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Title: Platte Avenue Corridor Study Update (Informational)

Presenter:
 Todd Frisbie, P.E., P.T.O.E, City Traffic Engineer, Public Works Department
 Lyle DeVries, P.E., P.T.O.E, Felsburg Holt & Ullevig

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Platte Avenue Corridor Study Update (Informational)

Presenter:

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Summary:

The Platte Avenue Corridor is one of the major transportation corridors in the City of Colorado Springs. In recognition of this, the City included a focused study of transportation improvement needs for Platte Avenue between Powers Boulevard and downtown as a PPRTA 2 (Pikes Peak Rural Transit Authority) project. Greater understanding of how the community uses Platte Avenue and the surrounding transportation connections provides a valuable opportunity to improve how people travel by car, transit, walking, or biking in and around this six-mile corridor.

Over the course of the study, the City collected and analyzed data to better understand the current conditions and future travel demands. The city worked closely with residents, businesses, and area stakeholders to identify how this former state highway may better serve the adjacent neighborhoods and community at large. In addition to community feedback, the Platte Avenue Corridor Study’s functional objectives serve as a guiding principle for identifying and evaluating solutions.

Background:

While transportation infrastructure projects are utilized to address needs within roadway rights-of-way, projects will ultimately influence the community and context beyond the rights-of-way. Taking this comprehensive view, the Platte Avenue Corridor Study is identifying strategic transportation investment opportunities that will support system travel efficiency and safety into the future while supporting positive outcomes for neighbors, businesses, and users of the system.

The study team has undertaken a technical evaluation of current and projected future corridor conditions to better understand the needs along the corridor. Possessing an awareness of these needs, the study team collaborated with stakeholders and citizens to create functional objectives and context-specific ambitions to guide the development of ideas for future investments. These ideas have been refined based on further technical analyses and collaboration with our citizens to arrive at preliminary alternatives.

The needs, ambitions, and alternatives have been organized by character area. A character area is a subsection of Platte Avenue possessing a unique configuration and adjacent land use/character.

Goals for the Platte Avenue corridor include:

- Maintain and enhance east-west connectivity and capacity for current and future traffic as the primary function of the corridor, considering travel times, network connectivity, and activity centers served
- Support Downtown as a destination - while connectivity between I-25 and the eastern reaches is important, the character of the Downtown portion of the corridor should prioritize the vision for Downtown
- Establish a consistent identity for the corridor while integrating and enhancing the different character areas and the transitions between
- Integrate the corridor into the community to create an 'Avenue,' visual connections, and context-specific placemaking opportunities
- Invest in the corridor to support the significant opportunity presented by Platte Ave to positively impact Citywide economic and equity outcomes
- Provide safe, efficient, and comfortable transportation options along and across the corridor to enhance mobility for those who drive, ride, walk, or roll

Previous Council Action:

N/A

Financial Implications:

There are no financial implications with the study itself. Future projects that may come from the study will have to be budgeted for and approved.

City Council Appointed Board/Commission/Committee Recommendation:

In December 2022, a project update was presented to the Citizens Transportation Advisory Board (CTAB).

Stakeholder Process:

The development of the Platte Avenue Corridor Study included a community outreach effort and stakeholder engagement process. A Community Advisory Committee (CAC) made up of representatives from a wide variety of sectors and organizations was established for the study. Their role was to help share project information to their networks and provide key insights at major technical milestones to assist the project team in developing the final plan and proposed improvements for Platte Avenue.

In January and February 2022, community engagement included community office hour sessions,

one-on-one meetings with stakeholders, and multiple meetings for residents and neighborhoods including the Middle Shooks Run Neighborhood and the Boulder Street Neighborhood Group.

In May and June 2022, three open houses were conducted in each council district overlapping the Platte Avenue corridor. Participants were invited to explore different information developed during the study effort, ask questions, and share their comments.

In response to public comment concerning the proposed one-way couplet of Boulder and Platte Avenues, in August 2022 the project team facilitated a community workshop focused on identifying and evaluating additional study alternatives for the portion of the Platte and Boulder Avenue corridors between Wahsatch Avenue and Circle Drive. Nearly 150 residents and business owners joined the study team in productive sessions over the course of two days. Sessions included:

- Topical focus groups of representative stakeholders sharing concerns and generating creative ideas
- Study team sessions to review and further develop and refine the ideas generated
- Two evening general public sessions to share outcomes and gauge feedback from a broader audience

The workshop yielded numerous perspectives and ideas that informed the recommendations for this draft corridor study.

In September 2022, the study team also met with residents and business representatives of the Knob Hill area to discuss their specific concerns and issues and to share potential options for Boulder and Platte Avenues through the Knob Hill area.

Alternatives:

Information only

Proposed Motion:

Information only

N/A