

CITY OF COLORADO SPRINGS PLANNING COMMISSION

RECORD-OF-DECISION

September 18, 2008

Page 24

NEW BUSINESS CALENDAR

MEETING: SEPTEMBER 18, 2008

ITEM : 6

STAFF: RYAN TEFERTILLER

FILE NO(S): CPC MP 97-00261-A2MJ08

PROJECT : COLORADO COLLEGE MASTER PLAN

STAFF PRESENTATION

Mr. Ryan Tefertiller, City Senior Planner, stated he received correspondence after the agenda was printed and distributed copies to the Planning Commission (Exhibits C and D). Mr. Tefertiller reviewed this application with PowerPoint slides (Exhibit A). Approval of this master plan would not allow immediate changes to Cascade Avenue.

Commissioner Hartsell stated future traffic studies would address the narrowing of adjacent streets. Commissioner Hartsell requested that staff discuss the Cascade Avenue narrowing at a future discussion.

Mr. Healy clarified that any street modifications would be heard administratively and then forwarded to City Council, similar to the South Tejon roadway changes. The Planning Commission could request that any future plans come before this body prior to scheduling them at a future City Council meeting.

Commissioner Cleveland inquired if the Dale Street/Cascade Avenue roundabout is installed would the existing traffic signal at Cache la Poudre be removed? Mr. Tefertiller deferred to City the Traffic Engineering team.

Mr. Tefertiller continued and stated the proposed "sharks teeth" (triangular-shaped cross bar along the pedestrian crossing) located further behind the crosswalk would provide further distance between pedestrian and vehicle.

Commissioner Butlak inquired of the college president's concern with one pedestrian/vehicle accident per year. Mr. Tefertiller stated it is common to have "close calls," but actual accident numbers are low.

Commissioner Butlak inquired of the key differences in crossings compared with Palmer High School. Mr. Tefertiller stated the difference is pedestrian crossings originating from Palmer High School occur at an intersection, but Colorado College crossings occur mid-block.

CITY OF COLORADO SPRINGS PLANNING COMMISSION

RECORD-OF-DECISION

September 18, 2008

Page 25

Commissioner Hartsell inquired if the City is “piggy-backing” upon Colorado College’s plans to take the opportunity to adjust Cascade Avenue. Mr. Tefertiller stated the City did not have plans to change Cascade Avenue prior to this submittal.

Commissioner Cleveland inquired of the justification for a roundabout at Dale? Mr. Tefertiller replied the two reasons are traffic calming to slow vehicles and increase the sense of place for drivers arriving from the south. Vehicles arriving from the south would sense that they are approaching a campus area.

APPLICANT PRESENTATION

1. Mr. Ed Eng, facilities director of Colorado College, presented the application with PowerPoint slides (Exhibit B).

Commissioner Hartsell inquired if on-street parking would be preserved along Cascade Avenue. Mr. Eng replied it would not be preserved along the campus portion.

Commissioner Gonzalez inquired if the 1997 master plan addressed road narrowing. Mr. Eng replied it contemplated reduction of drive lanes from 12 feet to 10-foot wide drive lanes.

Commissioner Butlak inquired if any students were not allowed cars on campus? Mr. Eng replied that freshmen are not allowed vehicles on campus.

2. Mr. Dick Celeste, president of Colorado College, explained that the college’s plans assist in creating a sense of place with coordination of the surrounding neighborhoods and businesses. He clarified that parking fees are imposed on those who register vehicles to park on campus lots. The college employs a parking enforcement officer and authorizes towing of unpermitted vehicles. He strongly discourages faculty and students from parking on adjacent neighborhood streets.

CITIZENS IN FAVOR

Exhibit C – letters distributed to the Planning Commission before the meeting.

1. Mr. Chuck Murphy, Murphy Constructors, supported the plan and felt it would increase pedestrian safety and beautification of the downtown and college areas.
2. Mr. Chris Jenkins, Nor’wood Development and resident of Old North End Neighborhood, supported the plan and applauds Mr. Tefertiller’s efforts.
3. Ms. Beth Kosley, Downtown Partnership and Development Committee, made clarification that Colorado College is an integral part of downtown and does not consider the college location as north of downtown. It is a key economic anchor for the downtown. She compared the road narrowing of Cascade Avenue to the South Tejon Complete Streets Plan, and felt that plan has worked beautifully without pushing traffic onto adjacent streets.
4. Mr. Dave Munger, Old North End Neighborhood Association (ONEN) president, stated the current lack of pedestrian safety is too big a price when there is a solution available. He felt the college’s plan helps unite the downtown, college and north end

CITY OF COLORADO SPRINGS PLANNING COMMISSION

RECORD-OF-DECISION

September 18, 2008

Page 26

neighborhood. He displayed a large map representing fairness of streets (Tejon, Cascade, Nevada, Weber, and Wahsatch) within ONEN that could complement the college's proposal for Cascade Avenue.

Mr. Healy clarified that the college's master plan only addresses Cascade Avenue. If traffic does spill over to adjacent streets, then further traffic studies should be conducted. Traffic studies dictate levels of service C will continue, and follow-up field studies will provide the results.

5. Mr. Val Snider displayed a preliminary route for a street car system within the downtown area and felt this compliments the college's master plan.

Commissioner Hartsell inquired if a dedicated lane was proposed for the street car? Mr. Snider replied a feasibility study will address that issue.

6. Ms. Drew Sloat, ONEN neighbor, preferred actual dedicated lanes for bicyclists along Cascade Avenue.
7. Mr. Rick Hoover, Central Colorado Springs Coalition, supported the plan.
8. Mr. Steve Engel, neighbor and Griffis Blessing representative, supported the plan.
9. Mr. Steve Stivers felt the plan is sound and supports increased pedestrian traffic.
10. Ms. Stephanie Waltman, property owner on Cascade Avenue, felt the City has an opportunity to create an area that draws people into a unique neighborhood, local parks, increases real estate values, and tourism.
11. Mr. Richard Guy, downtown business owner, reminded the audience this is a master plan – a guiding document. He supports the \$300 million the college is willing to spend in our downtown area.

CITIZENS IN OPPOSITION

Exhibit D – letters distributed to Planning Commission before the meeting.

1. Mr. David Justice lives within one block of Colorado College and opposed the plan.
2. Mr. Bruce Walker, ONEN resident and alumni, stated that precedence typically dictates construction of a bridge or tunnel for safer pedestrian access rather than road narrowing.
3. Ms. Jane Morgan, resident on Cascade Avenue, stated the ONEN president represents the board members, but does not represent the viewpoints of all ONEN members. She opposed the plan because she felt traffic will be diverted to Nevada Avenue and negatively affect pedestrian crossings near Steele Elementary School.
4. Mr. Bruce Trexler, resident on North Wahsatch, opposed a non-profit tax exempt organization providing mixed use development. He felt traffic calming devices/construction for the college should be in conjunction with the surrounding neighborhood.
5. Mr. Steve Marsh was concerned that the traffic study would be adopted and bypass further stakeholder discussion. He preferred the traffic study results discussed at a future Planning Commission meeting.
6. Ms. Mary Alice Ayling, resident of Cascade Avenue, preferred a bridge constructed between Uintah and Cache la Poudre.
7. Mr. John Dunham, resident near Cascade/Fontanero intersection, felt the traffic should

CITY OF COLORADO SPRINGS PLANNING COMMISSION

RECORD-OF-DECISION

September 18, 2008

Page 27

- not be pushed onto other streets.
8. Mr. Rick Villa stated his research found multiple articles that explained roundabouts are unsafe when incorporating pedestrian crossings. He provided his e-mail address should any be interested in the web links (springspolitics@gmak.com). He felt Mr. Celeste has a conflict of interest with his roles as Colorado College president and president of the Downtown Partnership.
 9. Mr. Kevin Comiskey works at the Dale House located at the southwest corner of Dale and Cascade, and was concerned with safe pedestrian crossings according to the proposed road changes near his business.

APPLICANT REBUTTAL

Mr. Celeste has not voted on the college's master plan when it was reviewed by the Downtown Partnership. The college does not intend to move east across Weber; there are no plans for academic buildings on the east side of Nevada. He felt that removing the second driving lane is the surest way of protecting pedestrians and calming traffic. He referenced pedestrian bridges in Ohio that are relics of the past because students do not use them. The traffic circle pattern is not intended for pedestrian crossings. The proposed mixed-use developments along North Tejon could generate revenue for the college and the city.

Commissioner Butlak inquired of the City Historic Preservation Board's letter regarding impact on historic properties and historic landscaped medians. Mr. Celeste stated the college does its best to maintain and retain historic properties. The Weber Street properties were mentioned, and the college maintains medians along Cascade. The same maintenance would be applied to any future traffic circles added to the right-of-way. He mentioned the US. Justice Dept. chose Colorado College among the first five colleges to be examined and required to implement a six-year plan to retrofit every building (that contain programs) to be American Disability Act (ADA) compliant. A pedestrian bridge or tunnel would create extreme difficulty with ADA compliance.

STAFF REQUESTED TO SPEAK

None.

DECISION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION

Commissioner Hartsell appreciated all for staying the entire day.

Moved by Commissioner Hartsell to approve **Item 6, CPC MP 97-00261-A2MJ08**, the proposed master plan, based upon the finding that the request complies with the required master plan criteria in City Code Section 7.5.408 and is subject to the following technical and informational plan modifications with revision to #4:

Technical and Informational Modifications to the Master Plan Amendment:

1. Modify LRDP Diagram 1 of 3 to clarify that the access point to Uintah St. at Wood will remain either for emergency vehicles only or that it may be opened as a future right-in, right-out after additional study, review and approval by the City.

CITY OF COLORADO SPRINGS PLANNING COMMISSION

RECORD-OF-DECISION

September 18, 2008

Page 28

2. Add building name labels to the large format map 3 of 3 for all buildings described in the narrative.
3. Revise the narrative to remove statements which imply that the proposed roundabouts will improve traffic flow through campus – this is speculative and contradicts the stated intent which is to increase pedestrian safety by slowing vehicular traffic along Cascade.
4. Add the following statement to each sheet of the large format master plan maps “Additional City **administrative review, City Planning Commission and City Council** review and approval ~~is~~ **are** needed prior to any physical changes to public improvements being implemented.”

Seconded by Commissioner Cleveland.

Commissioner Magill felt traffic access is critical to retail. He’s open to the pending traffic study and testing. He felt any restrictions to downtown would negatively affect downtown businesses. He referenced the safe pedestrian crossings in the cities of Auckland, New Zealand and Kona, Hawaii where reduced lanes are bulbed out with a signal push-button pedestrian crossings along main roads (red light appears for vehicles and green light appears for pedestrian crossing). He felt there are alternatives to road narrowing to accommodate pedestrian/campus safety.

Commissioner Butlak applauded Commissioner Magill’s comments. She suggested an illuminated push-button signal crossing for pedestrians. There were many comments of pedestrians crossing without looking before entering the roadway – pedestrians must also be involved in the process.

Commissioner Gonzalez stated the master plan was very well thought out and comprehensive. He was concerned how traffic will work on Cascade and awaits the study results. He was also concerned with comments from the Dale House representative regarding unsafe pedestrian crossings at the roundabout near the Dale/Cascade intersection.

Commissioner Butcher stated the master plan is great. Most comments surrounded Cascade Avenue, which opens the door for all public comment. He did not feel that subsequent plans should be reviewed by the Planning Commission.

Motion carried 9-0.

September 18, 2008
DATE OF DECISION

Richard Hansen
PLANNING COMMISSION CHAIR