THE CITY OF ASHEVILLE

Staff Report

Council Meeting Date: October 10, 2023

Subject: Reaffirmation of the City Council's commitment to multimodal transportation and authorization to proceed with the College Patton Complete Streets Project.

Staff Resource(s): Ken Putnam, PE, Director of Transportation
Jessica Morriss, AICP, Assistant Director of Transportation

Action Requested: Adoption of a resolution reaffirming the City Council's commitment to multimodal transportation, authorizing the City Manager to direct staff to move forward with the College Patton Complete Streets Project, and directing City staff to prepare ordinance amendments to permit use of all modes of personal transportation within bike lanes.

Background:

- The addition of bicycle facilities in Asheville's urban core is consistent with adopted City plans and policies to improve multimodal transportation, particularly in Downtown.
- Plan alignment includes the 2009 Downtown Master Plan, the 2012 Complete Streets Policy, the 2016 Asheville in Motion Mobility Plan, and the 2018 Living Asheville Comprehensive Plan.
- City Council's 2036 Vision Framework for transportation and accessibility states, "Whether you drive a car, take the bus, ride a bike or walk, getting around Asheville is easy. Public transportation is widespread, frequent, and reliable. Sidewalks, greenways, and bike facilities get us where we want to go safely and keep us active and healthy. It is easy to live in Asheville without a car and still enjoy economic, academic, and social success."
- The City's existing Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) was developed using previously approved plans and policies, including the 2012 Complete Streets Policy and the 2018 Living Asheville Comprehensive Plan as a basis.
- The College and Patton Complete Streets Project has been prioritized in the CIP because College and Patton are the primary east-west through streets in downtown.
- The proposed bike lanes will connect to existing bike lanes and future bike lanes in downtown and beyond, and the project will have a relatively quick installation time with a comparatively low cost given its community benefits.
- Staff most recently presented a status update on the College Patton Complete Streets Project as part of the August 22, 2023, City Manager's Report.
- As part of that discussion, staff hoped to gauge consensus from Council regarding their level of support to continue with the project.
- While beneficial feedback was received on August 22, conclusive direction was not received.
- Since August 22, staff have distributed a detailed memo providing additional background information on the history and outreach efforts associated with the bike lane project, updated details on the project's webpage and distributed information via email to stakeholders including the City's downtown safety initiative subscriber list, and organizations/people who have self identified as BIPOC, Youth, Seniors, Interested in Transportation, People with Disabilities and/or their Caretakers, and LGBTQ+.
- Staff have also conducted targeted project meetings with business owners and other community members, particularly those representing the BIPOC community.
- The City Council is being asked to approve a resolution to reaffirm their commitment to multimodal transportation and authorize the City Manager to direct staff to move forward with the College Patton Complete Streets Project.

Vendor Outreach Efforts:

- Vendor solicitation and selection to complete the College Patton Complete Streets Project will only occur if the City Council approves the resolution authorizing the City Manager to direct staff to proceed with the project.

Council Goal(s):

- Improve/Expand Core Services

Committee(s):

- Downtown Commission: March 11, 2022 & June 10, 2022 - presentation only; December 9, 2022 presentation and vote - 6 to 3 vote to recommend project implementation; September 22, 2023 - presentation only.
- Multimodal Transportation Commission: March 23, 2022 - Presentation only; June 22, 2022 - presentation and vote - 6 to 1 vote to recommend implementation of the project
- City Council City Manager's Report - September 13, 2022 - presentation only
- City Council City Manager's Report - August 22, 2023 - presentation only

Pro(s):

- Currently listed in the adopted capital budget.
- Implements multimodal principles.
- Enhances travel safety for multiple modes of transportation.

Con(s):

- Possible reduced levels of service for automobiles and increased queue lengths during peak hours.

Fiscal Impact:

- Funding for this project ($100,000) was previously budgeted and is available in the General Capital Projects Fund.
- Thus far, approximately $12,000 has been spent toward project design and public outreach.

Suggested Motion:

- Motion to adopt a resolution to authorize the City Manager to direct staff to move forward with the College Patton Complete Streets Project, and to prepare ordinance amendments to permit use of all modes of personal transportation within bike lanes.

Attachment(s)

- Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. 23 -_____

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO DIRECT STAFF TO MOVE FORWARD WITH THE COLLEGE / PATTON COMPLETE STREETS PROJECT, AND ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS TO PERMIT USE BY ALL MODES OF PERSONAL TRANSPORTATION WITHIN BIKE LANES _____

WHEREAS, College Street and Patton Avenue are city-maintained streets, being the main and only roads traveling from east to west through downtown, with vibrant local businesses and residential communities, and

WHEREAS, the College / Patton Complete Streets Project ("Project") area includes the sections of College Street and Patton Avenue between Spruce Street and Pritchard Park; and

WHEREAS, various studies and reports have proposed multi-modal improvements to the College Street and Patton Avenue corridors over the last five years, and

WHEREAS, the project supports the City's Complete Streets Policy adopted in 2012; and

WHEREAS, the project aligns with the City Council 2036 Vision in the Transportation and Accessibility focus area by implementing complete streets principles in order to improve multiple modes of transportation in order to enhance travel safety and create a bicycle facility network that will connect all sides of Asheville to the Central Business District; and

WHEREAS, the College / Patton Complete Streets Project ("Project") was adopted in the FY 2022 Capital Improvement Program with a budget of $100,000; and

WHEREAS, on December 9, 2022, the Downtown Commission voted 6-3, and on June 22, 2022, the Multimodal Transportation Commission voted 6-1 to recommend implementing the project; and

WHEREAS, throughout 2022 and 2023, robust public engagement took place, which included key stakeholder meetings, property owner meetings, meetings with community leaders, public meetings, project site tours, online surveys; and

WHEREAS, public comments were used to adjust the design of the project for the most prioritized needs of the business and residential community within the project area, such as sidewalk eateries, accessible parking, short-term parking, and additional loading zones; and

WHEREAS, City Council desires to expand the allowance to use public bike lanes to all modes of personal transportation devices;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ASHEVILLE THAT:

The City Manager is hereby authorized to direct staff to move forward with the College / Patton Complete Streets Project, and to prepare ordinance amendments to permit use of all modes of personal transportation within bike lanes.

Read, approved, and adopted this 10th day of October, 2023.

_____ _____

City Clerk Mayor

Approved as to form:

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City Attorney