



City of Glenwood Springs Transportation Commission

November 2021 Commission Regular Meeting Agenda

Tuesday, November 2, 2021, 7:30 – 9:30 am  
Council Chambers, City Hall

- I. Call to Order.
- II. Approval of the August 10, 2021 Meeting Minutes. (5 min.)
- III. Comments from residents appearing for items not on the agenda
- IV. Continued discussion on roles and duties for Transportation Commission
- V. Ride Glenwood Fare Recommendation
- VI. Final MOVE Report
  - a. Response and recommendation on final MOVE documents
  - b. Transportation Demand Management model
- VII. Bike Share Program Update
- VIII. Recruit Transportation Commission Applicants
- IX. Agenda Planning for Next Meeting. (5 min.)

**City of Glenwood Springs, Transportation Commission**  
**DRAFT Minutes, regular meeting – October 5, 2021**

The meeting convened at 7:30am and adjourned at 9:40am.

**Participants** included:

Commission members: Sandy Lowell, Steve Smith, John Stephens, Ralph Trapani

City council members Ingrid Wussow, Charlie Willman

City staff: Linda DuPriest, Debra Figueroa, Matt Langhorst, Jenn Ooton, Bryana Starbuck

**Commission chair**

Ralph convened the meeting as Vice-Chairman. The commission unanimously confirmed him as commission Chairman.

**Transportation Commission next – structure, duties, protocols**

All present discussed recent difficulties and changes regarding the commission's roles, and approaches to filling those roles, including city council's September 2 adjustments to the formal list of commission duties—eliminating all specified duties and replacing with, *"...(1) To advise and assist the City Manager or their designee concerning transportation matters. (2) Such other duties as may be requested by the City Council. (3) To meet annually with the City Council to have Council set the Commission's goals and priorities for the year."*

Commissioners variously clarified that their engagement on transportation issues has been based in desire to improve the efficiency, safety, and effectiveness of the local transportation network, and specifically to help, supplement, and support the work of professional staff by providing additional user-experience perspectives. Commissioners also expressed regret over apparent misinterpretations of that intention.

All participants emphasized the importance of allowing for disagreement on substance, and engaging on details in a civil, respectful manner.

City staff anticipate the return of engineering staff as support to the commission's meetings and work.

Suggested remedies and renewed emphasis for commission engagement included:

- commission communications directed through liaison staff
- all involved recruit additional, diverse commission applicants, including citizens with practical everyday perspectives
- commission retain annual preparation of recommendations to city council for prioritizing large and small capital projects
- commission receive reports and submit comments at predictable stages of design for capital projects (30%, 60%, etc.)
- commission continue research and recommendations regarding transportation demand management (as affirmed by city council during February 18 work session)

- commission review and comments be arranged early in design of major transportation-related studies and outreach, and continue during course of such studies
  - commission review and comments arranged early in city review of land-use and development proposals with potential transportation implications
- Further discussion of commission duties and activities is to be the subject of an upcoming city council work session, tentatively sometime in November.

### **6&24 multiple-use path**

Matt reported that additional repair and maintenance work continues on the aging bicycle path along Highway 6&24 between Donegan Road and Linden Street. Major failures and issues with the existing path—particularly portion subject to flooding and ice—must be remedied by complete reconstruction of the path; major interim repairs are not cost-effective. Current estimate for complete reconstruction is \$800,000, \$50,000-100,000 for survey and design work.

Linda and Matt discussed potential funding sources for reconstruction, including programs for transportation alternatives and enhancements included in infrastructure funding legislation pending before Congress. Some funding sources require complete design in place, while other sources can fund conceptual plans or even pay for final design work. Early funding may be available for more immediate sources, some of which involve grants via reimbursement.

### **Bicycle-pedestrian network maintenance**

Matt explained that Parks & Recreation Department has increasing responsibility for cleaning and maintenance of bicycle-pedestrian infrastructure, particularly off-street paths. Streets Department continues responsibility for most on-street facilities.

City staff are working to document and prioritize gaps in pedestrian network, with particular focus on routes connecting to transit services. Commissioners reminded that *Garfield County Health Department* conducted such a review, results of which may be of value in current city effort. Public works expects to present a gaps/remedies plan by spring 2022. Bicycle network is not specifically included in the current review.

### **MOVE study**

Final topical chapters of the MOVE study have been delivered from consultants to *Roaring Fork Transportation Authority* (RFTA) and to the city, including distribution to commission members for review. Staff agreed to also forward to commissioners any summary documents from the study.

City council may consider, and possibly act on, MOVE report results, perhaps as soon as November 4 meeting. Next regular commission meeting will be November 2; commissioners asked for opportunity to review and comment on the MOVE report in a timely manner (before council review). For now, individual commissioners will review the MOVE documents and relay comments through staff; a special commission meeting may be necessary.

### **RFTA bike-share study**

Linda reported that contractor work on *Roaring Fork Transportation Authority's* (RFTA) study of potential bike-share services expansion (possibly including Glenwood Springs is nearing completion. Comments from city staff are due immediately. Steve and John volunteered to review the current consultant materials and provide initial comments and suggestions, pending more complete review and discussion by the full commission.

[*Subsequent update:* At its October 14 regular meeting, RFTA board received an update report from bike-share consultants *Toole Design*. The update primarily summarized public outreach, consultation with city staff, and discussing within the study's technical advisory committee. The update also presented a phased system-expansion plan for bike-share, anticipating continued RFTA contracting with *We-cycle* for the service (currently operating in Aspen, Snowmass Village, and Basalt).

Under the expansion proposal, Glenwood Springs would see 20 docking stations/350 docks for 160 bicycles (including some electric-assist bicycles) in phase one (projected 2024); phases 2 and 3 would include additional 18 stations/260 docks and 144 additional bicycles. Phase 1 would emphasize existing bicycle travel network (RiverTrail, Blake, other paved paths) generally south of Colorado River and west of Roaring Fork River, all with emphasis on connecting select neighborhoods with transit services.

Related, final consultant recommendations on broader first mile-last mile transit connections are to be presented to the study's technical advisory committee in November.

Also related, the RFTA board approved allocation of \$62,000 for deposit on additional bike-share docking stations and bicycles for use in Aspen and Basalt.

Initial comments on the bike-share study, from Steve and John, include:

- more time is needed to allow proper review and recommendations from full Transportation Commission, and discussion by city council, before RFTA commitments are made for a Glenwood Springs bike-share program
- costs for expanding bike-share (including to Glenwood Springs, and including potential cost-share implications for the city) are not yet presented; the report does note that RFTA funding, "...would be insufficient to fund 100% of the project costs..."
- first-priority emphasis for city expenditures should be on completing and repairing Glenwood Springs bicycling infrastructure; the RFTA consultant report affirms that, "...safe bike and pedestrian access to and from stations is essential..." and notes that, "...improved bike routes and infrastructure are needed as a precursor to system expansion...", but it is not clear whether the report anticipates those infrastructure improvements before or after a phase-one bike-share installation; improvements should be completed before any bike-share installations, or city expenses for them, are undertaken
- the consultant report appropriately notes that a Glenwood Springs bike-share system must be of sufficient size to support success; the proposed first phase appears to provide service both for destinations and for origins (that is, both

workplaces/bus stops and homes); more scrutiny of the proposed station locations is needed (John has outlined a first list of potential inadequacies in the Glenwood Springs station-location plan)

- additional methods of promoting bicycle travel should be thoroughly considered, either instead of bike-share or in addition to it—threshold list of bicycle infrastructure projects, partnerships with major employers and businesses, general promotion of travel by personal bicycles, more comprehensive first mile-last mile support network (including specialized transit/shuttles, variable work locations, *etc.*)

- color chosen for bike-share bicycles for use in Glenwood Springs is an important safety consideration; current standard *We-cycle* gray provides very low visibility, thus not suitable for the more streets-based bicycle travel necessary here



## City of Glenwood Springs Transportation Commission

### **MOVE Study Report and Transit Demand Management Model Guiding Principles and Recommendations**

February 2021

#### **I. Introduction.**

The Transportation Commission is charged with the power and duty to “investigate, study and report to the City Council any and all matters concerning transportation issues which directly affect the City,” and to “investigate, study and report to the City Council on... forms of funding to assist in meeting the transportation needs of the City.” Muni. Code. 020.020.030(i)(1) & (4).

The City of Glenwood Springs, in partnership with RFTA, approved \$300,000 in funding for the MOVE Study in 2019 (the “Study”). The Study took place largely over 2020. Recently City staff and RFTA officials requested the City to commit to more and further funding to do more outreach and marketing surrounding the Study’s signature feature – building support for massive infrastructure project related to transit in downtown Glenwood Springs. The City declined to approve the request.

Though many of the Study’s goals are laudable, the Transportation Commission envisions the current MOVE alternative BRT alignment options to be potential long term solutions rather than immediate, mandatory goals to be met within the next twenty years. Rather than commit the City to one or more multi-million dollar infrastructure projects, the Commission believes more cost efficient, common sense Traffic Demand Management (“TDM”) strategies can be much more easily developed, finalized and implemented. The Transportation Commission believes that effective TDM strategies may reduce peak-hour traffic congestion in the City so effectively that multi-million dollar projects (such as building a busway on the Rio Grande Corridor or widening Grand Avenue, e.g.) may never be necessary. Indeed, that is the goal and the hope.

**The Transportation Commission recommends Council direct the City Manager to task staff to work with the consultants and RFTA to use the remaining MOVE funds to finalize specific components of the study that seem to be most promising: namely the parking management study and recommendations, and recommendations**

**concerning optimizing RFTA's and the Ride GWS bus routes using existing transportation corridors.** At the same time, the Commission urges Council to direct the City Manager to ask the consultants to abandon efforts to finalize plans for either a dedicated busway on the Rio Grande Corridor, or an expanded Grand Avenue, at this time. The forecast benefit in travel time for buses under either MOVE preferred transit corridor alternative is predicted to be minimal when compared against the anticipated cost of building and maintaining either.

The Transportation Commission further recommends that Council charge the City's Transit Planning and Development Lead ("Transportation Director") to work directly with the Commission to implement the Study's recommendations, as part of a broader TDM program that the Commission recommends the City embark upon, as outlined below.

Glenwood Springs is uniquely positioned, and incentivized, to lead significant regional TDM efforts affecting the Roaring Fork and Colorado River valleys, being at the intersection of both. Simply put, there is no other community or entity capable of steering the destiny of the traffic challenges facing Glenwood Springs than the City, itself.

The Commission therefore urges this Council to rise to the challenge of leadership and learn from the example of its upvalley neighbors to embrace proven TDM measures to mitigate the effect of commuter traffic with common sense approaches that do not required millions of dollars. The Commission believes that if the City will choose to embrace this opportunity, and implement a TDM model program now, it will offer the potential to provide the City immediate traffic relief, cost savings and revenue generation, all while enhancing the small town character and quality of life in Glenwood Springs hopefully for years to come.

## **II. The Transportation Commission's Traffic Demand Management Model.**

### **A. Purpose and Theory.**

#### **Context – preservation of community values.**

Glenwood Springs is a small community split by a Federal Interstate, a State Highway, two railway corridors, and two rivers, surrounded by mountains that hem it in on all sides. It also benefits from a great deal of seasonal tourist travel in no small part because of its small-town character and charm. Preserving this "charm," including its walkable downtown core areas and magnificent riparian corridors, is critical to all residents and to commerce.

#### **Travel patterns.**

Traffic in Glenwood Springs is increasing, and the population of the surrounding areas is expected to grow. Commuter patterns for the past few decades consist of a predominately one-way flow of traffic from downvalley areas to, or through, Glenwood, heading south in the morning, with a similar commuting wave heading north in the afternoon; current assumptions (accurately or inaccurately) suggest those patterns will continue at increased volume and intensity absent effective TDM strategies being implemented.

Recent data suggest the commuting traffic coming to Glenwood each morning is split roughly equally between travelers ending their trips in Glenwood and those traveling beyond. Limited data and anecdotal observations suggest Glenwood residents primarily commute within town, with some heading south in the morning, returning north in the evening.

*Unique geography, unique opportunities.*

The narrow corridor and other unique features and travel patterns of Glenwood Springs require unique solutions. Historically, the City has employed few or no transportation demand management (TDM) measures, such as paid / permitted parking, managed lanes, transit-priority traffic signals, and tourist-targeted transit solutions (e.g., shuttle services).

Location and design of bus stops along Grand Avenue could be better optimized. Varying fare structures could improve transit appeal. Smart-card type payment systems could allow for origin-destination trip data collection.

Finally, the city's generally narrow profile lends itself to safe, convenient bicycle and pedestrian travel for many local trips—commuting, school, shopping, appointments and tourism. Enhancing opportunities and facilities for those trips is important to reducing growth in motor traffic volumes.

*Recent over-emphasis on high impact structural responses.*

Recent proposals for addressing traffic congestion in Glenwood Springs have focused primarily on solutions that promote big “supply-based” infrastructure projects. Pursuit of costly infrastructure, without first attempting lower-impact “demand-based” measures, risks needlessly threatening the charm and character that makes Glenwood such a great place to live and tourist attraction.

**B. Outline and Goals.**

In light of all the above, the City of Glenwood Springs Transportation Commission urges Council to adopt a graduated approach to managing mobility and reducing traffic congestion, first utilizing all available inexpensive, flexible, proven TDM techniques, and relegating expensive, high impact projects (like highway widening and/or river corridor bypass routes) to long term status.

It should be feasible for the City's Transit Planning and Development Lead (“Transit Coordinator”), with the support of the Transportation Commission, to pursue “low hanging fruit” options to help reduce traffic and improve quality for life for residents and tourists alike, before more expensive giant infrastructure projects are contemplated. The Transportation Commission therefore recommends the City empower the Transit Coordinator to pursue the following solutions, in the following step-by-step approach.

**Stage 1. Research & Design.**

*Empower Transit Coordinator, in collaboration with the Commission and City Council, to set TDM Target Traffic Levels, review available TDM techniques, and use historical data and consensus of local and regional partners to develop a roadmap for implementing TDM*



*strategies. (The Commission initially recommends TDM levels to be set so as to keep SH 82 volumes at 2019 levels (29,000 AADT at Exit 116 or 25,000 AADT S/O Blake)).*

- Take advantage of expertise and enthusiasm from Transportation Commission.
- Empower the Transit Coordinator to work with City and regional agencies to refine and implement transportation demand management elements, with assistance from Transportation Commission members and other local expertise.
- Investigate and outline a higher enforcement / paid parking program downtown as recommended by the MOVE study consultants (potential source of revenue for TDM programs).
- Collect and synthesize immediately available data on traffic flow / transit use to inform Stage 2 planning (no new studies before beginning to take action), including review of existing data from the Grand Avenue bridge replacement experience.
- Maintain communication and coordination with Pitkin County / Aspen transportation managers on their entities' demonstrated TDM successes and difficulties vis a vis past and ongoing TDM programs.
- Evaluate comparative values of investment in bike share, on-demand scooters, ebikes, *etc.* and expanded support for user-owned bicycling, including partnerships with major employers.
- Implement best practices technology for trip data collection for tracking trips, both transit and vehicular, looking forward.
- Establish criteria to measure success, and criteria that establish when to trigger various TDM intervention levels and tools (as outlined below).
- Compile comprehensive inventory of needed bicycle-pedestrian-trails improvements.

### **Stage 2. Implementation.**

*Implement measures to keep peak hour congestion and overall motor traffic within TDM Traffic Target levels.*

Level 1 Tools (using existing infrastructure).

- Implement MOVE study parking recommendations.
- Implement MOVE study bike/ped connection service recommendations (complete repairs & accelerate maintenance of bicycle-pedestrian infrastructure; fill route gaps; adopt policies and design adjustments to prioritize safer bicycling).

- Implement seasonal tourist-focused human powered travel services, including by collaborating with lodges to provide guests with bicycles, shuttles, and other non-car options, and to explore electric circulator trams.
- Implement an extended / modified BRT service to West Glenwood, including the possibility of a split “BRT- Express” / “BRT- GWS Local” model to best accommodate all commuters (whether travelling through or to GWS, and whether originating in GWS), to best facilitate and encourage commuters to park and ride at a West Glenwood transfer center (whether at its current location or at the Mall property).
- Implement a refined / modified / expanded Hogback service to more effectively accommodate West Garfield commuters, whether seeking to (1) transfer to BRT at West Glenwood or (2) commute to work centers in GWS.
- Implement MOVE study Ride GWS suggestions, by having RFTA take over the existing Ride GWS route on 6 & 24 to replace with Local service and re-direct the Ride GWS service route(s) and/or create an on-demand service option.
- Explore congestion management and incentive strategies such as peak hour managed lanes on east-bound I-70 at key points approaching Glenwood’s exits (e.g., HOV 2 + lanes on I-70 and exit 116).
- Collaborate with large local employers incentives and accommodations for commuting options (bicycling, walking, bus passes, car pooling, telecommuting, parking limitations, *etc.*).
- Implement an ongoing method for data collection, to inform changes to route-priorities/resources over time, to facilitate regular / ongoing monitoring of TDM goals.

#### Level 2 Tools (improving existing infrastructure).

- Revisit parking rates based on collected data.
- Revisit transit service levels / rates / offered incentives based on collected data.
- Explore and invest in synchronized/adaptive signal timing along Grand Ave. that accounts for different signal timing during commute hours, as well as bus prioritization interventions.
- Implement common sense rationalizations and improvements to bus stop locations along Grand Ave.
  - Consider relocating stops adjacent to a signal that the bus can control.
  - Activate Transit Signal Priority.
- Implement peak hour managed lanes on I-70 and consider adding peak hour managed lanes on Grand Ave / State Highway 82 southbound.

- Consider options for Midland Ave. use as an alternative busway route, for express buses, for certain times of day.
- Explore automated traffic calming measures to avoid cut through traffic in problem areas (automated speed bumps, e.g.).
- Expand and refine bicycle-pedestrian-trails infrastructure for improve safety, access, and convenience.

Level 3 Tools (modifying and improving existing infrastructure).

- Revisit parking rates based on collected data.
- Revisit transit service levels / rates / offered incentives based on collected data.
- Revisit conditions of peak hour managed lanes on I-70 and add peak hour managed lanes on Grand Ave / State Highway 82 southbound.
- Integrate enhanced bicycle-pedestrian-trails features into all new transportation construction projects.
- Build all Grand Ave. bus stations to be pull-off stations, adjacent to traffic signals with bus prioritization implemented.
- Implement developed options for Midland Ave.'s use as an express busway alternative route, for certain times of day.
- Implement automated traffic calming measures to avoid cut through traffic in problem areas (automated speed bumps, e.g.)

**Stage 3, Major New Infrastructure** (last resort).

*Consider major infrastructure investments to accommodate motor traffic if other TDM tools prove ineffective.*

- Consider reconfiguration of Grand Ave. to prioritize through-traffic at certain times of day.
- Consider constructing a BRT route on the Rio Grande corridor.

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