

## **Platte Avenue Corridor Study Community Office Hours Summary- Session One**

*January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2022, 3 pm – 5 pm*

### **Platte Avenue Community Office Hours Background**

Following a recent virtual meeting recording (and related community survey) that was published before the end of the year, the Platte Avenue Corridor Study project team held two community office hours sessions in early 2022 (on January 6<sup>th</sup> and January 10<sup>th</sup>) to meet virtually with members of the public. Each session ran two hours in length and provided the option to join during the first hour, second hour, or both. The first session saw nine total participants, and five of those nine joined for the full two-hours. A summary list of attendees and project team participants can be found at the end of this summary.

The sessions were open to the public and announced through the Platte Avenue project webpage (<https://coloradosprings.gov/project/platte-avenue-corridor-study>), the Platte Avenue project distribution list, and the City of Colorado Springs social media channels, including Facebook and Next Door. The public was invited to join the virtual sessions using the Zoom link, posted to the project webpage.

### **Community Office Hours Opening & Introductions**

The primary goal of the community office hour session(s) was to allow members of the public to meet directly with members of the project team, comment on the project, and have their project-related questions answered. Participants were invited to use the raise their hand function to alert the group if they had a question. If participants did not feel comfortable unmuting to ask their question, or for those without access to a microphone, participants were encouraged to ask their questions or make comments using the chat box feature.

To begin the conversation and provide an overview of the recent draft alternatives presented in December, the project team walked through a short slide presentation. The contents of this presentation include a recap of recent public meeting material which is publicly available on the project website. The contents of these remarks are summarized and included in Appendix A of this summary report.

### **Participant Comments, Questions, and Summary of Response**

Please note that not every comment or question asked during the office hours received a direct and detailed response. The conversation was fluid, and what follows is a high-level overview of the questions asked and addressed (if applicable) during the conversation. The take-aways from this conversation also informed the creation of a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document, which is available in the “project materials” section of the Platte Avenue Corridor Study project webpage (<https://coloradosprings.gov/platteavenue>). During the meeting the

following conversation themes emerged:

### **Study Need and Current Conditions Analysis**

- Several attendees asked what issues the study is looking to address. The project team explained that the Platte Avenue Corridor Study is part of a larger city-wide master transportation plan called ConnectCOS. Early on in that process, Platte Avenue was identified as a priority corridor. For more than ten years now the city has recognized that Platte Avenue is a critical east/west corridor that serves greater network connectivity needs and warranted additional analysis.
- Another topic that arose was what metrics were being utilized as part of the ongoing technical analysis. The city project manager discussed how the planning horizon aligns with PlanCOS and ConnectCOS - which are both considered a 20-year planning horizon. In terms for forward-looking trends and issues, the city is trying to align with forecasted future land use changes as well as technology improvements. For example, the area near Citadel Mall has investment potential, as it covers a lot of underutilized land.
- Attendees also raised questions about the order of the project going forward. The project team explained that the decision on alternatives is down the road dependent on money sources and immediate needs of the city.

### **Traffic and Congestion**

- Attendees asked about the comparison of traffic volumes on streets like Union Boulevard, Academy Boulevard, Nevada Avenue, Powers Boulevard, and Platte Avenue as it relates to vehicle traffic in the city's downtown area. The project team provided insight to their detailed traffic analysis looking at current and future traffic volumes based on the Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments (PPACG) Travel Demand model. Through this analysis, the project team determined that many people travel on Platte. Additionally, many people also travel North and South allowing the traffic to decrease while traveling West. It is due to delays and congestion around the Union Boulevard intersection that the project team is considering the one-way couplet as part of their drafted transformational alternatives.
- In addition to traffic and congestion, attendees asked about the treatment of Platte Avenue through the corridor's business district. The project team is making recommendations in these areas in order to create a safer commuter and pedestrian environment. The project team has heard from the Knob Hill Arts District that traffic speeds and pedestrian crossings are a concern in the corridor's business district. Attendees in the meeting echoed their support for a more walkable corridor.
- The project team has introduced the concept of a "stroad", which builds on the definitions of both road and street. While a road functions to move people from point A to point B and a street function to generate wealth, a "stroad" is a combination of both. A "stroad" causes conflicts between vehicles and other modes of transportation, influencing areas such as residential neighborhoods or business districts.

## **Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodations**

- When discussing the Central Corridor portion of Platte Avenue, attendees had questions about the balance of bike lanes, transit lanes, and parking. The project team explained that all current street parking in residential areas will be preserved, while also proposing an additional transit and bike lanes. One attendee commented that in their experience the best scenario would be what the city did with Weber Street with parking, bicycle, travel, and protected parking.

## **Parking**

- Attendees from the Middle Shooks Run and 800-Block neighborhood on Boulder Street explained that parking remains a major issue, and the reduction of parking would cause additional issues for residents. The necessity of parking along Platte Avenue and Boulder Street due to local businesses, churches, and schools make parking a necessity. Attendees also elaborated that a dedicated parking lane, particularly one that is protected, would help ensure the safety of those entering or leaving their vehicles.

## **Public Process**

- Attendees asked questions around the public engagement and involvement of businesses along the Platte Avenue corridor. In the early stages, the project team reached out to city stakeholders (other city departments and advocacy organizations) in order to coordinate and work together on the Platte Avenue Corridor Study. The team, then, selected project-specific stakeholders to make up a Community Advisory Committee (CAC). This committee is to act like a sounding board before the project team presents their ideas to the public.
- Additionally, the project team provided an update on the public engagement process. The project team collected feedback through neighborhood meetings, stakeholder interviews, a comment card, and survey with a deadline of January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022. The next steps of the study include the project team conducting additional technical analysis to refine alternatives for the corridor. A draft plan will then be shared with the community for another round of public engagement and feedback.

## **Land Use and Community**

- Attendees expressed their desire to protect the older trees planted in the Platte Avenue median, referencing the City of Colorado Springs' history of being known as the "tree city".
- Additionally, one attendee expressed their concern over the inclusion of bicycles and bike lanes on the corridor. They recommended not including bike lanes from Wasatch Avenue to Union Boulevard in order to preserve the medians, where many historical trees are planted.

## Community Office Hours Participants, Session One

The table below summarizes who was in attendance on the day of the scheduled office hours session from the Colorado Springs community and from the Platte Avenue Corridor Study project team.

### ATTENDEES

Attendee	Profile	Additional Notes
David Ware	Works on the Corridor	
Doug & Cindy	Residents	Platte Avenue
Christine	Resident	
Lee Trovas	Resident	Platte Avenue
Jean Lux	Resident	800 Block of Boulder Neighborhood
Cully	Resident	Bike COS Volunteer
Mike Chavez	City of Colorado Springs	
Fallon Gibbons	City of Colorado Springs	

### PROJECT TEAM

Name	Company
Dan Krueger	City of Colorado Springs
Aaron Egbert	City of Colorado Springs
Kelly Leadbetter	FHU
Ted Ritschard	Olsson
Angie Martell	Olsson
Zach Barr	Kearns & West
Sarah Franklin	Kearns & West

## Appendix A: Introductory Presentation

### Project Overview

Kelly Leadbetter, FHU, gave workshop participants a high-level 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.

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.

### Study Area and Character Areas

The study area runs from I-25 to Powers Boulevard and is organized into four character areas. The character areas define segments of the corridor based on the unique characteristics of that segment. The four character areas are (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 2). 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.

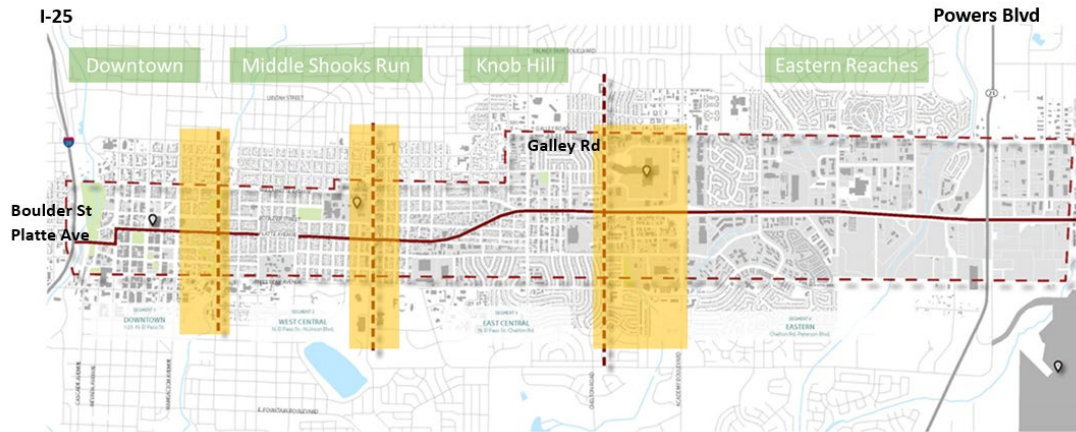
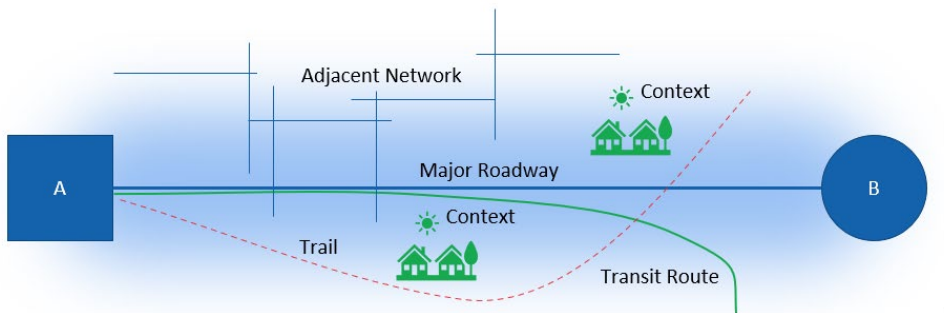


Figure 2: Platte Avenue Corridor Study Project and Character Areas.

**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 (Figure 3).



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Figure 3: A depiction of the definition of a “corridor”.

## Process and Timeline

Currently, the Platte Avenue Corridor Study project team is narrowing in on the final recommended alternatives and developing strategies for the corridor that will then become recommended projects. Public input is critical to finalizing the recommendations and moving into a draft of the final plan.

Recent opportunities for the general public to learn about the status of the project and provide input included: (1) watching the most recent public meeting, which was scheduled to take place on December 15<sup>th</sup> and was recorded due to city-wide storms and power outages, (2) responding to a virtual comment card which directed the public to comment and ask questions regarding what they saw and heard on the recording of the public meeting, and (3) a community survey offered from December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021, through January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022, which asked respondents to comment on the incremental versus transformational draft alternatives.

Towards the end of March 2022, the project team will produce a draft of the final plan document for the Platte Avenue Corridor. The project timeline and where the project team is within the context of that timeline, is depicted in the image below (Figure 4).

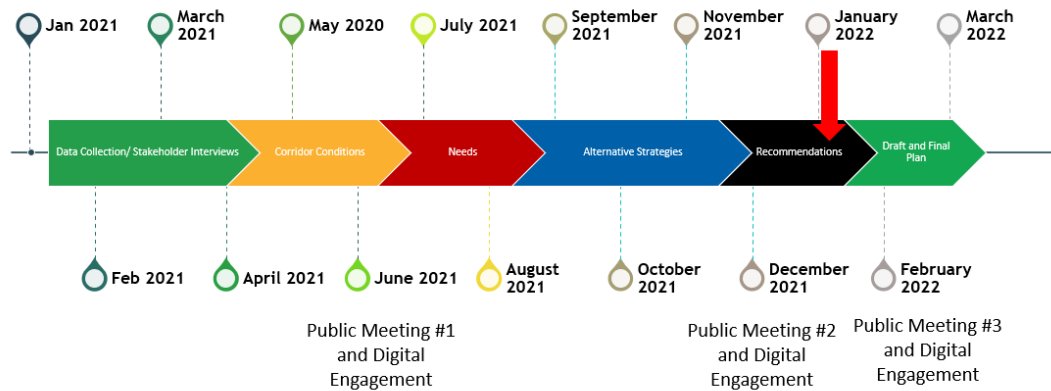


Figure 4: Platte Avenue Corridor Study Project Timeline (as of January 2022).

The FHU team goes on to discuss the process for developing strategy alternatives (Figure 5). The goals (mentioned in earlier sections of this summary), public and stakeholder input, and thorough technical analysis were critical in determining the current conditions, needs, and future phases of the project. The key phases include: (1) defining the current conditions and needs of the corridor, (2) coming up with the functional objectives<sup>1</sup> for Platte Avenue, (3) defining and contextualizing the ambitions for each of the four character areas of Platte Avenue, (4) coming up with a full menu of potential solutions, (5) narrowing and organizing those solutions into recommended alternatives that are incremental and transformational.

Incremental alternatives are defined as being effective in addressing the functional objectives and providing basic functional improvements based on the existing context and constraints; constraints could include things like funding, community support, etc. Transformational alternatives are defined as being more ambitious in support of all the functional objectives, as well as exploring what “could be” without existing constraints present. Transformational alternatives, for example, may come with added challenges and costs as well as added benefit and impact.

<sup>1</sup> Functional objectives are defined as statements that define Platte Avenue’s function and which translate the ConnectCOS goals (safety, reliability, sustainability, equity, connectivity, and accessibility) to the needs of the Platte Avenue Corridor.



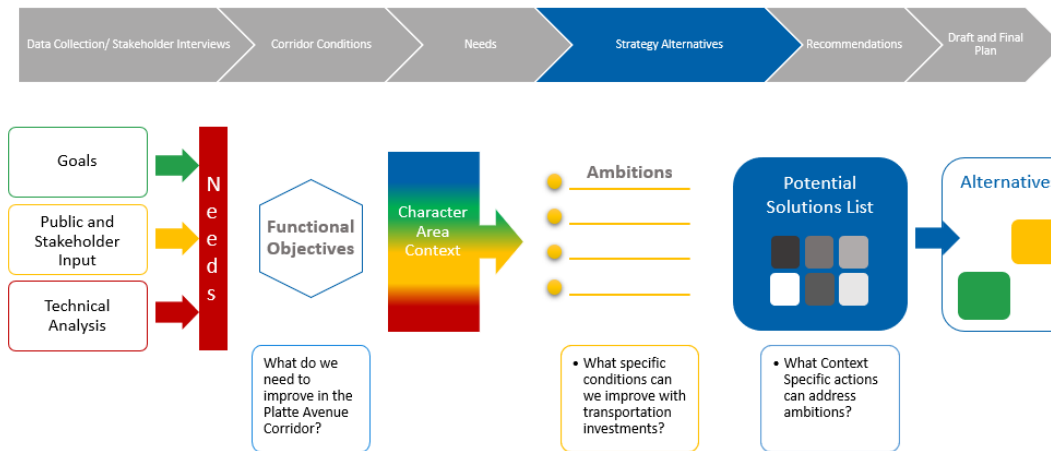


Figure 5: The process for developing strategy alternatives for the Platte Avenue Corridor.

Next steps are shown in Figure 6 below, public and stakeholder input will be used to define a recommended alternative (either the incremental or the transformational), and a draft plan and concept will be reached towards the end of quarter one, 2022.

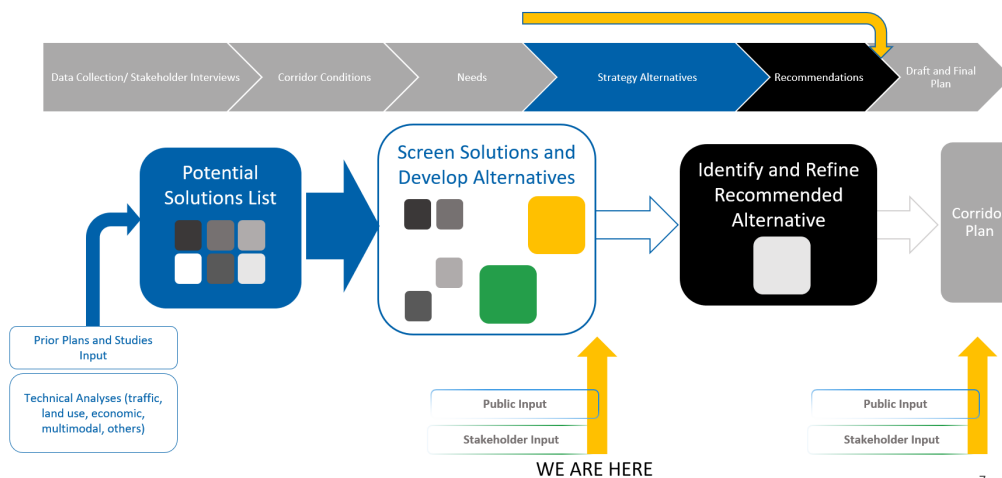


Figure 6: Next steps for developing strategy alternatives for the Platte Avenue Corridor.

## Feedback Opportunities & Next Steps

To close the project overview and initial presentation, members of the project team reviewed the current opportunities to provide input. They include:

- 1) Provide feedback by completing the digital comment card available on the project webpage (<https://coloradosprings.gov/platteavenue>). The comment card is available through January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022.
- 2) Participate in the Platte Avenue Corridor Study Survey of Character Area Ambitions and Alternatives. The survey is available and linked to the comment card above, and a direct link is also available on the project website. The survey will also remain open through January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022.



- 3) A recording of the most recent public meeting presentation and materials are available on the Platte Avenue Corridor Study project webpage.

The project team then reviewed where members of the public could find each of these opportunities on the project webpage as well as other resources and information available.