



CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE

Memorandum

TO: Members of City Council
FROM: Mike Bennett, City Manager
Tamra Allen, Community Development Director
DATE: February 7, 2025
SUBJECT: Urban Trails Committee Annual Report

The Urban Trails Committee is an advisory committee to the City Council that meets monthly. The purpose of the Urban Trails Committee is to plan and promote the City Council's goals for an interconnected network of sidewalks, paths and routes for active transportation and recreation throughout the Grand Junction urbanized area.

The Urban Trails Committee acts in an advisory capacity to City Council on matters pertaining to the safe, convenient and efficient movement of pedestrians and bicyclists of all ages and abilities throughout the community, as well as other forms of transit. The attached annual report provides highlights of the Urban Trails Committee program activities and accomplishments.

Attachment:

Urban Trails Committee Annual Report 2024

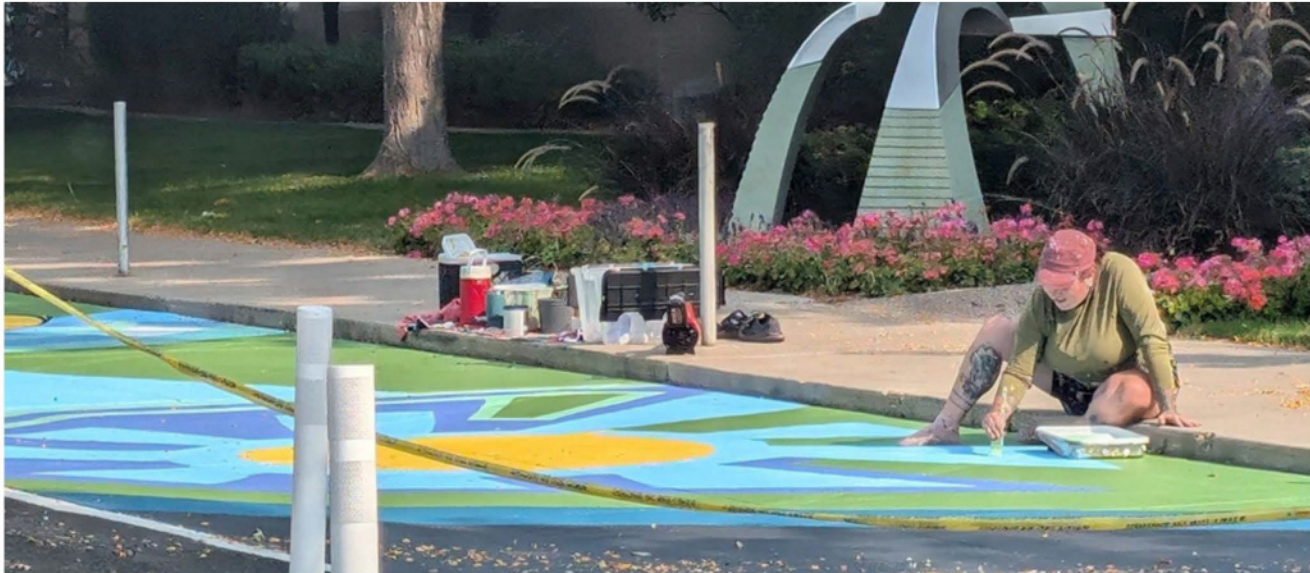
*C: John Shaver, City Attorney
Department Directors*

URBAN TRAILS COMMITTEE

2024 ANNUAL REPORT



2024 Annual Report



Committee Overview

Introduction

Resolution No. 48-94 created the Grand Junction Trails Board in 1994 as a subcommittee of the Riverfront Commission to serve as the principal coordinating body for the development of a trails and pathway system throughout Grand Junction and connecting to trail systems outside the City; to plan, develop and promote such a path system and help coordinate the implementation of the Multi-Modal Plan; and to actively pursue the development of new trails both in the City and in areas which may be annexed.

Resolution No. 48-14 was adopted by the Grand Junction City Council on December 17, 2014, re-establishing the Trails Board as the Urban Trails Committee (UTC) of the City rather than being a subcommittee of the Riverfront Commission.

The UTC has regular meetings on the second Wednesday of each month at 5:30 p.m. at City Hall.

Vision

The UTC envisions Grand Junction as a vibrant walkable and bikeable community for all ages and abilities. The convenience, efficiency, and safety of our active transportation network will be an attraction to everyone who lives here or comes to visit.

Mission

The mission of the UTC is to advise the Grand Junction City Council and Staff to help plan, prioritize, and promote the City's goal for developing a well-maintained active transportation network, throughout the urbanized area, that emphasizes safety, connectivity, and efficiency for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other multimodal users of all ages and abilities.

Membership

Committee members are appointed by the City Council and currently include Athena Fouts (Chair), Dr. Stephen (Steve) Meyer (Vice Chair), Lori Bell, Kristen Burnham, Dr. Brooke A. Carlson, Andrew (Andy) Gingerich (RTPO, ex-officio member), Dr. Michael (Mike) Holt, Diana L. Rooney, Anita Sheetz (MCPH, ex-officio member), Brent Starnes, and Julia Wildman.

The UTC Council Liaison is Jason Nguyen. Alternate Council Liaison is Abram (Abe) Herman.

The sole outgoing member in 2024 was Josh Mathe (resigned).

The Committee is staffed by Henry Brown (Mobility Planner) and Eric Mocko (Transportation Engineer).

Committee Goals

The following goals were updated and approved by the UTC in March 2020 and are reviewed on an annual basis every January. The goals are used to establish the Committee's annual work plan and to assess accomplishments.



Goal One - Network

To review the City's active transportation network on an ongoing basis and recommend enhancements for the purpose of increasing extent and connectivity of well-maintained sidewalks, bike lanes, and pathways within the urbanized area.

Goal Two - Policy

To research active transportation issues and make recommendations for possible actions and policies for the City of Grand Junction.



Goal Three - Usage

To increase the number of citizens using active modes of transportation and to promote the plans for and improvements to the active transportation network.

Goal Four - Partnerships

To develop and maintain relationships with local organizations and jurisdictions to further the advancement of active transportation.



2024 Projects & Accomplishments

Summary

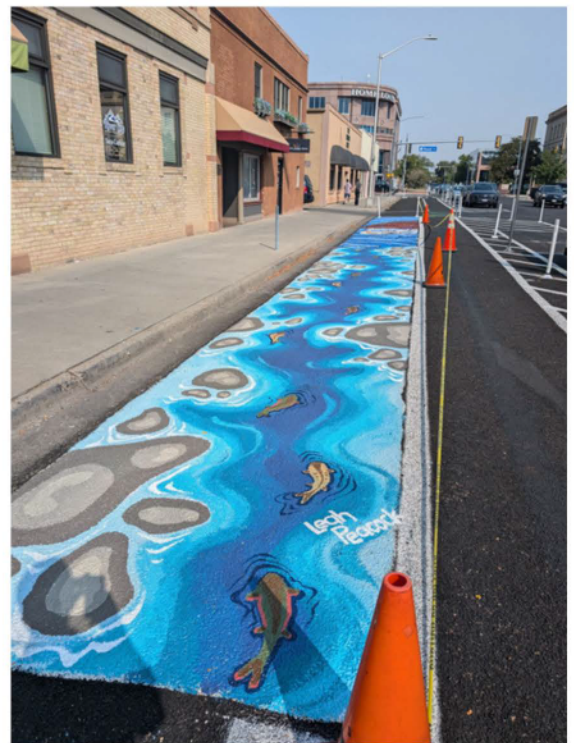
In 2024, the Urban Trails Committee made noteworthy progress against its four main goals. On the **Network** side, key maps were updated, digitized, and published; important updates were made to the Infrastructure Priorities List; and key infrastructure projects were implemented or reached planning milestones. In terms of **Policy**, the UTC was represented on the Impact Fees Stakeholder Group and issued recommendations based on an autumn Walk Audit. To measure and promote **Usage**, the UTC completed its annual Active Traffic (Pedestrian & Bicycle) Counts; supported deployment of another 40 e-bikes for low- to moderate-income community members; and supported the development of a community cycling safety education program. As far as **Partnerships**, the UTC issued eight Letters of Support for various City departments, local Community Based Organizations, and County officials; formalized its relationship with Mesa County Public Health; and began collaborating more closely with disability advocates.

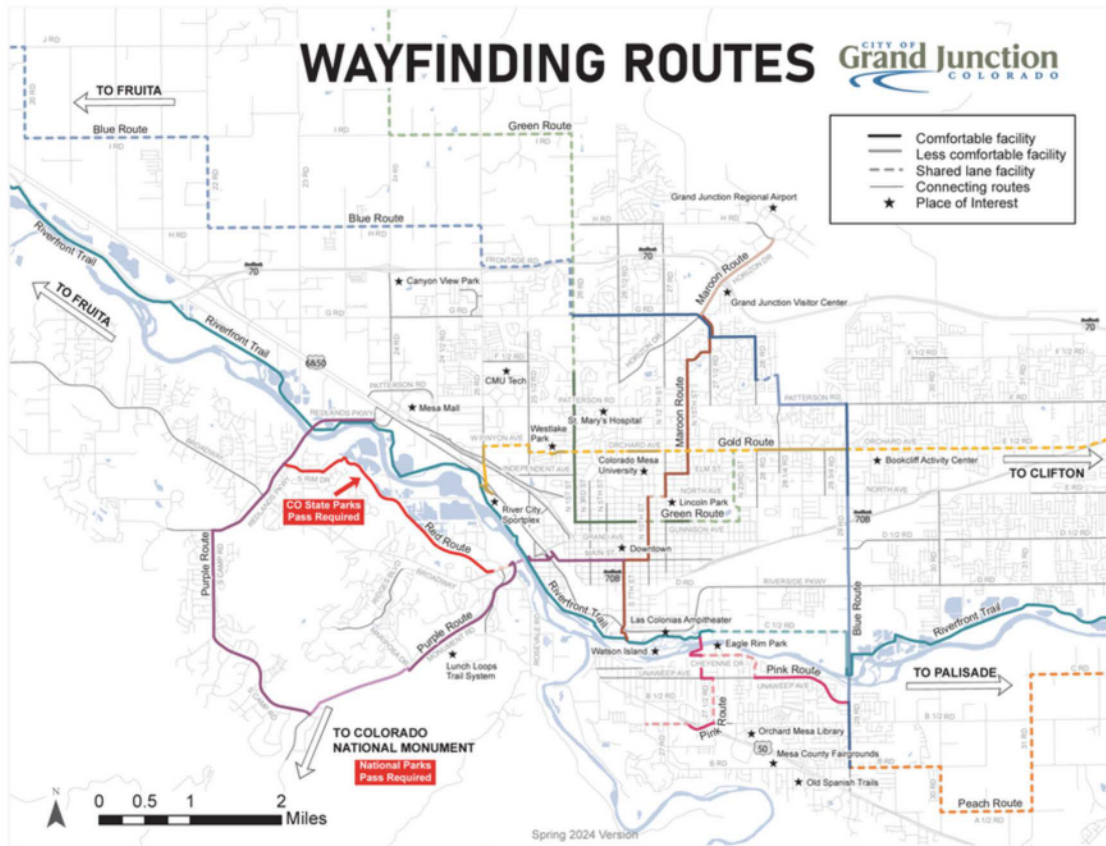
Network Milestones

Complete Streets - The most newsworthy project of 2024 was the pilot implementation of a Complete Streets redesign on 4th & 5th Streets. While the project predates the Pedestrian Bicycle Plan, the UTC had previously advised staff on certain design elements being trialed, especially the configuration of protecting the cycle lane with vehicular parking. Preliminary results show meaningful driver speed reductions, from 85th percentile speeds 12-27% above the posted speed limit before the pilot, to no more than 15% above the posted speed limit during the pilot.

Living Streets - While qualitative evidence suggests that 4th & 5th Streets have become more walkable and, in particular, easier to cross safely during the pilot, a UTC "Living Streets" subcommittee advised staff on further enhancements to the corridor. In Q4 2024, four asphalt murals were installed by local artists, new parking capacity for over 30 bicycles has been established, shared micromobility corrals have been relocated into amenity spaces, and staff is continuing to work on wet and dry planters for City Hall and bus stops, respectively.

Wayfinding - Under advisement from the UTC, staff updated the Wayfinding Routes Maps, by showing key landmarks, including connecting routes, and incorporating Pedestrian Bicycle Plan data to classify segments as "Comfortable," "Less comfortable," or "Shared lane." The updated map was published in The Daily Sentinel's *Ride* magazine.





7th Street Active Transportation Corridor Feasibility Study - The UTC is represented on a Steering Committee advising staff and contracted consultants on the feasibility assessment of 7th Street, with the intent of evaluating the potential for creating a safe and direct Active Transportation facility along the corridor. While initial results showed the technical feasibility of lane reductions on portions of 7th Street, community acceptability of those concepts has been mixed. Staff are continuing to develop options and plan to coordinate again with UTC and other stakeholders in 2025.

Infrastructure Priorities - The UTC continued its practice of ranking Infrastructure Priorities to support staff's advancement of capital projects. More detail can be found in the following section. To support future years' prioritization, staff have digitized a map of all projects on the list.

Policy Recommendations

Impact Fees - The UTC is represented on the Impact Fee Stakeholder Group advising staff and contracted consultants on proposed updates to the city's Impact Fee structure.

Walk Audit - For the first time since 2021, the UTC (alongside city staff and invited guests from City Council and Planning Commission) participated in a Walk Audit in Q4. Participants spent about one hour circulating in the Northwest GJ/Mesa Mall area, making observations on the quality and Level of Traffic Stress of the pedestrian facilities using a Walk Audit Tool Kit adapted from the American Association of Retired Persons. A summary included several specific recommendations for City Council and staff consideration, including for a more regular Walk Audit schedule to be considered.

Promoting Usage

Active Transportation Counts – The UTC continued its annual practice of counting cyclists, pedestrians, and other sidewalk users. Over three days, 22 volunteers collectively spent more than 70 hours tallying travelers across seven locations, five of which now have 4+ years of data. After digitizing the data, summarized results were shared back with the Committee.



e-Bike to Work – The UTC supported a successful e-bike program in 2024. With funding support from the Colorado Energy Office and The Gear Junction and in-kind support from Housing Resources of Western Colorado, more than 80 e-bikes have been deployed to low- to moderate-income residents and employees over two program years. Additionally, training, safety and security accessories, and one year of maintenance were provided to participants. In exchange, participants tracked their travel habits for a minimum of two months after receiving e-bikes. To date, over 23,000 miles have been traveled in the city via the e-bikes.

League Cycling Instructor Trainings – Supporting the safe usage of active modes in Grand Junction, staff organized the region’s first ever League of American Bicyclists Cycling Instructor (LCI) Seminar. While the Western Slope had previously had only one active LCI, seven more were certified in 2024. With plans for deploying Smart Cycling and other safety trainings under development, the Committee will have the opportunity to advance a set of shared expectations for all travelers in the community.

Enhancing Partnerships

Letters of Support – When various city departments, Community Based Organizations, or other entities are pursuing grant opportunities or other input or feedback, the UTC frequently hears requests for support. In 2024, eight letters were issued by the UTC. More detail can be found in a future section on the variety of letters the UTC signed in 2024.

Mesa County Public Health – After a transition in the UTC representation from Mesa County Public Health, ex-officio member Anita Sheetz invested significant energy in formalizing the nature of the role within the partner organization.

Disability Advocacy – In 2024, the UTC had multiple touchpoints with Grand Junction’s Center for Independence, whose mission is “Empowering People with Disabilities,” including their staff participation in the UTC’s Walk Audit. In the interest of ensuring the work of the UTC continues to accommodate the needs of all residents, the committee voted to include input from disability advocates in the infrastructure prioritization process and other committee activities. While the precise mechanism for this is under development, staff is in communication with the Center for Independence and other local service providers for upcoming UTC activities.

Infrastructure Prioritization

New Projects

The Urban Trails Committee continued its practice of prioritizing multimodal infrastructure projects. In April 2024, the UTC approved updates and rankings of the Infrastructure Priorities List, based on standardized criteria:

- **Connectivity:** Proposed project creates and completes connections in the network.
- **Safety:** Proposed project decreases likelihood of accidents and injuries.
- **Usage:** Proposed project likely to increase usership and engage new user groups.
- **Social Equity:** Proposed project enhances multimodal options for marginalized groups.
- **Current Condition:** Proposed project substantially improves the physical condition of infrastructure.

The list is used by staff to inform and support potential grant funding opportunities, the City's Capital Improvements Program, and other Engineering & Transportation decisions, as well as long-range planning activities within the Community Development Department. The 2024 Infrastructure Priorities List included 11 new projects:

Independent Avenue (N. Rim Rock access) - Improve access to the US-6&50 multiuse trail or Rim Rock Avenue from Independent Avenue, given challenges with the Sam's Club roundabout and no westside sidewalk approaching US-6&50.

US-6&50 - NB 25 Road - Relieve blind spots and high-speed right-turn configuration which lead to higher crash risk at the multiuse trail crossing.

South 7th Street - Evaluate repurposing space from underutilized on-street parking to buffer the cycle lanes.

West Avenue - WB Riverside Parkway - Improve access to the Riverside Parkway multiuse trail from West Avenue, given challenges with signal phasing and sidewalk access.

Orchard Avenue - 28 ¼ Road - Evaluate opportunities to build more continuity around islands in the cycle lanes around this intersection.

Santa Clara Avenue - US-50 to Roubideau Street - Fill gaps in sidewalk network and cover irrigation ditch for Safe Routes to School.

West Pinyon Avenue - S. Westgate Drive to 25 ½ Road - Fill gaps in sidewalk network (Gold Route).

28 Road - I-70B to North Avenue - 28 Road/Indian Wash Complete Streets redesign to improve access from affordable and other housing developments residential to the Western Region One Source (Department of Military and Veterans Affairs Office) and to services on North Avenue.

N/S Access - Unaweeep Avenue to B ½ Road - Evaluate opportunities to close sidewalk network gaps between the B ½ Road multiuse trail and Unaweeep Avenue (Pink Route).

30 Road - Riverfront Trail to D Road - Fill gaps in sidewalk and cycle network to improve RFT access.

12th Street - Wellington Avenue - Develop a safer crossing of 12th Street to support GVT access to City Market and future trail connection.

Projects marked “Funded”

In 2024, several projects were reclassified as “Funded” based on guidance from the Engineering & Transportation Department. These projects were removed from the ranked list.

Crosby Avenue - Included on the UTC Infrastructure Priorities List at least as far back as 2016, this project received a \$1,000,000 Revitalizing Main Streets grant from the Colorado Department of Transportation to cover approximately 40% of the cost of a Complete Streets rebuild. The design will improve access to the West Main Street Bridge via a new trail on the northeast roadside and cycle lanes. Important non-existing pedestrian and cycle connections are anticipated to be completed in Q2 2026, after substantial utility work can be completed.

Monument Connect Phase II & South Camp Road Trail - Also dating back at least as far as 2016, the UTC have prioritized completing the Purple Route with a separated trail around the Redlands, including the addition of pedestrian connections where none currently exist and significantly reducing the Level of Traffic Stress of the cycle facilities west of Lunch Loops. Now, construction is underway on the section of separated trail between the Lunch Loops Trailhead and South Camp Road and is anticipated to open in 2025. Since 2020, the UTC have additionally prioritized replacing the damaged asphalt at the trail section from Wingate Elementary to Rimrock Road. This section was included on the list for 2024 asphalt replacement but was delayed due to other priorities and is now anticipated to be completed in 2025. Other portions of the Purple Route were completed in 2024.

Highway 340 (Broadway) Bridges - Since 2020, the UTC have prioritized widening the multiuse trail adjacent to Highway 340 across the Colorado (Purple Route). Fruitful conversations with CDOT, who own the 340 Bridge, have resulted in a plan to adjust the jersey barriers into the existing wide shoulder in conjunction with resurfacing planned for 2026.

West Orchard Mesa Bridge/Eagle Rim Bluff Trail - Also since 2020, the UTC has prioritized asphalt replacement on the West Orchard Mesa pedestrian bridge and bluff trail to Eagle Rim Park (Pink Route). This section was included on the list for 2024 asphalt replacement but was delayed due to other priorities and is now anticipated to be completed in 2026.

Wayfinding - Since 2022, the UTC has prioritized completion of signage and striping associated with Grand Junction’s wayfinding routes. Staff have begun the effort to determine where signage and striping are missing.

Projects marked “Completed”

In 2024, the UTC voted for three projects to be reclassified as “Completed.” These projects were removed from the ranked list. Other project merges and splits caused the overall ranked list to grow by only two items.

10th Street - With the installation of green conflict markings, wayfinding signage and striping, and bulb-outs on Grand Avenue, the UTC voted in 2024 to call 10th Street (Maroon Route) “Complete” between CMU and downtown. This culminates a project which UTC has prioritized since at least 2016. Opportunities still exist to reduce the incidence of cars parked in the cycle lane, to improve corridor directness through CMU, and to reduce Level of Stress at I-70B and down to the Riverfront Trail via South Avenue and 9th Street.

South Rim Drive & Redlands Parkway - With the realignment of the Redlands Parkway Trail (Purple Route) at South Rim Drive (Red Route), green conflict striping, and construction of a refuge island, the UTC voted in 2024 to call the project “Complete.” This culminates a project which UTC has prioritized since 2020. Opportunities still exist to connect the cycle lanes on South Rim Drive to the Redlands Parkway facilities.

Riverfront Trail Asphalt Replacement - With multi-year asphalt replacement work now finished on the main leg of the Riverfront Trail, between Las Colonias and the Blue Heron Boat Ramp, the UTC voted in 2024 to call the project “Complete.” This culminates a project which UTC has prioritized since 2020. Further asphalt replacement on RFT connections is still underway and proposed for funding over the next three years.



Letters of Support

The Urban Trails Committee issued several letters of support for City Departments and partner organizations pursuing grant funding for various projects, including multimodal infrastructure planning and construction, livability data collection, and recognition.

NOAA Heat Island Mapping - The UTC heard about the Sustainability Division's proposal to collect local air temperature data from various points around the city on a representative hot summer day. These data would allow consultants contracted by the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration to produce a detailed heat model to help show where the city may consider prioritizing tree cover, asphalt removal or other heat mitigating efforts. A letter was signed from the UTC to support a successful bid for \$16,500 from NOAA to support the project. The Committee heard a summary report from the Sustainability Division on the results of the study in December.

Matchett Park - After hearing from Parks and Recreation Director Ken Sherbenou about the evolving plans for development of a regional park and Community Recreation Center at Matchett Park, the UTC issued a letter to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, reiterating the community interest in seeing prioritization of certain access considerations. Specifically, the committee expressed interest in seeing high quality Transit Circulation, Safe and Connected Passenger and Parking Pedestrian Access, and Site Pedestrian Access (especially from south of Patterson Avenue) developed in conjunction with other site development.

Colorado APA Recognition - The UTC heard about the opportunity for statewide recognition of the team responsible for development of Grand Junction's 2023 Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan. Recognition from the Colorado chapter of the American Planning Association would highlight the value of combining the plan development with an update to the Transportation Engineering Design Standards to support immediate implementation. A letter was signed from the UTC to support the nomination for award recognition.

Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program - The UTC heard a reprise of a proposal from City Engineering & Transportation and Community Development staff for the development of a dedicated Active Transportation bridge across the Railroad and Riverside Parkway, connecting 2nd Street to the Riverfront at Dos Rios. Downtown does not have an obvious and accessible to the Riverfront. As Dos Rios develops, enabling residents and visitors to travel seamlessly to and from Downtown will offer benefits to both commerce centers. A letter was signed from the UTC to support a request from the US Department of Transportation to help fund planning and design for the new structure. No Colorado projects ultimately received funding from the grant.

EECBG Staff Capacity – The UTC heard about a joint effort from the City Sustainability and Mobility Divisions to build staff capacity to support deployment of strategies from the Pedestrian Bicycle and Sustainability and Adaptation. A letter was signed from the UTC, but not ultimately sent to the Colorado Energy Office due to a decision from City leadership not to pursue the grant.

Safe Streets and Roads for All Program – The UTC heard from staff of the City and Regional Transportation Planning Office about a plan to test novel safety demonstrations and bolster research supporting the Mesa County Safety Action Plan. A letter was signed from the UTC to support a successful bid for \$196,000 from the US Department of Transportation. With local match split between Mesa County, Grand Junction, Fruita, and Palisade, 12 speed feedback signs will be deployed amongst the communities, and Rural High Risk Network analysis will be progressed.

Reconnecting Communities Pilot – The UTC heard about a plan from Mesa County to develop safer multimodal infrastructure on 32 ½ and E Roads as a part of their Clifton Community Safety and Connectivity Project. A letter was signed from the UTC to support a bid for \$6,102,500 from the US Department of Transportation to help fund final design and construction. The application is pending.

Colorado Water Conservation Board – The UTC heard about a plan from RiversEdge West to advance the Colorado River Corridor Initiative with a master plan encompassing efforts to promote river cleanliness, accessibility, and health, focusing on water-conscious land use that supports various uses of the river corridor. A letter was signed from the UTC to support a bid for \$315,228 from the Colorado Department of Natural Resources Water Conservation Board to help fund the plan. The application is pending.

Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant (MPDG) – After the City was not awarded a grant in the 2023 cycle to design, plan, and construct a dedicated active transportation bridge across I-70 along 26 ½ Road (N. 7th Street), despite a letter of support from the UTC, staff enhanced the application for 2024, responding to the shortcomings identified by federal grant evaluators. As the infrastructure vision was unchanged, the same UTC letter was used to support the renewed bid for federal MPDG funds. The renewed ask was also unsuccessful and staff are awaiting a debrief from grant evaluators to understand whether the project could be a good fit for future federal grant funding or whether other funding mechanisms need to be developed.