STAFF REPORT

Date: **October 11, 2023**

To: **Mayor and City Council**

Thru: **Doug Thornley, City Manager**

Subject: **Staff Report (For Possible Action): Presentation, discussion, and possible acceptance of the Downtown Micromobility Network of Streets - Group 1 and request that the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) include these streets in the Regional Transportation Improvement Plan (RTIP). [Wards 1, 3 & 5]**

From: **Kerrie Koski, Director of Public Works and City Engineer**

Department: **Public Works**

Summary:

One of the Council's top Infrastructure priorities is Downtown safety, connectivity, and micromobility improvements. This includes improved walking, biking, and transit connectivity to make it safer and easier for the public to access more sustainable ways to visit downtown, the Truckee River, the University of Nevada, Reno, and surrounding local businesses while enhancing road safety for all users. In a little over a year, the Council prioritized a significant number of actions to support this goal. Below is a summary list of those items:

1. Approval of Virginia Street Placemaking Study.
2. Approval design contract for implementation of Virginia Street Placemaking - Phase 1.
3. Allocation of ARPA funding for Placemaking.
4. Acceptance of the Micromobility Pilot Study.
5. Acceptance of Interlocal Agreement with RTC for reimbursement for the purchase of Multi-Use Path Maintenance Equipment.
6. Acceptance of Move United Grant to Support Access to Reno's Adaptive Cycling Center.
7. Acceptance of Bird Scooter franchise agreement.
8. Approval of Interlocal agreements with the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) for maintenance & rehabilitation projects which included micromobilty.
9. Approval of City of Reno Capital Improvement program, which includes micromobility.
10. Acceptance of Grant from the Carson Truckee Water Conservancy District (CTWCD) for bank stabilization of the Truckee River under the Kuenzli Street bridge.

City & RTC staff have collaborated in numerous community engagement efforts during the Placemaking Study, Micromobility Pilot Study, and the Downtown Network Corridor Alternatives. A significant amount of community engagement has taken place, including in-person as well as online engagement through surveys (Table 1) to gather input on seven downtown corridors.

Table 1: Public Engagement Activities

Engagement Activity	**Metric**
Public feedback virtual/in-person events	5
Bicycle Community/Stakeholder meetings	4
Public Surveys – Placemaking, Pilot & MM Network	4 (4,500)
City of Reno Public Work-Property/Business owner meetings	26
Community Boards (NAB, RAAC, CMAC) Presentations *Notifications to all NABs for public engagement meetings*	4
Workshops - League of American Bicyclists, Dutch Cycling Embassy, NACTO	3

Staff is seeking direction to approve the Downtown Micromobility Network of Streets - Group 1 (Exhibit 1), which requires additional funding in the Regional Transportation Plan. Group 1 includes four downtown corridors that have the greatest support when evaluating three fundamental areas: transportation engineering (safety and transportation network needs of all users), community, and property/business owners. If approved, this plan will require authorization from the RTC to include these streets into the RTIP. The RTC could use $20 Million of Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funding that the RTC has available (Table 2). This recommendation supports the infrastructure and public safety priorities established by Council.

Exhibit 1

Table 2: Proposed Downtown Micromobility Network of Streets - Group 1

Corridor	Limits	Corridor Direction	Corridor Length	Estimated Project Cost	% Allocation
Virginia Street	9th Street to Liberty Street	North/South	1.01	$4.0M	20%
Lake St/Sinclair St/Evans Ave.	9th Street to Holcomb Avenue	North/South	1.30	$3.3M	16.5%
Vine Street	University Terrace to Riverside Drive	North/South	0.86	$2.9M	14.5%
5th Street	Keystone Avenue to Evans Avenue	East/West	0.98	$4.0M	20%
Contingency				$3.2M	20%
Design/Construction Admin				$2.6M	18%
Total			4.15	$20,000,000	100%

Alignment with Strategic Plan:
Infrastructure, Climate Change, and Environmental Sustainability – promoting micromodes reduces traffic congestion, and improves air quality

Public Safety – increasing separation between transportation modes reduces conflicts and promotes safety for all roadway users

Previous Council Action:
July 26, 2023 - Council accepted Virginia Street Placemaking Implementation, which included Microbmobility on Virginia Street.

May 10, 2023 - Council approved Regional Transportation Commission (RTC FY 2024 Interlocal Agreement authorizing projects and requested staff bring an amendment that included additional streets in the downtown micro-mobility network.

April 26, 2023 - Council accepted the Micromobilty Pilot Study.

July 20, 2022 – Council approved the Interlocal Cooperative Agreement for Reimbursement with the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) to construct the Micromobility Pilot Project on Fifth Street between Vine Street and Evans Avenue and Virginia Street between Fifth Street and Liberty Street, in an amount not to exceed $400,000. There is no recent Council action relevant to this item.

Background:
Adding Micromobility infrastructure advances strategic local and regional goals identified in the;

- City of Reno Strategic Plan,
- City of Reno Downtown Action Plan,
- City of Reno Sustainability and Climate Action Plan,
- 2050 Regional Transportation Plan

The 2050 Regional Transportation Plan identifies vehicle trip reduction as a critical step to address roadway congestion and improve air quality in the region. Micromobility infrastructure installation also addresses three goals of the City of Reno Strategic Plan. The public safety goal identifies a key strategy of increasing attention and efforts on traffic and pedestrian safety. The economic and community development goal identifies several strategies that micromobility projects seek to address with features that implement a quality-built environment including supporting integration of the University community into the downtown area; identifying infrastructure needs to promote

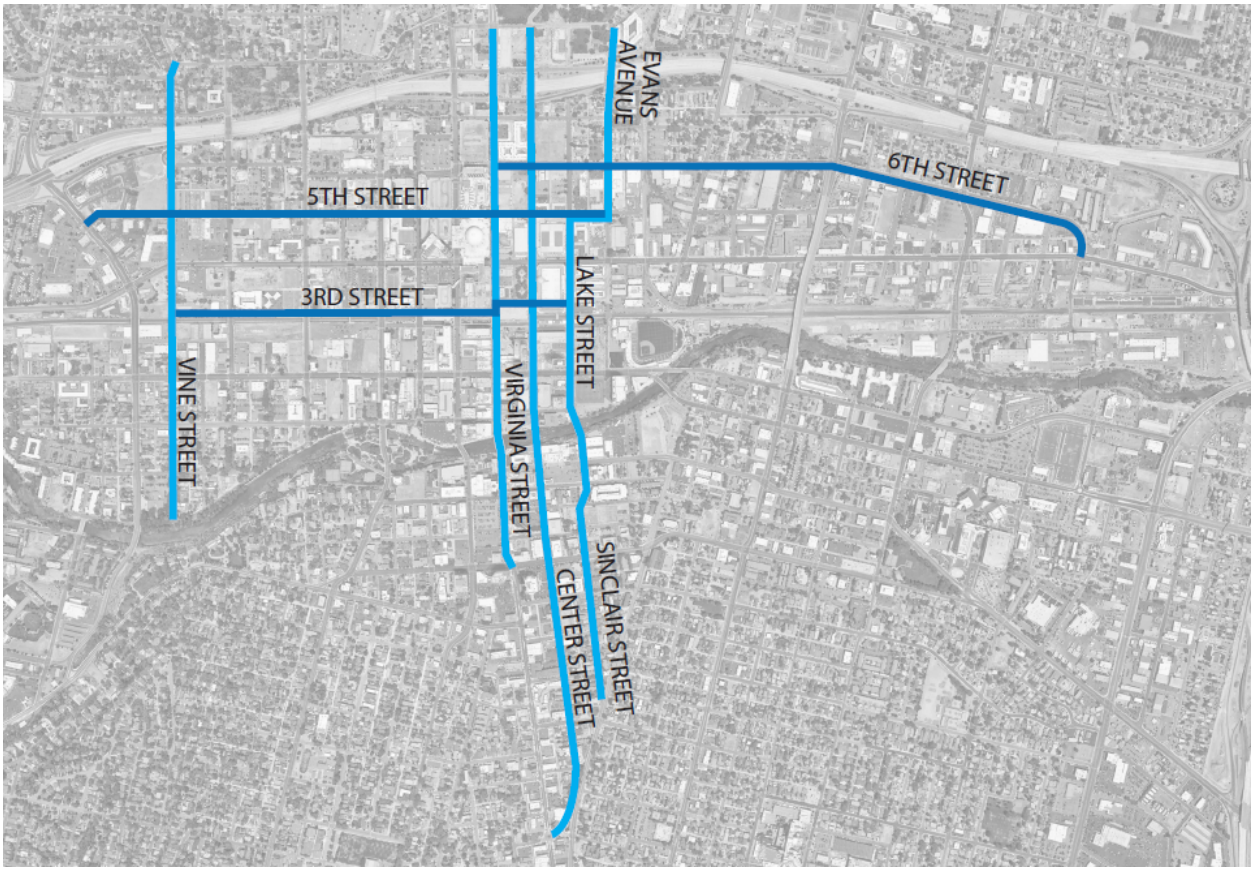
infill development, focusing on opportunities within the McCarran loop; and implementing the Downtown Action Plan. Finally, the installation of this infrastructure addresses strategies in the infrastructure, climate change, and environmental sustainability goal including collaborating regionally with entities in support of Reno's transportation infrastructure.

Micromobility refers to a range of small, lightweight vehicles such as bicycles or scooters, that typically operate at speeds less than 20 mph and are driven by the user. The City has limited space for micromobility within the urban core, and it is extremely expensive to acquire additional right of way. Facilitating a mode shift from single-occupant vehicles to micromodes can free up roadway space, which benefits all roadway users and the environment. Recent numbers from RTC show there are over a half million daily vehicle trips under five miles within the McCarran loop, which provides a significant opportunity to promote micromobility in our region. Micromodes have seen a significant increase in the last decade. In addition to being space-efficient, these modes offer a sustainable, healthy, and cost-efficient way to travel. The modes, especially in conjunction with shared services, can promote equity within our transportation network. They enhance transportation options and can increase access to public transportation.

National surveys indicate safety and comfort as the biggest obstacles to transitioning to a bicycle or scooter for daily transportation. These surveys have identified four major categories of cyclist based on their current level of interest in cycling including no way no how, interested but concerned, somewhat confident, and highly confident/strong and fearless. The largest portion of riders, 51 percent to 56 percent, fall into the "interested but concerned" category. To realize the greatest potential for mode shift, agencies need to target infrastructure for the stress tolerances of this large group. Stress imposed on a rider by the traffic environment can be mitigated by reducing the amount of interaction riders must have with vehicle traffic. One way of achieving this is by increasing the level of separation between different modes as adjacent traffic volumes and speeds increase (e.g., high vehicle volumes and speeds require greater separation from micromodes than low vehicle volumes and speeds). This provides a scalable approach for the implementation of micromode-specific infrastructure based on the context of the traffic environment.

Discussion:
Seven corridors in the Downtown area were evaluated through three fundamental areas that included; transportation engineering, community support, and business/property owner impacts with the goal of providing recommendations of corridors that ***provide a low-stress micromode facility that is complementary to high-vehicle capacity on downtown roadways***. The seven corridors are shown in Exhibit 2 below.

Exhibit 2



In an effort to provide clear information to inform the recommendation of these corridors, City staff, and RTC staff worked closely with a consultant working under contract for the RTC. The consultant prepared visual conceptual cross-sections, evaluated project impacts, and developed updated cost estimates for the listed corridors for use in public outreach, project prioritization, funding allocation, and further grant applications.

It should be noted that the RTC has prioritized 6th Street (Virginia Street to 4th Street) in the RTIP and submitted this corridor for a Safe Streets For All (SSFA) Grant. This would provide another east/west corridor approximately 1.2 miles long and estimated costs at $11 million. The 6th Street corridor is supported by transportation engineering, community and property/business but it is not included in the Group 1 recommendation because another funding plan is being pursued by the RTC.

Four downtown corridors have the greatest support when evaluating all three fundamental areas; ***transportation engineering (safety and network needs for all users), community input, and property/business owner impact.*** Virginia Street, Sinclair/Lake/Evans, Vine Street, 5th Street and 6th Street (Table 3).

<u>Transportation Engineering factors included</u>;

- Safety - vehicle speeds, vehicle volumes, width of the right-of-way, number of major driveway access conflicts, and visibility and expectations of vehicle operators, and conflicts with micromodes going with or against the direction of vehicle traffic.
- Network evaluation- maintaining a network with sufficient vehicle capacity through Downtown, especially with council priority of slowing speeds and adding micromobility on Virginia Street.
- Cost/benefit - When allocating a finite amount of resources to potential projects, what will yield the greatest community benefit? Adding micromobility facilities on lower stress streets can be done at a lower cost, resulting in a larger micromobility network. Adding micromobility facilities to high speed, high volume roads requires a much higher level of infrastructure to accomplish safely.

Community input included; public meetings, stakeholder meetings, and surveys. This input was requested to determine the community support for safe connected routes and which were most useful and encourage micromodes. The input showed that generally all routes were supported, some more than others.

Property/Business impacts included; onsite meetings with business owners/property owners to determine support for the removal of parking lanes, loading, and vehicle lanes. Generally, all businesses support expanding the micromobility downtown but not on Center Street/University Way and 3rd Street because of the loss of vehicle lanes, loading areas, and/or parking lanes. Many also expressed that Center Street/University Way has higher vehicle speeds and micromodes are difficult to see by vehicle drivers, as people who observe the traffic patterns on Center Street/University Way every day, they were concerns about safety especially at non-signalized intersections.

The 3rd Street corridor was the least supported by community input and is not supported by transportation engineers due to the limited amount of right-of-way and the large number of uncontrolled crossing of streets with high vehicle volumes. Additionally, some of the adjacent property owners are also not in support due to the loss of parking needed to accommodate the corridor.

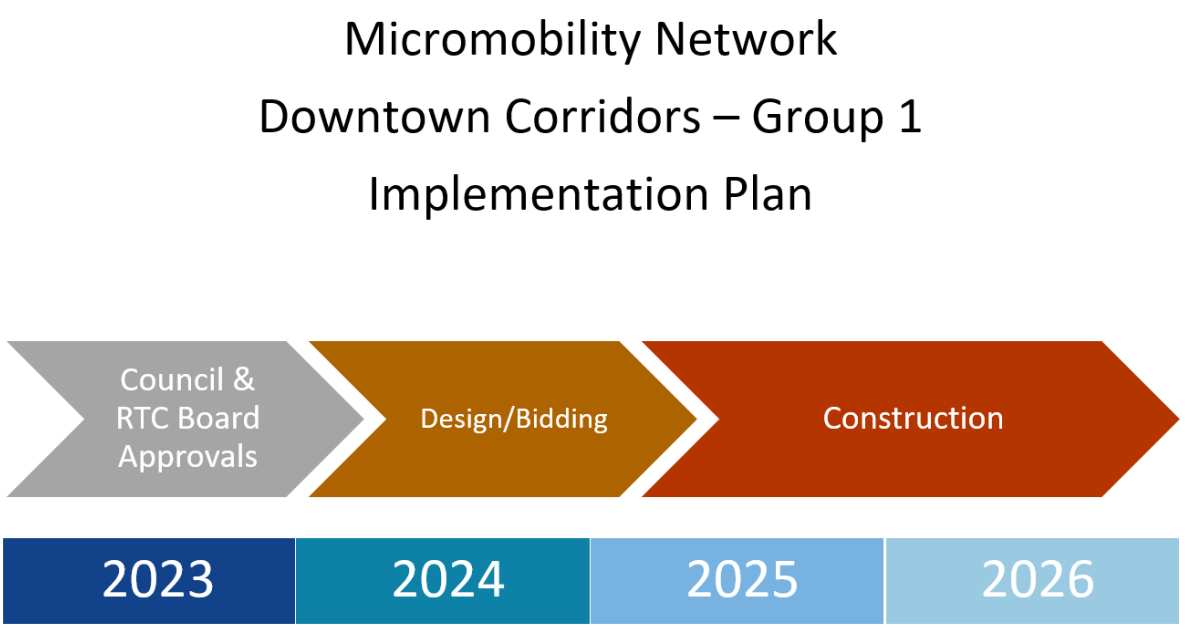
The Center Street/University Way is not supported by transportation engineers because of vehicle speeds, vehicle volumes, reduction of travel lanes, number of major driveway access conflicts, lack of visibility and expectations of vehicle operators, and intersection conflicts with micromodes traveling against the direction of vehicle traffic. This corridor is also not supported by the many of the property/business owners spoken to because of the loss of vehicle lanes, loading areas, and/or parking lanes. The community did support this corridor for a connected route.

Table 3

Micro-Mobility Corridor	Limits	Length (Miles)	Estimate Project Cost	Engineering	Business	Community
Sinclair/LakeStre Street/Evans Avenue	9th Street to Holcomb Ave.	1.3	$3.3 M	✓	✓	✓
Virginia Street	9th Street to Liberty Street	1.01	$4 M	✓	✓	✓ Support Through Virginia Street Placemaking Council Acceptance of Implementation Plan
University Way/Center Street	9th Street to Virginia Street	1.5	$11.1 M	✗	✗	✓
Vine Street	University Terrace to Riverside Drive	0.86	$2.9 M	✓	✓	✓
3rd Street	Vine Street to Lake Street	0.76	$4.4 M	✗	✗	✓
5th Street	Keystone Avenue to Evans Avenue	0.98	$4 M	✓	✓	✓
6th Street	Virginia Street to 4th Street	1.17	$11 M	Pending - Future Corridor Funded by Safe Streets For All Grant - More Business Outreach Needed		

If this item is approved, the next step for implementation for the Downtown Corridors – Group 1 is shown in Exhibit 3 below.

Exhibit 3



Financial Implications:
There are no financial implications with acceptance of the Downtown Micromobility Network of Streets - Group 1. As future projects are developed in detail, additional maintenance needs will be identified.

Legal Implications:
None.

Recommendation:
Staff recommends the Council accept the Downtown Micromobility Network of Streets - Group 1, and request the RTC include these streets in the Regional Transportation Improvement Plan (RTIP).

Proposed Motion:
Move to approve the Downtown Micromobility Network of Streets - Group 1 and request that the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) include these streets in the Regional Transportation Improvement Plan (RTIP).