MEMORANDUM

To:	Pasadena City Council
From:	Pasadena Environmental Advisory Commission
Date:	May 9, 2023
Re:	Complete Streets Coalition Greenways Resolution

The Environmental Advisory Commission recommends that the City Council adopt the resolution drafted by the Pasadena Complete Streets Coalition, which directs City staff to implement an "All Ages and Abilities" standard on four north-south "Greenways" in Pasadena. The EAC determines that the resolution would shift more trips within the City to biking and walking and improve the safety of those trips. This would help the City meet its Climate Action Plan goals.

Background

The City's Plans for "Greenways"

Pasadena's Bicycle Transportation Action Plan ("BTAP"), adopted in 2015 as part of the Mobility Element of Pasadena's General Plan, set forth goals for creating an environment (1) where people circulate without a car; (2) that significantly increases the number of people who commute by bike; (3) that increases the number of people who use a bike for utilitarian trips, fitness and recreation; and (4) that provides business and economic benefits for the City. Pursuant to these goals, the BTAP designated nine dedicated bicycle facilities along with several "Roseways."[1] In 2021, to assist the City with the development of the BTAP, a feasibility study was conducted to outline proposed improvements on four north-south "Greenways" (El Molino Avenue, Wilson Avenue, Sierra Bonita Avenue, and Craig Avenue).[2] The study presented analysis of local traffic data that showed that the Greenways could be constructed while still allowing car traffic to move freely in the city, and it presented conceptual designs for each of the four Greenways.[3]

As of September 2022, the proposed Greenways have full funding allocated for their development. The estimated $12 million cost would be covered by funding from LA Metro for

[1] *See* City of Pasadena, Bicycle Transportation Action Plan (Aug. 17, 2015), available at https://www.cityofpasadena.net/transportation/wp-content/uploads/sites/20/Pasadena-Bike-Action-Plan-08-17-2015.pdf.
[2] *See* City of Pasadena, Greenways Feasibility Study 2021, available at https://www.cityofpasadena.net/transportation/community-mobility/greenways/.
[3] *Id.*

Mobility Improvement Projects (MIP) from Measure R, which was freed up after the 710 Freeway expansion was cancelled in 2017.[4]

The "All Ages and Abilities" Criteria

The National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) provides guidance that aims to create safe, comfortable, and low-stress bicycle and pedestrian networks that are accessible to people of all ages and abilities.[5] NACTO has set forth "All Ages and Abilities" criteria for selecting and implementing bike facilities. These criteria, which are detailed on NACTO's website (with extensive guidance on bikeway design for planners), are designed to ensure that bikeway designs meet the needs of a broad set of potential bicyclists, including children, seniors, and people with disabilities.

According to the Pasadena Complete Streets Coalition's analysis of the proposed Greenway designs in the 2021 feasibility study, those designs would not meet the "All Ages and Abilities" criteria promulgated by NACTO.[6] In order to meet the NACTO criteria, according to the Complete Streets Coalition, a number of changes to the designs would be needed, including:

- Reducing car speed by adding traffic calming features, including speed cushions;
- Reducing cut-through car traffic using design elements, including traffic diverters;
- Reducing speed limits to 20 miles per hour or lower on all routes; and
- Reducing the number of cars passing cyclists, including through the use of signage.

The Pasadena Complete Streets Coalition Resolution

The Complete Streets Coalition has drafted a resolution that directs City staff to design and construct the four proposed north-south "Greenways" following NACTO's "All Ages and Abilities" criteria for greenways, including criteria for limiting vehicle speeds and volumes. The resolution also directs the City Manager to set a timeline for construction of the four north-south Greenways, with a completion date before the end of 2028.

Adopting the Resolution Would Further the Goals of the Climate Action Plan

The EAC recommends that the Council adopt the resolution on Greenways drafted by the Complete Streets Coalition. Adopting the Complete Streets Coalition's resolution will further the goals of the City's Climate Action Plan.

The Climate Action Plan sets specific targets for reducing emissions by encouraging more trips by bike and walking.[7] Measure T-1 of the CAP ("Walking and Bicycling") focuses directly on lowering greenhouse gas emissions from transportation fuel consumption by reducing

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[4] *See* Keith Calayag, "City Council Approves 19 Proposed Projects To Replace $230.5 Million Gold Line Grade Separation Project at California Boulevard," *Pasadena Now*, Sep. 20, 2022, available at https://www.pasadenanow.com/main/city-council-approves-19-proposed-projects-to-replace-230-5-million-gold-line-grade-separation-project-at-california-boulevard.

[5] *See* National Association of City Transportation Officials, *Urban Bikeway Design Guide: Designing for All Ages and Abilities*, available at https://nacto.org/publication/urban-bikeway-design-guide/designing-ages-abilities-new/.

[6] *See* Pasadena Complete Streets Coalition, "Pasadena Greenways" report (April 19, 2023), at 8.

[7] *See* City of Pasadena, Climate Action Plan (Mar. 5, 2018) at 34, available at https://www.cityofpasadena.net/planning/wp-content/uploads/sites/30/Final-Pasadena-Climate-Action-Plan_3.5.2018.pdf?v=1683005763900.

vehicle miles traveled and improving traffic flow.[8] This in turn requires reducing automobile dependence by promoting walking, bicycling, and public transit as viable travel options. Pursuant to these goals, the CAP's Measure T-1 has three sub-measures that the CAP estimates could collectively reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 523 metric tons of CO_2 equivalent by 2035, compared to a 2009 baseline:[9]

- Measure T-1.1 calls for expanding Pasadena's bicycle and pedestrian network, including by implementing the BTAP and incorporating bikeway projects into new development.
- Measure T-1.2 calls for improving bicycle and pedestrian safety, including by making safety improvements as outlined in the BTAP and implementing traffic calming features to slow vehicle traffic and improve bicycle safety.
- Measure T-1.3 calls for encouraging bicycle and pedestrian travel, including by publicizing new bicycle and pedestrian facilities and network improvement projects.

Designing and constructing the proposed Greenways following the NACTO criteria will support these measures in the CAP.

First, following the NACTO criteria would support the goals of Measure T-1.1, which calls for expanding Pasadena's bicycle and pedestrian network by (among other things) implementing the BTAP. The BTAP sets forth several concrete objectives related to increasing the number of bicycle trips in Pasadena and the safety of those trips. Among other things, the BTAP calls for increasing the proportion of commute trips by bicycle in Pasadena to five percent, increasing the proportion of utilitarian trips by bicycle (to schools, stores, parks, and other destinations) to five percent, and reducing the bicycle-involved crash rate by 25 percent.[10] Designing and constructing the City's proposed north-south Greenways following the NACTO criteria would support these objectives by making those Greenways more accessible to a wider range of the City's residents and workers, allowing more residents and workers to choose bicycling or walking as modes of transportation.

Second, following the NACTO criteria would support the goals of Measure T-1.2, which calls for improving bicycle and pedestrian safety. Following the NACTO criteria would involve, among other things, implementing traffic calming features, reducing cut-through traffic using design elements, reducing speed limits, and reducing the number of cars passing cyclists. These features would make the four proposed Greenways safer for cyclists and pedestrians as compared to designing and constructing the Greenways without these features.

Finally, following the NACTO criteria would support Measure T-1.3, which calls for encouraging more bicycle and pedestrian travel. Designing the four proposed north-south Greenways in comportment with NACTO's "All Ages and Abilities" criteria will, by improving safety and reducing the speed and amount of car traffic, encourage more biking and walking trips by the broadest possible set of people, including children, seniors, and people with disabilities.

In short, following the NACTO criteria would—by improving the safety of bicyclists and pedestrians and by shifting more trips from motor vehicles to bicycles and walking—support the CAP's measures relating to sustainable transportation. In supporting these measures, following

[8] *Id.* at 45.
[9] *Id.* at 46.
[10] *See* City of Pasadena, Bicycle Transportation Action Plan, *supra* n. 1, at 4-5.

the NACTO criteria would help the City achieve the significant greenhouse gas emissions reductions described in the CAP.

The EAC recognizes that, in determining whether to adopt the Complete Streets Coalition's resolution, the Council must consider several other issues beyond the scope of this memorandum. These issues include whether or not the costs of following the NACTO criteria for the Greenways would exceed the allotted funding for the projects or would unreasonably delay completion of the projects. The EAC recommends that the Council undertake due consideration of these issues, but that, given the alignment between the NACTO criteria and the CAP's objectives, the Council prioritize following those criteria to the extent feasible within budgetary and timeline constraints.