

STAFF REPORT

DATE: September 23, 2008

TO: City Council

FROM: Bob Clarke, City Engineer
Mike Webb, Principal Planner

SUBJECT: Proposed Fifth Street Corridor Civic Engagement and Workplan

Recommendation

Authorize staff to proceed with the proposed workplan and civic engagement plan for evaluation of the Fifth Street Corridor between A Street and L Streets.

Fiscal Impact

None at this time. City staff hours are budgeted in various programs to conduct public outreach and to perform preliminary assessments of possible public improvements. Should a project scope be approved and direction given to pursue the implementation of a project, budget impacts would be addressed at that time. If the proposed workplan is approved by the City Council, it is anticipated that the potential for outside services and a budget adjustment, would be included as part of the discussion at the December Council workshop.

Council Goal(s)

This effort addresses the City Council goals of maintaining and improving the infrastructure by investigating opportunities to enhance the safety and efficient circulation of all modes of transportation.

Background and Analysis

In April 2003, staff presented to the City Council the scope for modifications to the F and G Street signals on Fifth Street (CIP #8714). During discussion of this project, the issue of pedestrian safety along the Fifth Street corridor surfaced. The Old North Davis Neighborhood suggested a lane reduction approach would be an appropriate strategy to address pedestrian safety. Ensuing discussions of the Fifth Street corridor raised additional issues related to bicycle connectivity through the downtown core area, motor vehicle travel impacts, and economic impacts to the downtown business community.

In July 2005, the City Council identified five issues to guide staff deliberations: bicycle route connectivity, improved pedestrian safety at street crossings, reduced motor vehicle speeds, protected left turns off of Fifth Street, and the pursuit of grant funds for potential improvements. Staff evaluated the lane reduction option and various other concepts to address issues. Ultimately, staff informed the Council that any option that would potentially achieve all of the objectives would also come with a negative impact – be it traffic delays, safety trade offs, loss of mature trees, or expense. With many different groups articulating different needs for the corridor, and no universally agreeable plan identified, the Council chose to table discussion for a period of time.

In June 2008, the issue of the Fifth Street corridor was raised by the Council and staff was asked to prepare a plan to address the subject. In prior discussions, the primary driver of the analysis was responding to a proposed solution, or options, rather than making a comprehensive effort to engage the community to identify what problems, or opportunities existed in the corridor. Staff recognizes that there are myriad interests in the Fifth Street Corridor. The corridor serves many modes of transportation, including vehicles, delivery trucks, buses, emergency vehicles, pedestrians, and bicycles. How the corridor is configured impacts these modes of transportation and the properties, businesses, and events served by the corridor.

In recognition of these multiple interests, staff proposes engaging the community to gain a better understanding of the full breadth of interests and issues. By better understanding how the corridor is used, and what the visions and concerns are for the future of the corridor, we will be in a better position to develop alternatives to be evaluated. Staff is committed to evaluating the issues from a fresh perspective and there will be no predetermined outcome or specific course of action for corridor alterations.

Attached is a proposed workplan that lays out the key steps and timeline for implementation of this approach. Step one is to be undertaken on September 9th, with Council input on this proposed plan. Step two incorporates a diversified civic engagement effort that will reach out to the broad community and will be conducted in a concentrated timeframe in order to maintain momentum and interest. Step three engages the City Council in a workshop to summarize our findings from the engagement efforts, proposes conceptual project alternatives, and tasks the Council with establishing relative priorities for the analysis phase. A specific budget proposal, any necessary budget adjustments, and consultant contracts would be brought before the Council for review and action as part of this step. Development and analysis of specific project alternatives occurs in step four. The analysis may require use of professional consultants, such as traffic engineers, to run traffic models. Because traffic modeling relies heavily upon key assumptions, a third party consultant may be utilized for peer evaluation. After the analysis of the alternatives has been completed, staff will re-engage the community to present the specifics of the alternatives, the findings of the analysis, to ascertain community reaction to each, and to ensure that the pros and cons of each alternative have been fully developed. In step six staff will engage city commissions and the City Council for recommendations and action on a possible course of action for the corridor. An implementation plan for any approved proposal will require further steps which would be developed at a later date.

Staff recognizes that this will be an ambitious effort, but we believe that it is the proper course of action to ensure that the full breadth of issues is considered and to provide decision-makers with as complete a picture as possible.

Attachments

- Proposed Workplan and Civic Engagement Plan

Proposed Fifth Street Corridor Workplan
8/28/08

Overall Approach: engage the community, interest groups, and decision-makers to identify goals/objectives for the Fifth Street corridor, to facilitate development and analysis of project options, and to decide on a course of action.

Proposed Workplan and Timeline

1. Present proposed workplan and timeline to City Council (Sep. 9, 2008)
2. Engage in comprehensive civic engagement (Oct/Nov 08)
 - a. Goal is to identify issues, comments, concerns, ideas to examine – there is no pre-determined outcome or project.
 - b. Existing conditions, traffic data, and accident data will be provided
 - c. See attachment A for details
3. City Council Workshop (Dec 2008)
 - a. Check in with findings from civic engagement
 - b. Identify key issues
 - c. Introduce conceptual project options (e.g. to resolve issue X you might employ options A, B, or C).
 - d. Establish relative criteria for the corridor to help focus analysis phase.
 - e. Approve necessary budget adjustments/contracts for steps 4, 5, and 6.
4. Analysis (Dec-Jan 09)

Staff and consultant(s), if needed, to devise and detail specific alternatives and analysis of each. Note: some alternatives may require technical analysis, such as traffic modeling. Peer review of technical analyses may also be utilized.
5. Re-engage the community with details of alternatives (Feb 09)
 - a. Community Workshop
 - b. Meetings of the SPAC and BAC for recommendations to Council
6. Report back to City Council with recommendations for action (Mar 09)
7. Implementation (TBD)
 - a. Details of implementation to be developed at a later date depending upon action.
 - b. Environmental review (CEQA)
 - c. Additional analysis, if needed
 - d. Design

Attachment A
Proposed Fifth Street Corridor Civic Engagement Plan

Forums for Civic Engagement

1. Small Neighborhood and Community Group Meetings (October/November)
 - a. Focused groups with Old East, Old North, Chamber, and DDBA to allow for direct input about specific concerns/issues.

2. Larger Community Workshops (November)
 - a. Open House format to convey information to and gather input from the community (invitation to community and identified interest groups - see below).
 - b. Two meetings to ensure maximum accessibility.

3. Website Survey (or Mailed Survey)
 - a. Identify primary function of the corridor and top issues for improvements
 - b. Seek feedback on “what if” scenarios.

4. Public Hearings at SPAC, BAC, and City Council

Communication and Engagement Tools

Telephone contacts to organized neighborhood groups to arrange meetings (Sept.)
 City Focus Newsletter (Oct.)
 Banners over Fifth Street (Oct.)
 Flyers at Farmers Market (Sept./Oct.)
 Newspaper Articles/Meeting Announcements (Sept. – Nov.)
 Community Television Channel
 City Website (Sept. – Nov.)
 Dialogic phone system
 Published list of upcoming meetings dates

Identified Interest Groups

Old North Nbhd. Assoc.	Unitrans	Safety & Parking Adv. Comm.
Old East Nbhd. Assoc.	Davis Community Transit	Bicycle Advisory Comm.
DDBA	Nbhd. Associations	Natural Resources Comm.
Chamber	Davis PD (internal to city)	Bus. & Econ. Dev. Comm.
Farmer’s Market	Davis FD (internal to city)	Davis Bicycle Club
DJUSD/PTA’s	DWR	Davis Bicycles!
UCD/ASUCD	EMT (ambulance) services	Sacramento Area Bicycle Advocates (SABA)
Climate Action Team	Union Pacific and CA Northern Railroads	
Yolo Transit	Homes and Businesses with access from Fifth Street	

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