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URBAN TRAILS COMMITTEE AGENDA
VIRTUAL MEETING

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 10, 2021 @ 5:30 PM

This meeting will be conducted as a VIRTUAL MEETING

Due to COVID-19, the public may not attend in person; however, the public may participate using the link or phone number below:

Please join my meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone.
https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/518657509

You can also dial in using your phone.
United States: +1 (312) 757-3121

Access Code: 518-657-509

Call to Order/Announcements

Approval of Minutes

Approve of Minutes of January 13, 2021 Meeting of the Urban Trails Committee

Approve of Minutes of February 10, 2021 Meeting of the Urban Trails Committee

Action Items

Finalize 2021 Infrastructure Priorities Ranking

Discussion Items

Discuss CDBG Recommendations

Mobility Hub

Updates

Other Business/Public Comment

Adjournment

Urban Trails Committee Minutes

January 13, 2021 (virtual meeting)

Present: Shana Wade (Chair), Andrew Gingerich (Committee Member), David Lehmann (Committee Member), Ross Mittelman (Committee Member), Diana Rooney (Vice Chair), Orin Zyvan (Committee Member), Lance Gloss (Senior Planner), Trent Prall (Public Works Director), Greg Caton (City Manager), Doug Shoemaker (Chief of Police), John Shaver (City Attorney), Ed Chamberlin (citizen), Tamra Allen (Community Development Director)

Absent Committee Members: Alisha Wenger

CALL TO ORDER

Shana called the meeting to order at 5:31pm.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

No announcements were made.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approve of Minutes of December 9, 2020 Special Meeting

Shana requested a change concerning the reason for the City Forester not presenting at the previous meeting.

Orin requested that Shana's title be corrected.

Orin moved to approve the minutes of the previous meeting. Diana seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

ACTION ITEMS

No action items on agenda.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Idaho Stop

Greg Caton gave an introduction to the topic of the Idaho Stop, and noted that it had been a topic of discussion for UTC during 2018-2019. He agreed with Shana that the aim of the discussion was fact-finding and commentary.

Trent Prall gave a brief introduction to the concept of an Idaho Stop, or Safety Stop or Stop-as-Yield, noting that the Colorado State Legislature had recently enabled jurisdictions to permit the Idaho Stop by Ordinance. This allows for cities to allow rolling stops by bicycles, with limits on speed, at stop signs. It can additionally include allowing cyclists to run red lights, though Trent noted that this would not be contemplated in Grand Junction at this time. He also noted the challenges of CDOT roadways in the community, to which local rules would not apply.

Steve recalled that earlier discussions on the topic included the challenge of implementing in the Valley's multijurisdictional environment. He also pointed out that Portland OR had recently adopted this. He noted that the best data came out of Idaho, especially Boise, and that it appeared that the Idaho Stop had no harm and likely a benefit.

Ed Chamberlin identified himself as a cyclist and a leader of the Velo Grand Junction bicycle club. He explained that he had brought this to the City Manager's attention in tandem with Councilmember rick Taggart. He pointed out that conversations with City staff indicated that the Grand Junction Police Department does not enforce the requirement for bicycles to stop at this time. He also noted that he had had personal conflicts with motorists as a cyclists, and that education and culture were important considerations for the Idaho Stop.

Doug Shoemaker identified that the PD's concern is the danger and risk of existing traffic patterns, laws, and violations in the community, and suggested that Grand Junction was not ready to move beyond basic enforcement of existing laws. He also pointed out the importance of education, and agreed with the multijurisdictional challenges. He affirmed that the enforcement of the requirement for cyclists to stop was currently nonexistent, but that the PD has the discretion to enforce the law but choose not to do so. He also noted that cyclist-motorist crashes in the City were often fatal for cyclists.

Diana asked Doug Shoemaker if they had any police on bicycles. Doug Shoemaker indicated that he had a limited number of parking enforcement officers on bikes, and that this was otherwise very limited. Diana asked if the cycling police had provided feedback, and Shoemaker indicated that their feedback had been funneled up through the command system. Shoemaker went on to explain that City and County facilities differ substantially. He suggested that cyclists that blow stop signs due so on long recreational rides.

Diana disagreed with Chief Shoemaker and pointed out that blowing stop signs seemed more likely to happen downtown.

Orin agreed with Diana, and pointed out that stop signs often drive route choices by cyclists. Orin asked for data on safety and driver attitudes.

David pointed out that data is limited, but concurred with Steve that the existing data suggest either no harm or a positive impact. David stated that the best situation would be for the State to move forward with the law. He pointed out that this might not be the best use of the cycling public's political capital, but that he does support the Safety Stop rule.

Diana reflected that Chief Shoemaker had expressed that the PD already does not enforce the requirement for cyclists to stop, and asked what the reason for retaining the regulation was.

Not entirely in response to Diana's question, Ed Chamberlin justified the need for having the Idaho Stop as being related to convenience and safety of cyclists. He also suggested using signage to trial this in limited areas.

Steve and Trent exchanged several comments about targeted areas for testing this using signage, especially to establish an alternative East-West thoroughfare to the riverfront trail.

Greg said the notion of a pilot was a good takeaway idea from the discussion, and suggested that staff revisit the idea of conducted a pilot.

Shana noted that Steamboat had recently adopted this rule as a means if improving cyclist safety.

Andy pointed out that it is not comfortable for him, as a cyclist, to have the police not enforcing a law and tacitly accepting behavior, but retaining the right to punish a cyclist for rolling through a stop at any time. He said that this discomfort would be resolved by creating clarity by adopting the law.

Diana pointed out that this may be an opportunity for being a leader in the state for cyclist advocacy, and endorsed the idea of a pilot area.

Orin shared that _______ may be a local resource.

Chief Shoemaker said that he had been a traffic sergeant in a previous role, and that he had done a lot of educating, and that that took a long time and that it was really complicated and challenging. He underscored that he was more concerned about existing challenges and would not support this unless it was done slowly and done right. He said being methodical is the best way to keep cyclists and motorists safe.

Ed pointed out that visibility is substantially better for a cyclist than for a motorist.

Andy said that if the issue is resources, then it would be good to identify specifically what those resources are.

Shana thanked the guests for joining the meeting, and reviewed the next steps, including research and further discussion, especially regarding the idea of a pilot program.

Discuss Policy Recommendations with City Manager

The City Manager noted that the Comprehensive Plan adoption and the accompanying forthcoming implementation matrix present a great opportunity for the UTC to influence policy. He gave some background about the function of the implementation matrix and its relationship to the biannual strategic planning process.

Lance asked about the recent letter from the UTC to the City Council and how that could specifically tied into these processes.

Greg clarified whether it was a draft letter, and Lance clarified that it was not a draft letter, and Greg confirmed that it didn’t get passed on to City Council.

Shana followed up and asked how best the UTC can advise Council and staff.

Greg summarized past staffing, including Kathy Portner and Paul Jagim, and noted that the City provides a Senior Planner to staff the committee. Greg pointed out that UTC needs relationships with Community Development, Parks and Rec, and Public Works. He pointed out the ongoing opportunity to refine these communications and roadmaps. He also pointed out that the most straightforward way for UTC to reach Council is through staff, through annual reports, and (in the future) joint UTC – Council meetings, potentially annually. He also suggested that a Council liaison to UTC could be set up.

Orin thanked Greg and Tamra for joining and pointed out his satisfaction with the substantial overlap between the Implementation Matrix and the Letter to Council. He described the origins of the Letter as being a way to create a clear and concise communication of recommendations to Council, and to keep such a document alive and updated over time.

Orin also pointed out that the bylaws describe the UTC as an advisory body to City Council, and that this had been the reason for the drafting, signing, and submitting of the letter with the intent for it to reach Council.

Greg pointed out that “advisory” roles take many shapes, including responding to request for input (such as the Idaho Stop), Annual Reporting, and similar. He also pointed out challenges related to the scope of recommendations.

Andy noted that he abstained from voting on the letter, and spoke to the intention of the letter and policy priorities list, and characterized it as a compliment to the infrastructure priorities list that the UTC produces annually.

Diana asked Greg in what ways the UTC might be most supportive.

Greg asked that the UTC provide input on the Implementation Matrix, which will soon be considered by Council, and participate in that review.

Tamra concurred with Greg and also suggested that the UTC might incorporate the work on the letter and list into the Annual Report.

Redlands 360

Shana noted that the UTC had toured the Redlands 360 property a week before this meeting.

Lance pointed out that there would be a long period of review for this, and solicited the UTC to pass along their comments to him.

Orin asked Lance to provide information about what the City is looking for in terms of review from the UTC on this project.

Diana pointed out that it’s a uniquely large project.

Tamra pointed out that the City anticipates recrafting the Zoning and Development Code, and that that would be an opportunity for the UTC to help structure

Steve said he was impressed by the amount of open space and public amenities proposed and asked for Tamra’s perspective.

Tamra noted that there was an apparently larger-than-required amount of proposed open space.

Lance reiterated that the discussion would continue and that UTC could pass on any feedback or questions to him by email to start.

UPDATES

Wayfinding

Diana and Steve complimented Trent on the wayfinding success, but Trent’s response was broken by a bad connection.

PUBLIC COMMMENT

No public comment voiced.

ADJOURNMENT

Steve made a motion to adjourn. Orin seconded the motion. Shana adjourned the meeting at 7:07 pm.

Urban Trails Committee Minutes

February 10, 2021 (virtual meeting)

Present: Shana Wade (Chair), David Lehmann, Ross Mittelman, Diana L. Rooney (Vice Chair), Orin Zyvan, Lance Gloss (Senior Planner), Trent Prall (Public Works Director), Alisha Wenger, Vara Kusal (Executive Director, Horizon Drive BID)

CALL TO ORDER

Shana called the meeting to order at 5:31 pm.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

No announcements were made.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

No minutes were available or approved.

ACTION ITEMS

Lance introduced a non-agendized item: a letter of support for a grant request to be made by the Horizon Drive Business Improvement District.

Consider a Letter of Support for Horizon Drive Parklet Project

The UTC welcome Vara Kusal, Executive Director of the Horizon Drive Business Improvement District (BID).

Vara gave a presentation with a set of slides showing the proposed location of a series of parklets along Horizon Drive. She explained that the BID would apply to the CDOT Revitalizing Main Streets grant program, which could provide up to $50,000 for the installation of parklets. She showed an example of a bicycle repair station that would be included, and indicated that bike parking would also be part of the parklet design.

Several committee members gave questions and comments related to the design, location, intent, and anticipated use of the parklets. Vara responded and general discussion of the proposal ensued.

The committee was generally supportive of the idea of providing outdoor public space in the area, especially given the number of long-term residents of some of the motels/lodges and the number of folks living in RVs in the district.

There was some question as to the exact placement of the facility near the interchange. Vara indicated that this was perhaps the only location available, as only the ROW was suitable for the grant, so parking lots were not permissible locations for the grant; and, some good candidate areas were outside of the BID boundary. The group also discussed use of the facility post-COVID.

Lance asked if the UTC was interested in writing a letter of support.

Diana moved to endorse the proposal and write a letter of recommendation. Steve seconded the motion. The UTC unanimously supported the proposal.

Diana and Lance committed to working with Vara to draft the letter.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Introduce UTC Infrastructure Priorities List

Lance described the use and background of the UTC Infrastructure Priorities List. At Trent's prompting, Lance reviewed the packet items: the final list, and a snapshot of last year's process. This includes the criteria-based ranking system.

Previously, the UTC had also used tiers, but these had gone away in 2019. The committee discussed whether or not the final numerical score based on the ranking should be amended in the meeting afterward or should be required to remain as ranked by the criteria-based scoring.

Shana asked that the list be updated with funding and completion details. Lance said the updates would be made.

Lance also covered process for nominating and ranking projects.

Orin suggested that the ranking be conducted from one to five to avoid ties.

Steve asked about discussing the projects in small groups outside of a meeting. It was determined that groups of two could meet or discuss.

David rekindled the discussion on adjusting rankings in a follow-up meeting, and noted that it was not the only thing UTC needs to invest time in.

Diana asked how the list was used.

Trent pointed out that grant proposals, the Capital Improvements Plan, and other Public Works decisions were influenced and supported by the rankings and list. He gave several examples.

David underscored that other kinds of improvements and projects interact with those on the list, and that the emphasis does not need to be on just this list or the ranked order.

Lance noted that the list informs long-range planning activities in the Community Development Department.

Andy noted that the list informs the RTPO's 5-year transportation plan cycle.

Lance re-summarized the ranking process and asked committee members to stick to the schedule on the list.

Andy suggested that reviewing of the survey results might be a good way to add items to the ranked list.

Trent committed to providing some extra commentary to the list about status of projects.

Ross asked for cost estimates, but Trent replied that the amount of effort needed to provide a good cost estimate and the complication of separating a total project from the multimodal components of it would make that challenging.

After further discussion of details, the committee committed to completing their homework on this project.

Safe Routes to School

Lance provided background on the use of CDBG funds to provide better multimodal connections to schools, similar to formal “Safe Routes to School” programs in other communities. He asked that the UTC look for new projects that could be proposed that would parallel the examples that were shared in the packet and in the UTC;’s Google Drive.

Trent asked that Lance provide a map of the boundaries of the CDBG eligibility areas.

Andy committed to forwarding resources about Safe Routes planning to the UTC.

Trent suggested that UTC members use the “School Walk Routes” layer on the City’s GIS Transportation Map.

Trent reviewed the items from last year’s list that are moving forward.

Annual Report

Lance gave a brief review of the report and attachments, and thanked David for supplying the new picture.

David said it was a good report and thanked Lance for working on it.

Diana asked for a tweak to the spelling of her name.

UPDATES

4th/5th One-way/Two-way

Trent noted that the study of converting 4th and 5th streets to two-ways was kicking off, and that Diana would be involved as a UTC rep. Public meetings would occur in the coming months.

Asphalt Trail Maintenance

Trent indicated that he had funding to do some asphalt upgrades as listed by UTC in the 2020 priorities list, and asked for direction from UTC on which one to start with.

Mobility Hub

Andy said that there was a quick and strong push to explore a Mobility Hub in Grand Junction, with anticipation of a grant application in April. This could involve a Survey. Andy described this as taking many different forms, with an emphasis on centralizing and linking transportation modes to provide for more seamless transitions between them.

PUBLIC COMMMENT

No public comment voiced.

ADJOURNMENT

Steve made a motion to adjourn. David seconded the motion. Shana adjourned the meeting at 7:00pm.