

# **Appendix E.**

# **Focus Group Meeting Notes**

## Education Providers Focus Group Notes

November 29, 2021

### **11/29 10am Attendees:**

Cam Wyatt from Career Center (Technical Trade School, ~450 schools/day)

Josh Warinner (Asst Principle at Grand Junction Avenue)

Dana Brosig – Regional Transportation planner

David Thornton – Grand Junction Planner

### **Like about North Avenue:**

- Diversity of businesses
- Connects the entire valley
- Provides employment opportunities to kids at career center
- Like the cross section of the areas that have been redeveloped with the 8-foot multi-modal sidewalk
- Students walk to work at the fast food restaurants or get lunch off campus (open campus)

### **Wish was different:**

- Neglected infrastructure near Career Center
- Additional crosswalks across North Avenue
  - Kids, families, other people cross to get to destinations (like convenience stores)
- Clear, safe sidewalks for people to connect to employment and other destinations
- Better transportation options
- Safe bicycle infrastructure
- Many career center kids have disabilities and rely on GVT and bicycles to get to/from Career Center and other destinations
- Safe sidewalks for students walking to restaurants on North Avenue

### **CDOT Project:**

With resurfacing, likely not restriping bike lane. In the future curb and gutter to be move or be reconstructed.

## Existing Use

- Please tell us a little about your agency/business, who you serve, and how North Avenue is important to what you do?
- Do your employees or people you serve currently walk, bike or use transit on North Avenue?
  - If not, what is keeping people from using these modes on North Avenue?
- How well is North Avenue and the bus system on North Avenue functioning for your needs today? What is working well and what is not?

## Career Center:

- North Avenue is critical for kids to access Center.
- Buses access from the west and exit through the east.
- Kids are told not to drive on North Ave but access the center from the Interstate instead.
- Kids access businesses on North Avenue for employment.
- Cam has heard incidents of kids crashing their bicycle because of lack of curbs or other issues with infrastructure on North Avenue.
- Kids need to be able to cross North Avenue from the east to get to Bookcliff Middle School.
- Manufactured Home Parks along corridor have young families and many people walking to destinations and needing to cross North Avenue
- GVT:
  - One task at Career Center is learning how to use GVT and access the whole valley using the system
  - For some of their students GVT is primary mode of transportation
  - Past Patterson road, students sometimes get lost/stuck waiting for the bus
  - More students rely on GVT as gas prices rise

## High School:

- Open campus for all grades, so many students leave at lunch and walk to the restaurants on North Avenue
- Bond measures were passed to rebuild new high school (on same property)
- One lunch period
- Students work at restaurants along North Avenue

- A lot of students walk, some drive on North Avenue
- Handful of students use GVT to get to school (15-20/1500)
- A lot of students walk/ride bike/skateboard from south of North Avenue and need to cross
- More freshman/sophomores do not drive and either need rides or walk/bike
- Lots of parents drop off students and this can sometimes create a back-up on 5<sup>th</sup> and North Ave
- GVT:
  - Provided some free bus passes for students who need it
  - Program for transit training for high-functioning, special needs students

## Current Challenges

- From your agency's perspective, what are the biggest challenges/barriers for people walking, biking, or using transit on or across North Avenue?

### Issues on the Corridor:

- Few crossings near high school and CMU
- Gaps in sidewalk
- Crosswalks needed between 29 road and 30 road
- Crossing east of Career Center between Career Center and Habitat for Humanity (RRFB)
- Existing Crosswalk at 29, but kids run across road at street to Bookcliff Middle School **North Avenue & 29 ¼ Road**
- What are the barriers to students using GVT?:
  - Stigma/Perception of taking public transit
  - Promoting, how to ride, what routes exist could be helpful
  - Option for getting to work or entertainment opportunities
- What are the barriers to students using GVT?:
  - Stigma/Perception of taking public transit
  - Promoting, how to ride, what routes exist could be helpful
  - Option for getting to work or entertainment opportunities
- What areas of North Avenue do you feel most uncomfortable walking, biking, or using transit? Why?
- What would need to change to make you (or your customers) feel safer and more comfortable to walk or bike on North Avenue?

## Future Vision

- What infrastructure improvements would you most like to see on North Avenue through this project?
  - Wider sidewalks
  - RRFBs or Controlled Crosswalks
  - Cross section near Texas Roadhouse on both sides of the road near the career center
  - Good visibility of pedestrians/bicyclists
  - Few crossings near high school and CMU
  - Gaps in sidewalk
  - Crosswalks needed between 29 road and 30 road
  - Crossing east of Career Center between Career Center and Habitat for Humanity (RRFB)
  - Existing Crosswalk at 29, but kids run across road at street to Bookcliff Middle School North Avenue & 29 ¼ Road
  - Targeted marketing: “This is where you can get from the High School/Career Center on GVT”
- Do you like the standard design already established for this project? (8’ sidewalk with 8’ landscape buffer and bus pullouts)
  - Like it generally:
    - Like wide sidewalks
    - Good bike/ped visibility
    - Like separated pull outs for buses, especially for people loading bicycles onto the front of the bus
  - May be challenging next to high school where there may not be of 16ft ROW

## Priorities

- What bus stop amenities do think are most important? (e.g., lighting, shelter, bench, trash bins, bike parking, other?)
  - Level of maintenance and lighting at bus stop makes a difference for student’s comfort for use
  - Students will walk some additional blocks if the bus stop looks inviting/safe

## Focus Group Questions



- What segment of North Ave do you feel would most benefit from sidewalk/trail improvements?
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Street (or atleast 7<sup>th</sup> Street) – 12<sup>th</sup> Street (students, high traffic, college)
  - 29 Road to 30 Road (at minimum on east side w/ Career Center, from Career Center to 29 road to give safe passage to nearest controlled crossing – LOTS of barriers in this area)
- What criteria should be used to prioritize projects on North Ave?
- (e.g., locations with: sidewalk gaps, high pedestrian activity, high bus ridership, high number of bike/ped crashes, minimal impact to ROW, etc.)
- Do you have any concerns about this project?

## Businesses/ Property Owners Focus Group

November 29, 2021

### Attendees:

- Kurt Graham – Habitat for Humanity
- Fitzgibbon – Vice President of Latino Chamber of Commerce & Property Owner
- President of Western Colorado Latino Chamber of Commerce
- Dereck Loya - CMU Student
- Scott - Latino Chamber of Commerce

### What people like:

- Diversity of businesses
- Good spine with lots of access points to different streets throughout town
- Activity
- Rich History for Grand Junction
- Great hub for businesses
  - North Avenue could be another Main Street for Grand Junction
- History of being a drag strip, funky, kitchy – “Cruisin’ North Avenue”

### What people wish was different:

- More wide and complete sidewalks
- More pedestrian friendly
  - Wider sidewalks
  - Beautification
- Improved traffic flows
  - Coordinated traffic signals to get through several signals
- Safer for bikes and pedestrians
- Make public friendly/family friendly
- Greener, more trees/shade
- Different types of spaces
  - Patterson is totally car focused
  - Main Street is Pedestrian Focused
  - North Avenue could be the happy medium
- Medians control access and mean people take a lot of U-turns on North Avenue
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements
- Turn Lincoln Park from a golf course to a public park

April of 2020 City of Grand Junction passed a law allowing dispensaries (Palisade also allows).

There have been discussions of Grand Junction perhaps taking over North Avenue from CDOT. There have been some discussions of acquiring more right-of-way to create new sidewalks if need be.

Important that property owners are engaged on proposed improvements and how it fits into their property and existing structures/uses.

## Existing Use/Current Issues

### How do people currently access and move on North Avenue?

- Don't see as many people riding the bus, but do see a lot of people biking
- Tried riding my bike to work but it felt really unsafe
- I work in Real Estate – some clients are discouraged from leasing or buying property on North Avenue because it feels run down
- Unhoused population on North Avenue may be discouraging retail opportunities
  - By Walmart feels somewhat unsafe
  - Shelter/bench by Walmart was taken out because they couldn't maintain it
- Crossing needed between Career Center and ReStore
- North Avenue is an easy and direct way to orient yourself/give directions
- Trailer Park on 28<sup>th</sup> uses North Ave a lot (largely Latino population)
- Perception of North Avenue is based on negative news (people getting hit walking/biking) – this deters people from walking and biking on the corridor
- Lots of Latino residents go to the businesses on North Avenue and use it as a reference point
- Stopping at every traffic light may be more of the perceived issue than congestion

### How well is the bus system working on North Avenue for your needs?

- Habitat for Humanity ReStore – fairly good traffic, good anchor for thrift stores
  - Volunteers use public transit
  - Customers don't use public transit much
  - Career Center students use transit on the corridor
- Where there are not bus pull-outs, buses back up traffic when loading
- Anecdotally, Latino residents are not using the bus as much
  - Could be issue with not knowing how to use it?
  - Education/more information needed
  - Have signs/materials/marketing in Spanish
  - Discouraged by feeling unsafe at bus stops
    - With kids
    - At night
    - Long wait
    - Close to cars/heavy and fast traffic



- Campaign, in a fun way, to get people to ride transit
  - Ride GVT Weekend
  - Get local businesses to participate and donate gift cards
  - Have people ride all the different routes
  - **North Avenue Transit Day**
    - Would need to increase frequency because currently 1-hour headways
- Potential for greater transit ridership, especially with increasing gas prices

## Future Vision

- **What infrastructure improvements would you most like to see on North Avenue through this project?**
  - Could see an electric trolley as a future transit mode
  - Crossings (possibly RRFBs)
    - At Habitat for Humanity
    - At 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue to CMU
    - By the VA
    - Right by Walmart
    - 12<sup>th</sup> Street by CMU
  - Coordinating the Traffic Signals along the corridors
    - **“Signal Progression”**
    - Can be looked into – can be challenging with 2-way street
  - Safe, connected, bike facility on this spine through the city
  - Improve the look of North Avenue
    - More greenery, flowers
    - Add decorations on North Ave for holidays/events
    - Green or decorated medians
    - Banners
    - Murals
    - Improved and branded bus stops
    - Public Art
    - Encourage/regulate businesses keeping property clean/nice

## Focus Group Questions



- Cut back vegetation that is growing into the sidewalk

## Priorities

- **What criteria should be used to prioritize projects on North Ave?**
  - East-end of North Avenue
    - Past new Uhaul gets pretty bad
    - Pedestrian scale lighting needed
  - Start filling in the gaps in the sidewalk network

## Human Services Providers Focus Group Notes

December 1, 2021

### Existing Use

- Please tell us a little about your agency/business, who you serve, and how North Avenue is important to what you do?
- Do your employees or people you serve currently walk, bike or use transit on North Avenue?
  - If not, what is keeping people from using these modes on North Avenue?
- How well is North Avenue and the bus system on North Avenue functioning for your needs today? What is working well and what is not?
- Notes
  - *How do users currently travel*
    - *VA: a lot of employees want to walk or bike but people are spread out, so they drive or bus to a point and then bike. That trip takes a long time though.*
      - *Have a transportation system set up for patients, but it has frequency limitations*
      - *Clients don't like to use the bus because there is no shelter or bench at the bus stop in front of the VA*
    - *DHS: mostly low income without other options, so use the bus. Offer free bus passes. More people would walk if felt safer but not the sidewalks and crosswalks that need for people to feel safe. Many families with small children. Strollers are very challenging. North Ave is main thoroughfare for people accessing the facility.*
    - *Mindstream Health: Lighting, bus shelters and benches would be really helpful*
    - *MCPH: the final connections on the east end of North Ave near the facility is really challenging. Not at all ADA accessible*

### Current Challenges

- From your agency's perspective, what are the biggest challenges/barriers for people walking, biking, or using transit on or across North Avenue?
  - (i.e., missing sidewalks, narrow sidewalks, not enough crossings, existing crossings feel unsafe, bus is not frequent enough, turning vehicles/driveways, walkway is too close to traffic, etc.)
  - *Transit frequency- is this a problem for your clients*
    - *Mindstream- people have to leave early to catch the bus. There are evening sessions that go until 7. Encourages loitering to have people waiting*
    - *DHS- frequency of the bus is a main barrier; people are late to appointments or miss appointments*
    - *Difficult for people who use the bus to get to work- makes people late to work*
  - *Bus stop location*
    - *Not good connectivity from Redlands to the Highway for people who are choice riders*
    - *If had more frequent routes on high traffic corridors (such as on North Ave and 7<sup>th</sup>) (rather than these big loops) you might get more choice riders*
      - *Would also help non-choice riders*
      - *A lot of people come down 7<sup>th</sup> from Criminal Justice*
    - *Near Walmart is a key destination as well*
- What areas of North Avenue do you feel most uncomfortable walking, biking, or using transit? Why?
  - *If only one side of the road had a sidewalk/improve, would that be a problem?*
    - *Would need some sidewalks on the north side because once you cross over, you need to get to the DHW or workforce campus itself*
    - *Think about where the highest density of pedestrians are*
      - *29 ¼ Road- trailer park and middle school has a lot of demand*
    - *Make sure to provide wayfinding with best places to cross, suggested side to walk on.*
  - *VA: From 1<sup>st</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> is the worst section*
  - *A lot of people jaywalking in the middle of blocks because there are long distances between blocks*
    - *We will consider moving bus stops and increase crossings*

- *Particular locations that are bad for crossings:*
  - *By Walmart, near CMU, near the VA, near DHS and Walgreens*
- *On both ends of the corridor there are challenges*
- What would need to change to make you (or your customers) feel safer and more comfortable to walk or bike on North Avenue?
  - *People bike on the sidewalk even when there is an on-street bike lane, especially towing a child*
  - *Will have an on-street bike lane and also an 8' wide sidewalk option that acts like a multiuse path*

## Future Vision

- What infrastructure improvements would you most like to see on North Avenue through this project?
  - *Anna: Wider sidewalks. People are going to continue riding their bikes on the sidewalks. Less interested in seeing a bike lane*
    - *Narrower lanes also serves as traffic calming*
  - *Really good lighting*
  - *Landscaping and urban greenery*
- Do you like the standard design already established for this project? (8' sidewalk with 8' landscape buffer and bus pullouts)
  - Would you change or add anything?

## Priorities

- What bus stop amenities do think are most important? (e.g., lighting, shelter, bench, trash bins, bike parking, other?)
- What segment of North Ave do you feel would most benefit from sidewalk/trail improvements?
  - *Where sidewalks are missing*
  - *Areas of high bus ridership and high pedestrian access*
  - *Be more consistent in the kind of sidewalks- right now has a mix of buffers, widths, offset. Come up with standard designs to bring continuity and consistency to the experience.*
- What criteria should be used to prioritize projects on North Ave?

## Focus Group Questions



- (e.g., locations with: sidewalk gaps, high pedestrian activity, high bus ridership, high number of bike/ped crashes, minimal impact to ROW, etc.)
- Do you have any concerns about this project?

## Introductions

- Dana Brosig
  - RTPO
  - Like the potential of North Avenue
  - Wish there was more connectivity, people are forced to bike on North Avenue
- Dave Thornton
  - City of Grand Junction
  - Like the vibe of North Avenue and potential
  - Connectivity is a big challenge
- Sonia Bjurstrom
  - Program Director at Mindstream Health
  - A lot of her clients come through North Avenue and the bus system has been really helpful
  - Concerns about cracked sidewalk and poor bike friendliness
- Kathy McCoy
  - Arial Clinical services- marketing recruitment
- Shelley Grattan
  - Department of Human Services, Workforce Center and Health Department
  - Like diversity of businesses and options
  - Don't like that they agglomerate similar businesses- lots of the same
  - Functionality and ability to get to different places
  - Maintenance of the corridor
  - Not built for the growth that Grand Junction has seen
- Ross Mittelman
  - Mesa County Public Health, trails coordinator
  - Appreciate the presence of CMU
  - Want improved safety and connectivity
  - Could benefit from urban greening and landscaping
- Anna Crickmer
  - Assistant Chief Engineer at the VA
  - The mall causes confusion
  - Appreciate it's a direct corridor for driving but wish other modes could follow those routes too
  - Not friendly to people with mobility issues
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## Urban Trails Committee Focus Group

December 8, 2021

### Introductions

- Patrick Picard
- Carly Sieff
- Dana Brosig
- Steve-
- Andy Gingrich
- Abe Herman- GJ City council
- Bob davis prk and res
- Trails coordinator
- Marie-
- Michelle
- Dana
- Planning technician
- Eric- GJ engineer
- Phoenix Landry
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### Notes

- Thoughts on the bike lane
  - o Like that a bike lane is being considered- serves a key demographic
  - o Someone else said they wouldn't feel comfortable biking on North Ave even if there was a bike lane
  - o There is a socioeconomic element to these investments
    - Need a separated lane to give it the proper attention
  - o Most people biking North Ave are doing so by necessity not by choice
  - o Anecdotal evidence of people biking- not having lights, being inebriated, pulling trailers
    - Not people that would necessarily use a bike lane
- Vision for the multiuse trail concept
  - o can sometimes feel narrow in heavy traffic
  - o the buffer makes it much more pleasant
  - o a lot of people in wheelchairs and scooters
  - o Need indication (signage or painting) that the path is for bicyclists and pedestrians
  - o Show indication for cars of bikes crossing on a multiuse path
- Be clear where the preferred crossing locations are
- Add lighting
- Get the basics in first
- High activity corridor- need to be able to access uses on this corridor

- Look into grants to update signage
- Highest priority
  - o High traffic areas also have no sidewalks
  - o 28 ½ to 28 ¾ road
  - o South of CMU
  - o In front of Wamart
  - o Think about feasibility
- Consider crossings- signage and lighting
  - o More green paint
  - o Get in front of the CDOT work
- Get CMU to be more involved

## Existing Use

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## Future Vision

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- Do you like the standard design already established for this project? (8' sidewalk with 8' landscape buffer and bus pullouts)



## Focus Group



- Would you change or add anything?

## Priorities

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- Do you have any concerns about this project?