

Bike path discussed at public forum at city hall

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
April 19 2018 2:50 PM



ALTON – Tuesday night, members of the public were invited to Alton City Hall to discuss with members of the Heartland Conservancy how to make Alton a town more friendly to bikers and pedestrians alike.

The presentation was the result of a poll taken by more than 690 people between Aug. 1 – Oct. 1, 2017. A similar open forum was presented last year at City Hall as well. During the forum, survey results and projected improvements were on display on

infographic postings. Members of the Heartland Conservancy, which is assisting the city with the bike path paid for partially by a Madison County grant, were also on-hand to discuss some concerns and questions from the public. The group did similar work in Godfrey.

According to the poll results, 40 percent of those who answered the questions rated walking conditions in Alton as poor, while 50 percent said they were fair. More than half rated bicycling conditions as “poor” and 40 percent rated bicycling conditions as fair. The majority of respondents considered improving those conditions in Alton very important with as many as 78 percent saying it should be a “priority.”

While most of the poll-takers walked and biked on their own, 94 percent said they would walk even more with improved facilities and 85 percent said they would bike more.

The top factors discouraging poll-takers from walking, which were named by at least 70 percent of poll-takers were: lack of sidewalks, crossing busy roads, sidewalks, and crosswalks in need of repair, automobile traffic and speed and destinations being too far away.

With bicycling, many of those same factors were named with more than 70 percent of poll-takers listing the following reasons discouraging them from biking: inadequate shoulder width, lack of off-street bike facilities, automobile traffic and speed, lack of on-street bike facilities, crossing busy roads, debris on the road or shoulder and bad driver behavior.

If these issues were fixed, walkers and bikers said they would travel more to businesses in Downtown Alton, businesses along Homer Adams Parkway and the Riverfront Park.

Roads and streets most need of improvement, according to the poll, are Homer Adams Parkway, State Street, Broadway, Alby Street and a tie between College Avenue and the Great River Road.

At the informational session Tuesday evening, members of the public were invited to place orange dots on areas most in need of improvement. The majority of those dots were placed near the end of State Street where it becomes the Great River Road as well as further down Broadway and on College Avenue.

Members of the Heartland Conservancy said they were going to take public input with their data and draft a plan to take to the Alton City Council, which will ultimately decide how that plan will be implemented. The plan now is geared toward walkers and bikers who described themselves as “interested but concerned” about biking, meaning it will

help create more places where such travelers feel safe and confident, so they may ride and walk more. As much as 60 percent of people taking the poll described themselves in this category.