



Item: 2014 Community Transportation Enhancement Program Projects

From: Andrew Finch, Senior Transportation Planner, Planning and Community Development

Initiated By: Planning and Community Development Department

Presented By: Craig Raymond, Director of Planning and Community Development

Action Requested: Approve list of Community Transportation Enhancement Program projects

Suggested Motion:

1. Commissioner moves:

“I move that the City Commission (approve/deny) the attached list of Community Transportation Enhancement Program projects.”

2. Mayor calls for a second, discussion, public comment, and calls the vote.

Recommendation: Staff recommends the City Commission approve the attached list of projects (Exhibit 1) to forward to the Montana Department of Transportation for approval and use of Community Transportation Enhancement Program (CTEP) funds.

Background: In 2012, the City Commission adopted Resolution 9954, outlining the process by which the City would consider and approve projects for use of Community Transportation Enhancement Program funds. The funds are Federal transportation dollars, made available through the Montana Department of Transportation for expenditure on certain eligible activities that enhance our local transportation network.

Resolution 9954 directed the Planning & Community Development Department to identify and recommend CTEP projects for approval by the City Commission. The resolution further directed staff to recommend projects that would implement the City Commission’s adopted plans and leverage scarce local dollars.

The Montana Department of Transportation is eliminating its CTEP program, but will allow local governments to expend their remaining allocations. However, all of Great Falls’ remaining allocations must be committed to projects. Approving the recommended projects will ensure the City will not lose approximately \$636,900 in funding.

Staff Project Identification Process: To identify and forward projects to the City Commission, staff used a number of criteria:

- 1) Availability of matching funds. One of the key, driving factors in project identification was to secure a commitment for matching dollars. Because the Planning & Community Development Department has no dedicated funding source for CTEP projects, staff worked with organizations outside the City to identify sources for matching dollars.
- 2) Conformance with City plans. The City's adopted plans provide guidance for projects or improvements to support community goals and objectives. Staff reviewed current plans to identify possible projects, as a way to fund identified community needs where there may be no other likely funding source.
- 3) Community redevelopment areas. Staff looked at areas of the community that are actively or likely to redevelop. Expenditure of CTEP dollars can often be used to supplement, augment, or encourage private redevelopment of blighted or underutilized areas.
- 4) Partnerships. Projects that have support beyond City Departments show community interest in the improvement.
- 5) Infrastructure deficiencies. Staff looked at committed improvements to public infrastructure, and gave preference to areas that were deficient, had no recent or pending improvements, or had incomplete infrastructure.

Project Overviews:

Project 1: Trail ADA Improvements

Scope: This project combines a number of City Park and Trail improvements into one larger project.

1) Bay Drive Trailhead Parking Lot Paving & ADA Connector Trail

The Bay Drive Trail parking lot and path to the trail are currently gravel and choked with weeds that take staff time to spray and string trim. The lot is too small for cars to turn around in so they are backing out onto Bay Drive. The neighbors at the Electric Co-op have complained about public use of their parking lots. This project would make it more comfortable and attractive to use the lot. It will be easier to plow in the winter and require less staff time and chemicals to maintain that lot and connecting path once they are paved.

<i>Cost:</i> Total estimated project cost:	\$56,300
Total CTEP amount (86.58%)	\$48,745
Total Match amount (13.42%)	\$ 7,555

2) West Bank Trailhead

The well used West Bank Park Trailhead parking area was built with a substandard base course and is surfaced with a thin coat of asphalt millings. It lacks ADA Parking and ADA access to the Trail, as well as a formal bike/pedestrian connection to 3rd St. NW. This project will correct those shortcomings from the base course on up and provide curb, gutter and sidewalk to transform and prepare the lot for long-term service.

<i>Cost:</i> Total estimated project cost:	\$80,826
Total CTEP amount (86.58%)	\$69,979
Total Match amount (13.42%)	\$10,847

3) West Bank Trail ADA Toilet

The West Bank Trail vault toilet is not wheelchair accessible. It was donated to the city two decades ago by Giant Springs State Park when they converted to ADA accessible units. At the time it seemed

much better than no unit at all. The goal here is to remove the old fiberglass unit and install a low-maintenance precast concrete unit at that location and add a paved path between the new vault toilet and the trail. Park & Recreation services the current vault toilet and would continue to service the precast concrete replacement at this location.

<i>Cost:</i> Total estimated project cost:	\$18,500
Total CTEP amount (86.58%)	\$16,017
Total Match amount (13.42%)	\$ 2,483

Match: The entire match amount will be provided by the non-profit Recreational Trails, Inc. (RTI), or through TIF Funding, if available.

PROJECT 1 – TOTAL COSTS

Total estimated project costs:	\$155,626
Total CTEP amount (86.58%)	\$134,741
Total Match amount (13.42%)	\$ 20,885

Compliance with City's Adopted Plans: The project helps to implement the following Goal and related Policies from the City's Growth Policy:

GOAL

Phy 4.4 Increase mobility and the access of citizens to transportation alternatives throughout the City.

POLICIES:

Phy 4.4.1 Improve the ability of residents to travel from home to work, schools, shopping, employment centers and activity centers.

Phy 4.4.4 Create a built environment that promotes easy access to safe walking, biking and other opportunities for physical activity.

Phy 4.4.7 Provide sufficient resources to construct and maintain the trails and related facilities recommended in the City's Comprehensive Park and Recreation Master Plan and the Bikeway Facilities Plan.

Need: Access by community members and visitors with mobility limitations is important to the health and vitality of our City. These projects will provide access to River's Edge Trail by those that need a hard surface to travel, and bring these portions of the City's trail system into compliance with Federal ADA requirements.

Concurrence: The project is supported by the City Park & Recreation Department; City Planning & Community Development Department; and, Recreational Trails, Inc.

Project 2: River Drive/Veterans Memorial Roadside Improvements

Scope: The proposed project would landscape an area adjacent to the Montana Veteran's Memorial and construct a small overlook/viewpoint at the Black Eagle Falls interpretive sign pullout along River Drive.

<i>Cost:</i> Total estimated project cost:	\$80,000
Total CTEP amount (86.58%)	\$69,264
Total Match amount (13.42%)	\$ 5,905

The 13.42% match dollars would be provided by the Montana Veteran's Memorial Association and through community volunteer donations.

Compliance with City's Adopted Plans: The City's Missouri River Urban Corridor Plan recognizes the scenic value of the River. It states, "The value of scenic views to the community is recognized in the Growth Policy, and many citizens treasure scenic drives such as River Drive along the Missouri River through Elks Riverside Park, and near the dams. Scenic views should be preserved and enhanced..." The Growth Policy further reflects this Goal.

Need: Many visitors to the area view both the Veterans Memorial and the Black Eagle Dam overlook. The Memorial site is largely developed, but has one area left un-landscaped. This project will complete and complement the landscaping investments that the Memorial, the Ball Park and the City have done on the rest of the site.

The informal overlook accommodates many visitors, but creates an unsafe situation for vehicles and pedestrians alike. Many viewers cross the guardrail for a better view of Black Eagle Falls. This project will create a safe viewpoint, with interpretive signs and a railing, to keep visitors safe and create a more memorable visitor experience.

Concurrence: The project is supported by the Montana Veterans Memorial, The Great Falls Baseball Club, City Park & Recreation Department, and the Montana Department of Transportation.

Project 3: Downtown Streetscape Expansion

Scope: The proposed project would supplement an existing, approved CTEP grant with an additional allocation, bringing the total project amount to \$1,000,000. It would implement streetscape improvements in priority areas, as identified in the recent Downtown Access Circulation and Streetscape Study.

<i>Cost:</i>	Total additional project cost:	\$500,000
	Total CTEP amount (86.58%)	\$432,900
	Total Match amount (13.42%)	\$ 67,100

The 13.42% match dollars would be provided by the Business Improvement District.

Compliance with City's Adopted Plans: Streetscape upgrades and extension of the current sidewalk amenities is recommended both in the Downtown Master Plan (pg. 54, Objective 5) and the follow-up Downtown Access, Circulation and Streetscape Plan (an implementation element of the Downtown Master Plan – pages 63-100). Additionally, the 2005 Growth Policy recommends upgrades (pg. 23, Transportation Element).

Need: The Downtown Streetscape is incomplete. Central Avenue has amenities that end at 7th Street, the current end of the BID district boundary. 1st Ave. N. and the streets between Central and 1st Ave. N. have amenities, as do portions of 2nd Ave. N. However, much of the core of the downtown lacks a coherent streetscape. As well, a number of blocks have sidewalks and curbs in poor condition. To foster downtown re-development and private investment, an expanded streetscape will repair deteriorated sidewalks, install shade trees and pedestrian scale lighting – which will build a more attractive visitor and shopper experience, as well as a more inviting place for downtown workers, residents and employers.

Concurrence: The project is supported by the Business Improvement District.

Fiscal Impact: Approval of the recommended projects would allow the City of Great Falls to maximize the use of its Federal CTEP dollars on projects that are targeted toward stated City goals and priorities, and to construct needed projects that might not otherwise be built due to scarcity of funds.

Although there are many unmet needs and potential projects for use of these funds, staff prioritized projects that had non-city sources of match, and that could be constructed within the MDT's 1-year timeframe for final CTEP projects.

Alternatives: The City Commission could approve only selected projects, or none of the projects. However, this would result in the loss of up to \$636,900 in CTEP funds.

Attachments:

- A. Exhibit 1 - 2014 recommended projects
- B. Resolution 9954
- C. December 8, 2011 Memorandum
- D. Project Map

2014 RECOMENDED LIST OF CTEP PROJECTS - CITY OF GREAT FALLS			\$636,905 for allocation
PROJECT DESCRIPTION	PROJECT \$	MATCH \$	CTEP \$
ADA TRAIL PROJECTS Pave trailhead parking & provide ADA access to trail; install ADA accessible trailside restroom in West Bank Park	\$155,626	\$20,891	\$134,741
RIVER DRIVE/VETERANS MEMORIAL ROADSIDE IMPROVEMENTS Install landscaping near Veterans Memorial and construct viewpoint overlook of Black Eagle Dam & Falls	\$80,000	\$10,736	\$69,264
DOWNTOWN STREETScape Construct additional streetscape improvements in priority areas, as identified in the Downtown Study.	\$500,000	\$67,100	\$432,900
TOTALS:			\$636,905
REMAINING FUNDS TO BE ALLOCATED:			\$0

RESOLUTION 9954

A RESOLUTION BY THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE
CITY OF GREAT FALLS, MONTANA, TO REDEFINE THE
COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENT
PROGRAM PROJECT SELECTION PROCESS

* * * * *

WHEREAS, the City of Great Falls receives an annual allocation of Federal Transportation funds through the Montana Department of Transportation's Community Transportation Enhancement Program (CTEP) for expenditure on eligible projects; and,

WHEREAS, Resolution 8535, passed by the City Commission on March 16, 1993, authorized the Great Falls City-County Planning Board to serve as the Transportation Enhancement Advisory Committee to the City Commission, to solicit and recommend eligible projects for use of CTEP allocations; and,

WHEREAS, the City-County Planning Board was dissolved in 2005, and certain duties were assumed by the Great Falls Planning Advisory Board; and,

WHEREAS, the Great Falls Planning & Community Development Department has recently reviewed the current CTEP project selection process for effectiveness, and concluded a modified selection process would be beneficial to the City of Great Falls; and,

WHEREAS, a more focused, targeted and expedited project selection process will allow the City of Great Falls to select projects that implement the City Commission's adopted plans and leverage scarce local dollars; and,

WHEREAS, this Resolution supersedes Resolution 8535.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF GREAT FALLS, MONTANA,

That the Great Falls Planning & Community Development Department shall identify and recommend CTEP projects for approval by the City Commission.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the City Commission of the City of Great Falls, Montana, on this 7th day of February, 2012.

Michael J. Winters, Mayor

ATTEST:

Lisa Kunz, City Clerk

(SEAL OF CITY)

APPROVED FOR LEGAL CONTENT:

James W. Santoro, City Attorney

Memorandum



TO: Mayor & City Commissioners

FROM: Mike Haynes, AICP Planning and Community Development Department Director

DATE: December 8, 2011

SUBJECT: Proposed CTEP Administration Changes

The Community Transportation Enhancement Program (CTEP) is a federal-aid program administered by the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT). Currently, 10% of MDT's federal surface transportation funds are devoted to the CTEP program with MDT allocating CTEP funds to Montana cities and counties on a per capita basis. The CTEP program is designed to fund "a variety of (eligible) non-traditional projects" that are "designed to strengthen the cultural, aesthetic, and environmental aspects" of Montana's transportation system.

CTEP funds have been used here over the years for many different community projects including construction of trails, sidewalks and handicap ramps, and the installation of streetscape, lighting and landscaping projects. CTEP funds will pay for 86.58% of a project with a 13.42% match required from the public/private partner making the application. Past projects have been matched by groups such as Recreational Trails Inc., the Downtown BID, the Park Trust Fund and the Public Works Department.

The State CTEP program allows local governments to establish their own procedures for project selection, requiring only that there be a public involvement component. Since 1993 the City of Great Falls has employed a process where any eligible agencies, groups or units of government submit applications for projects proposed to use CTEP funds to the Planning Division. The Planning Advisory Board then reviews, ranks and makes recommendations to the City Commission on use of those funds and the City Commission takes final action on funding decisions. Planning staff then implements and administers CTEP-funded projects including soliciting bids, project management, budgeting, accounting, and ensuring adherence to federal, state and local regulations.

We have reviewed CTEP procedures in the light of the city's renewed commitment to creating and updating community plans (Missouri River Corridor Plan, Downtown Master Plan, Transportation Plan, Growth Policy, etc.) and the reality of lower revenues flowing to the city from federal and state sources. Based on that review we recommend making procedural changes to the selection process (while the process for implementation would remain unchanged).

We propose a more focused, targeted and expedited CTEP process where Planning staff reviews community plans for projects eligible for CTEP funding, prioritizes projects based on community goals, and identifies and coordinates with potential partners. Planning staff would then bring forward those recommendations to the City Commission, providing opportunity for public comment.

As an example, this new process would allow the city together with downtown stakeholders to establish a logical, strategic and cost-effective plan for expanding the downtown streetscape using CTEP funds, and work over time towards that shared vision. This is in contrast to funding an uncoordinated and inefficient expansion of streetscape driven by individual property owners or groups seeking funding for streetscape improvements one block at a time.

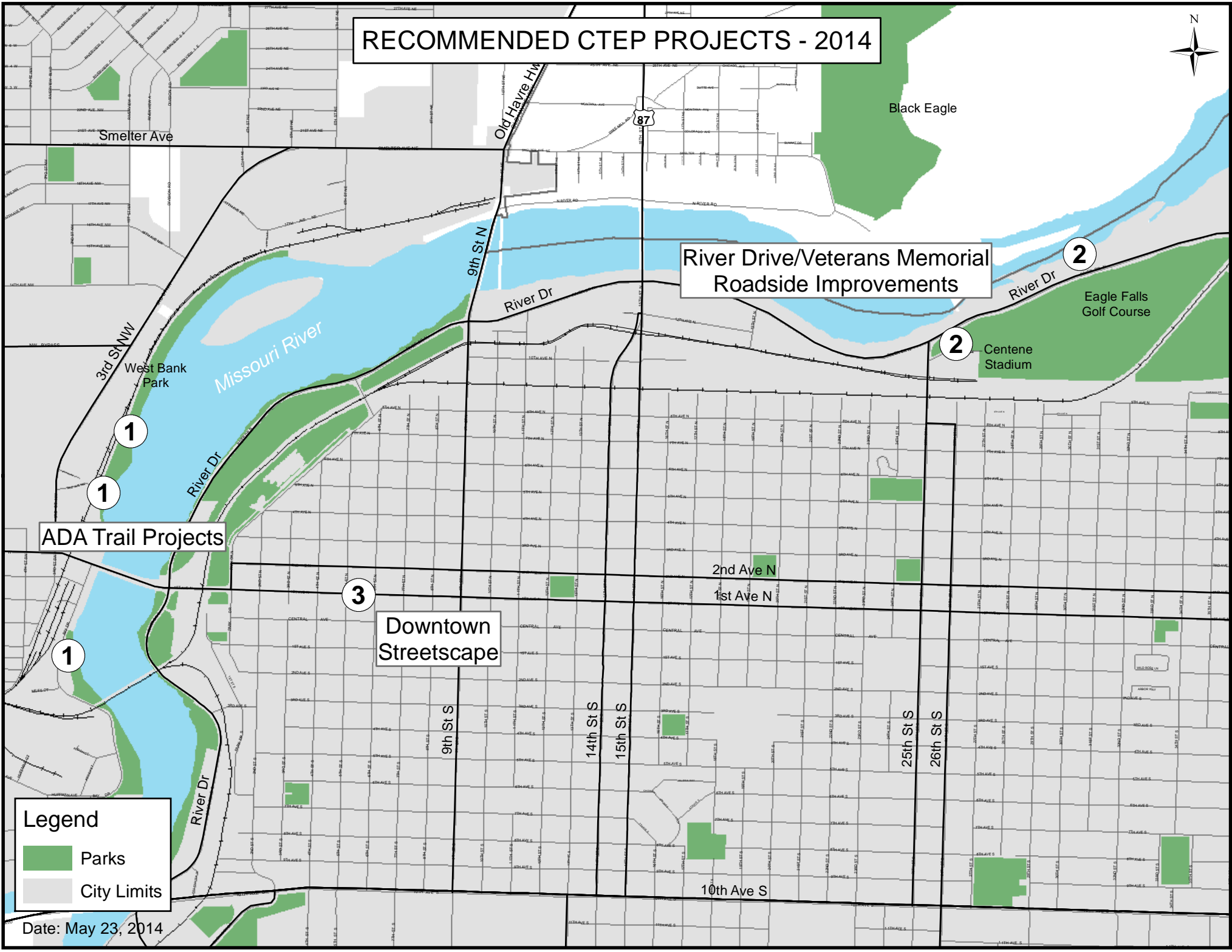
We believe the benefits of this revised process are many and include:

- Accelerating the CTEP project selection process;
- Implementing projects that the community has identified as key through local planning efforts in a strategic way;
- Focusing on projects that have greatest benefit to the city;
- Spurring redevelopment and private investment; and
- Leveraging scarce local dollars with federal funds.

Also, with so much uncertainty about federal and state funding we want to ensure that we never give up current or future funding because we have not allocated existing funds in a timely manner.

Planning staff recommends the City Commission consider a Resolution to modify the CTEP process to direct funding to projects that more closely aligned to adopted community plans. We invite your comments or questions before we bring forward such a Resolution for your consideration.

RECOMMENDED CTEP PROJECTS - 2014





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1
ADA Trail Projects

2
2
River Drive/Veterans Memorial
Roadside Improvements

3
Downtown
Streetscape

Legend

-  Parks
-  City Limits

Date: May 23, 2014