

This is the start of the email chain. City staff and contractors had seen the letter to the editor and started an email chain amongst themselves.

*From: Angela Jo Woolcott <AngelaJoWoolcott@gbsm.com>
Sent: Monday, August 24, 2020 9:57 AM
To: Roberts, Tim <Tim.Roberts@coloradosprings.gov>; Frisbie, Todd <Todd.Frisbie@coloradosprings.gov>; Melchor, Kim <Kim.Melchor@coloradosprings.gov>
Cc: Ted.Ritschard <Ted.Ritschard@fhueng.com>; Ollie Johnson <olliejohnson@gbsm.com>; Annie.McFarland <Annie.McFarland@fhueng.com>
Subject: Over the weekend - activity in the Gazette
Morning Everyone!*

We are guessing by now that you read the following blurb in the Gazette over the weekend? We are familiar with C. from a few other projects in the area over the last several years. After speaking with Ted earlier this morning, we wanted to check with the three of you to see just how frequently the city is in communication with C. these days? Depending on what you say we might suggest a slightly different follow-up, but typically we would add him to our list of stakeholder interviews to hear directly from him during this analysis phase of the planning process. As you know, CONO is also on our list of stakeholder interviews and we are hoping to make them our first conversation so we can remind them how important their assistance is with sharing the link with all RNOs to participate in the survey. Once we hear from you, we can make an informed decision on how to strategically proceed – his plea for community input is a great opportunity for us to capitalize on.

*Thanks!
Angela*

*From: Melchor, Kim
To: Angela Jo Woolcott; Roberts, Tim; Frisbie, Todd
Cc: Ted.Ritschard; Ollie Johnson; Annie.McFarland
Subject: RE: Over the weekend - activity in the Gazette
Date: Monday, August 24, 2020 11:21:55 AM
Attachments: image001.png*

Angela and team I'm not familiar with C., but perhaps he has communicated with Traffic Engineering in the past. I think you're right, this is certainly an opportunity for our CAC (citizen advisory committee) members like CONO to tell the story of how ConnectCOS supports the goals in PlanCOS- which had a tremendous amount of public input from the general public. Perhaps we can work to emphasize the wide swath of public input a little more in future social media posts. Sounds like we'll circle around when we hear back from the rest of the group.

*Regards,
Kim*

What they don't know is that they are about to hear some very direct comments from Charles about what he thinks of their PlanCOS and ConnectCOS surveys.

From: Angela Jo Woolcott <AngelaJoWoolcott@gbsm.com>

Sent: Monday, August 31, 2020 4:50 PM

To: crollman@comcast.net

Cc: Melchor, Kim <Kim.Melchor@coloradosprings.gov>; Ted.Ritschard <Ted.Ritschard@fhueng.com>; Annie.McFarland <Annie.McFarland@fhueng.com>; Ollie Johnson

<olliejohnson@gbsm.com>; Sarah Leistico <sarahleistico@gbsm.com>

Subject: ConnectCOS follow-up

Hi C.,

I wanted to reach out on behalf of the ConnectCOS project team and say thank you for your interest in this visionary transportation planning effort as well as for encouraging other residents to get involved. I understand that you were actively involved in PlanCOS and therefore ought to be receiving current project email updates from our team. By now I am sure you've had the opportunity to complete the survey and provide (current condition) comments through the online map tool. Please remember that the survey will be open until September 11 and we greatly appreciate your ongoing support in sharing the survey with others. As a reminder, the project website has the latest project information and is a great resource, <https://coloradosprings.gov/connectcos>. If you have any questions, or would like to speak to someone on the project team, please don't hesitate to ask. We would be more than happy to meet with you.

Thanks again,

Angela Jo Woolcott

From: C.

Sent: Tuesday, September 1, 2020 10:33 AM

To: Angela Jo Woolcott <AngelaJoWoolcott@gbsm.com>

Cc: 'Melchor, Kim' <Kim.Melchor@coloradosprings.gov>; 'Ted.Ritschard' <Ted.Ritschard@fhueng.com>; 'Annie.McFarland' <Annie.McFarland@fhueng.com>; Ollie Johnson

<olliejohnson@gbsm.com>; Sarah Leistico <sarahleistico@gbsm.com>

Subject: RE: ConnectCOS follow-up

Hi Angela!

I appreciate the response.

My concern, in case you didn't notice it, is that PlanCOS seemed to have imbalanced participation from city residents. Organized bicycle groups participated in far greater numbers than ordinary citizens. This ultimately showed up in the objections to newly installed bike lanes by many who hadn't participated in PlanCOS. Those who didn't participate in PlanCOS should not be disenfranchised. To have the time and energy to participate is a luxury, not a given. My concern has been elevated by your recent email to me soliciting my response to your survey. It seemed clear that the survey was sent to prior participants of PlanCOS, without targeting residents, city wide. I saw no advertising of your survey in local media like the Gazette, and received no postcard from you in the mail. The audience for the survey was therefore not broad, but was the same group that produced PlanCOS. The result of that survey will contain the same biases as reflected in PlanCOS. Once your survey is completed, it will obviously be used

to promote changes to transportation within the city. If the survey is biased, those changes will also be biased. I expect to end up in arguments with bicycle advocates who will point at your survey as if it is representative of the city. No, it's not. During the flap about bike lanes, I and others proposed that the city perform a city-wide survey to ask what residents they want. The mayor made clear that he wasn't open to this. I'll repeat that proposal now. If you do a survey, broadly survey the whole city so the result will be credible. The current survey will not be credible because the participants are not representative of the city.

*Regards,
C.*

In a later email, Charles went on...

"I can tell you what triggered me on ConnectCOS. The bike lanes were very divisive for a bunch of reasons that we don't need to rehash. "PlanCOS" became symbolic of the bike lane issue in part because bike lane proponents argued in on-line discussions that those who hadn't participated in PlanCOS had no right to complain after it was implemented. It became apparent that organized bicycle enthusiasts had participated and likely dominated some of the discussions and planning. So, "PlanCOS" became a four-letter word that represents a small but active group forcing its will on the rest of us. It didn't help at all that the mayor turned a deaf ear to calls for a city-wide survey to determine the level of support or opposition to bike lanes among the citizens. Many of us got the impression, me included, that opposition to bike lanes was wide spread and that the city chose to ignore that fact. I am still ticked about this. The moniker "ConnectCOS" unfortunately is a strong reminder of "PlanCOS". So, it resurrects all the anger created by the bike lane fiasco. Déjà vu all over again. The big issue for me is the sense that ConnectCOS is repeating the mistakes of PlanCOS. Information about the ConnectCOS survey was distributed to a limited group, which I gather consisted primarily of the PlanCOS participants. I was on the PlanCOS email distribution list, so I got the ConnectCOS survey notice, but there was (until today) no notice in the Gazette and no postcard in the mail. This set off alarm bells that the same non-representative group that dominated PlanCOS would likely also dominate ConnectCOS. Then, the survey itself really seemed to promote "multimodal" transportation, so it biases the results that it will produce. What I'd like to see is a better written survey and an extraordinary effort made to solicit involvement from a broad swath of the city. (I know this is easy to say, but hard to accomplish.) Then when a plan is beginning to take shape, I'd like it to be sanity checked again with a broad swath of the city. It's more important to me that any plan has the real and measurable support of a majority of citizens than it is that I get my way on the issue of giving up motor vehicle lanes to bicyclists. If my friends and neighbors want something that I don't, I can live with that. But when I find that my friends and neighbors feel as I do, I tend to become vocal."

The city staff kept trying to arrange an in-person meeting. As best as we can tell, that did not happen. He continued with email communications. Here's some from his next email:

“As I lay in bed this morning, I revisited the bike lane issue. I was unable to think of anything positive about bicycles on streets if you’re driving a car. Bicycle users (for transportation rather than recreation) are clearly a very small portion of the population. So, my bet is that a vast majority of the population has either a neutral or negative view of trading motor vehicle lanes for bike lanes. It offends my sense of fairness that PlanCOS and its bike lanes was the product of an obviously atypical group of proponents, but was never ratified by the population in general. That the mayor refused to do a survey or non-binding referendum on the subject still sticks in my craw.”

As the email chain continues, it appears that Charles and Tim Roberts talked earlier. Charles refers to their conversation:

From: C.

Sent: Thursday, September 10, 2020 3:33 PM

To: Ted.Ritschard <Ted.Ritschard@fhueng.com>; Angela Jo Woolcott <angelajowoolcott@gbsm.com>

Cc: 'Melchor, Kim' <Kim.Melchor@coloradosprings.gov>; Annie.McFarland <Annie.McFarland@fhueng.com>; Ollie Johnson <olliejohnson@gbsm.com>; Sarah Leistico

<sarahleistico@gbsm.com>; 'Roberts, Tim' <Tim.Roberts@coloradosprings.gov>

Subject: RE: ConnectCOS follow-up

Ted,

Tim and I spent some time on the phone this afternoon. I am reassured, although I remain concerned that participation by a relatively small group of active and engaged bicycle enthusiasts will overwhelm the likely anemic response to your survey from the vast majority of the city population. I don't have a solution to this in my pocket, but if a repeat of the prior acrimony over bike lanes is to be avoided it'll be important to somehow figure out (and factor in) what is or isn't acceptable to typical citizens who are focused on doing the laundry and tucking in the kids. I am happy to meet with you, if still desired.

C.

The offer to sit down and talk continues from contractors:

From: Ted.Ritschard <Ted.Ritschard@fhueng.com>

Sent: Thursday, September 10, 2020 3:52 PM

To: C.

Cc: 'Roberts, Tim' <Tim.Roberts@coloradosprings.gov>

Subject: RE: ConnectCOS follow-up

C.,

I appreciate that you took the time to talk with Tim. He and I have worked together for some time. I believe we share a similar philosophy, but he might correct me I also agree that vocal groups can overwhelm the process and we are doing our best to publicize the process, reach out to a broad group, and welcome everyone. If you have ideas to reach more people, please share with us. We would still be happy to meet if you have questions or comments on our approach. Just let me know.

Thanks,
Ted

Charles responds. He's a good guy and is looking for solutions- not just an opportunity to complain:

*From: C.
To: "Ted.Ritschard"
Cc: Roberts, Tim
Subject: RE: ConnectCOS follow-up
Date: Thursday, September 10, 2020 4:57:09 PM
I presume we need to reach more people, but without spending much money? No one tool is likely to work. It'll take a mix. Traffic and policing go hand in hand. The Neighborhood Watch program is pretty broad and has access to a lot of people through its block captains. I wonder if CSPD would be ok with advocating that block captains encourage neighbors to participate? This would be within the domain for Neighborhood Watch because travel safety is no doubt an important part of your goal. I see a ConnectCOS post in Nextdoor.com that targeted 'Subscribers of City of Colorado Springs', it got 19 likes which is ok but not great. I wonder how many people fall into that category? How about posting in Nextdoor under the 'Safety' category? I see 108 likes in response to a post from CDPHE, and 57 likes in response to a CSPD post concerning the burn ban. Transportation counts in the safety category in my book. Can we afford a few ads in the Gazette? (Not that the Gazette reach is broad enough) Does ConnectCOS have a Facebook presence? Nothing popped up when I searched FB for 'ConnectCOS'. How about putting ConnectCOS survey links on a number of city web pages? Public Works, Planning and Development, Mountain Metro, Community Development, CSFD, CSPD, GoCOS.
C.*

Contractors and traffic and planning staff plan how to respond:

*From: Roberts, Tim
To: Ted.Ritschard
Cc: Frisbie, Todd
Subject: FW: Survey
Date: Monday, September 21, 2020 5:35:00 PM
Hi Ted,
I think I'll let him know tomorrow that we received his e-mail and are working on a response. Maybe we can discuss this on Wednesday? Todd said the meeting went well last Friday. Good job!!
Tim Roberts*

Charles has more to say, though. He's a smart guy- not a fool:

*From: C.
Sent: Monday, September 21, 2020 9:05 AM
To: 'Ted.Ritschard'; Roberts, Tim
Cc: Easton, Travis W.*

Subject: Survey

Tim and Ted,

I'm doing a little introspection before I make any more of a public fool of myself. As Tim said, numbers matter. I'm trying to understand the implication of the stats and I'm trying to figure out exactly what I think and why. The biggest objection I had (and have) to the prior PlanCOS process and resulting bike lanes was my perception that bicycle enthusiasts in the city had a disproportionate voice in that process. That the mayor appeared to block any independent survey, poll or referendum to accurately measure support for bike lanes only served to confirm my annoyance. Your ConnectCOS survey will presumably be used to set policy and goals for the next twenty years. For that reason, it's especially important to me that the ConnectCOS survey be an accurate and unbiased reflection of the city as a whole, and not unduly influenced by specific groups. If I understand correctly, Tim told me in a phone conversation last week that 300 out of 1200 responses to your survey appeared to be from bicycle enthusiasts. My response at the time was that this doesn't surprise me. What I didn't say at the time is that it seems to confirm my concern. As I remember it, the bicycle club that showed up in force at the Gazette's "Battle of the Bike Lanes" town hall in 2019 was estimated to comprise a few hundred people. The fact that they all showed up wearing identical t-shirts, and that many showed up very early to take prominent seats in the audience, illustrates their monolithic organization, energy, and determination to make themselves highly and disproportionately visible. It's a safe bet that the same group has also participated en masse in your survey. My suspicion is that this explains many of the 300 bicycle enthusiast responses that you received. While 300 out of 1200 does not represent a majority, having a unified block of 25% in an otherwise (presumably) diverse group represents a lot of power to affect policy. If this pattern applies in general to contributors to ConnectCOS, there is a lot for me to be worried about. The 2017 census tables (this is data that I have readily at hand) estimated that 0.5% of total commuters in Colorado Springs were using bicycles. To have representation by bicycle enthusiasts in your survey run at 25% is simply not representative of the city. It appears to be way out of whack. If 25% of the city population used bicycles for transportation (as opposed to recreation), one would expect to see parked bikes all over the city. Yet I seldom see more than one or two. I don't see them in significant numbers at the grocery store, at Tinseltown, at University Village, in church parking lots, at my doctor's office, and so on. The only credible and impartial measure of support for bike lanes that I've seen was the postcard campaign sent to residents in the Research Parkway area. The result of that poll was so negative that Research Parkway was returned to its state prior to the bike lane addition. To be clear, I am not unconditionally opposed to bike lanes. One that Tim is planning for Parkview has my full support because it helps calm Parkview without a dreaded midway stop sign on a steep slope. However, I am opposed to setting policy based on survey that is faulty because it didn't reach a broad swath of the city population. Garbage in/garbage out applies. I think a survey that obtains only 1200 participants out of a population of almost 700,000 is easily manipulated, and way too small to be trustworthy. So, how do you guys interpret the 300/1200 statistic? Is there reason for me to not be concerned?

C.

The City staff and contractors don't know how to respond and this is the last Charles related email in the CORA:

*From: Ted.Ritschard
To: Roberts, Tim
Cc: Frisbie, Todd
Subject: RE: [EXT] FW: Survey
Date: Tuesday, September 22, 2020 7:23:01 AM*

Yes, let's talk about Mr. [C.] Rollman. I was not sure how to respond.

*Ted Ritschard, PE
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