

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

STAFF: Tim Roberts, Transportation Planning Manager

FILE NO(S):

PROJECT: ConnectCOS Master Transportation Plan

APPLICANT: CITY OF COLORADO SPRINGS

PROJECT SUMMARY:

1. Project Description: The ConnectCOS Transportation Plan for a Mobile Community is a city-wide and multi-modal transportation master plan, which is intended to replace the 2001 Intermodal Transportation Plan in its entirety with the exception of a certain identified topical elements (e.g. BikeCOS! and Transit Plan). This plan includes critical updates to the Major Thoroughfare and Truck Route Plans.

Creation and adoption of this Plan is a key recommended initiative of PlanCOS, the City's Comprehensive Plan. Upon adoption, ConnectCOS will serve as a further articulation of the city-wide multi-modal transportation strategies in support of the PlanCOS vision and goals.

A complete copy of the plan will be provided as a separate attachment.

Additional information is available at the project website: <https://coloradosprings.gov/ConnectCOS>.

Please also refer to the attached PowerPoint which summarizes the process of creating this Plan, along with its purpose and content.

The attached draft ordinance includes language that addresses certain prior related approval actions, including the documents that will be superseded with the adoption of this Plan, along with the other related documents that will remain in force and effect.

Also attached is a summary of the various ordinances that have amended the Intermodal Transportation Plan following its adoption in 2001, along with their recommended disposition.

2. Planning and Development and Public Works Team's Recommendation: That the Planning Commission recommend approval to City Council for the Plan.

BACKGROUND:

Colorado Springs and transportation planning have transformed since the last update to a citywide transportation plan occurred in 2001. Emerging technologies, changing demographics and travel choices, and the City itself have changed, along with perceptions and expectations for an effective mobility system and public investment. PlanCOS established a vision and goals for the community through an extensive public process that gave voice to citizens' dreams and desires. ConnectCOS is designed to help realize the community vision and the transportation system that supports it.

Through a formal Request for Proposals, proposal scoring, shortlist, and interview process, the City selected a consultant team with local leadership and staff to collaborate with City staff to conduct a public process and develop this plan. Once under contract, work began in earnest early in 2020. The project then had to complete a significant transition in the Spring to adapt to the COVID crisis. As a publicly-driven process that required and sought engagement with the entire community, ConnectCOS was

adapted to provide more extensive virtual engagement opportunities. The schedule was slowed to give more time to schedule, conduct, and integrate these discussions.

The Project Team including City staff and the consultant team completed a technical and data-driven process to integrate transportation best practices, the input of advisors, stakeholders, and the public to develop a forward-looking transportation master plan. The technical analysis was guided by a goal framework developed through early input from stakeholders and the public to focus results on improving the transportation system to be more safe, equitable, sustainable, efficiently reliable, accessible, and connected.

A data-driven analysis of the existing system and forecast conditions for 2045 was conducted to identify challenges and quantify system needs, i.e., where performance relative to the goals was not acceptable. The analysis also incorporated conclusions and recommendations of PlanCOS to ensure outcomes serve to advance those efforts. As examples: the transportation analysis included evaluation of multimodal connectivity to PlanCOS activity centers; and potential projects were tailored to the vibrant neighborhoods and unique places recognized by Plan COS as essential to the community.

Evaluating system needs revealed potential actions to address these deficiencies by considering a full spectrum of possible investments. The spectrum of actions included safety specific improvements, investments to better support community expectations for environment, quality of life, and economic opportunity, adding capacity in one or several modes of travel, alternative routing or connections, and travel demand management.

From the evaluation of needs and actions to address them, over 250 potential projects were identified. These were then reviewed and refined to a list of 140 recommended projects within ConnectCOS. A subset of these projects became the City's recommended projects for the voter approved PPRTA3 (Pikes Peak Rural Transportation Authority) ballot initiative in November of 2022.

ConnectCOS also includes discussion and recommendation for other city-wide strategies that should be considered in advancing projects. These discussions include:

- Regional Mobility
- Specific Geographic Focus Areas
- Developing Technology
- Right of Way Allocation
- Infrastructure Maintenance
- Travel Demand Management
- Context Specific Street Design
- Incident Management

ConnectCOS documents updates to specific codified guidance including the Major Thoroughfare Plan and Truck Route map. In addition, it adds maps describing a preferred vision network for enhanced transit and for active transportation modes. These maps are not specifically codified but communicate a vision that guides project implementation and future decisions to support these modes.

Adoption of ConnectCOS will supersede the prior 2001 Intermodal Transportation Plan and related elements including the current MTP (Ordinance No. 01-58, Ordinance No. 02-120, Ordinance No. 04-172 Ordinance No. 11-73) and the East-West Mobility Study (2002). It does not supersede more recent and relevant plans including COSBikes!, 2045 Regional Transit Plan, and small area or corridor plans approved since 2015, such as the North Nevada Plan Connectivity Plan. A separate attachment provides additional information on the recommended disposition of prior documents. Future planning efforts or updates to these plans should consider and reflect the goals of PlanCOS and ConnectCOS until they are superseded as well.

STAKEHOLDER PROCESS AND INVOLVEMENT:

Engagement was organized to multiple tiers including a standing Community Advisory Committee that met for every milestone decision or deliverable. A more expansive stakeholder group provided multiple one-on-one interviews, virtual public meetings, open office hours, and virtual input opportunities for everyone. These opportunities were extended through social and commercial media, printed flyers, newsletters and for target audiences including transit riders and bi-lingual communities. The process documented over 3,100 individual responses to two surveys on system strengths/weaknesses and

priorities/strategies plus over 300 participants in virtual public meetings. Public engagement reached major milestone in the summer of 2022 with six in-person public open house meetings in each of the City's six council districts, that included over 200 attendees.

ANALYSIS OF REVIEW CRITERIA/MAJOR ISSUES/COMPREHENSIVE PLAN & MASTER PLAN CONFORMANCE:

ConnectCOS is a citywide multimodal transportation plan which intended to support and guide major transportation decisions and priorities, programs, and initiatives. It will also serve as a guide in the evaluation and design of discretionary land development proposals throughout the City.

PlanCOS specifically recommends creation and adoption of this Plan and provides a high-level vision for it. The following language from Chapter 8 of PlanCOS is excerpted in its entirety

"2. Intermodal Mobility Plan

-The interrelationship between land use and transportation planning is fundamental and essential. The City's overall intermodal transportation plan (ITP) has not been comprehensively updated since 2001, in conjunction with the previous major update of the Comprehensive Plan. Since that time our city has grown and changed considerably and transportation demand, technologies, priorities, and impacts have also evolved. Although individual motor vehicles continue to account for the predominant share of the miles we travel within our city, the way we use and interact with them is changing. PlanCOS recommends a more holistic and integrated approach in the form of a comprehensive update of the Intermodal Transportation Plan as an Intermodal Mobility Plan (IMP). Although PlanCOS does not intend to prescribe the details of the expected content and format of this plan, the following high-level recommendations are provided:

- Improved overall alignment of Code with the overall themes and priorities of PlanCOS, including the goals policies in Chapter 5: Strong Connections.*
- Increased user access, navigability and leveraging of technology within the IMP document;*
- Proactive and adaptable recommendations for anticipated changes in transportation demand and technology;*
- Renewed focus on walkability and bikeability throughout the majority of the transportation system;*
- Emphasis on maximization of capacity of the existing roadway system using technology and other transportation system management (TSM) approaches in order to reduce the need for additional lane capacity for primary corridors;*
- Overall de-emphasis on high levels of access control for most major roadways, allowing for higher levels of street interconnectivity;*
- Additional focus on designing or managing major transportation corridors to mitigate their impacts as barriers to local street and nonmotorized connectivity;*
- Additional support for designing local street networks to be narrower, more connected and with a de-emphasis on motor vehicle speed; and*
- Incorporation of stretch goals and a plan for achieving higher level transit service particularly for key activity centers and corridors, and to include intercity connections along the Front Range."*

Staff suggests that PlanCOS focuses attention and priority to each of these high-level recommendations.

PlanCOS **Chapter 4-Strong Connections** focuses on transportation. The most relevant Big Ideas in PlanCOS include the following, with supporting goals and strategies written around them:

- CONNECT MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION
- TAKE TRANSIT TO THE NEXT LEVEL

Selected pertinent PlanCOS policies and strategies are excerpted below:

“Policy SC-1.A: Plan for and implement transportation projects for the overall mobility of people and to manage the impacts of cars on our built environment.

Strategy SC-1.A-1: Approach the Intermodal Transportation Plan update as an overall mobility plan, with a focus on maximizing the multimodal capacity of the current and future transportation system, thereby reducing the overall need for land and pavement. Focus and brand this effort as an intermodal mobility plan (IMP).

Strategy SC-1.A-2: Focus attention on increasing multimodal east-west transportation capacity.

Strategy SC-1.A-3: Continue to coordinate with State and regional partners, and the development community to plan, phase, and secure funding to complete connections and upgrades of key developing north-south corridors including Powers Boulevard, Marksheffel Road, and the future Banning Lewis Parkway.

Strategy SC-1.A-4: Take full advantage of advances in technology to increase the capacity of the primary transportation system to move people and goods.

Strategy SC-1.A-5: Build “complete streets” by safely and reasonably incorporating multiple modes in the design of new and redeveloped transportation corridors.

Strategy SC-1.A-6: Focus planning and design attention on the transportation hubs and other elements that provide for safe and convenient interconnections between modes.

Strategy SC-1.A-8: Design land uses and transportation improvements with an emphasis on “first and last mile” trips having desirable and safe options for non-motorized travel.

Strategy SC-1.A-9: Reduce the emphasis on requiring transportation facilities to be designed to fully address peak hour traffic demand forecasts, especially in Downtown and other identified higher density multimodal corridors and centers.

Strategy SC-1.A-10: When applicable, use a multistreet corridor in the planning and implementation of transit routes in order to manage impacts while maintaining a high level of service (Typology 1: Urban Core Streets).

Policy SC-1.B: Proactively consider and incorporate the needs of our senior population in all relevant transportation planning and project decisions

Policy SC-1.C: Improve transportation connectivity to the Denver metro area through I-25 capacity expansion.

Policy SC-1.D: Establish and maintain convenient multimodal connections between neighborhoods, local destinations, employment and activity centers, and Downtown.

Policy SC-1.E: Develop a “Smart City” plan that includes comprehensive recommendations for multimodal projects and priorities the City can implement over time.

Policy SC-1.F: Maximize multimodal transportation options serving the Downtown area to reduce the need for individual car ownership and use by visitors, residents, and employees.

Policy SC-1.G: Reduce the barrier and other negative impacts of major transportation corridors without unreasonably reducing their capacity and function

Policy SC-1.H: Improve neighborhood livability by providing connections between neighborhoods and Neighborhood Centers (Chapter 3: Typology 1) and by reducing vehicular speeds.

Policy SC-2.A: Systematically support and encourage the density and design needed to support this network beginning with Downtown, key corridors, activity centers, and trip generators.

Strategy SC-2.A-1: Design and construct the new Downtown Transit Center to include immediate capacity for intercity bus trips and for eventual integration with potential commuter rail service.

Strategy SC-2.A-2: Continue to update zoning and other regulations to allow mixed-use and high-density development as uses by right.

Strategy SC-2.A-3: Plan and promote “high-capacity” transit in the Urban Core (Typology 1) and Established Suburban areas (Typology 2) in such corridors as Academy Blvd., Nevada Ave., Weber St., Colorado Ave., and Platte Ave.

Strategy SC-2.A-4: Rewrite the zoning and subdivision codes to better support densification and mixed-use to support multimodal transportation.

Policy SC-2.B: Continue to enhance the existing transit system to make it a more viable option and strategically expand the existing system in response to new needs.

Strategy SC-2.B-1: Expand transit service frequency and times within the Urban Core area (Typology 1) and along existing key routes.

Strategy SC-2.B-2: Expand transit service into the Recent Suburban areas (Typology 3) with partnerships to serve major destinations such as hospitals and military installations.

Strategy SC-2.B-3: Pursue the implementation of a new governance structure for transit, consistent with agreed upon funding structure.

Strategy SC-2.B-4: Identify sufficient funding sources to support the desired level of transit service.

Strategy SC-2.B-5: Provide convenient and inexpensive transit connections between the Colorado Springs Airport and key locations within the city.

Policy SC-2.C: Actively plan for a high-speed commuter rail or similar service along the Front Range.

Strategy SC-2.C-1: Support Colorado Department of Transportation’s operation and expansion of Bustang between Pueblo and Denver, as an interim connection.

Strategy SC-2.C-2: Preserve existing and potential railway corridors within the city for possible use as future rail corridors between Colorado Springs and Denver.

Staff suggest that the process of creating ConnectCOS, and much of its content align well with the majority of this PlanCOS guidance.

Analysis of Master Plan Criteria (7.5.408)

7.5.408.A. Comprehensive Plan:

Section 7.5.408 of the current City Code includes several specific criteria that new and amended Master Plan elements should address. The forgoing discussion has addressed consistency with the City Comprehensive Plan and its related elements. This section of the Code also includes review criteria organized around several topic areas including but not limited to land use and transportation. The transportation and certain fiscally-related criteria are most pertinent. However, these criteria are primarily focused on review of the transportation-related content associated with privately initiated land use master plans, and therefore are not fully applicable to the review of a publicly initiated and system-specific master plan element.

It is anticipated that the City's new Unified Development Code will be adopted and effective within the first half of 2023, and that this new document will supersede Chapter 7 of the current Code. Although that document refers to consistency with the Comprehensive Plan and its related elements in several areas, it does not contain criteria for the development of topical elements such as this ConnectCOS.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Recommend City Council approve replacement of the 2001 City of Colorado Springs Intermodal Transportation Plan (ITP) by adopting ConnectCOS