

## **UTC Minutes – December 8, 2021**

Members in attendance: Orin Zyvan, Valerie Dobbs, Shana Wade, Valerie Dobbs, Diana Rooney, Stephen Myer, Andy, Abe, Rob, Athena

Staff in attendance: Dani Acosta, Kalli Saavas, Dave, Felix, Eric, Ross, Trent, Rob Davis,

RTPO Staff in attendance: Dana Brosig

### **Call to Order/Announcements**

Diana R. called meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

Diana R. reminded the committee about the January 10, 2022 UTC workshop.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Shana W. moved to approve the November 10, 2021 minutes. Valerie D. seconded the motion.

### **ETC North Avenue Study Focus Group**

Patrick went over project background, which will define vision for the corridor and identify a set of prioritized infrastructure projects to make the corridor more comfortable for people biking, walking and taking transit. ETC Study is separate from the CDOT North Ave Improvement Project, which will encompass road resurfacing, the construction of new medians to control access, improve surface and improve traffic flow (construction is scheduled from Spring 2022 to Fall 2022). ETC Study will focus on improvements outside the curb.

ETC project outcomes includes: 1) Developing a vision for the North Avenue Corridor, 2) Developing conceptual designs for improving bus stops, 3) Longer-term transit speed and reliability improvements, 3) Developing a corridor-wide conceptual design for multi-use trail, 4) Preliminary design for construction of next high priority segment of multiuse trail, 5) A prioritized list of long-term infrastructure project to improve walking, biking, getting to and from bus stops that can get implemented as funding becomes available.

Patrick P. recapped the project's community outreach activities:

- Open house on November 16<sup>th</sup> at the Lincoln Park Barn – 40 attendees
- Online survey in both English and Spanish – received 240 responses
- Focus groups with education, human services providers, and UTC
- Conducted walk audit with technical team including RTPO, City, CDOT and Mesa County staff along 2.5 miles of the corridor

Patrick P. shared survey results with the committee. In general 60 percent of respondents expressed that they were uncomfortable biking or walking along the corridor. Respondents also shared that there was not enough lighting at night, not enough crosswalks, and that the current design standard (8' sidewalk on both sides, multi-use 8' landscape buffer, bus stop pullouts and bikes lanes) was not an ideal situation.

Patrick P. also shared the project's preliminary analysis. Highest ridership identified along the east end of corridor near Dept of Human Services. 68 percent of stops are more than 200 feet from nearest

signalized crossing. East end of corridor has the most gaps in the sidewalk. The crash analysis showed a concentration of crashes throughout the corridor including a couple of hotspots. Over a five-year period, there were 68 crashes involving a pedestrian or bike, which is a high number for a corridor of this nature. The analysis further broke down the crash data by mode, crashes by type, and crash severity by type. The analysis showed that there were a higher number of bike crashes compared to pedestrian crashes, which Patrick P. noted was interesting as it is not a corridor with high significant bike facilities. The most common type of conflict point was right turn hooks off drives. The analysis found that crash injuries were most severe at unsignalized crossings.

Diana R. expressed that she was happy about the bike shoulder consideration and that it spoke to the need of an overlooked population. Diana R. remarked that the corridor is a pretty commercial area and a corridor where a lot of people work who might not necessarily have a car.

Abe H. remarked that even as a fairly bold cyclist and he is not sure he would ride along North Ave even with a bike lane. Abe H. added that with the amount of curb cuts along North Ave, it would be surprising if a bike lane would even be approved by CDOT.

Stephen M. remarked that he has never used North Ave as a bike route. Asked who is using this and how needs this? Remark that the answers to those questions need to be decided as part of this study. Stephen M. remarked that there would need to be a separated lane to make it safe and that people biking east on North Avenue really have no other choice, particularly due to the amount of inexpensive housing along this corridor and the human services center located there too.

Orin Z. asked if there was outreach done to first responders about who the people were in these accidents. Patrick P. answered no, but that mentioned that the data can break down by age, gender and other data pieces associated with the crash. Orin Z. shared a comment from a Fire EMT who responds to the North Ave Corridor that people commonly involved in accidents where the last people you want using bike lanes (e.g., inebriates, those not using lights, those pulling trailers, those not going a fast enough speed). Remark that the bike lane may activate other types of users, but there is still a group of people for whom the bike lane is not an option and won't alleviate the issue.

Patrick P. asked for thoughts on what was envisioned for multiuse trail and mentioned that intent is to serve bicyclists and that a bicycle lane that is 5' with no separation or buffer is not comfortable.

Vara D. asked if the study included CMU as a focus group since there are about 10,000 to 12,000 students who patronize shop along the corridor and regularly cross North Avenue. Patrick P. answered that there were focus groups with GJ High School and D51 Workforce Center. Dana B. said they tried to coordinate a focus group with CMU but did not get a response. Patrick P. shared that 15 percent of the survey respondents were college age (18-25 years), which was more participation than what is expected from that demographic.

Orin Z. asked if there was any discussion with CMU about this study's relationship to their master plan.

Diana R. remarked that the multiuse path along the western portion near the Lincoln park enhances the buffer and creates a sense of enclosure. Shana W. remarked it was also beneficial because it accommodates folks with mobility aids.

Orin Z. asked if CDOT would change roadway width. Trent P. answered that it would not be part of the North Ave project since the CDOT project is limited to resurfacing. Trent shared that the vision is to change curb and gutter and go to that asphalt section and lay concrete. Original intent of the path was to be used by both bike and ped since bike lanes also help control speeds.

Trent P. explained that the plan is to strip at 11' off the center median and long term where there are no sidewalks along the corridor, the plan is to continue to build out to 30 Rd. Ultimately, the intent is to get the functional plan and public outreach teed up for the North Ave Corridor to be ready for future grants that can help build out the rest. Trent remarked that a substantial of ROW needs to be purchased to be able to accommodate the detached walks.

Patrick P. asked committee members what they would change.

Abe H. remarked that there needs to be some indication that the multi-use path is meant for both bikes and pedestrians, especially if there is going to be a bike lane also. Abe H. also remarked that there needs to be some indication for cars to alert them to peds and cyclists.

Diana shared that the study should identify alternative routes that provide north and south connections.

Orin Z. asked if there were other easements that can be relied on or if the City could find those infrastructure opportunities.

Steve M. remarked that high speed east to west cycle traffic seems to have better conditions off of Orchard Avenue and suggested bike traffic be redirected and instead focus on making North Avenue more pedestrianized. Andy G. shared that for such a high activity corridor you need access for all these movements and raised the possibility of parallel facilities that serve longer distance bike movements like a bike boulevard.

Abe H. remarked that the economic impact these improvements will have cannot be neglected and shared that more activation along the corridor will likely attract more businesses.

Diana R. asked if there were grants available for businesses update their signage. Dave T. shared that the City managed a program for approximately five years that included a 50/50 match up to \$10,000 dollars for signage and façade improvements.

Patrick P. asked if there were thoughts about which segment of the corridor should be prioritized first.

Shana W. remarked that high traffic areas with the least amount of sidewalk should be prioritized first – e.g., 28 ¼ Rd to 29 Rd.

Dana B. asked whether one side of the road needs to be prioritized first and shared that demand seems to be concentrated near the Walmart.

Orin Z. remarked that the priority should be fill sidewalk gaps first.

Dana B. shared lessons learned from the education focus group:

- 350 students go to D51 Workforce Center every day and students are advised not to walk.

- The school is transitioning into a workforce development center and improvements to the corridor and any resulting business activation would create better access to nearby employers along or near the corridor.
- Did not invite Bookcliff Middle School but there lots of students trying to cross North Ave.

Steve M. remarked that helping provide safe connections for Bookcliff MS could be a SRTS project.

Orin Z. suggested that there is an opportunity to project bundle crossing striping, lighting along medians, and greens striping for bike boxes into the CDOT resurfacing project.

Patrick P. asked committee members to send any additional comments to Dana B. – please send additional comments to Dana

### **2022 Pedestrian & Bicycle RFP**

Dani A. presented an overview of the draft RFP and shared comments received.

Diana R. suggested that the City wait to post the RFP until January to ensure a better quality of responses.

Dani A. shared with the group that next steps would include assembling a proposal review committee and that one of the review members would come from UTC. Asked for interested volunteers. Valerie D. mentioned she had done previous work with CMU and volunteered. Valerie D. selected as proposal reviewer for UTC.

Andy G. suggested that more innovative components of the RFP should be included as optional capabilities.

Abe H. shared that Trust for Public Land have robust GIS tools for looking at the potential usage of trails.

One committee member asked if the RFP was planning to include on-demand/micro mobility like e-scooters and how that fits in the master plan.

### **Updates**

Dana B. shared that there would be a transportation engineer opening at RTPPO and that the position will be posted on Mesa County employment opportunities page.

### **Adjournment**

Valerie D. made a motion to end the meeting. Shana W. seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 7:06 pm.