

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

City Council



STAFF

Dillon Willett, Project Manager
Dana Hornkohl, Capital Projects Manager

SUBJECT

First Reading of Ordinance No. 132, 2025, Appropriating Prior Year Reserves and Authorizing Transfers of Appropriations for the Power Trail and Harmony Grade Separated Crossing Project and Related Art in Public Places.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this item is to appropriate Transportation Capital Expansion Fee (TCEF) funds to the Power Trail and Harmony Grade Separated Crossing project (Project). The funds will be used for construction services. If approved, this item will: 1) appropriate \$1,500,000 in TCEF funds to the Project; and 2) appropriate \$15,000 (1%) of the TCEF funds to the Art in Public Places (APP) program.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends adoption of the Ordinance on First Reading.

BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION

The Project will design and construct an underpass for the Power Trail where it intersects with Harmony Road. A separate project will construct trail connections north and south of Harmony Road, utilizing local funding, to connect the underpass to the existing ends of the Power Trail.

The current route for the Power Trail directs bicycles and pedestrians to use the City roadway network north and south of Harmony Road, and cross Harmony Road at-grade at McMurry Avenue. Several residential neighborhoods are south of Harmony Road near the Project location, and several destinations are north of Harmony Road including multiple schools, businesses, a park, and a golf course. The existing at-grade crossing has been the scene of at least eight crashes involving bicycles and pedestrians between 2020 and 2024. Three of these crashes involved serious injuries and one involved a fatal injury. The Project will complete the gap in the Power Trail at Harmony Road by providing a low stress connection and encouraging greater trail usage. Overall risk will be reduced at the at-grade crossing, by reducing the number of pedestrian and bicycle crossings at McMurray Avenue. This will reduce vehicle waiting times and air pollution from idling vehicles. The low stress connection is expected to accelerate the mode shift from motor vehicles to active modes.

The Project and various trail connections will complete the Power Trail from the Poudre River Corridor to the Big Thompson Corridor. The City is also working on design and construction of multiple projects to connect the Power Trail to local trail networks and residential communities in southeast Fort Collins. The

Siphon Pedestrian Overpass crossing the Union Pacific Railroad tracks south of Harmony Road will connect the Mail Creek Trail to the Power Trail. Mail Creek Trail connects Bacon Elementary, the school side park currently under construction, and several existing communities via an underpass of Timberline Road to the City's overall trail network, via the Power Trail. Additionally, several residential developments near the Power Trail are in design and construction, adding to future trail demand and potential diversion of vehicle trips. Finally, the Power Trail is regionally significant and identified in the North Front Range Metropolitan Planning Organization (NFRMPO) Regional Active Transportation Plan (RATP) adopted in July 2021. The Power Trail is part of the Front Range Trail (West), also known as Regional Active Transportation Corridor (RATC) No.7. The 2025 RATP is currently under development and RATC No.7 remains in the updated plan.

Staff began reviewing alternatives for a grade separated crossing in 2019. There are significant challenges for both an underpass (ground water and large utility vaults) as well as an overpass (long ramp distances and overhead power lines) at this crossing location. By 2022, after a rigorous evaluation of alternatives, an underpass perpendicular to Harmony Road with ramps running parallel to the roadway was a clear choice. This option allowed for a trail experience that was like many locations on the City's trail network. This configuration also allowed for large utility vaults to remain in place without relocation costs. While overpass options were evaluated, cost, maintenance, long ramps, and viewshed interruption were other reasons an underpass was chosen. Primary design began in 2023. Minimal easement or right-of-way acquisition was needed for the underpass option. Several trail easement acquisitions were needed for the trail connections north and south of the underpass. These acquisitions are complete. The underpass was designed in conjunction with the trail sections. To simplify property acquisition and allow the underpass to move forward while acquisition was underway, a construction package for the Project was compiled and advertised in May 2025.

Five bids were received in response to the invitation to bid. During the City's evaluation of the apparent low bid, staff in good faith deviated from established procedures. After consultation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), staff determined the misstep invalidated the bid process necessitating the bid to be cancelled. The City will be posting a new invitation to bid for the Project soon. The bid for the trail construction package will be advertised later this year or early in 2026.

The probable cost for the Project construction was \$10,100,000. All but one of the initial bids received was above the estimated construction cost. To facilitate moving Project construction forward without delay, considering the need to process a second invitation to bid, staff is requesting to include an additional \$1,500,000 in TCEF funds in the Project. If there are excess funds, they can be used toward construction of the trail connections north and south of the Project.

Grants make up a significant portion of the funding for the Project. The City was awarded \$800,000 in Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funds in 2016. Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program funds were awarded to the Project in 2022 (\$2,700,000) and 2023 (\$3,239,300).

CITY FINANCIAL IMPACTS

The following is a summary of the funding anticipated for design, right-of-way acquisition, and construction for the Power Trail and Harmony Grade Separated Crossing project.

Prior Appropriated or Transferred Funds	
Transportation Capital Expansion Fee (TOEF)	\$ 1,072,491
Transportation Services Fund (TSF)	\$ 880
Art in Public Places (APP)	\$ (10,733)
Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)	\$ 800,000
Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ)	\$ 5,939,300
Community Capital Improvement Program - Bike/Pedestrian Grade Separated Crossing (CCIP-GSC)	\$ 1,200,000
Community Capital Improvement Program - Pedestrian Sidewalk (CCIP-PS)	\$ 1,000,000
Conservation Trust Fund (CTF)	\$ 1,600,000
Total Prior Appropriation	\$ 11,601,938

Funds to be Appropriated	
Transportation Capital Expansion Fee (TOEF)	\$ 1,514,700
Transportation Services Fund (TSF)	\$ 300
Net Total Project Funds to be Appropriated	\$ 1,515,000
Proposed Transfer to Art in Public Places	\$ 15,000
Total Capital Project Funds	\$ 13,101,938

The total fund amount projected for this Project is \$13,101,938 composed of funds appropriated or transferred with prior actions and with this action.

BOARD / COMMISSION / COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

The Project has been presented to the committees, boards, and commissions listed below.

- Bicycle Advisory Committee/Active Modes Advisory Board: 09/15/2022, 10/26/2020, 12/11/2019, and 11/26/2018.
- Commission on Disabilities/Disability Advisory Board: 01/10/2019
- Transportation Board: 08/16/2023 (part of the Transportation Capital Projects Prioritization Study), 12/18/2019, and 11/21/2018
- Parks and Recreation Advisory Board: 12/05/2018

The Project has come before Council for previous appropriations in March/April 2024 and February 2025.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

Staff developed a Public Engagement Plan for the Project. Staff presented and discussed Project drawings and renderings at several public outreach events including Kinard Middle School FC Moves Outreach Event in Fall 2019; the 2023, 2024, and 2025 Transportation Project Fairs; and the Kruse Elementary School Bike to School Day Open House in May 2024. A City web page is regularly updated with Project information and upcoming milestones.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Vicinity Map
2. Renderings
3. Ordinance No. 132, 2025