

## **Platte Avenue Corridor Study Community Workshops Summary**

### ***Downtown***

*The sections that follow cover in more detail the hands on virtual activities which occurred during the workshop focused on the character area of Downtown. This workshop took place on Tuesday, August 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021. This portion of the study area includes Platte Avenue and the surrounding businesses between I-25 and Wahsatch Avenue.*

### **Activity #2: Participant Feedback on Visual Preference Survey**

#### ***What is your vision for the future of Platte Avenue?***

Sarah Franklin, Kearns & West, gave a brief tutorial of Miro and conducted a short series of warm-up exercises to allow participants practice using the Miro tool bars and possible ways to engage with the exercises that follow. Then, Angela Woolcott, Kearns & West, led workshop participants into the first of the Miro exercises (workshop activity #2).

The purpose of this exercise was to help workshop participants envision a spectrum of potential transformational changes<sup>1</sup> and receive feedback on specific corridor character elements and amenities they liked most. This activity asks participants to assess a series of photos on a virtual presentation board and indicate which photos resonate with them as a vision for their character area of Platte Avenue. The photos represent potential placemaking and transit improvements and depict visions for community spaces and places to gather as well as streetscape, roadway, and other signature improvements which could be unique to each character area.

Participants are given three virtual dots of the same color, and each participant is assigned a different dot color. Participants selected their preferred photos by moving their allotted dots on up to three photos that aligned with their vision for Platte Avenue. They may also place more than one dot on an image, but they may only place three dots on the board.

Next, facilitators from the project team engaged participants in small group discussions to understand what elements depicted in the photos prompted them to select the images as the most desirable as well as what they liked and disliked about the photos provided. They also asked questions about where specific features of a photo might be most desired within the

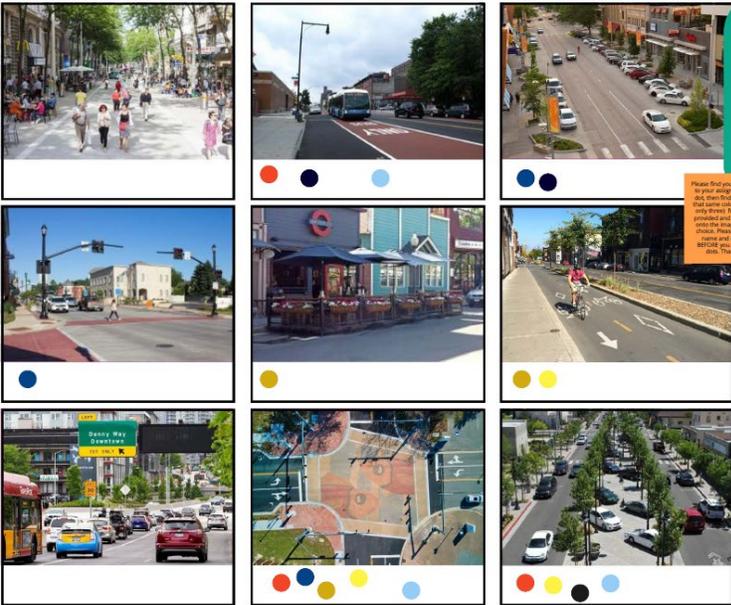
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<sup>1</sup> Transformational in this context describes changes to urban form and public right of way which has long lasting social, economic, and environmental impacts beyond aesthetic upgrades. These changes often require more resources than changes incremental in scale might require.

character area. Conversations also included additional feedback from workshop participants on elements they wanted to see in the character area but were not represented in the photos.

Below is a summary of the outcomes from the visual preference survey for the Downtown character area (Figure 1) as well as a summary of the discussions that followed.

### What is your vision for the future of Platte Avenue? Downtown Character Area



**Platte Ave.**  
A ConnectCOS Community Corridor

Pick three images that resonate with you about the future of this distinct character area of the Platte Avenue Corridor.

**Miro tools and instructions:**

- 1) Pick a dot color from the list below or create your own.
- 2) Fill in your name in place of "Participant Name" next to the color of your dot in the provided list.
- 3) Place your dots on your preferred images. You may place more than one dot on an image but you may only use three dots of the same color.

Please list your names next to your assigned color of dot. The first names of that same color of dot are only shown from the list provided and show them onto the image of your choice. Please list your name and dot color above the color you pick. Thank you!

- Abigail Kreuser
- Chelsea Sondeck
- Craig Thayer
- Dawn Rickett
- Janna Wade
- Jeff Peterson
- Jim Godfrey
- Kazen Palus
- Kathline Brady
- Lara Disney
- Matt Kalish
- Muji Rieger
- Paul Spotts
- Rachel Beck
- Ryan Tefertiller
- Tezzy Johns
- Theresa McDonough
- Tina
- [Participant Name]
- [Participant Name]
- [Participant Name]
- [Participant Name]
- Kelly (Example)
- Dan Krueger

Don't see your name? Please insert your name in place of "participant name".

Figure 1: Platte Avenue Corridor Study Workshop Miro Board for Activity 2, Downtown Character Area

Discussion summary: likes & dislikes from workshop participants

- Participants were drawn to the intersection image because it is aesthetically pleasing, however some participants commented that it would be nice to see some bicycle infrastructure here.
- The pedestrian infrastructure images with more of an urban feel are also appealing.
- The image in the bottom right, image 9 of Figure 1 from left to right, is appealing due to the tree cover, traffic calming measures, and bike infrastructure.
  - However, other workshop participants expressed that Platte should not be narrowed to one lane because it will not address the growth in traffic due to it being an east/west corridor.

- Some workshop participants do not believe it is appropriate to have bicycles on Platte Avenue, especially due to the amount of parking located on either side of the street where bikes may have to bike between parked cars and moving traffic.
- We need to be able to move traffic through Downtown, but we want it to look nice and behave well.
- Some participants were faced with the difficulty of deciding between placing their dots on images that feature bus service vs. bicycle connections. Bus service is important to help move people to and through Downtown, though bike options are also appealing especially between Cascade and Nevada.
  - More bus lanes could help reduce vehicular trips which also addresses traffic volume.
- Participants recommend making investments in Art and especially using art at the intersections as a traffic calming measure.
- There was additional conversation as to whether the project team should consider utilizing Platte Avenue to support housing needs for the City; some residential uses along Platte could go vertical closer to the Downtown area.

### **Activity #3: Participant Feedback on Budget Exercise**

#### ***Where and how would you make investments in proposed solutions for Platte Avenue?***

Next, Ted Ritschard, Olsson, led workshop participants into the second and final of the two Miro exercises (workshop activity #3).

The purpose of this exercise was to engage participants in trade-off scenarios and encourage them to prioritize transformational and incremental changes which are most desired, understanding that not all changes can be made. Additional discussion touched on the guard rails<sup>2</sup> that make transformational improvements truly transformational. Participants were presented with another series of photos that were categorized by mode (bicycle, pedestrian, transit, vehicle, and streetscape). The series of photos for each category represented a spectrum of three investments:

- (1) Incremental investments: defined as investments requiring minimal resources or investment dollars. Incremental investments tend to be shorter term solutions.  
*For example, in the bicycle category, the incremental investment could be a standard, on-street bike lane, separated from traffic with road striping.*
- (2) Enhanced investments: defined as interventions requiring more than minimal resources. These investments may be longer-term solutions that are less impactful, though in some cases more efficient or resourceful, than a transformational change may be.  
*For example, in the case of the bicycle category, an enhanced investment could be a*

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<sup>2</sup> In this context, a guardrail is defined as a parameter or set of parameters in order to better understand transformational improvements.

*buffered bike lane. A buffered bike lane is an on street lane, separated from traffic by a protective buffer.*

(3) Transformational investments: defined as large scale changes which require a significant level of resources and often result in long lasting social, economic, and environmental outcomes.

*In the case of the bicycle example, the transformational investment could be a separated, perhaps elevated, multi-use path.*

Participants were given five tokens: one red token to invest in a transformational improvement, two blue tokens to invest in two enhanced improvements, and two yellow tokens to invest in two incremental improvements. Participants were instructed to put one token in each of the five aforementioned categories (there must be one token per category).

Next, facilitators from the project team engaged participants in small group discussions to understand why workshop participants made certain investment decisions.

Below is the summary of the outcomes from the visual budget exercise for the Downtown character area as well as a summary of the discussions that followed.



Figure 2: Platte Avenue Corridor Study Workshop Miro Board for Activity 3, Downtown Character Area

Discussion Summary:

*The discussion was organized around a series of guiding questions that participants responded to as well as time for open dialogue.*

- The project team asked the group of participants: “what does transformational transit mean to you for this corridor”?
  - Some workshop participants believe truly transformational improvements should address larger concerns of climate change.
  - If we had an efficient, modern transportation system, participants believe people will use it and because of this transit has the ability to be transformational.
- Other participants believe that transformational investments should happen at the streetscape level rather than the transit level. Enhanced streetscapes could be an opportunity for the entire corridor.
- Are there things specific to the streetscape that would make an investment transformational?
  - Participants commented that we could make improvements similar to what other areas of Downtown have. Current streetscape infrastructure has been long neglected on Platte Avenue.
  - They also commented that making investments in hard infrastructure leads to improved pedestrian character, improved safety, and improved investment in adjacent properties. By improving streetscapes, you improve all of the other investments, similar to a trickledown effect, which can be transformational in impact because of its multiplier effect.
- When the entire corridor is considered, how does bicycling fit in? Is biking incremental or enhanced?
  - Participants commented that there are already concerted efforts and projects in the works for bike signage and usage Downtown. For this reason participants decided to make incremental investments for bicycling that would support efforts already underway.
- Are there additional things that could improve corridor-wide bicycle connectivity?
  - Workshop participants commented that it may not make sense to integrate a bike network into the traffic grid along the entirety of Platte Avenue. There are adjacent streets that may be safer and more conducive to bicycling (this statement comes from a bicycle commuter).
- One workshop participant commented on pedestrian connectivity and safety especially around schools and at key intersections of Nevada and Wahsatch along Platte Avenue. They recommended building pedestrian bridges to help mitigate these safety issues and strengthen connectivity to Acacia Park.
- Workshop participants also commented on the critical need for tree canopy and greenspace to soften all the hardscape along Platte Avenue. Added greenspace can have a lot of ancillary benefit.

## Community Workshop Participants

The table below shows the stakeholders who were in attendance on the day of the scheduled workshop. Invitations went out to a larger group of stakeholders and community members as referenced in the bottom of the table.

**Downtown Character Area**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>
<b>Abigail Kreuser</b>	Kreuser Gallery
<b>Chelsea Gondeck</b>	Downtown Partnership
<b>Craig Thayer</b>	NNE
<b>Dawn Rickert</b>	Property Owner
<b>Gayle Sturdivant</b>	City of Colorado Springs
<b>Jim Godfrey</b>	Pikes Peak Rural Transportation Authority (PPRTA)
<b>Karen Palus</b>	Parks, Rec and Cultural Services
<b>Kathrine Brady</b>	COS Planning/Bicycle
<b>Paul Spotts</b>	The Independence Center & Community Transit Coalition
<b>Ryan Tefertiller</b>	City of Colorado Springs Urban Design Manager
<b>Terry Johns</b>	School District 11 Facilities
<b>Todd Frisbie</b>	City of Colorado Springs
<b>Paul Morrow</b>	City Community Development Division
<b>Chad Wright</b>	Colorado Spring Housing Authority

*\*Additional invitations went to the following businesses and organizations: Colorado Springs Chamber, YMCA of the Pikes Peak Region, The Independence Center, Community Transit Coalition, Palmer High School District 11, Catalyst Campus for Technology, Prince Hall Masonic Lodge - Pikes Peak Lodge #5, Colorado Children's Academy Downtown, Divine Redeemer Catholic School, Borriello Brothers Real New York Pizza, Switchback coffee roasters, Beacon Hill Hardware, Moore Promotional Products, CRP Architects, First Presbyterian Church*