



Legislation Text

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A Resolution of Support for the Transit Downtown Relocation Study Recommendations

Presenter:

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Summary:

Last fall, the Transit Services Division completed a study to identify Downtown locations appropriate for a new multimodal transit center (hereinafter "Relocation Study"). On July 25, 2016, we briefed City Council on the approach of the Relocation Study, the status of work, and provided a summary of the remaining tasks. Today, Transit Services staff will brief City Council on the City's Transit Services needs, goals, and the findings from the downtown Relocation Study of the three (3) feasible transit center sites. Transit Services will also discuss the recommendations of a Mayor-appointed steering committee charged with prioritizing those final three sites.

Previous Council Action:

On July 25, 2016, City Council received a presentation update on the Downtown Transit Station Relocation Study. On November 24, 2015, Council approved Ordinance 15-86 appropriating the 2016 Budget, including \$100,000 to implement the Downtown Transit Station Relocation Study. ON May 27, 2014, Council approved Resolution 50-15 authorizing a funding transfer of \$38,000 into the Downtown Transit Station Relocation Study Project.

Background:

The City's transit system, operated as Mountain Metropolitan Transit, provides bus and complementary ADA paratransit service to the community. The current Downtown Transit Terminal is located on the ground floor of the parking structure at the southwest corner of Kiowa Street and Nevada Avenue, and has functioned in that capacity since 1976. Six (6) studies have been conducted in the last 18 years to identify a new downtown transit station location, yet this year marks the 41st anniversary in its current location. The Relocation Study conducted last year was the seventh. The needs for operating our system out of a new location have not changed and are more prevalent today.

Relocation Study Need/Goals

The existing transit terminal has various limitations that cannot be overcome. A new downtown transit center is needed to improve operations, safety, and the customer experience, as well as enhance downtown redevelopment opportunities. Furthermore, the existing downtown terminal is at capacity and cannot be expanded, bus maneuvering is difficult and mixed vehicle/pedestrian traffic is a safety concern, and the current design limits first responder access, multimodal connections, and results in a challenging boarding and unloading environment for our customers.

The project's goals focused on operational enhancements, safety improvements, rider experience, and economic revitalization. This study also considered the goals stated in prior studies, as well as new and emerging needs evidenced in current downtown policies.

Findings and Recommendations

Emerging from the Relocation Study were three potential sites that could achieve the study goals by providing operational and safety enhancements; improving the customer experience and image; and enhancing and promoting downtown redevelopment efforts. Below are the three finalist sites recommended from the Relocation Study:

Site 8 (3/4 of block, bounded by Colorado Ave, Sahwatch St, Cucharras St, Sierra Madre St)

Site 12 (3/4 of block, bounded by Cucharras St, Weber St, Vermijo St, Nevada Ave)

Site 17 (Pueblo Avenue right-of-way between Nevada Avenue and Wahsatch Avenue).

Details of the 2016 Relocation Study can be found on the project website:

www.coloradosprings.gov/MetroStation <<http://www.coloradosprings.gov/MetroStation>>.

Mayor-Appointed Steering Committee

Early in 2017, Mayor John Suthers appointed a steering committee (hereinafter "Committee") charged with reviewing the three (3) finalist sites identified in the Relocation Study and ranking and prioritizing them before making a clear recommendation to the Mayor for action.

The Committee was composed of nine (9) stakeholders representing a broad cross-section of the community with varied interests and perspectives; two City Council members - Tom Strand and Jill Gaebler; and seven City and County staff. The Committee met from mid-February through mid-May and was co-chaired by Councilmember Strand and Susan Edmondson, Executive Director of the Downtown Partnership.

The Committee's recommendation was presented to, and accepted by, the Mayor on July 17, 2017. The results of the Committee's ranking and prioritization are as follows:

- 1) Site 8**
- 2) Site 12**
- 3) Site 17**

Site 8, bordered by Colorado Avenue, Sahwatch Street, Cucharras Street, and Sierra Madre Street was the Committee's clear top choice for the following four reasons: (i) it has the best ability to accommodate our transit system's current and future needs; (ii) it is the area closest to major anchor attractions such as America the Beautiful Park, U.S. Olympic Museum and Hall of Fame, El Paso County Courthouse, Pikes Peak Center for the Performing Arts, Pikes Peak Community College downtown campus; (iii) it has the highest potential to be a true multimodal facility and community asset that can serve many users; and (iv) it has the closest proximity to main line rail, should passenger rail service become a reality in the future.

A key component to building a new downtown multimodal transit center is the fact that the project clearly supports the City's strategic goal pertaining to *Investing in Infrastructure*. This project is engaging citizens regarding infrastructure needs and solutions, and invests in multi-use infrastructure incorporating smart growth solutions to maximize efficiency and improve the attractiveness of our infrastructure.

The Transit Services staff presentation will also provide additional background on the Committee's efforts to reach their final recommendation.

Financial Implications:

The project will be funded by a combination of Federal Transit Grants and matching Pikes Peak Rural Transportation Authority (PPRTA) funds. Additional grants will be sought.

Board/Commission Recommendation:

The Steering Committee's recommendation was presented to the Citizens Transportation Advisory Board (CTAB) on August 1, 2017. Board members expressed support for the project and had no significant concerns.

Stakeholder Process:

Development of the Downtown Transit Station Study included the on-going participation of the Stakeholder Working Advisory Group (SWAG) and public open houses. The final three transit center sites were prioritized by the Transit Center Relocation Steering Committee, composed of two City Council Members and other community stakeholders.

Alternatives:

City Council may not support the Transit Center Relocation Steering Committee's recommendation and not approve the attached resolution.

Proposed Motion:

Move to approve the attached resolution accepting and adopting the City of Colorado Springs Transit Center Relocation Steering Committee's recommendation.

N/A