



Memorandum

TO: Mayor and City Council

THROUGH: Kenneth Johnstone, Community Development Director

FROM: Sarah Showalter, Planner II

DATE: November 9, 2012 (for November 19 Study Session)

SUBJECT: 38th Avenue Corridor Plan Implementation

The 38th Avenue Corridor Plan establishes a long-term vision for the revitalization of 38th Avenue between Sheridan and Wadsworth into a vibrant, mixed-use Main Street. The purpose of this memo and the study session on November 19 is to update Council on the implementation steps that have been completed since the plan's adoption one year ago in October 2011

This memo is structured as follows:

- (1) Overview of Accomplished Implementation Items
- (2) Next Steps for Implementation
- (3) Project Assessment

Overview of Accomplished Implementation Items

The Corridor Plan's implementation matrix calls for many Phase I implementation items to be achieved in 2011-2012. The following Phase I action items, organized by guiding principle in the plan, have been completed in the past year:

Guiding Principle: Organization

Implementation Item (from Corridor Plan)	Completion
Hold an open house for businesses on the corridor to provide information on business resources and recruit for the Leadership Committee.	Business open house held in December with over 30 attendees
Create a 38 th Avenue Leadership Committee to meet on a regular basis and address relevant implementation tasks, such as marketing and events.	The Leadership Committee was formed in January 2012 and continues to meet regularly. It has over 40 members including business owners, property owners, and residents.
Develop 38 th Avenue newsletter to get out the word about the Leadership Committee, events, new businesses, etc.	The City's Economic Development Department has issued three 38 th Avenue newsletters in 2012.

Guiding Principle: Identity

Implementation Item (from Corridor Plan)	Completion
Develop a branding/marketing strategy and tagline to provide an identity from which the corridor can capitalize.	The Leadership Committee, with assistance from WR2020 and funding from the City, adopted a new brand and marketing strategy for the Ridge at 38 in summer of 2012.
Host a 38 th Corridor Grand Opening Ceremony.	The City, WR2020, and the Leadership Committee successfully hosted “Celebrate Ridge at 38” on September 22 with approximately 2,500 in attendance.
Develop a Facebook page and website devoted to the corridor that highlights existing businesses, events, etc.	WR2020 completed as part of branding effort in summer 2012.

Guiding Principle: Vitality

Implementation Item (from Corridor Plan)	Completion
Pursue a City-initiated rezoning of the corridor to the Mixed Use-Neighborhood (MU-N) zone district.	City Council approved a City-initiated rezoning in October 2012.
Work with Jefferson County School District to consider utilizing the large green and parking lot in front of the school for special events.	The City successfully used the green for the corridor grand opening and is modifying an existing Joint Use Agreement with the school district to include use of the school property for events in coming years.

Guiding Principle: Mobility

Implementation Item (from Corridor Plan)	Completion
Complete retrofit road diet, which entails restriping the street to three lanes and making pedestrian-friendly improvements including new planters, amenity zones (pop-up cafes), and access enhancements.	Construction completed in late May through mid July 2012.

There are additional achievements that relate to the major implementation items above which have also been accomplished in the last year, including:

- (1) Promoting the Ridge at 38 brand with new banners on the corridor. Approximately 50 pedestrian banners with the new logo/brand were added to the street on the City’s pedestrian poles between Sheridan and Harlan as well as some Xcel-owned poles between Harlan and Wadsworth.
- (2) Ridge at 38 businesses donated money to sponsor art panels, which were added to the concrete planters on the street.

- (3) New bicycle racks for bike parking (one at Dairy Queen and one in front of Right Coast Pizza) were added thanks to sponsorship by Wheat Ridge Cyclery.

Next Steps for Implementation

The Corridor Plan contains an implementation matrix with implementation steps phased over four different time frames: Phase I: 2011-2012; Phase II: 2013-2014; Phase III: 2015-2020; Phase IV: 2021-2030. There are several steps, such as developing a civic center on the corridor, that are recognized to take many years and the vision is not anticipated to be realized for twenty years.

While much has been accomplished in the past year, there are still many steps that lie ahead to successfully implement the plan. A summary of the priority implementation steps that City staff, Wheat Ridge 2020, and the Leadership Committee will be working on in the upcoming year follows.

- (1) **Marketing/Branding Implementation:** the Leadership Committee has formed a Marketing Subcommittee that will meet regularly in the upcoming year to oversee implementation of the marketing plan, which will include promotional materials and joint marketing efforts for businesses on the corridor. The City's Economic Development manager is part of this subcommittee and will work with them on promotional materials such as a business directory/map.
- (2) **Events:** part of the marketing strategy is to host regular events along the corridor throughout the year. Events highlight businesses on the street and build community capital. The Leadership Committee also has an Events Subcommittee which will help to plan events for the following year. Planning is already underway, in conjunction with the City, for a holiday event on Sunday, December 2nd. The event will include the City's traditional tree lighting ceremony along with kids activities, carolers, a hayride, and artisan vendors in local business storefronts.
- (3) **Sign design guidelines:** the Corridor Plan and the Marketing Plan both recommend developing guidelines to improve the look of signage on the corridor. The plan is for City staff and the Leadership Committee, with the input of a professional graphic designer and businesses on the street, to develop guidelines that create a quality environment that promote the brand.
- (4) **Improved pedestrian crossings:** the Corridor Plan calls for improving pedestrian crossings along the corridor for enhanced safety. In 2013, Public Works will be installing flashing pedestrian crossing signs at two crosswalks that currently do not have traffic lights and have been reported to have low compliance in terms of vehicles slowing for pedestrians to cross. These two locations are at Benton Street and Upham Street.

Other implementation action items prioritized in the Corridor Plan for Phase I and II include considering a charter amendment to remove the density restriction of 21 units per acre on 38th Avenue and modifying height restrictions to allow 3-4 story mixed use buildings, funding a streetscape design study to develop a comprehensive design for more permanent streetscape improvements, considering an ordinance to require snow removal in commercial areas, and conducting a financial study for the recommendation to create a Civic Center on 38th Avenue. These items are not directly funded for City staff's work plan in 2013 but are important implementation steps to keep in mind for the upcoming 1-2 years.

Project Assessment

The 38th Avenue Corridor Plan calls for an 18-24 month evaluation period for the retrofit road diet that was completed in July 2012. The physical changes to the street are part of a larger revitalization strategy that is just being implemented in an effort to make Ridge at 38 the community's Main Street. Each component of the revitalization is designed to work in concert with the other and 1.5 – 2 years is the absolute minimum amount of time needed to effectively assess a variety of metrics that can easily fluctuate by season or month. Moreover, it takes time for economic impacts to be seen. Months and even years may be necessary for businesses and developers to learn about 38th Avenue, find a property to lease or buy, and obtain financing before a physical investment is witnessed on the corridor. As established in the Corridor Plan, the long term vision for a vibrant, mixed-use main street will likely take up to twenty years to realize.

On June 2012 staff shared with City Council, via memo, a list of metrics that will be evaluated over the 24 month evaluation period (from July 2012-July 2014) in an effort to assess the success of the project. These metrics include:

- **Traffic volume** on 38th Avenue and on parallel streets – the counts on parallel streets (including 44th Avenue, 41st Avenue, 35th Avenue, and 32nd Avenue) will help measure potential diversion.
- **Pedestrian and bicycle counts** on 38th Avenue.
- **Travel time** for 38th Avenue as well as diversion routes – utilizing GPS software, staff collected baseline data this spring to measure how long it takes to travel 38th Avenue as well as potential diversion routes. This will be repeated to assess how the street reconfiguration has impacted travel times.
- **Traffic speed** on 38th Avenue – staff has baseline data on the speed of cars prior to the road diet (5-10 mph over the speed limit) and will be able to compare that to speeds after the street reconfiguration.
- **Accidents** on 38th Avenue – with data from the Police Department, staff will compare accident rates on the corridor over time, pre- and post-road diet
- **Emergency vehicle access** – all emergency responders will give feedback on the project. In particular, the Police Department and Wheat Ridge Fire have data on average response times that they will be able to track over time. Wheat Ridge Fire indicated that their response times vary throughout the year due to factors such as weather so at least 1-2 years of data is needed to effectively compare pre- and post-road diet times.
- **Vacancy rates** on 38th Avenue – utilizing data from CoStar, the City will monitor the number of vacancies on the street over time.
- **Building permit** and **business license** activity – staff will utilize records on permits and licenses to track new investment and new businesses on the corridor.
- **Sales revenue** – utilizing sales tax data, staff will track sales revenue on the corridor over time.

There are other more subjective metrics that will also factor into the assessment, such as feedback from businesses, residents, and the 38th Avenue Leadership Committee. The City is attempting to track this over time through tools such as the City's Citizen Survey, which this year asked questions about how often citizens frequent businesses on 38th Avenue and whether they think of the street as the community's main street.

As part of the assessment effort, staff started this fall to collect data points for some of the metrics above, namely traffic counts, traffic speed, travel time, accidents, and sales tax revenue. It is important to note that these numbers were collected just three months after the street was restriped in late May/early June 2012 and just two months since the amenities were installed in July 2012. This is too short of a timeframe to draw any conclusions. Staff from Public Works evaluated the traffic and accident data and did not notice any major fluctuations that raise concerns. A summary of the findings is attached.

Attachments:

- (1) Traffic counts and travel speed
- (2) Travel time
- (3) Accidents
- (4) Summary of sales tax revenue

CITY OF WHEAT RIDGE

TRAFFIC VOLUME AND SPEED DATA MAP

Legend

 CityBoundary

 2% Change in traffic volume

 2% Change in traffic speed



1 in = 600 ft

Horizontal Coordinate System:
NAD83/92 State Plane, Colorado Central Zone 0502

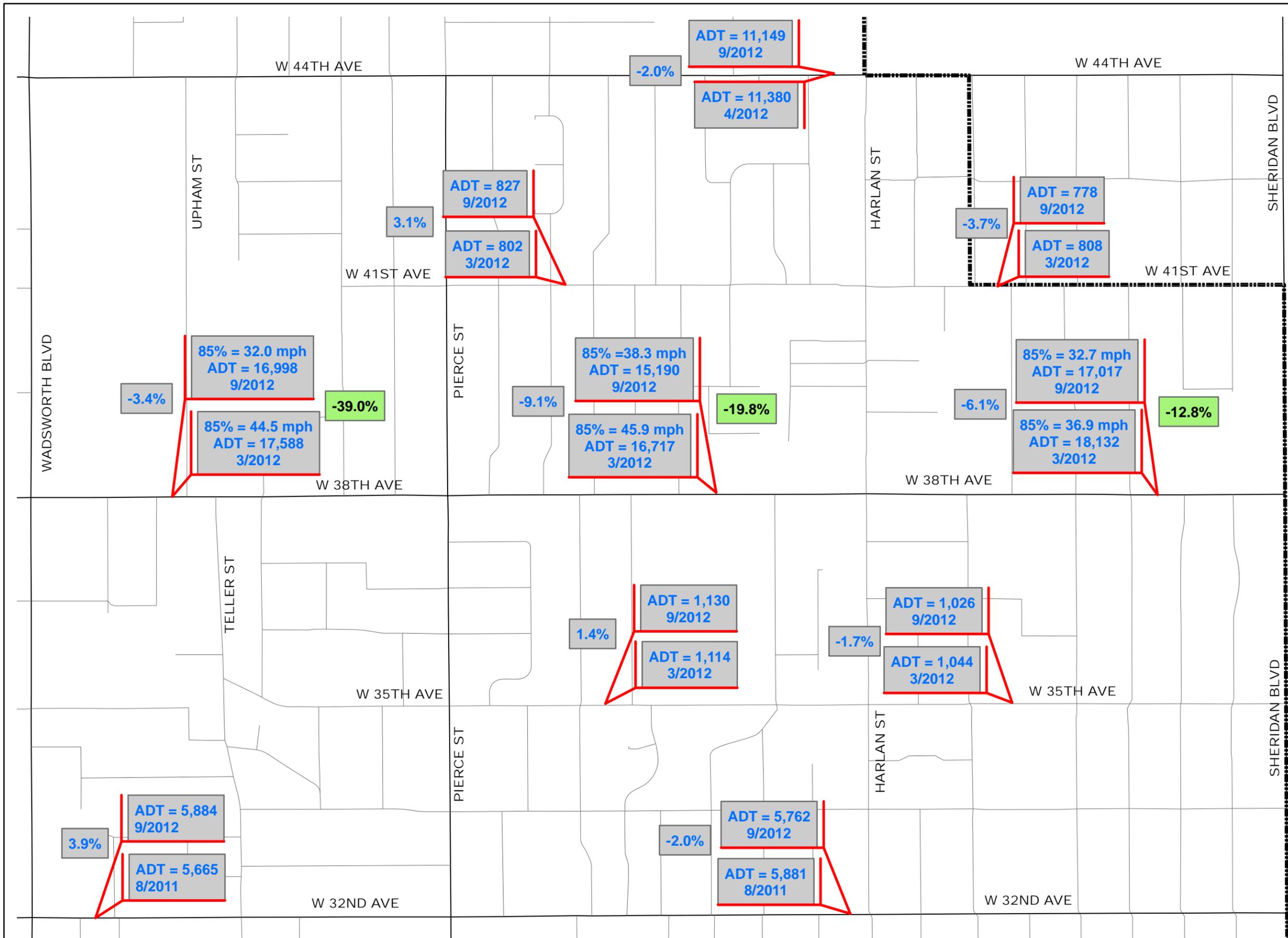
Vertical Datum: NAVD88

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UPDATED: 11/9/12



38th Avenue, Sheridan to Wadsworth

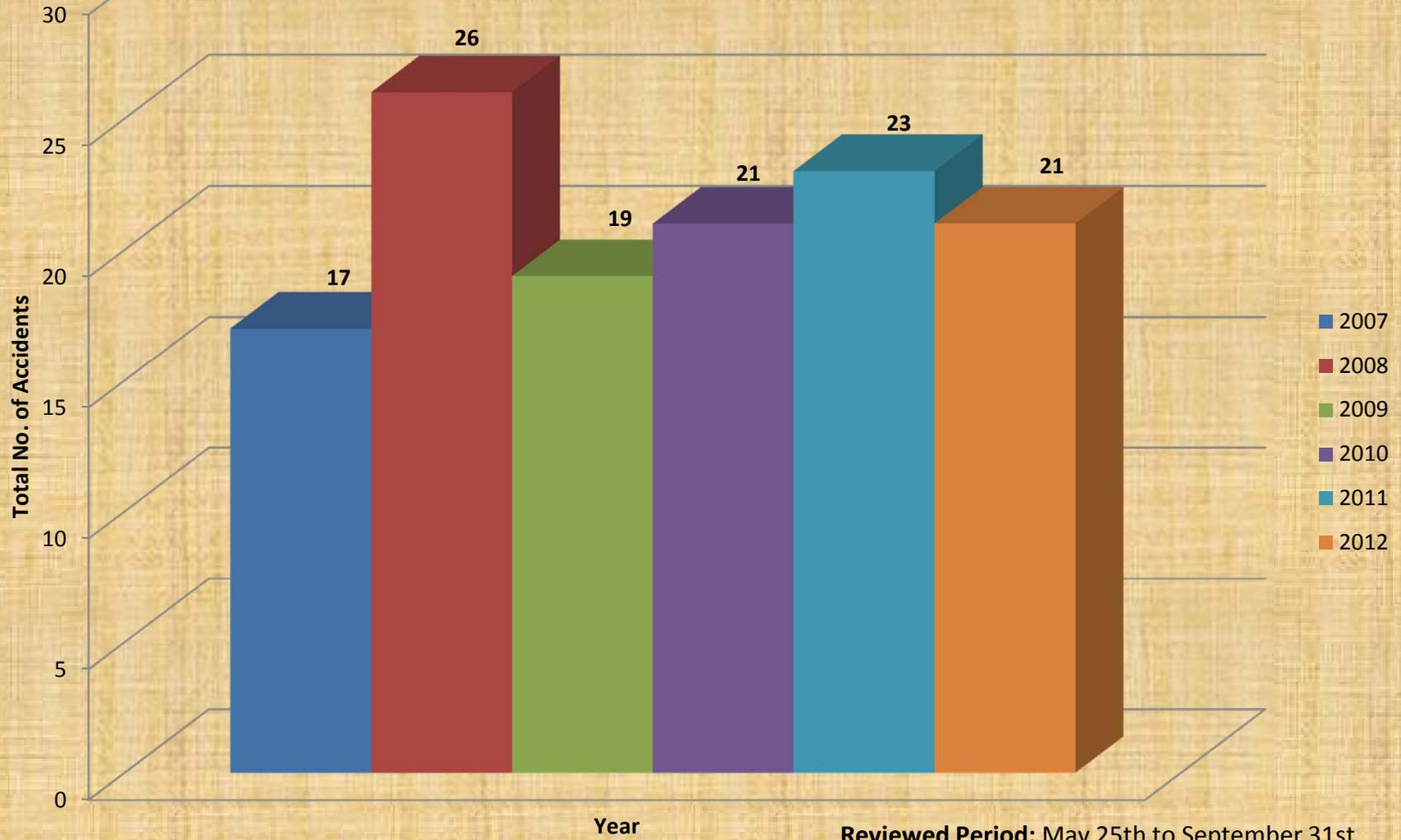
Travel Time Study

Time Period	Direction	Time of day	April 2012	Sept 2012	Change
			Seconds		
AM	Westbound	Rush Hour	222	220	-2
	Westbound	School Arrival		236	
	Eastbound	Rush Hour	180	181	1
	Eastbound	School Arrival		269	
PM	Westbound	Rush Hour	281	289	8
	Westbound	School Release	237	254	17
	Eastbound	Rush Hour	219	261	42
	Eastbound	School Release	332	256	-76

AM Rush Hour 7-8 AM
 PM Rush Hour 5-6 PM
 School Arrival 9 AM
 School Release 4 PM

 Experience about 110 seconds of delay to cross the intersection at Sheridan Blvd

38th Avenue Lane Configuration Project Traffic Accidents Review



Reviewed Period: May 25th to September 31st
Study Segment: Wadsworth to Sheridan

Executive Summary

Sales Tax Data/ 38th Avenue

From 2009-2012, for the months of May through September, the City received sales tax revenues for *The Ridge at 38* as identified from Upham Street to Sheridan Boulevard. Overall, the corridor's sales tax revenues have increased each year since 2009. In 2012, sales tax revenues increased 7.4% from 2011, 7.8% from 2010 and 10.9% over 2009.

Sales tax revenues for businesses from Upham to Newland, identified as the Main Street District of 38th Avenue Corridor Plan (The Plan) adopted by City Council in October, 2011, indicates an increase in 2012 over the previous 3-years. Business in this corridor is up almost 11.6% over 2011, 6.5% compared to 2010 and over 9% since 2009.

Tax revenues from Newland to Benton; which incorporates the Neighborhood and a portion of the Commercial Districts of The Plan saw a slight decrease of .15% compared to 2011, but are up when compared to 2010 (2.4%) and 2009 (4.9%).

Sales tax revenues from Benton to Sheridan also witnessed a growth in sales tax generation in 2012. Located within The Plan's Commercial District, this section of 38th Avenue had a 7.0% increase when compared to 2011, an 8.2% increase over 2010 and an 11.4% increase compared to 2009.

Overall sales tax generation along *The Ridge at 38* broken down into industry segments reflect that in 2012 the Dining, Food and Grocery, Liquor, and Gaming segment of the corridor has increased steadily from 2009 to present with a 6.6% increase over 2011. When analyzed for business activity that has been in operation for all 4-years of the data collected, the revenues also steadily increased each year since 2009. Compared to 2011, comparable sales tax has increased 4.6% in 2012.

Auto related services had a slight increase of 2.7% in 2012 compared to 2011. The 2012 revenues are 3.7% below the revenues generated in 2010 and down 16.1% compared to 2009. When the data is compared to those auto related businesses that have operated along the corridor for the 4-year time period, sales tax increased 3.2% in 2012 compared to 2011; decreased 4.5% compared to 2010 and decreased 10.4% compared to 2009.

Miscellaneous retail sales indicate an increase in 2012 compared to the three previous years. The data shows that 2012 is 9.4% higher compared to 2011, 4.6% over 2010 and 11.1% higher than 2009. When those businesses that have been open for 4-years are extrapolated from the data, sales are up over the previous 3-years by 1.7% compared to 2011, 5.3% over 2010 and 8.6% than 2009.