

MEMORANDUM

TO: City Council
FROM: Ken Coleman and Steve Westbay
DATE: June 23, 2015
RE: Completes Streets – Urban Highway Corridor Design Project

The adopted 2015 City Budget includes funding allocations for street improvement projects. The \$100,000 allocation for the development of the Complete Streets Urban Highway Corridor Design project came from the 2015 street improvement funding. In late April the City executed a contract with Fox/Higgins/Hernandez Transportation Group for the Complete Streets Urban Highway Corridor Design Project. Prior to bringing the Transportation Consultant onboard, the staff focused on conducting traffic counts, documenting the sequence of street-light signals and establishing topographic survey control points for the related highway corridors. This memorandum discusses the background of non-motorized endeavors that have been implemented by the City in the past, summarizes the scope of work developed for the urban highway design project and provides highlights of the ongoing activities associated with the project.

Background Context

The real genesis of local efforts to improve non-motorized transportation functions is tied to the initial work in 2006 that set the stage for the 2007 City's recreation bond initiative. A survey conducted as a prelude to this initiative indicated a strong community desire to improve the city trail system. After passage of the ballot initiative the *Gunnison Trails Master Plan* (2007) was adopted. The first major redevelopment projects were implemented after receiving a GOCO grant for the Bridge to Bridge project. Prior to these events, the first bike lane stripping project was completed on Colorado Street and expanded to other streets.

In 2012 the City revised the original *Trails Master Plan* through the adoption of the *City of Gunnison Non-Motorized Transportation Plan* (2012). During this same time period, City capital improvement projects focused on sidewalk corridor extensions to better serve connectivity to the Community Schools. Bike lanes were further extended and additional expenditures were directed to sidewalk improvements within the city. In 2013 the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), Gunnison County and the City signed an Intergovernmental Agreement for the adoption of the *East Highway 50 Access Control Plan*. This first highway planning effort focused on defining future intersection function on the Highway 50 corridor from Main Street east through the Gunnison Rising Annexation. This document helps to set the stage for future intersection improvements that could include improved pedestrian crossing facilities.

The latest work completed in regard to the urban highway design project is associated with the grant award by GOCO for the City's Rivers to Ridges trail project and the completion of the *City of Gunnison Community Analysis* (February, 2015). The GOCO grant award will allow for the development of the east Highway 50 underpass which will serve as the second bookend pedestrian facility that provides grade separated crossing points of Highways 50 and 135. Completion of these three underpasses by the City (Highway 135 Bridge, Twin Bridges, box culvert) represents a total facility value of approximately one million dollars.

There was no doubt that pedestrian highway corridor functions were of great community interest from the onset of developing the *Community Analysis*. In fact the Comprehensive Plan, Scope of Work includes a task element specifically dedicated to establishing Complete Streets action policies. Results from the analysis indicate that pedestrian crossing concerns on Highway 50 are of greatest contention. Survey responses indicated that crossing Main Street (east/west) was of less concern but a noticeable minority indicated concern about these crossings as well.

Scope of Work

The goal of the Complete Streets Urban Highway Corridor Design project is to develop preliminary engineering drawings for multi-modal facility improvements on the urban highway corridors that will be programmed into the City of Gunnison Strategic Planning process.

The Scope of Work is set up in an eight-task process as summarized below:

1. Establish background data (traffic & pedestrian Counts, accident reports, ROW data, sequence of traffic signals, etc.);
2. Implement demonstration project design and permitting;
3. Conduct a multi-modal safety audit of the urban highway corridors;
4. Conduct a series of public input sessions;
5. Develop 30% design plans and distribute for input;
6. Develop 80% (preliminary) engineering design plans;
7. Integrate a phased project approach into the City's Capital Plan; and,
8. Explore grant funding sources.

Ongoing Activities

A key factor in the success of this project is to involve CDOT staff into all of the tasks contemplated by the project scope of work. On June 10, 2015, CDOT participated in an initial web-based conference call with the City's transportation consulting team and city staff. The discussion focused on the general project expectations and the implementation of the Highway 50 bike-lane demonstration project. On June 22nd the respective staff members and consultants scheduled another conference to discuss amendments to the demonstration project. Thereafter, the City will submit a Special Use Permit Application to CDOT for the proposed demonstration project. The application will include the proposed bike-lane geometry design for the highway, a highway safety control plan for the stripping installation and other project related details.

The staff and consultants have also been working to develop background data. In October 2014, city staff conducted a series of pedestrian counts on the highway system. These counts were also duplicated in early May of this year. Traffic volume counts were also conducted in early May – these newest counts will be used along with previous traffic count data to model intersection performance and other vehicle traffic functions. Accident counts are being compiled and data from the State Patrol is forthcoming. Traffic signal sequence data has also been compiled.

Survey work to establish topography control points on the highway corridors was completed in the March/April timeframe. A request for proposals was published for the aerial photography production in March and the flight occurred in mid-April before the trees had bloomed. This

high resolution aerial photography of the highway corridors will provide very accurate topographic data that can be used as a basis for the engineering design drawing.

Conclusion

During the past eight years, capital improvements to non-motorized transportation facilities have been a significant municipal priority. Community engagement guiding the previous efforts has been provided by the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC). Since 2010, BPAC has focused on education programming, providing input for improving non-motorized travel and guiding grants funding activity. Ana's Pledge Bicycle Rodeo and Bicycle Friendly Community Silver designation (2012) are examples of the successful endeavors of the BPAC.

The BPAC and the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee will be intimately involved in the Complete Streets Urban Highway Corridor Design project. Additionally public input will also be sought throughout the process. However, it must be noted that contemplating physical alterations to the highway corridor also presents specific and complex nuances that must be addressed through a structured engineering design program that involves the City staff, city consultants and CDOT staff. The successful execution of the urban highway design scope of work will provide a framework for programming highway corridor improvements.