

Platte Avenue Corridor Study Community Workshops Summary

Background Information

Platte Avenue Workshop Description

Platte Avenue has been identified as a priority corridor for further analysis as part of the ConnectCOS Transportation Master Plan for the City of Colorado Springs. The broader ConnectCOS effort will update the previous City Intermodal Plan that is now 20 years old and will help set the vision and priorities for transportation improvements in Colorado Springs for the next 20 years (<https://coloradosprings.gov/project/connectcos>).

In August 2021, the Platte Avenue Study project team held three community workshops, engaging select geo-targeted members of the community, including business and property owners, residents, workforce, City staff, as well as transportation and land use experts, to inform proposed alternatives and next steps in the Platte Avenue Corridor Study (<https://coloradosprings.gov/project/platte-avenue-corridor-study>).

As part of the technical analysis of the Platte Avenue Corridor study, the study area has been divided into four character areas: (1) Downtown, (2) Middle Shooks Run, (3) Knob Hill, (4) and Eastern Reaches (Figure 3). The function of one character area influences the function and performance of the adjacent character areas making one continuous corridor. The project team recognizes that character areas do not have distinct street borders but rather transition zones from one area to the next. When considering investments in each of these distinct character areas, we have to consider investments for the entire corridor and study area. The community workshops were organized by character area and were scheduled as follows:

Monday, August 16th, Areas 3 & 4 Community Workshop (Knob Hill & Eastern Reaches)

This portion of the study area includes Platte Avenue and the surrounding neighborhoods between Union Boulevard and Chelton Road. This segment includes Knob Hill Arts District, Citadel Mall, and Academy Boulevard.

Tuesday, August 17th, Area 1 Community Workshop (Downtown)

This portion of the study area includes Platte Avenue and the surrounding businesses between I-25 and Wahsatch Avenue.

Wednesday, August 18th, Area 2 Community Workshop (Middle Shooks Run)

This portion of the study area includes Platte Avenue and the surrounding neighborhoods between Wahsatch and Union Boulevard. This segment includes Middle Shooks Run.

The following Workshop Goals were identified early in the process and shared with participants on the day of the workshops:

- 1) Provide educational information on current Citywide transportation planning efforts, project framework, and corridor existing conditions.
- 2) Experience the segment of the corridor specified in the workshop through a virtual “tour” to better understand existing functionality, issues and opportunities.
- 3) Explore and capture community interests and feedback by engaging participants in virtual workshop exercises.
- 4) Workshop participants play a critical role in identifying corridor-wide solutions. Empower participants to act as a resource and source for information for other community members regarding the Platte Avenue Corridor Study.
- 5) Celebrate neighborhood culture and identity that varies across the four-character areas by identifying corridor wide solutions that are specific and unique to each segment. Workshop participants will help the project team identify the elements that make each character area unique and tailor solutions in response.

Virtual Workshop Tools

During the Platte Avenue Corridor Study Character Area Workshops, The project team used a platform called Miro, which is an application through Zoom, to support our collaborative brainstorming sessions. [Miro](#) is a live, digital, collaborative whiteboard that allows multiple participants to contribute their thoughts simultaneously and anonymously on a given topic via sticky notes and other graphic visual tools. To ensure everyone was prepared to engage productively during our limited workshop time, we asked participants to take 10-15 minutes in advance of the meeting to review this [YouTube Tutorial: How to Navigate a Miro Board](#) and read the additional information on Miro tips and tricks which was sent out prior to the meeting. With this recommended tutorial and tips information, participants gained familiarity with the Miro functions that were to be used in the workshops. An additional tutorial was given on the day of the workshop, prior to starting the Miro exercises.

For anyone who was unable to attend a virtual workshop, the outcomes of the workshops are included in this summary, packaged with relevant materials and will be posted to the project webpage.

Workshop Participation Process

The project team made targeted as well as open invitations to stakeholders using a variety of methods and platforms. Geo-targeted invitations were made to business and property owners, residents, workforce, City staff, as well as transportation and land use experts and were

reflective of the workshop dates and character areas. The majority of outreach used a grassroots approach and included making personal phone calls and email invitations to many local businesses, organizations, schools, community centers, and religious institutions located on or adjacent to Platte Avenue.

Invitations were also shared publicly along with information on how to RSVP for the workshops, via the project website as well as Next Door. Lastly, all stakeholders who had previously participated in the Platte Avenue Corridor Study either through focus groups, stakeholder interviews, or as a member of the Community Advisory Committee (CAC), were organized based on proximity to character area and invited to the workshop date most relevant to their location and interests. CAC members offered recommendations for local businesses, property owners, and community leaders, and these individuals were also invited to attend the workshops. A full list of CAC members can be found on the project webpage (<https://coloradosprings.gov/project/platte-avenue-corridor-study>).

Everyone who was invited or expressed interest in participating was given workshop details including an agenda, description of activities, Miro tutorial, and Zoom information via email as well as calendar invitation. If a stakeholder or member of the public was unavailable on the scheduled date of the workshop that pertained to their character area, they were invited to attend a different workshop on one of the other two workshops dates. In some cases, a select few of the participants expressed interest in attending more than one workshop. A list of workshop participants is available at the end of this summary.

Below is a detailed summary of what occurred and was shared during the workshops. All workshops followed a similar format and structure, covering the same content early on in the workshop agenda, though deviating in format to engage participants in “hands on” virtual activities focusing on the specified character area.

Workshop Opening & Introductions

The meeting facilitator, Angela Woolcott, Kearns & West, welcomed attendees and provided introductions to the members of the Platte Avenue Corridor Study project team. Angela invited workshop participants to enter their names and organizations into the chat box as well as any affiliation they have to the project. After participants had done this, Angela read aloud the names, organizations, and affiliations of everyone in attendance.

Angela then discussed the workshop goals, listed in the section above, and the workshop participation guidelines which encouraged participants to:

- Be collaborative and provide productive ideas and feedback to the team to help the study be successful,
- Respect the ideas of others; and
- Focus on the task at hand and help everyone stay on agenda.

All workshop agendas included a project overview, a virtual tour of the character areas using drone video taken from segments of the corridor, an overview as well as group poll and

discussion of the draft functional objectives, and two exercises in Miro which included a visual preference survey as well as a budgeting exercise.

Angela referenced the diversity of workshop participants present and expressed that some workshop participants are already familiar with the Platte Avenue Corridor Study while other participants are new to learning about the project and why the City of Colorado Springs is studying Platte Avenue. To ensure everyone was starting with a baseline understanding of the project, each workshop began with a project overview.

Project Overview

Next, Ted Ritschard, Olsson, gave workshop participants an overview of the Platte Avenue Corridor Study, why the study is taking place, and what has been done to date. The Platte Avenue Corridor study is connected to and is a pilot corridor project of [ConnectCOS](#), which is the 20-year transportation master plan for the City of Colorado Springs. Platte Avenue was identified early in the ConnectCOS process as a critical city corridor, whose study area runs from 1-25 to Powers Boulevard.

ConnectCOS strives to identify transportation and mobility improvements based on six primary goal areas: safe, equitable, sustainable, efficiently reliable, accessible, and connected (Figure 1). The goal framework helps define future transportation improvements for the City of Colorado Springs. By assessing where the current system is not meeting the goal framework, we can understand where the current needs are as well as identifying actions to address these needs.



Figure 1: ConnectCOS Goal Framework.

Overall Process

Currently, the Platte Avenue Corridor Study project team is narrowing in on the transition point between needs and solutions. Ted reviewed the timeline for the project (Figure 2) and noted that the project team is moving into the phase of developing initial strategies for the corridor that will then become recommended projects. The workshops are critical to moving into the solutions phase of the project. Towards the end of 2021, the project team will produce a draft of the final plan document for the Platte Avenue Corridor.



Figure 2: Platte Avenue Corridor Study Project Timeline (as of August 2021).

Character Areas & Current Conditions

Next, Ted Ritschard, Olsson discussed the study area of the project which runs from I-25 to Powers Boulevard and further explained how the character areas help the project team with their analysis. As mentioned in earlier sections of this summary, the character areas define segments of the corridor based on the unique characteristics of that segment. There are four character areas: (1) Downtown, (2) Middle Shooks Run, (3) Knob Hill, and (4) Eastern Reaches. Character areas are fluid; they do not have physical boundaries, but rather transition zones where one character area blends into the other to create a continuous study area and corridor (Figure 3). It is important to both address the needs of the individual character areas while also assessing those needs within the context of the entire corridor.

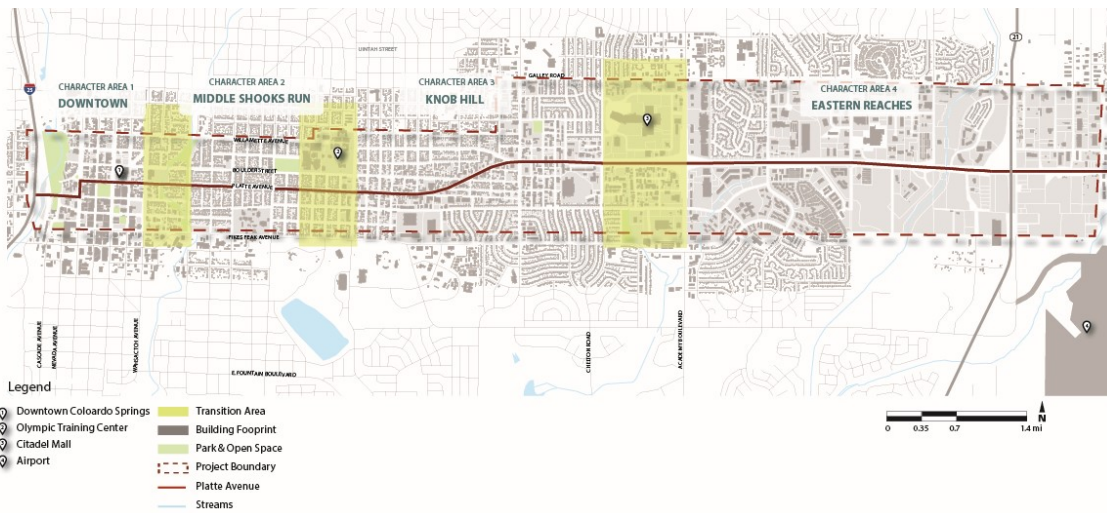


Figure 3: Platte Avenue Corridor Study Project and Character Areas.

How do we define a corridor? A corridor includes the major roadway but also any adjacent roadways or networks that exist such as trail and transit routes as well as the context of adjacent neighborhoods.

Ted verbally led participants through a brief video of the character area(s) being covered in the individual workshops. Each character area video included a closing frame of all four character areas in comparison. This viewpoint showcased how different the character areas are and the different challenges presented.

Workshop wrap-up & next steps

In closing, Angela Woolcott, Kearns & West, encouraged workshop attendees to invite additional participants to subsequent workshops that could add value to the study. The Miro exercise stayed open following each workshop until 10 pm in order to allow participants to go back and add their comments or adjust their exercise activity.

Aaron Egbert, City of Colorado Springs, reiterated how helpful the workshop participation is to the next steps in the Platte Avenue Corridor Study. The project team will utilize findings from the workshops to refine the functional objective for the corridors and start to narrow in on potential solutions and recommendations.

Each workshop summary includes a list of stakeholders who were invited and who participated. Please visit the individual workshop summaries for information on attendance and character area specific stakeholder feedback.