

Platte Avenue Corridor Study

Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Kickoff, May 3rd, 2021

Meeting Purpose

- Establish the CAC charter, roles, and responsibilities
- Develop a common understanding of the project
- Review project milestones, and
- Discuss desired outcomes.

Welcome and Introductions

The meeting facilitator, Angela Jo Woolcott (K&W), welcomed attendees. Aaron Egbert, City of Colorado Springs Traffic Engineer and Deputy Project Manager, provided opening remarks and introductions for the Platte Avenue Corridor Study. Angela then introduced the project team, outlined the meeting agenda, shared the meeting purpose, the minimum study requirements, participation guidelines, and CAC roster, roles, and responsibilities. A complete list of participants is at the end of this summary.

The CAC roles and responsibilities include:

- Acting as a representative of the community to help vet information;
- Sharing the perspective of your organization, not individual interests;
- Being available and participating in the entire process;
- Sharing concerns with the project team and CAC members;
- Staying engaged between meetings; and
- Serving as a project partner and sharing information.

Angela asked if any CAC members had questions or concerns about the requested commitment, roles, and responsibilities of the CAC members for the entirety of the project. Attendees were in agreement and no concerns were raised.

Project Overview

Ted Ritschard, Felsburg Holt & Ullevig (FHU), provided an overview of the project. The Platte Avenue Corridor Study is a part of the broader transportation planning effort currently underway, ConnectCOS, and has been identified as a priority corridor to achieve a more mobile community. The ConnectCOS goal framework seeks to create a transportation system that is more safe, equitable, sustainable, efficiently reliable, accessible, and connected. The Platte Avenue Corridor has been split into four distinct character areas, Downtown, West Central, East Central, and Eastern to help organize the study. Challenges and considerations across the corridor include:

- Traffic and safety given forecasted growth, travel time reliability, and intersection operations (especially at Circle and Murray).
- Transit along the corridor including the transfer station at Citadel Mall and high ridership routes.
- Infrastructure (bridges, pavement, and stormwater) conditions.
- Connections to parks, trails, and open spaces as well as the ability for bicyclists and pedestrians to cross and move along Platte Avenue.
- Communities along the corridor including commercial areas, neighborhoods, residents, travelers, economy, and environment.

Anna Laybourn, Design Workshop, shared the existing economic conditions along the corridor. Housing within the corridor, specifically in the Downtown and West Central character areas, is much older than housing found elsewhere in the city. Despite slow population and economic growth throughout the corridor, the market capitalization rate for all asset types has continued to decrease over the past 10 years. A decreasing capitalization rate is a good economic indication that the perceived risk of investing in an area is decreasing. Investors often look at areas with falling capitalization rate as good investment opportunities. The highest income census tracts are in the Central Western and Eastern character areas with the highest tract located near Peterson Airforce Base. The highest percentage of homeowners is in the West Central character area.

CAC members were then asked what they see as challenges along the corridor. The following comments were provided:

- Adding bike and pedestrian access along the whole corridor to specific destinations.
- Increasing safety for bike and pedestrian travel across and along the corridor.
- Confusion of the corridor in relation to traffic speeds from residential areas to freeway like areas.
- Diverse use of the corridor from east to west.
- Curb cutting and intersection improvements have been helpful recently to increase safety and access.
- Introduce more residential-focused transit along the corridor.
- Increase connections along the corridor with existing trails and bike paths.
- Management of stormwater during heavy rain events; specifically miniature viaducts that flood.
- Increasing personal safety for renters or homeowners along the corridor.
- Being a multi-modal process and study will be difficult but rewarding.

Angela concluded the project overview by reviewing the high-level project milestones. She noted that public involvement and stakeholder engagement will be conducted throughout the project to receive valuable feedback.

What We Have Heard

Kelly Leadbetter, FHU, summarized feedback gathered from topical workshops with utilities, bike advocates, city staff, and other stakeholders. The corridor operates as a gateway to many destinations and a key transit route with high ridership, but the current character is unwelcoming. Platte Avenue is poised for a multi-modal transformation that better serves the surrounding neighborhoods. The City has received feedback that living directly on Platte Avenue compromises their quality of life because of the traffic, inability to cross the street, and noise.

Angela then summarized feedback received from stakeholder interviews and a partnering workshop held with City staff. Participants of stakeholder interviews shared concerns around safety for north-south travel across Platte, high speed traffic in residential areas, and biking along Platte without a bike lane. Other themes shared included a desire for more parking in some areas, the need for the study to consider all modes, and curb cuts making intersections safer and more accessible. At the Partnering Workshop, City staff shared a desire for a more balanced roadway, transit enhancements, reducing barriers for north-south travel, near-, mid-, and long-term actions to compliment ongoing and planned development, and improved connectivity to adjacent major roadways.

Small Group Discussions

CAC members and project staff were then separated into two small groups for further discussion on the project. Below is a list of the two groups.

<p>GREEN GROUP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical: Ted • Facilitator: Zach • Notetaker: Amy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • William Harrell • Brett Lacey • Eric Becker • Tim Roberts • Anna <u>Laybourn</u> • Aaron Egbert 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ann Werner • Chelsea <u>Gondeck</u> • Allen Beauchamp • John <u>Liosatos</u> • Emily Duncan
<p>BLUE GROUP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical: Marianne • Facilitator: Angela • Notetaker: Kelly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nicole Odell • Mark Hopewell • Paul Spotts • Katherine Brady • Dan Krueger • Eric Gunderson 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Richard Muledy • Christian Mendez • Mark Northop

Each group was asked the following questions:

- What is a desired outcome you would like?
- What is the current role of Platte?
- How would you like to see Platte Avenue transform?
- What does the future of Platte Avenue look like to you?
- Does your vision change from segment to segment?
- How can Platte best serve the community in the future?

The following comments were shared and recorded during the exercise.

- Each character area is very different and there is a desire to maintain that character into the future but also connect these areas and improve aesthetics between them. Solutions may differ between each area and should focus on maintaining the current character.
- Perspectives of Knob Hill residents and business owners on the identity of the community and include the communities voice is important to the process.
- Currently Platte is the easiest way to get east to Powers, but the character is somewhat confusing with the different character areas and lack of demarcation leading to safety issues and concerns. It also serves as an important transit corridor with high ridership on existing routes which should be enhanced to support transit-to-transit and multiple modes.
- The Eastern character area has a lot more opportunities with blank spaces that can be transformed.
- Evaluate how multimodal improvements along the Platte Avenue corridor will impact other east/west corridors.
- Improve drainage of stormwater on roads during large storms.
- Truly take a corridor approach that includes parallel facilities and connecting facilities and north-south intersections focusing on how each play into the transportation system.
- Keep considerations for grade separated crossings for trail user safety and consistency with Parks Master Plan that labels all tier 1 trails as grade separated.
- Ensure non-choice riders (that don't have other options besides biking) are considered when reviewing facilities and access across the corridor not just Sunday leisure or recreational riders.
- PPACG is focused on longer-range and regional efforts but can help spread information on engagement opportunities.
- There is a need for parks on the east side of the corridor near Academy Boulevard.
- Be mindful of the utility upgrades needed to serve the new development on the Eastern character area of the corridor.

Next Steps

Angela summarized next steps for the Platte Avenue Corridor Study. A project website will be established in May followed by an email blast announcing the start of the project. The next CAC meeting will be scheduled using Doodle Poll and will cover an analysis of the corridor and its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and constraints. Dan Krueger, City of Colorado Springs, and Aaron closed the meeting with final remarks and thanked CAC members for their time and input.

Participants

Project Team Attendees

Name	Organization
Aaron Egbert	City of Colorado Springs
Dan Krueger	City of Colorado Springs
Ted Ritschard	FHU
Kelly Leadbetter	FHU
Angela Woolcott	Kearns & West
Christian Mendez	Kearns & West
Zach Barr	Kearns & West
Anna Laybourn	Design Workshop
Marianne Stuck	Design Workshop
Amy Garinger	Kimley-Horn
Eric Gunderson	Kimley-Horn

Committee Attendees

Name	Organization
Ann Werner	Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments
Emily Duncan	Parks, Rec and Cultural Services
Brett Lacey	COS Fire Department
Chelsea Gondeck	Downtown Partnership
Mark Hopewell	Active Transportation Advisory Committee
Katherine Brady	COS Planning/Bicycle
Nicole Odell	Bike Colorado Springs
Paul Spotts	The Independence Center
Mark Northop	PPACG
John Liosatos	PPACG
Allen Beauchamp	Trails and Open Space Coalition
Karen Palus	Parks, Rec and Cultural Services
Richard Mulledy	COS: Stormwater Enterprise Manager
Eric Becker	Platte Ave (in Knob Hill) Special Improvement Maintenance District

Name	Organization
William Harrell	Citizen Transportation Advisory Board (CTAB)
Tim Roberts	City of Colorado Springs