FOCUS GROUP MEMBERS:
Joe Hanrahan, Jenny Hill, Jean Aaro, Karen Anesi, Scott Langley

Present on behalf of city staff were Courtney Child, Devin King, and Scott Shine.

INTRODUCTION
Mr. King and Mr. Shine introduced the focus group, its purpose, and the agenda for today’s meeting. This focus group is a diverse group of community members who use the intersection in different ways. Mr. King will provide the group with the feedback from the May 23rd public meeting the city received about the project.

BACKGROUND: DATA CONTEXT
Mr. King provided the focus group with crash data for the intersection, injury data, which directions have the highest level of traffic flow, and the bicycle and pedestrian count data from 2021.

GROUP QUESTIONS
Mr. King asked the group the following questions and stated he would leave it open to the group to discuss.

1. What is the purpose of this intersection?

The group agreed this is a connector intersection. It is a regional connector intersection that connects people to the retail stores. It is important as the communities in Edgemont and off of Florida Road grow. The intersection funnels people, dog walkers, and bike traffic. This intersection does not include Animas River Trail users or others who use sidewalk who may not use intersection because of danger, meaning there is more connectivity that happens through this part of town that is not happening at this intersection. One group member mentioned how there are not a lot of ways to get off 3rd and not a lot of alternatives from 15th.

Another group member mentioned that people use this intersection to get to south Durango and the airport. The only other connecting alternatives are to go up to college mesa or 32nd St. This intersection is the ideal way to get downtown off of Florida.

A group member disagreed and said there are multiple ways to get across town and other major arterial roads to travel on. The intersection is only one way to get through town, but people who live on 15th and 3rd, this is the only way out of their neighborhood. For some it’s their only connector.

2. How do you use this intersection?
One group member said they use it to drive their kids to preschool at 8/8:30 a.m. They have to wait 2-3 minutes waiting at intersections (turning left on 3rd), but on the way home it is easier because it is a right turn. In the winter, Florida is icy and people will slide into bike lane.

One member mentioned they heard a lot of people avoid turning left onto 15th and will go anywhere else in town to avoid it. One reason for this is because they don’t like waiting on traffic, nor holding up other traffic.

One group member who lives on the college mesa said they do not use the intersection to go home. They try to only use the intersection when going right on Florida. They will avoid this intersection at certain times of day, like end of school.

Another group member said they use it when walking their dog. While they tend to stay on the sidewalk and only cross the street at the 2nd Ave. and 15th St intersection, they will cross the intersection in winter because the sidewalk is impassable due to snow. They travel through the intersection at 9/9:30 a.m. and 6 p.m. noting this may not be the busiest times and 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. seem to have heavier traffic.

Another group member said they use the intersection to turn right onto 15th (off Florida) and will go left on 2nd, right on 14th St, left on Camino Del Rio if they are heading out of town. They will turn left on 3rd for downtown to access parking. Do not use it to go south of town, but rather they will go to college mesa. If they are going to the library they will go straight through and head right on Main Ave.

3. What needs or issues do you see with this intersection?

The group agreed vehicle drivers need to go slow and look going through the intersection. There is a need to make it safer for drivers going straight (right on 15th). Four of the group members agreed there is a need to eliminate left hand turn in all directions. Some group members mentioned how drivers turning right on 15th don’t use blinkers, which makes it difficult for other drivers to know if they have the right-of-way to pass through the intersection. If drivers are turning left on to 3rd, they need to signal earlier, which will be helpful to drivers turning left onto 15th. One group member suggested this may be because drivers wait to see which traffic lane (left or right) has left traffic before they decide which way they are turning off of Florida. There is an issue with the drivers speeding going up 15th, and when they turn left on 15th.

Two group members are in favor of keeping the intersection open to two-way traffic and keeping the left hand turn because of the connectivity of the intersection. They see a need to make the left hand turns safer. With the city’s midtown safety and connectivity project, one group member thinks more bikes and pedestrians will be crossing 2nd, so it is not ideal to eliminate left at 14th.

Multiple group members were unsure about a roundabout because of space and the degree of the slope. One group member mentioned how roundabouts are successful at traffic calming.

Mr. King steered the conversation away from the median on 3rd Ave. at 14th St. because it is on the agenda for next week’s meeting and asked another follow up question about the intersection.

4. How would you tell someone out of town how to navigate this intersection?
Almost all group members agreed they would tell someone to pass through the intersection slowly and with caution. Some group members said they would not send someone if they had to make a lefthand turn. Instead of turning left they would tell them to go to North College and Geoglein instead. Group members said they would tell others to avoid it because it is confusing. If a driver is coming from the south, they would have to go up 15th and through the intersection. Some group members said they would tell someone to drive to 2nd to get to 14th to avoid the intersection.

Other comments group members made about the intersection is that they noticed people get road rage or creep out into intersection if they are turning left on 15th. There is good visibility turning right on Florida, making this turn less stressful than others. Group members mentioned they like the flashing lights at 2nd Ave. because it is easier for them to see bikes and pedestrians crossing the street.