

## **Platte Avenue Corridor Study Community Office Hours Summary – Session Two**

*January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2022, 4 pm – 6 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 the project team and residents introduced themselves. The introductions included brief remarks from the project team and the City of Colorado Springs.

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

Please note that not every comment/question 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 “frequently asked questions” section of the Platte Avenue Corridor Study project webpage (<https://coloradosprings.gov/platteavenue>). During the meeting, the following conversation themes emerged:

### **Traffic and Congestion**

- During the meeting, several attendees asked about the proposed transformational alternative of a one-way couplet, and if this would create a higher need for people to travel the North-South streets of the Middle Shooks Run area. Additional concerns were raised about traffic speed enforcement and lane reductions.
- Attendees emphasized the need to dissuade racing and engine revving of vehicles traveling on Platte Avenue. Attendees raised that the El Paso Street bridge acts as a sound amplifier for revving engines. The project team is continuing to consider how noise mitigation could be incorporated into their draft alternatives. Regarding speed, the project team explained how signal timing for one-way streets are effective in moving traffic, while retaining optimal roadway capacity.
- Attendees also expressed concern over the traffic congestion at specific intersections along the corridor including the following: Filmore Street and MLK Bypass, East of Union Boulevard. The project team explained the Eastern Reaches character area is the busiest from a traffic volume standpoint, whereas traffic daily volumes decrease as you travel towards Downtown, where people chose different modes of transportation. Through the project team's traffic analysis, they hope to propose capacity improvements in areas of high need.
- While discussing traffic and congestion, one attendee raised concerns about how traffic patterns have changed due to the pandemic and questioned whether the current models reflect those changes. The project team has accounted for pre-pandemic levels and factored the capacity counts to reflect higher traffic volumes, which factored 20% higher during the morning commute and 12% higher during the evening commute.
- Residents expressed concern of congestion on Prospect Street between Boulder Street and Willamette Avenue, and they hope the proposed alternatives would not exacerbate the current problem. The residents would welcome changes to this area that would help alleviate the congestion, especially around school pick-up times.

### **Parking**

- Attendees raised concerns about parking, particularly in the Middle Shooks Run character area. The transformational alternative includes parking, whereas the incremental alternative does not include parking. Throughout the public engagement process, the project team has heard that parking remains a priority in this area and agree that parking is essential to include in future draft alternatives.
- In addition, Boulder Street residents raised concerns about the lack of safe parking. Many park on Prospect Street now; however, heavy parking on this narrow road leads to additional neighborhood congestion and restricted views for vehicles entering or leaving neighborhood alleys.

### **Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Transit Accommodations**

- Attendees discussed the city's bike network, as it relates to the inclusion of bike lanes on Platte Avenue. Initial questions centered on how the current bike network would be incorporated into the Platte Avenue Corridor Study. The project team explained that the incremental alternative for the Central Corridor would include bike lanes on Boulder Street only, while the transformational alternative would include bike lanes on both Boulder Street and Platte Avenue. Platte Avenue in the transformational alternative would feature a two-way bike facility. In response, one attendee stressed the need for balance between bikes and vehicle travel throughout this portion of the corridor.
- Attendees asked about how bike lanes on the Platte Avenue Corridor fit into the larger network, and why bike lanes are not placed on parallel streets. One attendee expressed that they do not see the need for bike lanes on Platte Avenue or Boulder Street due to the city's other functional East-West bike lanes. The project team explained from a macro level, the bike network and its incorporation into this study depends on safety. Through BikeCOS, Boulder Street has been envisioned to be part of the city's bike network; therefore, the project team had to incorporate it into their study. The project team is still considering the placement of bike lanes within the Platte Avenue Corridor.
- Attendees continued to discuss how the transformational alternatives inclusion of a center bike lane would be functional and safe. Attendees proposed the inclusion of protected bike lanes to create a buffer from vehicles traveling the corridor. One attendee referenced European cities' use of a bike and pedestrian space and asked if the current alternatives did not do this due to the expense of moving existing green space. The project team responded to explain that currently the cost is not a strong decision factor. The team defaulted to the on-street network, which currently puts bike lanes next to the sidewalk, where pedestrians and bikes ride at different levels.
- Attendees also had questions regarding the inclusion of additional lanes, such as bike and transit lanes on Boulder Street. One attendee expressed concern over the width of the street, and how it is not wide enough to include public transit. Additionally, if there is a dedicated bus lane, it would be important to consider the speed of the bus since the neighborhood has lots of kids, schools, and churches. Additionally, attendees questioned how pedestrians would cross the street with lanes dedicated to multiple modes of transportation, including vehicle, bike, and transit.

### **One-way Couplet**

- Attendees expressed that the transformational one-way couplet was the better of the two-options as compared to the incremental alternatives proposed for the Central Corridor area. Despite support, attendees but did raise concerns about how people would navigate the couplet, particularly when traveling North-South. Improved left-hand turn lanes would not negate the need for North-South crossing needs.
- Attendees also raised concerns about how emergency vehicles would navigate the one-way couplet. The project team explained that they are in current talks with first

responders and are looking at creative ways to address this issue. Additionally, the team is examining emergency routes and how the one-way couplet would impact these.

- Overall, attendees equated the one-way couplet to improved lane capacity along Platte Avenue and Boulder Street. Another attendee stressed that the goal should not be acceptable level of service, but the study should aim to improve levels of service and capacity. One attendee did raise that they would prefer to see three vehicle lanes on both Platte Avenue and Boulder, as they do not believe two vehicle lanes could handle the future traffic capacity.

### **Land Use and Community**

- Attendees questioned if the Platte Avenue Corridor Study considered the possible impacts on low-income populations. Additionally, attendees raised concerns that transportation and street improvements lead to higher housing costs. The project team acknowledged the shortage of affordable housing along the corridor. One of the study's goals is to make sure there are mobility options for all who live on the corridor to spur additional development. The project team does not anticipate having negative impacts towards housing and are looking for opportunities where underutilized lands can be better used within the community.
- Attendees also stressed the need for policy-related improvements particularly around infrastructure. The project team related infrastructure policy to the larger ConnectCOS plan, which is the city-wide master transportation plan. Platte Avenue Corridor Study is a pilot study and provides an opportunity to review policy and procedure within the larger plan.
- Attendees also discussed proposed alternatives for the walking trail near the El Paso Street bridge, including a proposed alternative that would route the Shooks Run Trail underground. Many attendees agreed that in other areas of the city, underground walking tunnels are too dangerous. Residents expressed how an underground trail would disrupt various neighborhood traditions, such as watching the New Year's fireworks.
- Lastly, attendees did express their support of a study that looks to make the city more walkable, bikeable, and accessible to multiple modes of transportation. They feel as though the City of Colorado Springs could lead the way, in comparison to other cities in the United States.

## Community Office Hours Participants, Session Two

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
Marie & Husband Bear	Commuter	
Jack Keaton	Resident	800 Block of Boulder
Annie Beer	Works on the Corridor	Peak Vista CHC
Jason Thede	Commuter	
Carlos Perez	Commuter	
Steven Karkenny	Resident	Middle Shooks Run Neighborhood
Jean Lux	Resident	800 Block of Boulder Neighborhood
Beth Roalstad	Works on the Corridor	Homeward Pikes Peak
Chelsea Gondeck	Commuter and works on corridor	Member of the Platte Avenue CAC
Patricia	Resident	Platte Avenue,
Stephanie Vigil	Commuter	Running for representative in the Colorado State House, District 16
Patricia Yates	Commuter	
Evan MacDonald	Resident, Commuter, and Works on the Corridor	Works with the Colorado School for the Deaf and Blind
Lisa Phillips	Resident	Middle Shooks Run Neighborhood
Barbara Knove	Commuter	Mesa Springs Community Association
Bailey	Resident	Middle Shooks Run Neighborhood
Monique	Resident	Platte Avenue

### PROJECT TEAM

Name	Company
Dan Krueger	City of Colorado Springs
Aaron Egbert	City of Colorado Springs
Lyle DeVries	FHU
Amy Garinger	Kimley-Horn
Angela Jo Woolcott	Kearns & West
Caitlin Sheridan	Kearns & West