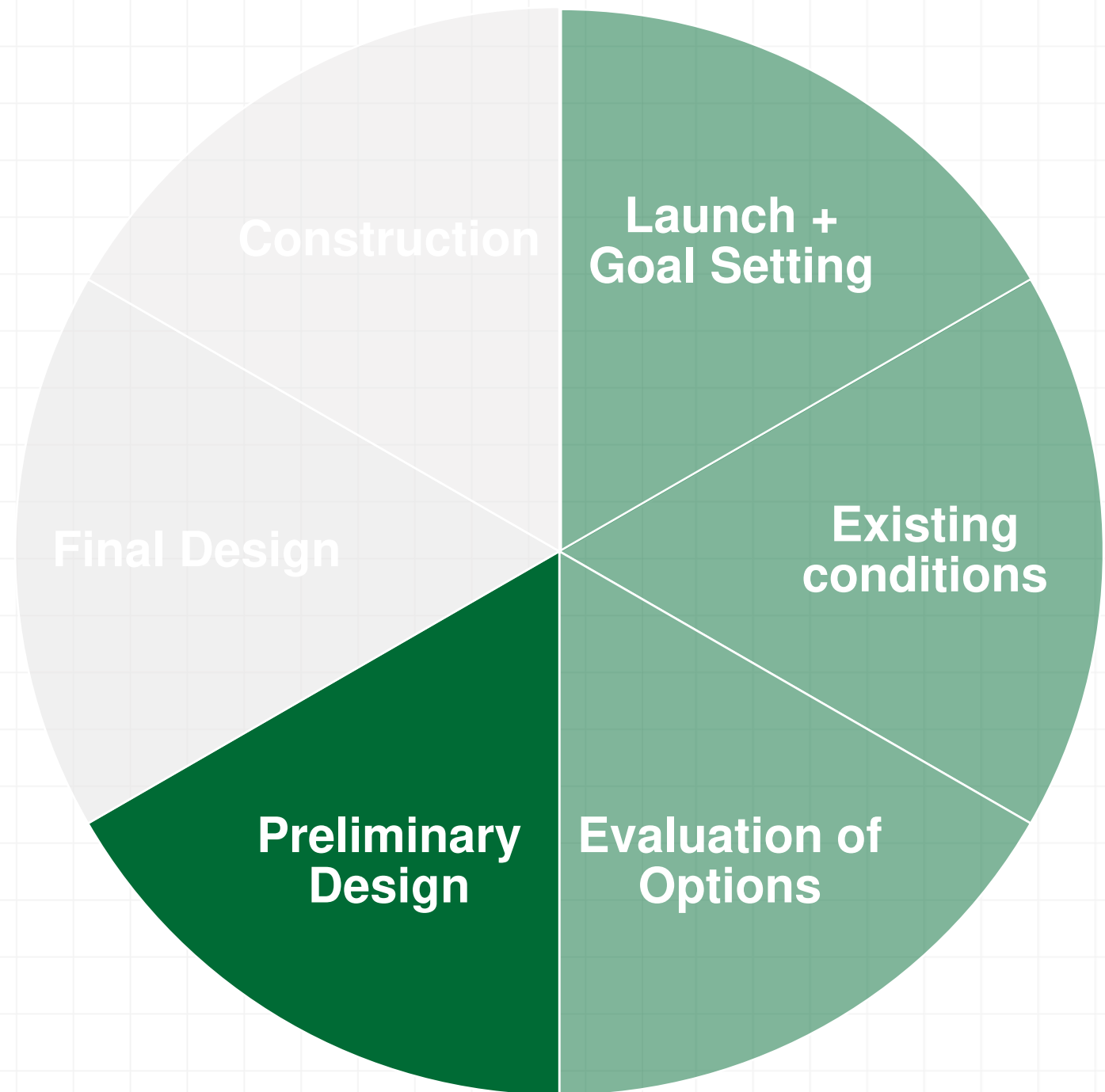
Select your preferred redesign style for Downtown Plaza.



# Key Tool: Survey



# Phase 4





Launch and  
goal setting

Existing  
conditions

Evaluate  
options

Preliminary  
Design

Final  
Design

Construction

## Goals for this phase

- ✓ Build general agreement around a recommended concept
- ✓ Gather feedback on access and aesthetics
- ✓ Start the construction conversation



Launch and  
goal setting

Existing  
conditions

Evaluate  
options

Preliminary  
Design

Final  
Design

Construction



## Key Tools

- ✓ Voting exercises
- ✓ Short videos or visual comparisons



# Key Tool: Voting Exercises

## Improvements for the public spaces along Rice Street

Place a sticker by the top two types of features you would like to see on Rice Street!



Wayfinding Signs



Public Art



Street Trees



Bike Racks



Plants and Stormwater Management



Street Furniture

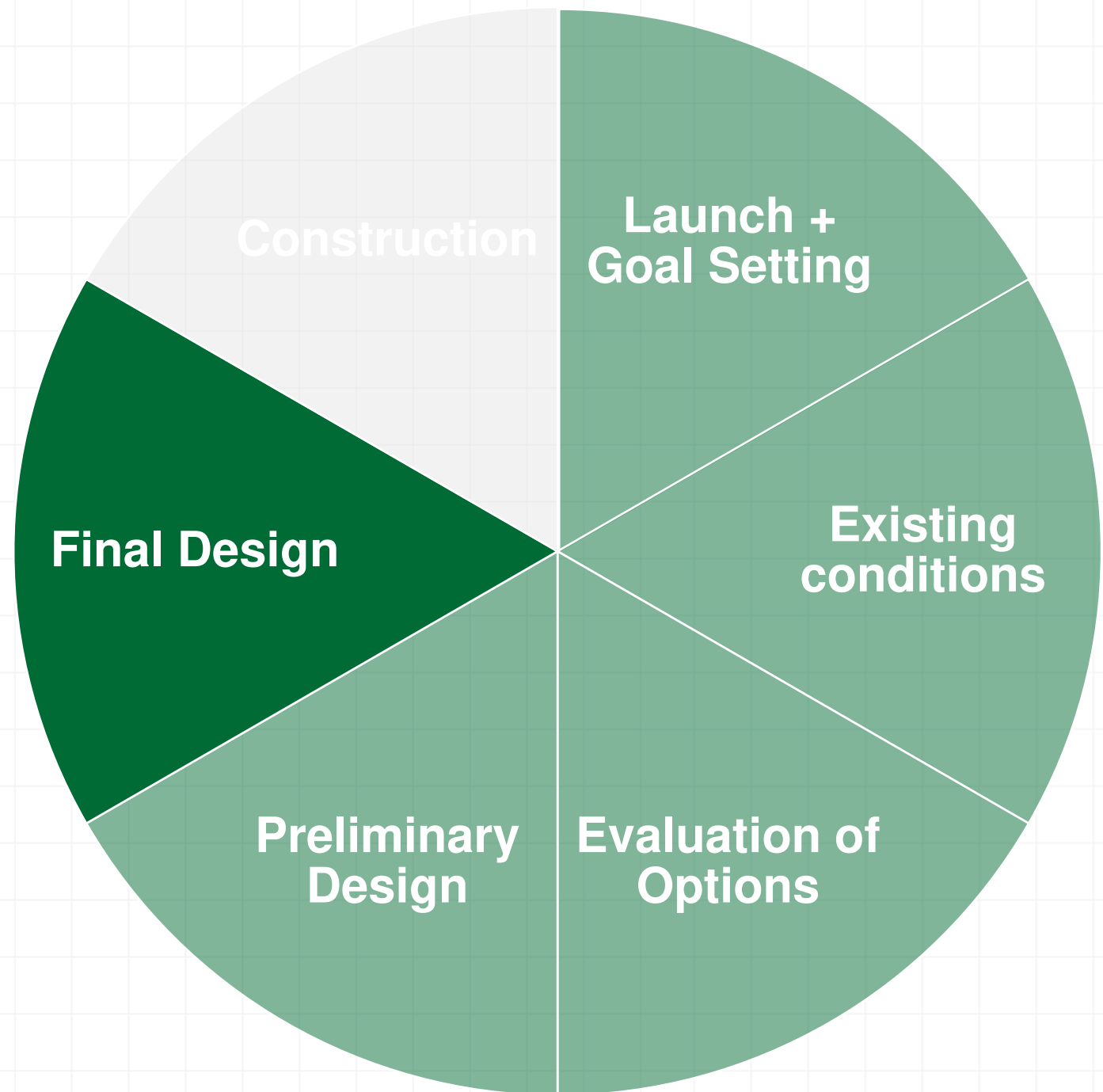




# Key Tool: Video Comparisons



# Phase 5





Launch and  
goal setting

Existing  
conditions

Evaluate  
options

Preliminary  
Design

**Final  
Design**

Construction

## Goals for this phase

- ✓ Work through final details with stakeholders
- ✓ Promote design
- ✓ Share construction details

Launch and  
goal setting

Existing  
conditions

Evaluate  
options

Preliminary  
Design

**Final  
Design**

Construction

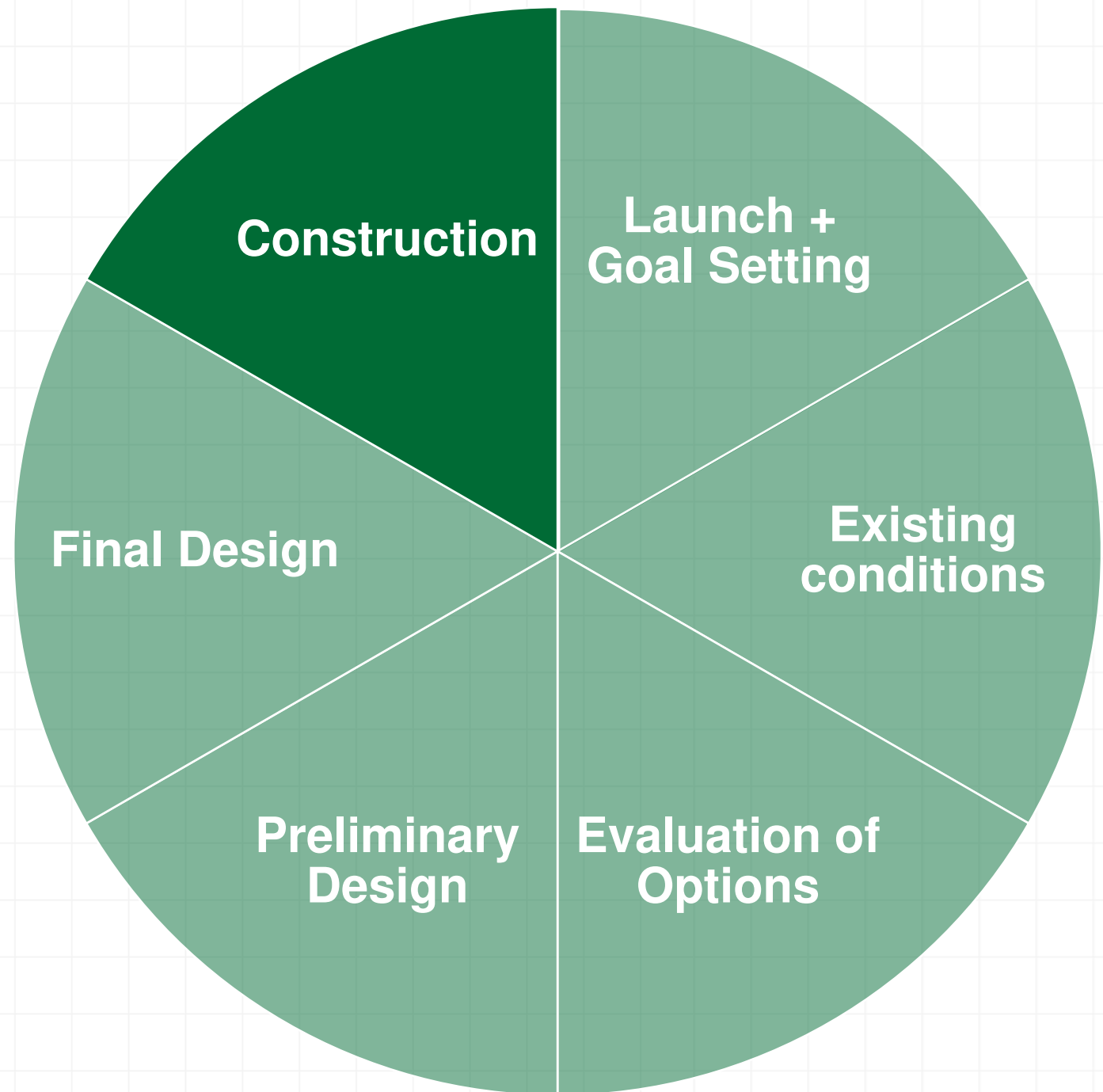


## Key Tools

- ✓ Corridor animation
- ✓ Interactive staging and detour maps



# Phase 6



Launch and  
goal setting

Existing  
conditions

Evaluate  
options

Preliminary  
Design

Final  
Design

**Construction**

## Goals for this phase

- ✓ Get stragglers up to speed
- ✓ Share construction messages across several channels
- ✓ React to changes and inquiries in a timely manner



Launch and  
goal setting

Existing  
conditions

Evaluate  
options

Preliminary  
Design

Final  
Design

**Construction**



## Key Tools

- ✓ Video updates
- ✓ Text and email updates
- ✓ Community liaison



# Key Tool: Text and Email Updates

Fri, Apr 28 at 4:05 PM

Downtown Highway 41 Project:  
River bridge closes Monday,  
May 1 <https://lnks.gd/2/25dndjh>

Fri, May 5 at 3:06 PM

Downtown Highway 41 Project:  
Weekly progress report <https://lnks.gd/2/26Nq2PB>

Friday 4:05 PM

Downtown Highway 41 Project:  
Weekly progress report [https://lnks.gd/2/27\\_dB3n](https://lnks.gd/2/27_dB3n)



Text Message



Having trouble viewing this email? [View it as a Web page](#)

View this email through Google Translate: [Español](#)



**CHASKA**  
Downtown  
Highway 41  
Project

May 12, 2023



Crews install new utilities at the Hwy 41/1st Street intersection.

## Current closures

### Stage 3: May 1 - Mid/Late June (weather permitting)

- Highway 41 river bridge closed
- Highway 41 closed from river bridge through just north of the Highway 41/61 intersection
- Highway 61 closed between Highway 41 and Walnut Street

## Stage 3 Parking Restrictions

During Stage 3, parking will be restricted along Pine Street, Walnut Street, and 4th Street to improve traffic flow and increase safety ([view the Stage 3 parking map](#)). Please park on other streets during this time or utilize one of the city parking lots. As a reminder, vehicles can only park in city lots for a maximum of 24 consecutive hours, and some blocks near Highway 41 have parking restrictions from 2 a.m. to 6 a.m.

## Weekly Update

### What happened the week of May 8?

- Crews continued pavement, lighting, and old utility removals.
- Storm sewer installation continued.
- Crews began bridge deck work.
- Crews completed water valve work near 1st Street.

### What will happen the week of May 15?

- Crews will begin making preparations to place curb and pave Highway 61, including installing a new gravel base.
- Curb installation is anticipated to begin on Highway 61 late in the week, weather permitting.
- Utility installations will continue on Highway 41.
- Crews will begin placing a new gravel roadway base on Highway 41.
- Crews will continue bridge deck work.

## Downtown is open for business

Don't forget: all of your favorite downtown businesses and destinations will be accessible during construction! View the [Stage 3](#) access map to see which key intersections will be open as you navigate downtown in the coming weeks. Show your support this summer and shop local!

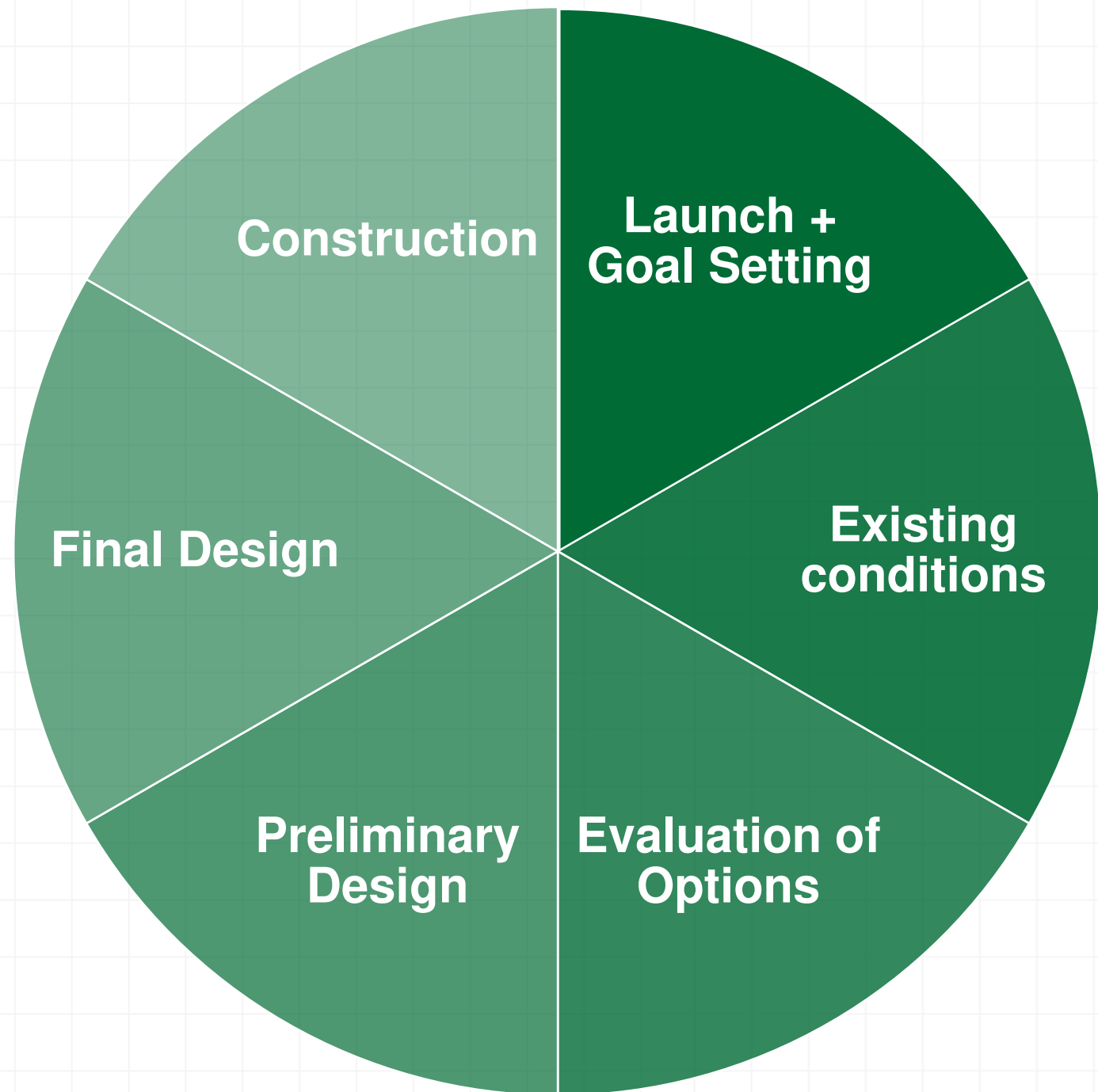
## Contact Us

If you have questions, please contact the project communication liaison at [DowntownHwy41@bolton-menk.com](mailto:DowntownHwy41@bolton-menk.com) or 952-679-3931.

Visit the website!



**How can we  
make the  
engagement  
process more  
intuitive for the  
public?**







## MY VISION FOR RICE STREET:

Safer  
A ~~Better~~ place to raise our  
Children in the Next  
Upcoming Generation!!

<http://RamseyCounty.us/RiceStreetStudy>

# Lessons Learned

- Acknowledge gaps in your engagement at each step of the project, even at the end
- Everyone can inform the engagement process
- Budget (time and money) for engagement – be realistic with your expectations
- Upfront versus backend costs – not just monetary – WHY TRUST US?
- Anyone want to add?







**Rachael Bronson, AICP**

*Multimodal Transportation Specialist*  
[rbronson@trafficpd.com](mailto:rbronson@trafficpd.com)

# Thank you!



**Katherine Amidon, AICP**

*Senior Environmental Planner*  
[katherine.amidon@bolton-menk.com](mailto:katherine.amidon@bolton-menk.com)



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