

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and City Council

FROM: Justin Forman, P.E., Senior Project Manager, City of Aspen
Matt Kuhn, Parks Operations Manager, City of Aspen

THRU: Trish Aragon, P.E., City Engineer, City of Aspen
Tom Rubel, Director of Parks and Open Space, City of Aspen

DATE OF MEMO: September 2nd, 2016

MEETING DATE: September 6th, 2016

RE: Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan Update

SUMMARY: City staff seeks input and to provide an update to Council regarding the proposed Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan project. The goals for the work session include the following:

- Highlight phase 1 summary.
- Introduce phase 2 of the master plan.
 - Bicycle boulevards
 - Converting street right-of-way (ROW) to trails
 - Moving east/west through the downtown core
 - General wayfinding
 - Bicycle lane striping
 - Sidewalks

BACKGROUND: The City of Aspen has a long history of working bicycle and pedestrian plans, some dating back to the 1970's. These plans have defined everything from the aesthetic of our sidewalks to the trail system that exists throughout the community already. The last comprehensive Bicycle and Pedestrian plan for the City was completed in 1991.

In 2014 and 2015, staff worked with Alta Planning and Design to create the first phase of a new Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan. Alta, along with staff, assembled an existing conditions map and undertook a comprehensive public survey process to identify priorities and needs within the community. This information was distilled down to a final map and set of recommendations for proposed improvements to the bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. Alta also reviewed documents such as the Aspen Area Community Plan, Aging Well in Pitkin County and City of Aspen Civic Master Plan to help ensure these proposed improvements were in line with the community vision. Phase I of the plan can be found in Attachment A.

DISCUSSION:

In early 2016 staff reached out to key internal departments to solicit feedback on the Phase I recommendations. Staff created the website, www.aspenbikeped.com, as a way to provide the plan to the community and collect feedback on Phase I of the plan. This site will remain as a community informational hub moving into Phase II.

Staff further held a public outreach event at Conner Memorial Park and staffed a booth at the farmer's market to allow for feedback and discussion on Phase I recommendations.

Phase I contains a comprehensive list of potential projects. The cost and time associated with implementing the entire list could be prohibitively high, therefore staff reviewed the list thoroughly and recommends that Phase II proceed with a narrower focus with emphasis on six key elements/projects. Staff believes it is important to check in with Council to ensure that the projects that are included in the Phase II scope of work fall in line with Council's vision of bicycle and pedestrian projects for the next 10-20 years.

Bicycle Boulevards:

Bicycle boulevards are designed to discourage non-local motor vehicle traffic, lower motor-vehicle volumes and speeds, and provide a free-flow travel for bikes by assigning right-of-way. The City of Aspen currently has this treatment on West Hopkins Avenue.



The Phase I planning process proposes five new bicycle boulevards. Staff propose to include an analysis/design of future Bicycle Boulevards in the scope of work for Phase II of the plan. The goal would be to work with the community to determine what aesthetic

any new bicycle boulevards would have. The Phase II plan will also provide direction to staff regarding an expedited implementation of a new bicycle boulevard on Hallam Street from 7th to either South Aspen Street or Mill Street, and other instances throughout the city.

Converting Street Right-of-Way to Incorporate Trails:

An excellent example of converting traditional street right-of-way to accommodate a trail would be Cemetery Lane.



There are approximately 14 new trails throughout town recommended in Phase I, with most of these occurring within existing street right of way. Staff recognize that many of these are significant shifts from the status quo and are not high priorities at this time.

With Council approval, staff would like to include a concept analysis in the Phase II scope of work to analyze a trail on 4th Street from Main Street to the Music Tent. Staff have heard through public outreach that moving bicycles and pedestrians through this corridor more safely is a priority. The study would solicit community guidance in design and provide an overall feasibility study, estimated cost, and conceptual design.

Concept Study for Downtown Feasibility East to West Corridor:

Although Phase I shows various treatments to be applied within the downtown core, staff believes a larger concept study should be looked at in order to answer the question: How do bicycles and pedestrians safely move through the downtown core in an east-west direction? This topic has been discussed at the City's Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Team level, and after meeting with the City departments and hearing from the community

in 2016, staff would like to include this question in the scope of work for Phase II of the plan. Community process and expert design will provide a project design that may be implemented holistically or incrementally.

General Wayfinding:

The parks department has provided trail signage throughout the trail system for decades, however this signage system degrades once you are in town. The highest priority in the needs assessment map in Phase I was for the City to have better wayfinding within town. Providing visitors and residents a comprehensive wayfinding system throughout town for bicycle routes, trails, parks, and civic institutions is paramount. Due to the complexity of this project, staff propose that this is an independent project in-lieu of including in Phase II.

Bicycle Lane Striping: (Protected/Advisory/Lane):

Bike lane striping are pavement markings in the roadway that give the bicyclist an assigned travel path. The City has applied bike lanes in numerous places throughout town such as Mill Street, S. Original Street, and South Aspen Street.



Phase II of the plan will solidify and provide direction to further the on-street bicycle infrastructure. Staff recommends that bicycle lane striping is expanded, as it provides a low-cost and effective improvement for cyclists in the roadway.

Sidewalks: Community driven prioritization.

An integral part of the pedestrian and bike connectivity plan is the City’s network of sidewalks. While there are several areas in town where pedestrians travel on the roadway surface, this poses challenges to those who need accessible access including but not limited to visually impaired, children, mobility impaired, and others. The City’s plan for a connected sidewalk network is included in the Phase I of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. This network recognizes the City’s desire to incorporate sidewalk free zones in the West End while still recognizing how important it is to have an accessible network in key areas.

As part of Phase II staff is recommending a prioritization of completing the top 5 sidewalk gaps in the City’s network. This prioritization process would include a public process, and incorporate known high priority gaps.

One potential gap includes the connection along Spruce Street. This is a critical sidewalk link because it connects the Smuggler Park area to the Centennial Apartments and the Lani White Trail. This is also the connection route for residents of the Centennial Apartments to the bus stop located at Smuggler Park.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: At this time, there are no financial decisions that need to be made. With Council approval on the above mentioned Discussion items, staff will put together a full scope of work that will frame a request for proposal. Staff expects to return to Council in late October for the approval of the consultant contract.

CITY MANAGER COMMENTS: _____
