

Colorado Springs Platte Avenue Corridor Study

Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Meeting #4, Tuesday, March 2nd, 2022
Meeting Summary

Meeting Purpose & Goals

- Provide an update on where the project team are in the study process.
- Report on previous feedback collected.
- Provide an overview of current advancing alternatives and proposed alternatives refinements.
- Discuss next steps for public engagement and the study's technical analysis.

Welcome and Introductions

The Platte Avenue CAC Meeting opened with a brief welcome from Dan Kruger (City of Colorado Springs), who welcomed CAC members and thanked them for their continued feedback throughout the project. Angela Woolcott (Kearns & West) reviewed the Microsoft Team's functions and the meeting agenda. The fourth Community Advisory Committee meeting's purpose was to provide an update on the study's process, previous report feedback collected, provide an update on how public feedback has influenced technical analysis, and discuss the study's next steps.

Public Engagement

The project team has continued to engage with the public through various forums, including community office hour sessions, small group meetings, survey and comment cards, and numerous other tools, including media advisories and the publication of Frequently Asked Questions. In addition, the project team has held two EOC meetings and two CAC meetings, including the meeting on March 2nd, 2022, and released an adapted Joint-Public meeting pre-recorded presentation between November 2021 and March 2022.

Through continued engagement, the project team has summarized collective feedback into the following five themes:

- Study Process,
- Vehicle Travel and Traffic Capacity,
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety,
- Keeping the character of Residential Neighborhoods (notably the Middle Shooks Run and Knob Hill character areas), and
- Increasing support for transformational alternatives related to the project's functional objectives.

For more detailed summaries of the public engagement themes, please visit <https://coloradosprings.gov/platteavenue>.

Review of Alternative Development

Ted Ritschard (Olsson) reviewed the purpose of the Platte Avenue Corridor Study. The project looks to identify a long-term vision for the Platte Avenue corridor that meets the needs and goals of the community. The project team's analysis has evaluated how the alternatives could create a viable and functional short-term and long-term future for the corridor. Continued technical analysis will help inform the specific recommended projects and a proposed schedule for implementation.

Ted, then, reminds the CAC of the study’s functional objectives, which include the following:

- Maintain and enhance the East-West connectivity and capacity for current and future traffic as the primary function of the corridor, considering travel times, network connectivity, and activity centers served.
- Support Downtown as a destination- while connectivity between I-25 and the Eastern Reaches is important, the character of the Downtown portion of the corridor should prioritize the vision for Downtown.
- Establish a consistent identity for the corridor while integrating and enhancing the different character areas and the transitions between the areas.
- Integrate the corridor into the community to create an “Avenue,” visual connections, and context-specific placemaking opportunities.
- Invest in the corridor to support the significant opportunity presented by Platte Avenue to impact Citywide economic and equity outcomes.
- Provide safe, efficient, and comfortable transportation options along and across the corridor to enhance mobility for those who drive, ride, walk, or roll.

The functional objectives have been a part of the larger alternatives’ evaluation and screening process. Figure 1: Alternatives Evaluation and Screening Process Diagram illustrates the process the technical team has taken to understand corridor needs and draft the corridor’s functional objectives, develop an unconstrained solution list, screen solutions, craft alternatives, and finally identify and further define recommended alternatives. The project team is continuing to collect and understand public feedback to identify and recommend potential corridor recommendations.

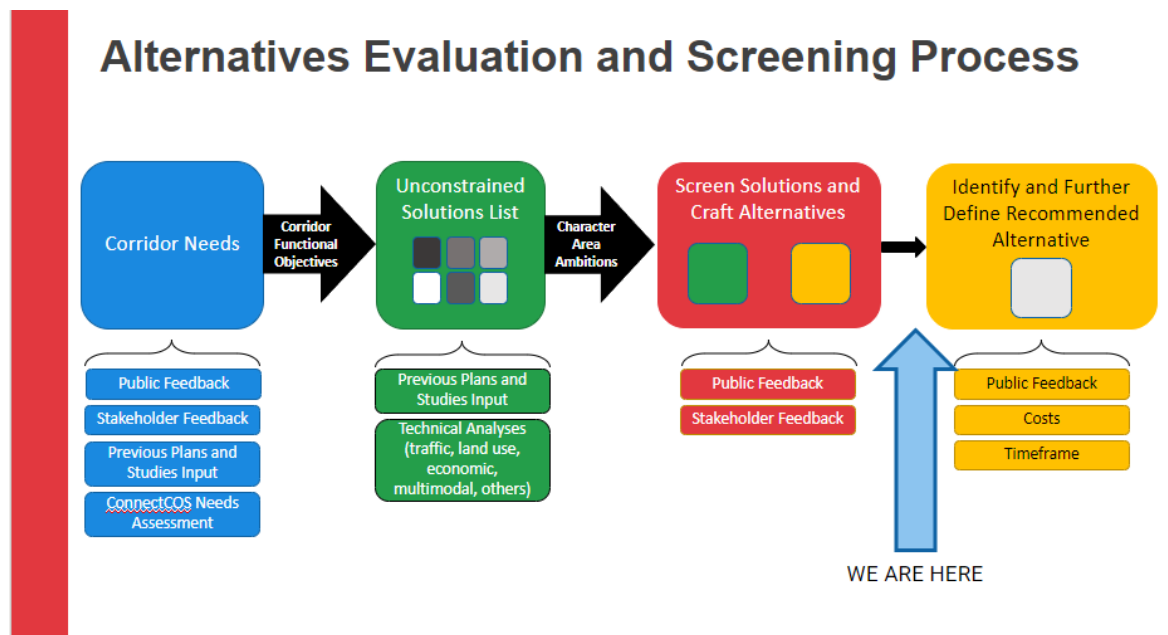


Figure 1: Alternatives Evaluation and Screening Process Diagram

Lastly, Ted reviewed the definitions for incremental and transformational alternatives. Incremental alternatives are solutions intended to effectively address current problems, while transformational alternatives are solutions planned to be ambitious and seek to address all functional objectives. After reviewing the alternatives process, Ted explains how the project team wants to explore how to recommend the transformational alternatives in the study’s final recommendations. Through analysis and stakeholder meetings, the project team has seen confirmation of the benefits, the inclusion of solutions for specific challenges, and evaluating financial implications.

Review of Incremental Approach

Lyle DeVries (Felsburg, Holt, & Ullevig (FHU)) provided a high-level review of the proposed draft incremental alternatives and public feedback for each of the three corridor sections.

Draft Incremental Alternatives for the Eastern Reaches Character Area

For the Eastern Reaches character area, the project team proposed the following incremental alternatives:

- The reconstruction of the Platte Avenue and Academy Boulevard intersection,
- The widening of Platte Avenue to six lanes from Academy Boulevard to Powers Boulevard,
- Operational improvements to Wooten Road, Murray Boulevard, and Powers Boulevard), and
- The creation of a shared-use path from Chelton Road to Sand Creek Drive.

Public feedback demonstrated support for added traffic capacity through additional lanes and the addition of a shared-use path. The public reiterated that a shared used path should ensure safe crossings and access for all.

Draft Incremental Alternatives for the Central Corridor (The Knob Hill and Middle Shooks Run Character Areas)

For the Central Corridor area, the project team proposed the following incremental alternatives:

- The inclusion of enhanced bus stops on Boulder Street,
- Intersection capacity improvements at Union Boulevard and Circle Drive,
- Additional signalized pedestrian crossing,
- introduction of a dedicated transit lane on Boulder Street from Wahsatch Avenue to Platte Avenue, and
- Transit queue jumps at significant intersections.

Public feedback emphasized maintaining on-street parking for residents on Boulder Street. Additionally, general feedback advocated not to include enhanced bus stops in residential neighborhoods.

Draft Incremental Alternatives for the Downtown Character Area

Lastly, for the Downtown Character Area, the project team proposed the following incremental alternatives:

- Pedestrian and aesthetic improvements to the Tejon Street intersection,
- Lane repurposing on Platte Avenue from Cascade Avenue to Wahsatch Avenue, and
- Nevada Avenue and Platte Avenue improvements.

Public feedback for this character area focused on how medians limit flexibility and do not enhance the pedestrian experience. Feedback advocated for a dedicated pedestrian space on the roadside.

Refining the Transformational Approach

Draft Transformational Alternatives for the Eastern Reaches Character Area

Amy Garinger (Kimley Horn) provided a high-level review of the transformational alternatives proposed for the Eastern Reaches character area. She began with a recap of proposed transformational alternatives, which include:

- Reconstruction of the Platte Avenue and Academy Boulevard interchange (all four legs),
- Widening of Platte Avenue to six lanes with additional intersection improvements to Wooten Road, Murray Boulevard, and Powers Boulevard,
- The creation of a shared-use Path from Chelton Road to Powers Boulevard
- The transition of Platte Avenue from a “road” to a “street” with additional signalized intersections and the elimination of frontage roads to activate an adjacent roadway network.

Amy then gave an overview of what the project team has heard regarding the Eastern Reaches’ transformational alternatives. This character area received fewer comments than other areas. Feedback supports the widening of Platte Avenue east of Powers Boulevard with a “road” atmosphere. The public

expressed support for the shared use path but did express their concern about intersection crossing and pedestrian interaction. The public also requested additional information on the Academy Boulevard proposed quadrant intersections, particularly around timing and investment.

As the public provided their feedback on the draft alternatives, the project team continued to refine their alternatives to understand the benefits and impacts of each. The project team shared that they believe the proposed alternatives would create a “street” environment and set the stage for livability and multi-modal activity within the Platte Avenue corridor. The project team acknowledges that the proposed transformational alternatives would impact existing land uses in the Platte Avenue and Academy Boulevard area.

As the project team develops their final recommendations, refinement analysis will incorporate the need for future widening of Platte Avenue and intersection improvements to Wooten Road, Murray Boulevard, and Powers Boulevard. The project team will continue to refine the shared-use path to understand how it can provide connectivity to Powers Boulevard and other corridor areas, including a potential connection in the Knob Hill character area.

The project team then facilitated discussion through an online virtual whiteboarding tool, known as Miro, for the CAC to contribute their thoughts on the transformational alternatives and impacts. CAC discussion focused on the following themes: industrial land use, private development, traffic lights, and transportation for all modes.

As development continues east of Powers Boulevard, the CAC is interested to see how Platte Avenue serves the corridor’s function. CAC members discussed that private and industrial development in this area would impact how the Platte Avenue corridor functions throughout the four-character areas. Additionally, CAC members brought up the growing industry expansion into this area, and the project should consider how that will impact the Eastern Reaches character area.

CAC members also asked about including traffic light cameras along Platte Avenue. Although not directly included in the design, the CAC advocated for the inclusion of traffic cameras to prevent additional accident fatalities and as a way to increase safety throughout the corridor.

In addition, CAC members discussed multi-modal transportation options to include bicycle, pedestrian, and transit infrastructure. CAC members asked if the multi-use path would be on both sides of the street to prevent bikes or pedestrians from crossing Platte Avenue. Additionally, CAC members asked about rapid bus transit in this area and how transit on Platte Avenue could connect to adjacent transit networks.

Draft Transformational Alternatives for the Central Corridor (The Knob Hill and Middle Shooks Run Character Areas)

Lyle provided a high-level review of the transformational alternatives proposed for the Central Corridor region. He began with a recap of proposed transformational alternatives, which include:

- Platte Avenue and Boulder Street as a one-way couplet with dedicated transit lane, enhanced bus stops, and wider streetscaping
- A two-way cycle track on Platte Avenue
- Improved North-South bike and pedestrian crossing
- Buffered bicycle lane on Boulder Street.

Lyle then gave an overview of what the project team has heard regarding the Central Corridor’s transformational alternatives. The public expressed concerns about traffic capacity and potential traffic impacts on North-South streets and parallel roadways. The project team heard that there was support for making North-South crossings easier for pedestrians and bikes. Feedback expressed continued concern for speeding and noise mitigation and the need to understand how the one-way couplet would impact emergency operations and access to Memorial Hospital. Additionally, community members expressed that Shooks Run Trail crossing is a neighborhood asset as currently configured. Further, the project team heard that keeping on-street parking in this area was essential.

As the public provided feedback, the project team continued to refine their alternatives to understand the benefits and impacts of the proposed changes. The project team shared that they believe the proposed transformational alternatives in this area would meet current travel demands and functional objectives, provide future flexibility, and facilitate on-street parking for both the Middle Shooks Run and Knob Hill character areas. The project team acknowledges that the transformational alternatives would impact current traffic and access patterns, including causing additional traffic on North-South residential roadways.

As the project team develops their final recommendations, refinement analysis will incorporate additional research on traffic patterns, traffic speeds, emergency access, and bicycle infrastructure. Additionally, the project team will look to understand how the one-way couplet would connect to the Eastern Reaches and Downtown character areas.

The project team facilitated discussion around the proposed transformational alternatives for the Central Corridor region. The themes in this discussion focused on the design of the one-way couplet and the Shooks Run Trail crossing. The project team clarified the configuration of a two-lane in each direction couplet. The CAC reiterated that the Shooks Run Trail is currently an asset, and that the committee would like to learn more about what is proposed for this crossing. The project team expressed that the trail crossing is still under consideration based on public feedback regarding an underground trail while balancing noise mitigation of the bridge and retaining walls on Platte Avenue.

Draft Transformational Alternatives for the Downtown Character Areas

Kelly Leadbetter (Felsburg, Holt, & Ullevig (FHU)) provided a high-level review of the transformational alternatives proposed for the Downtown character area. She began with a recap of the proposed transformational alternatives, which include:

- Lane repurposing and streetscape improvements to Bijou Street and Kiowa Street
- Lane repurposing on Platte Avenue from Cascade Avenue to Wahsatch Avenue
- The creation of a flexible street along Acacia Park.

Kelly then gave an overview of public feedback regarding the Downtown character area. The project team has heard split opinions on moving or celebrating the location of the General Palmer statue. And community members expressed concern about lane reductions and traffic capacity. The project team has also heard that school and pedestrian safety and maintaining school drop-off operations are essential to the community. Additionally, emergency access for the downtown character area was also a concern.

As the public provided feedback, the project team continued to refine their alternatives to understand the benefits and impacts of the proposed changes. The project team shared that they believe the transformational alternatives in the Downtown character area would further advance Downtown as a destination with flexible street use while emphasizing the pedestrian experience. Additionally, the proposed alternatives would better handle traffic levels within the larger grid. The project team does acknowledge that the transformational alternatives may hinder delivery truck activity along Bijou Street and Kiowa Street.

As the project team develops their final recommendations, refinement analysis will incorporate traffic analysis findings, school operations, and emergency access analysis. Additionally, the project team will consider how delivery trucks could function on Bijou Street and Kiowa Street. And lastly, continue to understand how Platte Avenue transitions into the Downtown character area.

The project team facilitated a discussion regarding the Downtown character areas. Themes during this character area included two-way configurations of Bijou Street and Kiowa Street, and Palmer school operations. The project team mentioned that multiple engineering teams had studied Bijou Street and Kiowa Street to understand their functionality as two-way streets; however, it involves a detailed needs analysis. Regarding Palmer High School, the project team plans to meet with representatives from District 11 to understand better how the alternatives would impact school safety and operations.

Look Ahead & Next Steps

The project team looks forward to various upcoming engagement opportunities. The project team has scheduled upcoming stakeholder meetings with Bike Colorado Springs, City of Colorado Springs Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services, elected officials, HBA, the development community, the Joint-Use Land Use Committee, Peterson Air Force Base, and the Knob Hill Arts District. The additional feedback collected from the CAC and upcoming stakeholder meetings will inform the project team's technical review. The project team will share their proposed recommendations in another round of EOC and CAC meetings and forthcoming public meeting(s).

Participants

Project Team Attendees

Name	Organization
Ted Ritschard	Olsson
Kelly Leadbetter	FHU
Lyle DeVries	FHU
Amy Garinger	Kimley Horn
Angela Jo Woolcott	Kearns & West
Sarah Franklin	Kearns & West
Caitlin Sheridan	Kearns & West
Aaron Egbert	City of Colorado Springs
Dan Kruger	City of Colorado Springs

Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Attendees

Name	Organization
Joel Kern	COS Police Department
Brett Lacey	COS Fire Department
Terry Johns	School District 11
Kevin McCafferty	School District 11
Scott Lee	COS Parking Enterprise
Nancy Henjum	COS City Council, District 5
Jim Godfrey	Pikes Peak Rural Transportation Authority (PPRTA)
Elena Nunez	Colorado Springs Utilities
Kate Brady	COS Planning/Bicycle
Allen Beauchamp	Trails and Open Space Coalition
Richard Mulledy	COS Stormwater Enterprise Manager
Chelsea Gondeck	Downtown Partnership
Gerald White	Bike Colorado Springs
Tim Seibert	Norwood Development Group
Paul Spotts	The Independence Center & Community Transit Coalition
Rodney Gullatte	Black Business Network
Emily Duncan	COS Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services