

MINUTES
REGULAR CITY COUNCIL WORKSESSION
CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF YUMA, ARIZONA
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS - YUMA CITY HALL
ONE CITY PLAZA, YUMA, ARIZONA
January 6, 2026
5:30 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Nicholls called the Regular City Council Worksession to order at 5:33 p.m.

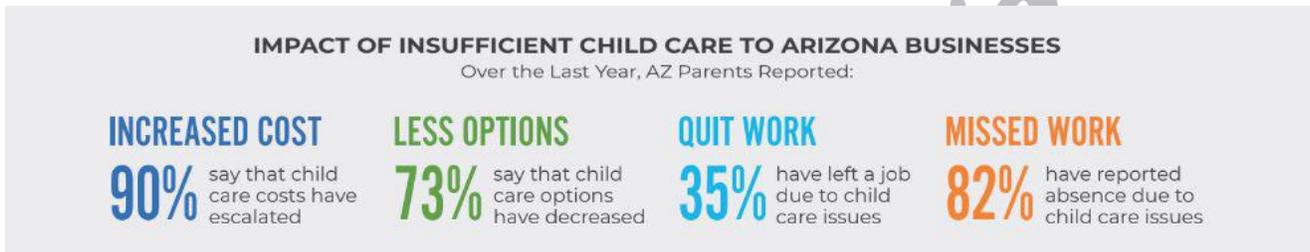
Councilmembers Present: Martinez, Morris, McClendon, Smith, Morales, Watts, and Mayor Nicholls
Councilmembers Absent: None
Staffmembers Present: Acting City Administrator, John D. Simonton
Assistant Director of Engineering, Steve Wilson
Director of Community Development, Alyssa Linville
Various department heads or their representatives
City Attorney, Richard W. Files
City Clerk, Lynda L. Bushong

I. FIRST THINGS FIRST PROGRAM

Zahid Plantillas, Community Engagement Coordinator, provided the following overview of First Things First, their community engagement priorities, and early childhood education issues:

- What Does First Things First Do?
 - First Things First, also known as the Arizona Early Childhood Development and Health Board, was established through a voter-approved proposition in 2006.
 - The organization advocates for early childhood development and health through community engagement and government affairs efforts.
 - Regional decisions on programs and investments are made by the Regional Partnership Council, which consists of local community leaders.
 - Local regional teams manage programs and ensure that desired outcomes are achieved.
- Expanding the Audience Through Engagement
 - The current strategy for community engagement focuses on expanding the audience through grassroots efforts and meeting communities where they are.
 - The goal is to change perceptions and conversations about early childhood, encouraging people to take action.
 - The organization aims to shift the view of early childhood education from something “cute” to a critical issue that impacts economic development.
 - Addressing early childhood is essential for strategic, sustainable community growth.
- The Business Case for Childcare
 - 60% of young children in Arizona live in households where all adults work, creating significant challenges for families and the state economy.
 - Childcare issues cost the state economy upwards of \$1.7 billion annually due to missed work, high job turnover, and parents leaving or changing careers.
 - Arizona ranks 48th in the nation for childcare availability, making it a major childcare desert.

- Childcare costs have outpaced inflation six to one, and the average annual cost is comparable to a year of university tuition.
- Arizona Can Not Work If Childcare Does Not Work
 - Arizona's economy cannot thrive without a functioning childcare system, as it is essential for workforce stability and growth.
 - Workforce development is being impacted by rising costs, fewer childcare options, and parents missing or quitting work.
 - If investments are not made now, the state will face greater consequences and higher costs in the future.



- Family Resource Centers
 - A key tangible solution is the creation of Family Resource Centers with a goal to provide adequate options that ease burdens on employers and families across Arizona.
 - In October, the Regional Center for Border Health Family Resource Center was inaugurated in Somerton to serve as a hub for community resources and conversations.
 - The center offers day care, preschool, utility payment assistance, food assistance, and serves as a space for agencies to connect with residents regularly.
 - First Things First helps facilitate collaboration between agencies and the community, ensuring solutions are locally adapted.
- Letters of Support
 - Last year, First Things First launched its first major letter of support campaign to build momentum for a legislative initiative.
 - The goal is to secure legislation that allocates more resources to partners in the early childhood ecosystem, not just First Things First.
 - In the initial effort, about 200 letters of support were collected from local, business, faith, and economic development leaders statewide.
 - During the 2025 push, support grew significantly, with over 1,000 letters collected, showing increased strategic awareness across sectors.
 - Childcare is increasingly being recognized as an economic development issue, rather than solely an education or health concern.
- Local Leadership
 - First Things First seeks to update and gather more letters of support from local leaders to strengthen the campaign.
 - Stakeholders are encouraged to use their platforms to invite First Things First to events and amplify the message about the childcare crisis.
 - Messaging should frame early childhood as an economic development issue to resonate with elected officials and economic leaders.
 - Local voices and trusted community stakeholders are critical to changing perceptions and driving action on early childhood issues.

- Support Team
 - The Yuma support team currently includes Regional Director, Rudy Ortiz, and Community Engagement Coordinator, Zahid Plantillas.
 - The team is committed to being accessible to the community to answer questions and meet with anyone interested in collaboration.
 - Their mission is to serve and work with the community to ensure sustainable and lasting growth
- Let Us Connect
 - All are encouraged to connect and get involved to learn more about First Things First and the work happening on the ground.
 - Support is needed through advocacy, including letters of support, local op-eds, and presentations to community groups.
 - The goal is to spread awareness, maintain ongoing action, and develop local solutions and models that can be replicated in other communities.
 - Invitations to events to share resources and strengthen relationships with the local community are appreciated.

Discussion

- Governor Hobbs has been a strong advocate for early childhood education, with significant investments made statewide through the Bright Futures AZ initiative. Potential partnerships within the city, similar to the Somerton Family Resource Center, are currently in progress with a focus on engaging all stakeholders and local leaders. While specific details are not yet available, a follow-up discussion can be scheduled. **(Smith/Plantillas)**
- First Things First does not directly provide day care services but funds local providers, who must meet strict eligibility requirements, through grants and programs such as the Quality First scholarship. The primary funding source is tobacco tax revenue, supplemented by fundraising efforts, as the organization operates as a quasi-state agency. **(Morris/Plantillas)**
- Public schools in Yuma County offer some preschool programs, with partnerships like the Gadsden School District serving as models that leaders hope to scale across the region. Currently, there are no efforts toward universal childcare, but advocacy through requests for legislative action and letters of support is seen as the first step to expanding access. **(Watts/Plantillas)**

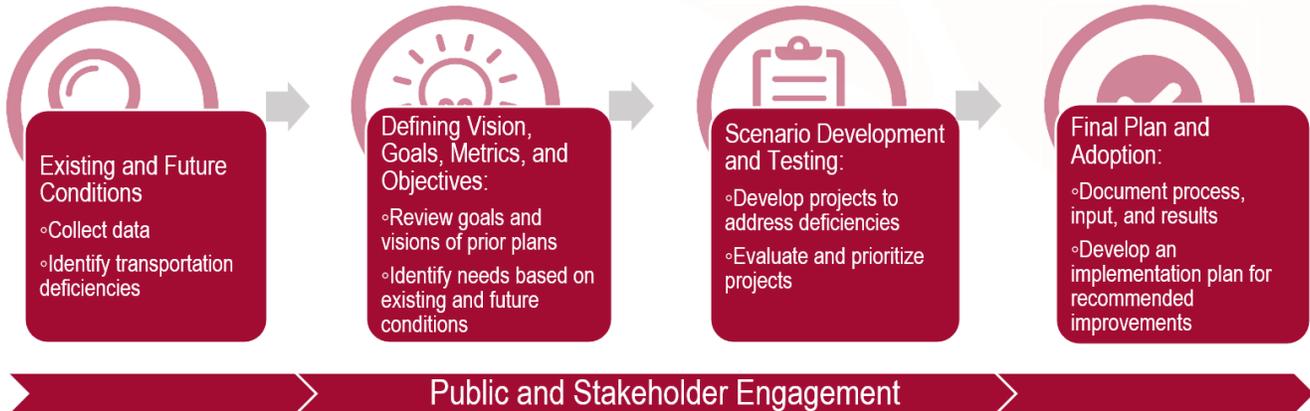
II. INTEGRATED MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN

Wilson stated that the Integrated Multi-Modal Transportation Master Plan (TMP) for 2025-2035, developed over the past year in coordination with City departments and through extensive public outreach, will guide transportation funding decisions for years to come. It aligns with the Yuma Metropolitan Planning Organization's long-range transportation plan and regional air quality models, ensuring consistency across planning efforts. **Wilson** introduced **Michael Grandy** of Kimley-Horn and Associates to provide an update on the TMP.

Grandy presented the following information:

- TMP Overview
 - The TMP process has four main tasks: 1) Existing and Future Conditions; 2) Defining Vision, Goals, Metrics, and Objectives; 3) Scenario Development and Testing; and 4) Final Plan and Adoption.

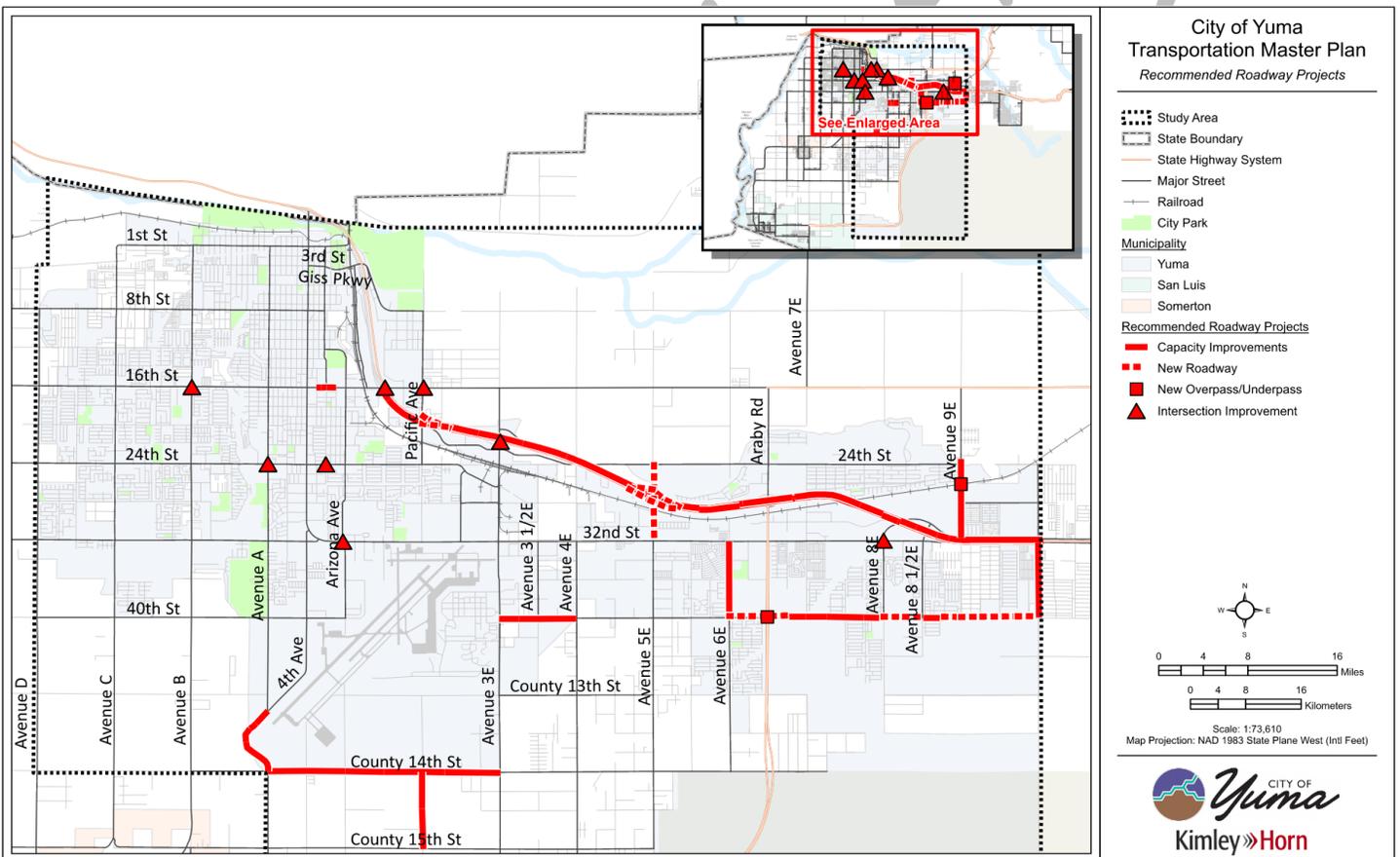
- Throughout the process there is also a fifth task: Public and Stakeholder Engagement.



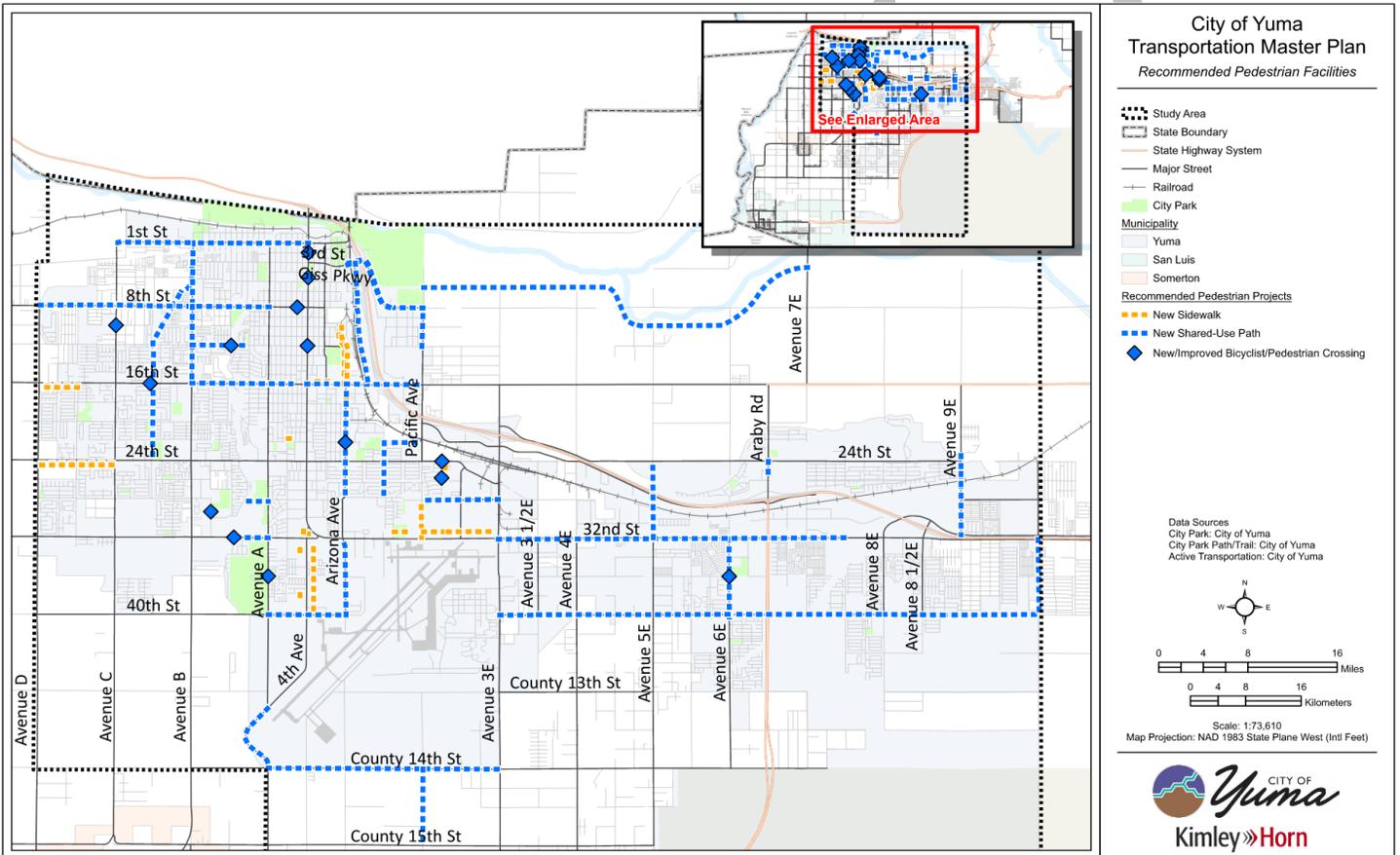
- TMP Vision
 - A well-maintained and integrated transportation system that prioritizes safety, efficiency, inclusivity of all modes of travel, and community health.
- TMP Goals
 - Maintain overall transportation infrastructure condition at acceptable levels through 2050.
 - Reduce fatal and serious injury crashes by 75% by 2050, with an ultimate goal of zero fatal and serious injury crashes to achieve Vision Zero.
 - Provide acceptable traffic operations on major roadways by 2050
 - Provide an interconnected multimodal network by improving transit, bicyclist, and pedestrian facilities.
 - Implement context-sensitive multimodal projects, policies, and processes that improve community health.
- Stakeholder and Public Engagement
 - Steering Committee
 - City of Yuma: Engineering, Community Development, and Communications
 - Yuma Metropolitan Planning Organization (YMPO)
 - Yuma County Intergovernmental Public Transit Authority (YCIPTA)
 - Yuma County: Engineering and Health District
 - Arizona Department of Transportation: Southwest District and Multimodal Planning Division
 - Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Yuma
 - Public outreach was conducted jointly with the YMPO Long Range Transportation Plan, combining efforts into single events for feedback on both projects. A co-branded website, Greater Yuma Moves, supported the initiative.
 - There were three rounds of outreach to engage the community:
 - Round 1 (May 2024 – July 2024)
 - Purpose: Get public feedback on existing issues and needs
 - Online survey, interactive map, website, social media posts, flyers, press releases

- Round 2 (December 2024 – June 2025)
 - Purpose: Get public feedback on draft improvement scenarios
 - Community event booths, City Council Worksession
- Round 3 (June 2025 – July 2025)
 - Purpose: Get public feedback on draft recommendations
 - Website, social media posts, flyers, press releases, City Council Worksession
- Public Outreach Input
 - Round 1
 - Top transportation needs identified:
 - Roadway and surface conditions
 - Reducing congestion
 - Improving safety
 - Common improvement suggestions:
 - More traffic interchanges along Interstate 8 (I-8)
 - Improved connectivity (overpasses, bridges across canals/railroads)
 - More shared-use paths for pedestrians and bicyclists
 - Wider roads and intersections
 - Increased enforcement of traffic laws
 - Top focus areas for planning:
 - Automobile travel
 - Bicycle travel
 - Round 2
 - Key priorities from public:
 - Pavement surface conditions (ranked #1)
 - Shared-use paths, sidewalks, bike lanes (ranked #2)
 - Investment preferences:
 - Safety
 - Bicycling and walking infrastructure
 - Transit infrastructure
 - Maintaining existing transportation infrastructure
 - Round 3
 - Main recommendation supported:
 - 40th Street improvements (strong public support)
 - Additional feedback:
 - Desire for more shared-use paths and crossings
 - Appreciation for recommended improvements
 - Other recommendations:
 - Small-scale intersection improvements (e.g., turn lanes, corner radius adjustments)
 - Forwarded to City Engineering and transportation teams
 - Transit service enhancements
 - Forwarded to YCIPTA for consideration

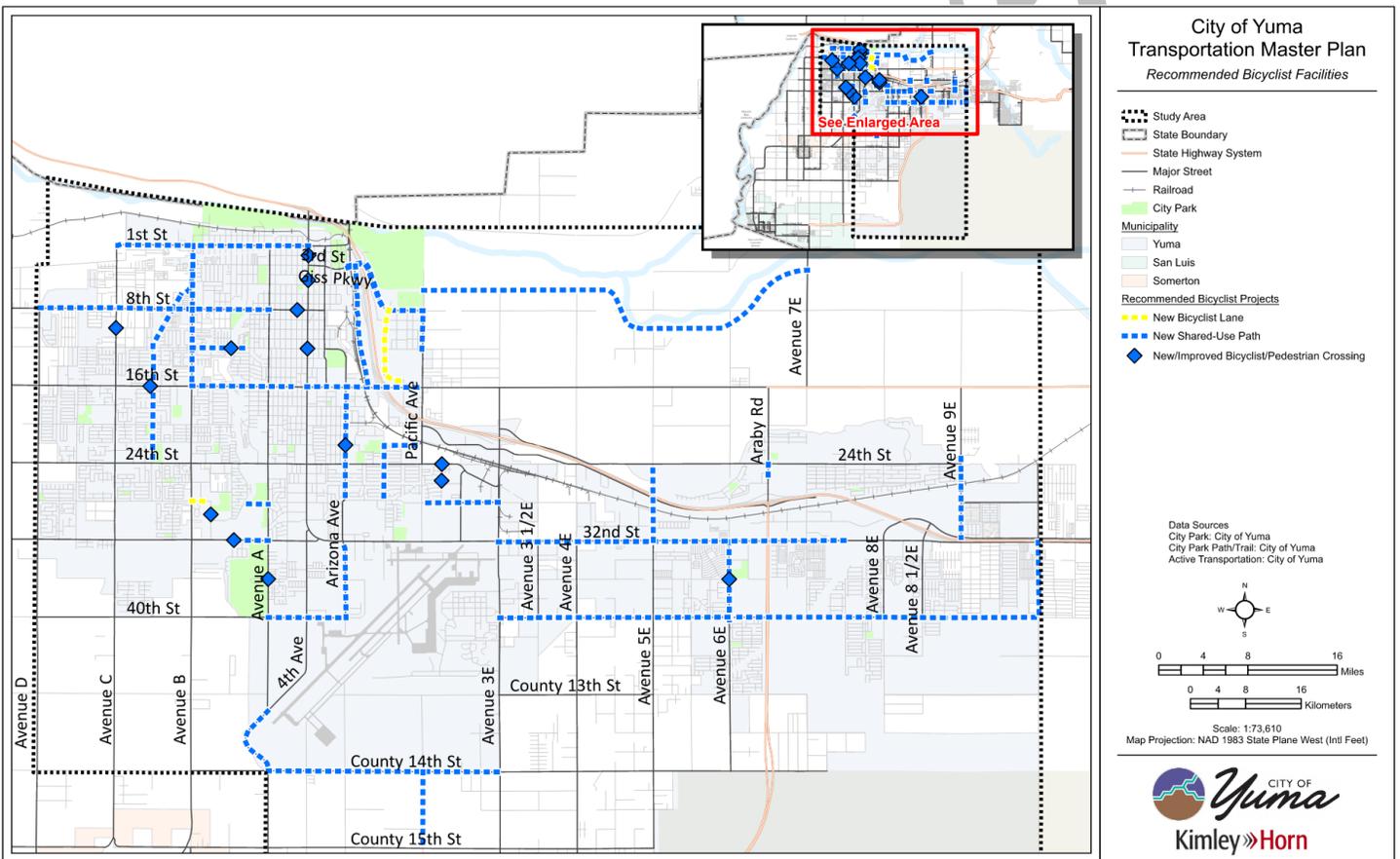
- Ongoing concerns:
 - Traffic congestion remains a major issue
 - Desire for additional congestion mitigation measures
- Recommended Improvements
 - Prioritization Methodology
 - The recommended improvements were prioritized using five weighted categories aligned with the project’s goals and vision:
 - Facility Quality (25%)
 - Roadway Operational Efficiency (20%)
 - Safety/Vision Zero Approach (25%)
 - Multimodal Integration (20%)
 - Community Health (10%)
 - Each project was evaluated technically and supplemented with public and stakeholder input, with additional weight given to recommendations identified as high priorities in previous plans, such as the regional transportation plan.
 - Recommended Projects
 - Roadway



- The map highlights all recommended roadway projects in red, including:
 - Road widening
 - New roads
 - Intersection upgrades
 - Overpass/underpass improvements
- Most projects focus on:
 - 40th Street
 - I-8
 - County 14th Street.
- Notably, two new concepts introduced are:
 - A full traffic interchange at Avenue 5E
 - A partial interchange at Pacific Avenue and I-8
- Pedestrian Facilities

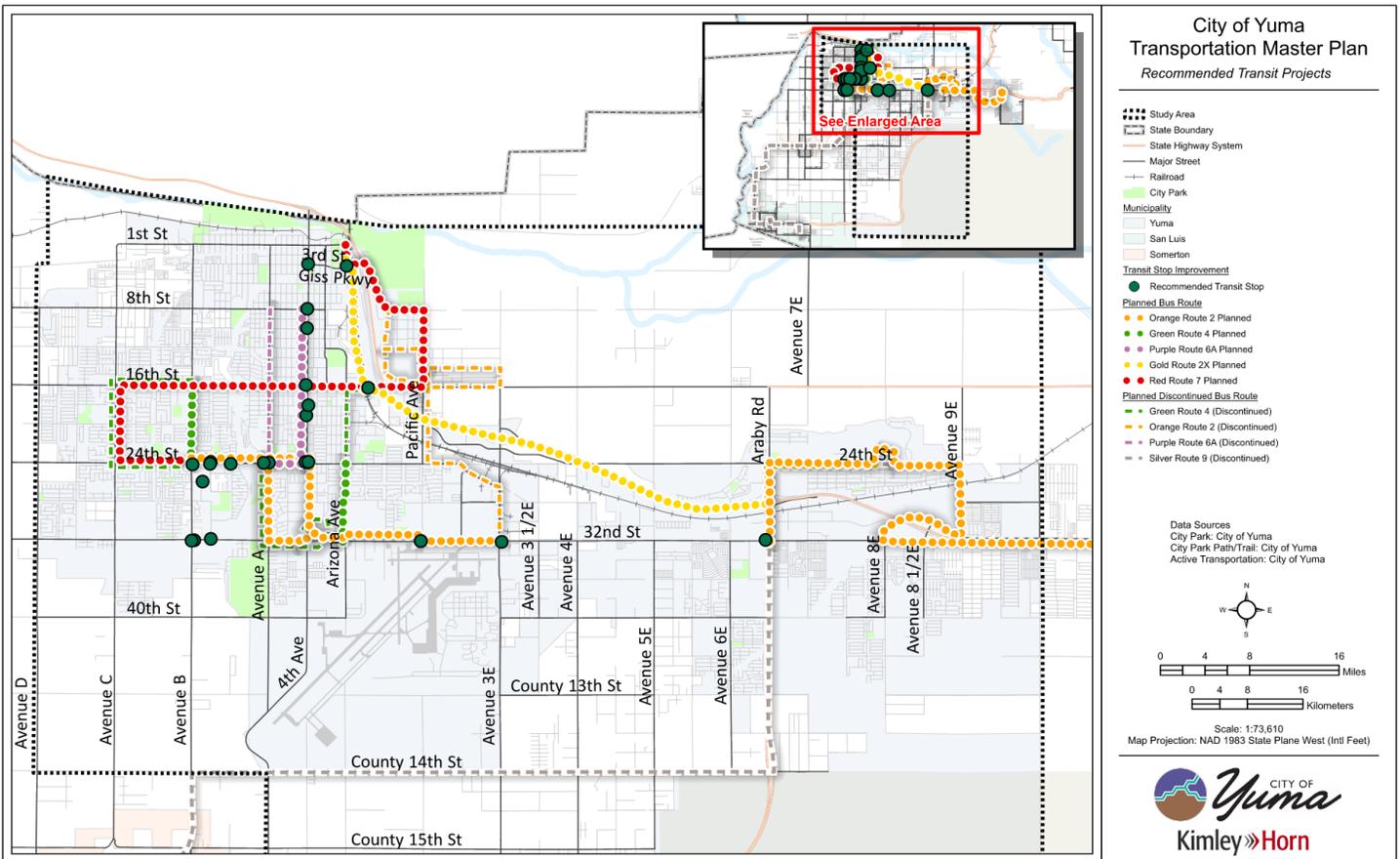


- The recommended pedestrian facility projects include an extensive expansion of:
 - Shared-use paths (dashed blue lines)
 - New sidewalks to fill existing gaps (yellow lines)
 - Designated bicyclist/pedestrian crossings (diamonds)
 - These would feature protective measures like the High Intensity Activated Crosswalk beacon (commonly known as HAWK signals) or similar systems for safe road crossing.
- Bicyclist Facilities



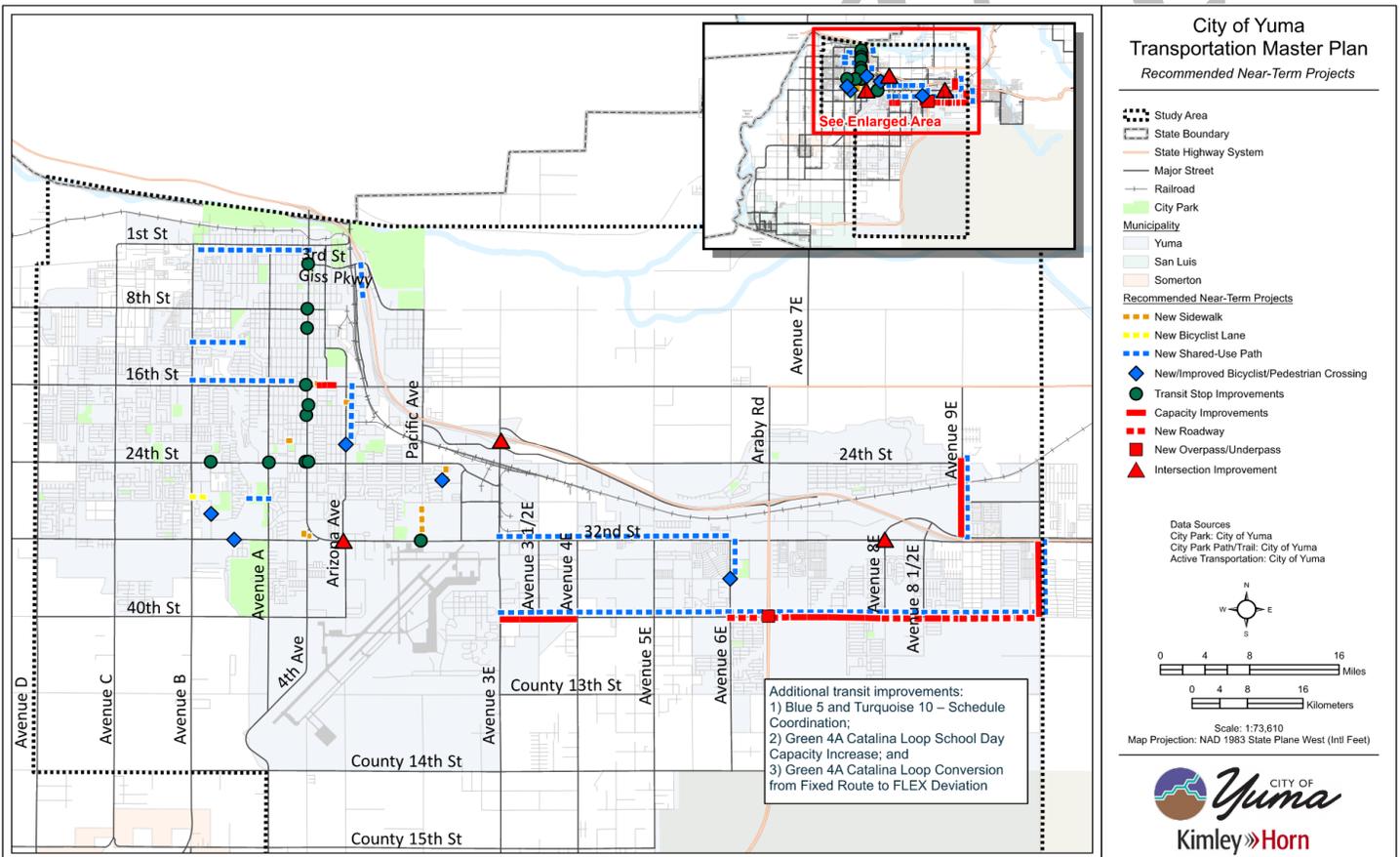
- The bicycle facility recommendations largely mirror the pedestrian plan since shared-use paths and crossings serve both groups.
- In addition, a few new bike lanes (shown in yellow) are proposed to fill gaps on lower-speed roads.
 - The overall strategy shifts away from on-road bike lanes toward off-road shared-use paths for improved safety and connectivity.

■ Transit

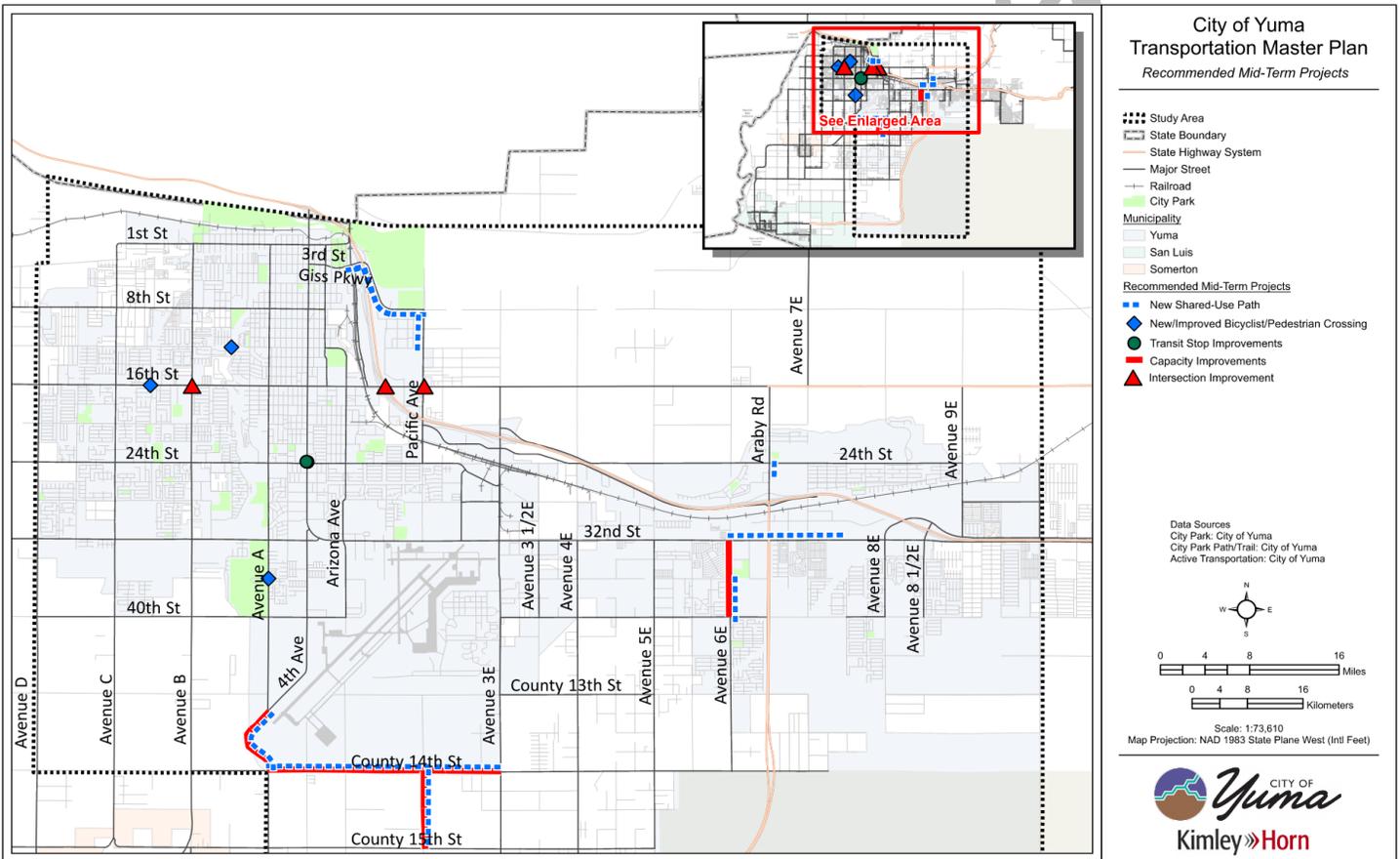


- The transit recommendations are based entirely on existing YMPO and YCIPTA plans, with no new proposals added.
- They include planned route modifications and expansions and improvements at transit stops, such as pull-outs (indicated by green circles on the map)
- Implementation Timeframes
 - Projects were categorized by implementation timeframes:
 - Near-Term (2026-2030) Projects
 - Mid-Term (2031-2035) Projects
 - Long-Term (2036-2050) Projects
 - The plan focuses on near- and mid-term projects to identify funding opportunities in the near future.
 - Out of 316 potential projects considered, 129 were recommended, totaling just over \$500 million.
 - These near-term projects exclude any already programmed for construction, ensuring the focus is on additional improvements rather than duplicating ongoing work.

- Project Cost Summary
 - Near-term (2026-2030) – 47 recommended projects
 - Planning Level Cost: \$133.8 million (City: \$132.3 million, ADOT: \$0.5 million, YCIPTA: \$1.0 million)
 - Mid-term (2031-2035) – 21 recommended projects
 - Planning Level Cost: \$66.4 million (City: \$56.6 million, ADOT: \$0.5 million, Yuma County: \$9.3 million)
 - Long-term (2036-2050) – 61 recommended projects
 - Planning Level Cost: \$300.6 million (City: \$87.6 million, ADOT: \$212.0 million, YCIPTA: \$1.0 million)
 - All Recommendations – 129 recommended projects
 - Planning Level Cost: \$500.8M (City: \$276.5 million, ADOT: \$213.0 million, YCIPTA: \$2.0 million, Yuma County: \$9.3 million)
- Near-Term (2026-2030) Projects

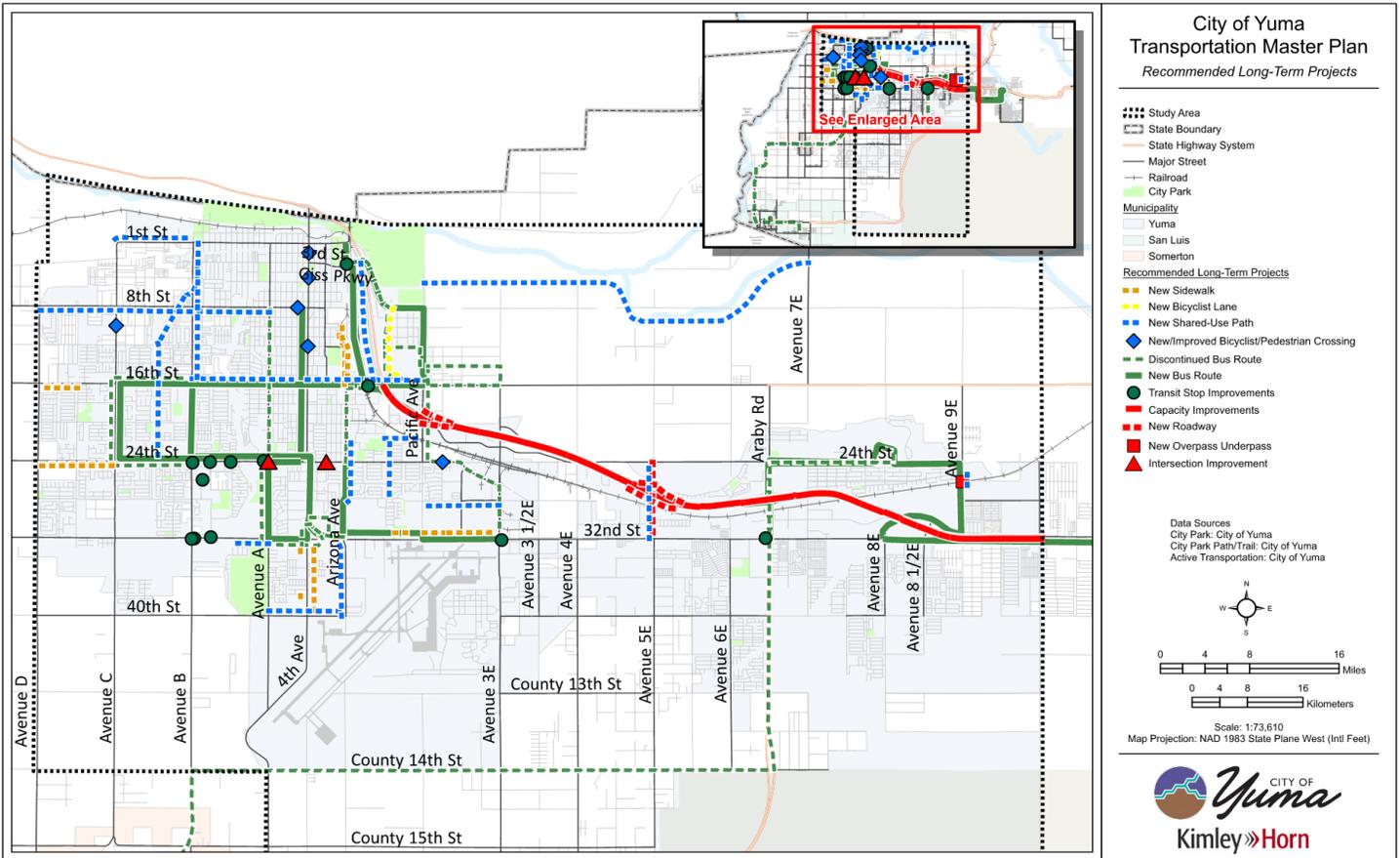


- Near-term projects include:
 - Emphasis on full connectivity along the 40th Street corridor for roads and shared-use paths between Avenues 3E and 10E
 - Spot improvements in central Yuma such as:
 - Transit upgrades
 - Intersection fixes
 - Bike/pedestrian crossings.
- Mid-Term (2031-2035) Projects



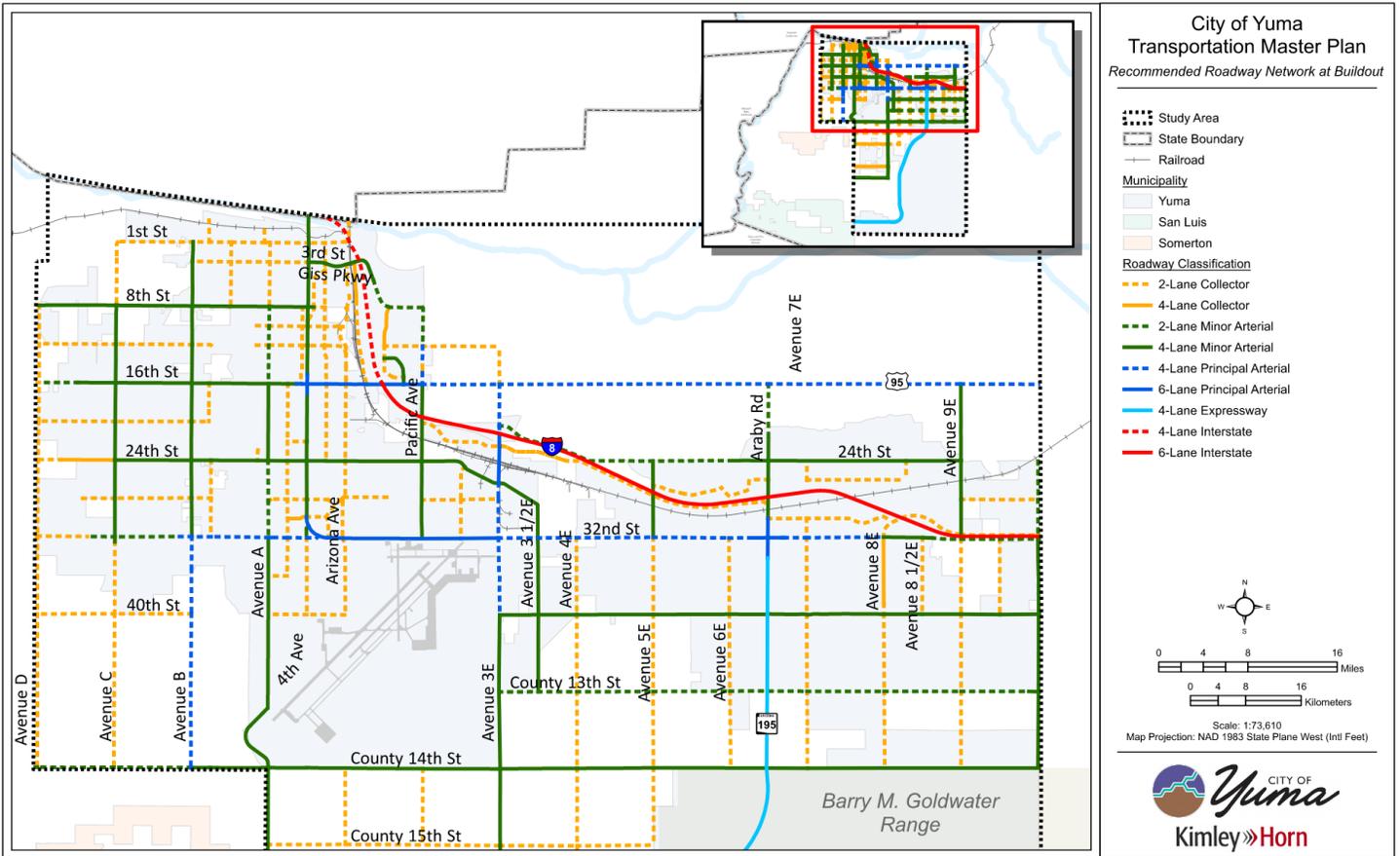
- Mid-term priorities center on County 14th Street improvements tied to the potential Marine Corps Air Station gate relocation, which may not proceed if the relocation does not occur.

○ Long-Term (2036-2050) Projects



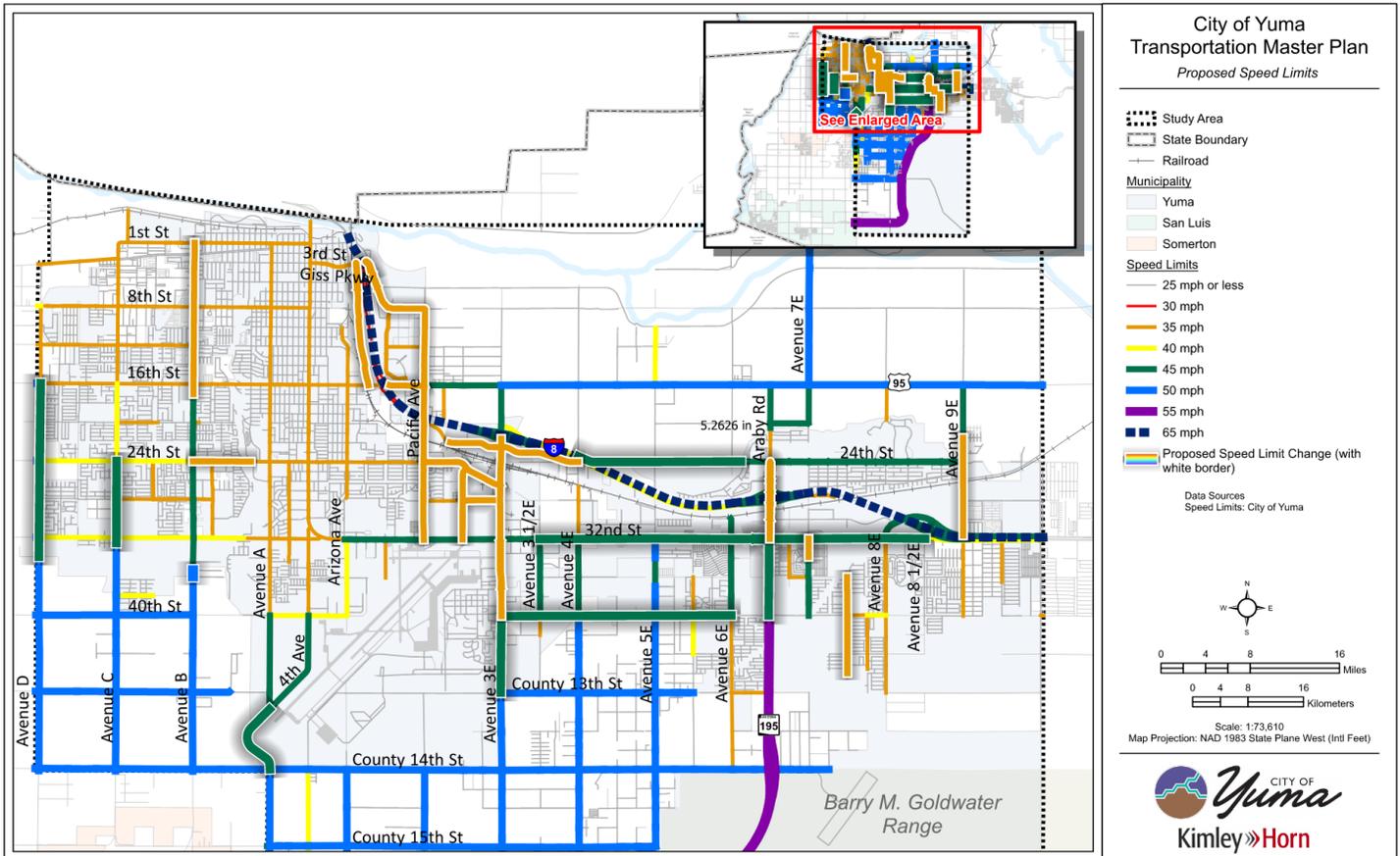
- Long-term plans include:
 - Widening I-8
 - Adding new traffic interchanges
 - Expanding transit routes
- Other Recommendations
 - Additional recommendations focus on policy and process rather than specific projects. These include:
 - Ensuring mixed-use developments incorporate transportation improvements that promote community health.
 - Updating Yuma’s standard roadway details.
 - Refining roadway classifications from the 2014 plan with minor changes.
 - Proposed adjustments also include:
 - Lowering speed limits for safety as the area grows.
 - Increasing tree and shade coverage to encourage walking and biking.
 - Planning for future technologies such as air taxis to improve connectivity and efficiency.

■ Recommended Buildout Roadway Network



- The recommended build-out roadway network map shows collectors and arterials with their lane configurations.
- A key change is on 32nd Street west of Fourth Avenue, which was previously planned as a six-lane arterial.
 - Due to constrained right-of-way and lower traffic volumes, it has been revised to a four-lane principal arterial, matching current conditions in that area.

■ Recommended Speed Limit Changes



- The proposed speed limit changes are highlighted with a white border around the affected road segments.
- These adjustments are recommendations only and would require review and approval by the City’s Traffic Engineer on a case-by-case basis before implementation.
- Coordination with Other Entities
 - The steering committee members will play a key role in implementing many projects, as they involve coordination across multiple entities.
 - This includes facilities owned by Yuma County and ADOT, transit improvements integrated with roadway projects, and the Marine Corps Air Station gate relocation.
 - Additionally, public health and environmental agencies like the Arizona Game and Fish Department, as well as private developers, will be important partners in supporting these improvements.
- Potential Funding Sources
 - The City’s funding strategy relies on existing sources and explores additional opportunities.
 - Current local funding includes the General Fund, bonds, City road tax, and development fees.
 - Regionally, a dedicated transportation sales tax has been discussed and is strongly recommended.

- State funding comes from gas tax and vehicle license tax allocations, along with the AZ SMART grant program, which helps prepare projects for federal funding.
- At the federal level, options include consistent programs like the Surface Transportation Block Grant and competitive programs such as Highway Safety Improvement, Transportation Alternatives, Off-System Bridge, and Carbon Reduction programs.

Discussion

- Shared-use paths are generally 10-12 feet wide and placed on one side of the road, with materials varying by location. Budget estimates assumed a new 10-foot path, allowing flexibility for design adjustments based on site conditions. **(McClendon/Grandy)**
- Shared-use paths provide a safer alternative for biking, reducing conflicts with large vehicles. Increasing tree and shade coverage along these paths can encourage more usage, help mitigate heat island effects, and make biking more appealing during hot weather. **(Watts)**
- The short-term plan includes installing a signal at 40th Street and the Area Service Highway to improve connectivity, with a future phase for an overpass or underpass estimated at \$20-30 million, contingent on grant funding. Widening Interstate 8 is proposed to reduce congestion and prevent the need for widening multiple arterial roads, as expanding the freeway would draw more traffic away from local streets. **(Morris/Grandy)**

Simonton noted that Steve Wilson is retiring on Thursday after being a valued member of the City of Yuma team and community. He recently received the City's Star Leader Award and will be greatly missed for his contributions and dedication.

III. REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA OF JANUARY 7, 2026

Motion Consent Agenda Item C.5 – Bid Award: Water Distribution Line 5th Street – Gila Street to Redondo (award a construction services contract to Taylor Engineering in the amount of \$1,381,777.00) (RFB-25-283) (Eng)

Mayor Nicholls declared a conflict of interest on Motion Consent Agenda Item C.5 as his firm performed the design for the project. There being no questions or discussion, **Mayor Nicholls** remained on the dais.

Motion Consent Agenda Item C.6 – Bid Award: Cleanup, Boarding and Securing Buildings (award a one-year contract with the option to renew for four additional one-year periods at an estimated annual expenditure of \$35,000.00 to Yuma Valley Contractors) (RFB-26-109) (Comm Dev)

Discussion

- The annual budget of \$35,000 is considered sufficient based on past expenses, though rising material costs may require future adjustments. Cleanup involves boarding windows with clear panels for visibility and safety, rather than using opaque materials. **(McClendon/Linville)**
- Bids were calculated using hourly rates and material costs based on a sample project scenario. The winning bid of \$13,000 reflects estimated costs for that scenario and may vary depending on the actual project scope. **(Morris/Linville)**
- The contractor will handle both the cleanup work and provide necessary materials; the City's role is to contact the contractor to perform the required tasks. **(Smith/Linville)**

- The contractor is responsible for cleaning up grass and brush, and the City places a lien on the property to recover costs and hopefully encouraging future upkeep. These cleanups typically involve residential properties. **(Watts/Linville)**
- The City has successfully collected on many liens, which accrue interest and are paid off when the property is sold. The only case where a lien would not be applied is if the property belongs to the City. **(Mayor Nicholls/Files)**

Resolution R2026-003 – Preannexation Development Agreement: 2108 W. 26th Street (for a parcel of undeveloped property located at 2108 W. 26th Street) (Comm Dev)

Ordinance O2026-002 – Rezoning of Property: 1980 W. Colorado Street (rezone approximately 2.78 acres located at 1980 W. Colorado Street from Manufactured Housing Park to High Density Residential) (ZONE-44544-2025) (Comm Dev)

Morris declared a conflict of interest on Resolution R2026-003 and Ordinance O2026-002 as his firm will be involved in those projects. There being no questions or discussion, **Morris** remained on the dais.

Public Hearing on Resolution R2026-005 – Minor General Plan Amendment: Vision Assets, LLC (change the land use designation for approximately 2.49 acres of property located at 2080 W. 27th Street from Low Density Residential to Medium Density Residential) (GP-44387-2025) (Comm Dev)

Discussion

- The fire and life safety concerns noted by the Planning and Zoning Commission will be addressed during the permitting process. Since the site plan is not yet finalized, these issues do not factor into the current decision and will be resolved during site plan review. **(Smith/Linville)**

EXECUTIVE SESSION/ADJOURNMENT

Motion (Morales/Smith): To adjourn the meeting to Executive Session. Voice vote: **approved** 7-0. The meeting adjourned at 6:33 p.m.

Lynda L. Bushong, City Clerk

APPROVED:

Douglas J. Nicholls, Mayor

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| Approved at the City Council Meeting of: _____ City Clerk: _____ |
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