



Legislation Text

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Ordinance No. 23-13 adopting the ConnectCOS Master Transportation Plan, the City of Colorado Springs 2023 Intermodal Transportation Plan as amended at the February 28, 2023 City Council meeting.

Presenter:

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Summary:

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 except for certain identified topical elements. The attached ordinance includes an amendment to the ConnectCOS Master Transportation Plan from the February 28, 2023 City Council meeting. The amendment modifies the description for project #105 Central East-West Mobility Study to conduct a study to determine multimodal strategies for improving east-west mobility while prioritizing the value of existing neighborhoods within the study area bounded by I-25 on the west, Powers Blvd to the east, and including of the Fillmore Street and Uintah Street corridors. The study will remove any consideration of an extension of Constitution Avenue between I-25 and Paseo Road and encourage the evaluation of the Rock Island right-of-way for inclusion into the City's Park System as a greenway. The study will consider regional influences of planned projects and updated information from the Transit Vision Network and future approved updates to the Regional Transit Plan and Regional Travel Demand Model.

Background:

Colorado Springs and the transportation planning industry have transformed significantly since the last update to a citywide transportation plan occurred in 2001. Emerging technologies, changing demographics and travel choices, have changed along with perceptions and expectations for an effective mobility system and public investment. The City's comprehensive plan, 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.

The City has 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 citizens 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 to 2045 were 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.

ConnectCOS documents the 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 Renew North Nevada Plan. Future planning efforts or updates to these plans should consider and reflect the goals of PlanCOS and ConnectCOS until they are superseded as well.

ConnectCOS Goals:

Safe - This goal reflects the community's desire to have a safe transportation system, a system of or minimal fatalities and injuries and a system that provides personal safety for those accessing or using roadways, transit stops, bike lanes, sidewalks, and trails.

Equitable - This goal captures the concept that transportation investments should enhance mobility for everyone. It recognizes that people, neighborhoods, and communities have different levels and types of needs and as a result, different areas of the city will necessitate different transportation investments.

Sustainable - The Sustainable goal reinforces the need to ensure the transportation system supports the economy, protects and enhances the environment, and provides a social benefit in the form of improving the quality of life, health, and overall well-being of our citizens.

Efficiently Reliable - This goal recognizes the balance needed between having a perfectly reliable transportation system and being efficient with limited community resources. It acknowledges that costs associated with providing a roadway with no delay or crashes needs to be balanced with community impacts for public right-of-way, implementation costs, and comparable alternatives.

Accessible - The Accessible Goal reflects the desire for the Colorado Springs citizenry to have transportation choices by which to travel and that these options have intuitive interconnectivity. It recognizes that transportation options should be comfortable, safe, and efficient.

Connected - This goal recognizes a connected transportation system enables all users to move between our homes, work, services, shopping, and recreation areas. It acknowledges that Colorado Springs needs to be connected to the larger economy beyond the Pikes Peak Region and that

connectivity with our military installations is essential.

Community Engagement:

Community engagement has been an important element in the development of the transportation plan. The project has a comprehensive web page on the City's website with links to working documents and past survey results from community outreach efforts. The project web page informs the community of the details of the plan, providing links to important materials and survey results that help lay the groundwork used in developing it. The site also provides a method for people to access live surveys and share input to seek feedback from the larger community. The website has been updated to include the amended ordinance modifying Project #105 Central East-West Mobility Study to explicitly remove any consideration of an extension of Constitution Avenue between I-25 and Paseo Road and encourage the evaluation of the right-of-way for inclusion into the City's Park System as a greenway.

The project team has conducted numerous public outreach and engagement opportunities in order to receive feedback on needs and priorities for the community. Although COVID changed the approach of citizen engagement, there has still been significant interest in the plan. During a one-month period between August and September of 2020, over 1,700 citizens responded to our initial transportation survey requesting feedback from respondents on the transportation system. A more recent survey in the fall of 2021 requesting feedback on draft recommendations from the plan received over 800 responses. The project also has a large Community Advisory Committee (CAC) with 30 stakeholders representing many interests across the community. The project team has held meetings with neighborhood representatives, conducted virtual Community Office Hour meetings, virtual Open House meetings, and CAC meetings for every milestone in the development of the plan.

Two well attended "town hall-format" meetings were then sponsored in January and February of 2023 for the primary purpose of addressing comments, concerns and questions around the Central East-West Mobility Study draft recommendations, and the potential for an extension of Constitution Avenue within existing rights of way, in particular.

Council Public Hearing

On February 28, 2023, the ConnectCOS Master Transportation Plan was presented to City Council for adoption at their formal meeting. City Council began the item with consideration of removing Project #105 Central East-West Mobility Study from Appendix A. It was decided to keep the item intact for the Public Hearing. The staff presentation began with a detailed discussion about why Project #105 should remain as a future study. It also covered the public outreach and input over the three-year period developing the study; community goal setting and a data-driven process to identify needs and its recommendation of tactical solutions; updates to codified documents such as the Major Thoroughfare Plan and the Truck Route Plan; and establishment of preferred vision networks for enhanced transit and for active transportation.

Over a hundred citizens attended the Public Hearing with most in attendance to show unity for the removal of the Constitution Avenue extension from the Central East-West Mobility Study or removal of the project all together. City Council debated the benefits and detriments of modifying the project to exclude the extension. City Council adopted the ordinance approving the ConnectCOS Master Transportation Plan on an 8-1 vote with a 7-2 vote to modify the plan to explicitly remove any consideration of an extension of Constitution Avenue between I-25 and Paseo Road and encourage the evaluation of the Rock Island right-of-way for inclusion into the City's Park System as a greenway.

Council Work Session:

On February 13, 2023, the ConnectCOS Master Transportation Plan was presented to City Council at their Work Session. Staff provided an overview of the plan touching on key elements such as the updated Major Thoroughfare Plan, the City's first Enhanced Transit Plan, the data driven process identifying existing and projected traffic congestion, identification of critical transportation corridors, a needs assessment for these corridors and a summary of projects to address identified needs citywide.

Staff also discussed one of the remaining divisive items, the Central East-West Mobility Study. This study is identified as a named project identified in the needs assessment but without a timeline or funding mechanism. The study would address public concerns about what could happen within the transportation corridor between Fillmore Street and Uintah Street from I-25 to SH 21 (Powers Blvd). The proposed comprehensive study would include a public process considering the widening of Fillmore Street, extending Constitution Avenue west from Paseo Drive to I-25, making existing Fillmore Street the best it can be without major widening, and a variety of transportation system management actions. The study is part of a 160-project list with funding and timing of the study undefined.

The Planning Commission recommended City Council approve the ordinance adopting the ConnectCOS Master Transportation Plan, including the Central East-West Mobility Study as presented.

The CTAB recommended adopting the Plan, including the Central East-West Mobility Study, but limiting the study to not include cars or trucks on an analysis of the Constitution extension to I-25. Buses, bikes, pedestrians and micro mobility vehicles would be allowed for consideration in the study for the Constitution alignment.

Previous Council Action:

On April 10, 2001, City Council adopted the current Intermodal Transportation Plan via Ordinance 01-58 and subsequent amendments including Ordinance No. 02-118, Ordinance No. 02-120, Ordinance No. 02-132, Ordinance No. 04-28, Ordinance No. 04-172, Ordinance No. 04-176, Ordinance No. 05-196, Ordinance No. 09-118, and Ordinance No. 11-73.

Financial Implications:

There are no financial implications for the ConnectCOS update presentation.

City Council Appointed Board/Commission/Committee Recommendation:

The CTAB acted on the ConnectCOS Master Transportation Plan at their January 3, 2023 and February 7, 2023 meetings recommending City Council approve the Ordinance with the inclusion of two amendments. The first amendment is the addition of Vision Zero principles within the document and the second revising the Project #105:Central East-West Mobility Study description in Appendix A to consider all multimodal options (transit, bike, pedestrians, micro-mobility) with specific direction to exclude cars and trucks.

Planning Commission acted on the ConnectCOS Master Transportation Plan at their February 8, 2023 meeting recommending approval of the Ordinance and the ConnectCOS Master Transportation Plan with the updated description for Project #105. The CTAB action was discussed but was not

included in the motion recommending approval to City Council.

Stakeholder Process:

The development of the ConnectCOS Master Transportation Plan includes a major community outreach effort and stakeholder engagement process. A large Community Advisory Committee with 30 stakeholders was established for the study. Open ended community office hours were made available for citizens to attend, along with two major survey opportunities to provide direct input into the study. Two virtual public meetings have been held along with a video presentation followed up with an opportunity to provide feedback on Corridor Portraits. Community engagement has been an adaptive process as COVID has impacted the initial public outreach plan. In January and February of 2023, two Town Hall meetings were held to receive feedback on the Central East-West Mobility Feasibility Study.

Alternatives:

City Council can approve the amended ordinance adopting the ConnectCOS Master Transportation Plan; approve the amended ordinance adopting the ConnectCOS Master Transportation Plan with additional amendment; or reject the amended ordinance.

Proposed Motion:

Approve an ordinance adopting the ConnectCOS Master Transportation Plan, the City of Colorado Springs 2023 Intermodal Transportation Plan as amended at the February 28, 2023 City Council meeting.

An ordinance adopting the ConnectCOS Master Transportation Plan, the City of Colorado Springs 2023 Intermodal Transportation Plan as amended at the February 28, 2023 City Council meeting.