

Alta Town Council

Staff Report



To: Town Council

From: Chris Cawley, Assistant Town Administrator

Re: Commercial Core Implementation Project

Date: May 4, 2018

Attachments: Commercial Core Implementation Project Concept Drawings

Background: As one component of developing and implementing the Commercial Core Plan, the Town received a grant from Wasatch Front Regional Council to develop concepts for improving conditions for “active transportation,” i.e. walking and bicycling, in the Commercial Core. The project we pursued beginning in summer 2017 focused on S.R. 210, primarily on the segment of the road in the “center of town,” between Our Lady of the Snows and the Rustler Lodge, and the end goal of the project has been to identify a few conceptual projects to work up into engineering drawings, which the town can then develop in partnership with UDOT and state or federal grant programs.

The project team identified vehicle speeds, narrow shoulders that commonly fill with parked cars and force pedestrians into travel lanes, and poor durability of lane markings as impediments to safe and enjoyable active transportation in the project area. The team conducted a brief traffic study at a location near the UDOT garage in July of 2017, which found that east-bound vehicle speeds exceed the posted speed limit frequently enough to warrant traffic calming intervention. Armed with these data, the project team developed several iterations of drawings showing different arrangements of features to slow traffic and separate uses, including barrier features such as raised curbing and center medians, “planter box” bulb-outs near mid-block crossings, elevated walkways, and striping to delineate pathways and parking areas from travel lanes.

Project Status: The current range of concepts was presented to the town council in the March 2018 meeting. The concept drawing includes “priority” projects:

- center median at Flagstaff parking area
- formalization of town office driveway/SR 210 “intersection” & trailhead
- Alta Lodge mid-block crossing
- bike/pedestrian lanes
- raised medians separating travel lanes from bike/ped paths
- seasonal “scenic plaza”/gathering area on Rustler Mine Dump

In the course of preparing the current range of drawings, UDOT has expressed interest in partnering to implement the center median concept as part of the 2018 SR 210 repaving project. Doing so will require UDOT to widen the cross-section of asphalt that is resurfaced during the project by about 3 feet on either side of the road, to account for the width of the median. As the repaving project is proceeding, UDOT will also be evaluating whether to implement a midblock crossing near the Alta Lodge this summer, which would ideally act in conjunction with the median to reinforce safer travel speeds through the center of town. Given the imminence of these UDOT projects and the partnership opportunities they present, the town will benefit by making a decision now to go ahead with our active transportation project.

The Town has reserved funds in the Tentative 2018 General Fund Budget to partner with UDOT for the purchase and installation of the median. The initial plan is to use stained jersey barriers, which we could fill with road base and landscaping, and to evaluate the effectiveness of the feature. We will follow up with formalized bike lane markings, short sections of raised curbing to separate travel lanes from bike/pedestrian space, and other elements once we can observe the effects of the feature throughout the summer and at least until early winter, 2018-2019 season.

Action Requested: UDOT has requested an endorsement by the Town for this project so they can incorporate a modest change order into their repaving plans to account for widening in conjunction with the center median. Similarly, WFRC requests that recipients of their Transportation and Land Use Connection grants consider “adoption” of the projects they fund. To satisfy both of these objectives, I am requesting that the town council consider a motion in support of the town pursuing the priority elements listed above, with the understanding that we’ll focus on the center median concept before moving on to other elements. Here is some sample language for a motion:

“I move to recommend the Town pursue the priority projects identified in the Town of Alta Commercial Core Implementation/Active Transportation Project, beginning with the center median feature and mid-block crossing elements during summer of 2018.”

