



Helena Citizens' Council  
316 N. Park Avenue, Room 320  
Helena, MT 59623  
Phone: 406.447.8493  
[hcc@helenamt.gov](mailto:hcc@helenamt.gov)  
[www.helenacitizenscouncil.com](http://www.helenacitizenscouncil.com)

---

**Date:** November 4, 2022  
**To:** The Helena City Commission  
**From:** The Helena Citizens' Council  
**Title:** Recommendation Regarding ARPA Allocation for a Bridge Over Henderson St.

Greetings Helena City Commission,

Let it be known that the Helena Citizens' Council held a special meeting on November 4, 2022 and passed the following recommendation for your consideration.

*Let it be resolved that the Helena Citizens' Council recommends that the City Commission use funding through ARPA-related grants (including the City's Community Aid Grant program) and other applicable funding sources for the construction of a bridge over Henderson Street on the Centennial Trail named the "Eric Feaver Memorial Bridge."*

This recommendation was moved by the Helena Citizens' Council based upon the findings presented in a document submitted by District 3 Representative Lowell Chandler. The referenced document is attached in order to supplement your consideration.

We appreciate your consideration of this recommendation,

-The Helena Citizens' Council

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Cole Rosling', is written over a horizontal line.

Cole Rosling, HCC Chair

DATE: November 1, 2022  
TO: Helena Citizens' Council  
FROM: Lowell Chandler – HCC Representative of District 3  
RE: Recommendation Regarding a Motion for the HCC to Support the NMTAC's Motion Advising the Commission to Pursue ARPA Funds for the Bridge Over Henderson Street on the Centennial Trail

On October 11, 2022, the Non-Motorized Travel Advisory Council (“NMTAC”) passed the following motion:

Motion to advise the City Commission to pursue ARPA funds for the bridge over Henderson Street on Centennial Trail.

As many of you are aware, the bridge over Henderson Avenue on the Centennial Trail has long been a focus of the Helena Community at large, the NMTAC, and various City Commissioners over the years, including Commissioner Elsaesser, Commissioner Halladay, and, most recently, the late-Commissioner Feaver. Based on my review, the bridge over Henderson Avenue has been under consideration by the City Commission since at least 2014.<sup>1</sup> NMTAC has long listed it as one of its major priorities for the Centennial Trail. It is long overdue to complete this project so that the connectivity of the Centennial Trail (Helena's only east to west separated multi-use path), as well as neighborhoods west of Henderson, can be enhanced, non-motorized use can increase, and Helenans can receive the related health benefits of biking, walking, or rolling to work, school, or play via a safe, separated multi-use path.

As noted above, the bridge over Henderson Avenue was one of the late-Commissioner Eric Feaver's major goals that he desired to accomplish during his tenure on the Commission. As the Commission representative on NMTAC, Commissioner Feaver frequently spoke about the need for construction of the bridge. For this reason and given Commissioner Feaver's record of commitment to public service, the Helena community, and non-motorized transit, I also recommend that the bridge over Henderson Avenue along the Centennial Trail be dedicated to Commissioner Eric Feaver and be named the “Eric Feaver Memorial Bridge.” Accordingly, I recommend the HCC pass the following motion:

*Motion to advise the City Commission to use funding through ARPA-related grants (including the City's Community Aid Grant program) and other applicable funding sources for the construction of a bridge over Henderson Street on the Centennial Trail named the “Eric Feaver Memorial Bridge.”*

## FINDINGS

### The Need

Constructing a bridge over Henderson Avenue on the Centennial Trail is a long overdue and badly needed improvement to the Centennial Trail so as to enhance the Trail's connectivity,

---

<sup>1</sup> See Blog of Former Commissioner Elsaesser, *Henderson Bridge and Centennial Trail!*, (Jan. 22, 2014), <http://matteforhelena.blogspot.com/2014/01/henderson-bridge-and-centennial-trail.html?m=1>.

safety, and usability. As one of Helena’s only separated multi-use pathway that provides an east to west corridor through the City of Helena (“City”), it is critical that the City invest in making the Centennial Trail a safe, usable, and connected trail. This bridge has been the focus of discussion among the City Commission since at least 2014<sup>2</sup> and is currently noted in the Greater Helena Area Long Range Transportation Plan as a project that has had specific support.<sup>3</sup> NMTAC has likewise discussed this issue in depth for more than a decade. Suffice to say, this project is widely supported.

The need for this project is well known by all who have biked, walked, or rolled on the Centennial Trail in the area of Henderson Avenue. The current crossing serves as a major impediment for users of the Centennial Trail as it is not only dangerous due to the vehicle traffic on Henderson but also serves as a physical barrier for trail users due to the steep decline and incline on each side. The crossing has low-visibility of Henderson Avenue due to the railroad tracks trestle blocking a southbound vehicle’s view of people crossing the road. Indeed, in the Spring 2016 Friends of Centennial Trail newsletter, it was accurately described as the “Dangerous and Inconvenient Crossing at Henderson.” A bridge over Henderson Avenue on the Centennial Trail would serve to enhance connectivity of the Centennial Trail and eliminate a major barrier that current and potential users of the Centennial Trail face when deciding whether to bike, walk, or roll on the Centennial Trail. By building a bridge over Henderson Avenue, Helenans will be more incentivized to bike, walk, or roll to work, school, or play, which will bring obvious public health benefits due to increased physical activity as well as added economic benefits associated with bicycling and walking.<sup>4</sup>

#### Use of ARPA Funds Is Appropriate for this Project

Using ARPA funds for a bridge over Henderson Avenue on the Centennial Trail is a project that likely qualifies as a proper ARPA-funded project. As the U.S. Treasury Department discussed in its Final Rule governing the disbursement of ARPA funds, projects like a bridge over Henderson Avenue on the Centennial Trail are eligible for funding under the ARPA program:

The final rule includes enumerated eligible uses in disproportionately impacted communities for developing neighborhood features that promote improved health and safety outcomes, such as parks, green spaces, recreational facilities, sidewalks, pedestrian safety features like crosswalks, projects that increase access to healthy

---

<sup>2</sup> See FN 1.

<sup>3</sup> Mont. Dept. of Transportation, *Greater Helena Area Long Range Transportation Plan – 2014 Update*, p. 10 (adopted by City Commission on June 29, 2015), <https://mdt.mt.gov/publications/docs/brochures/helena-transportation-plan.pdf>.

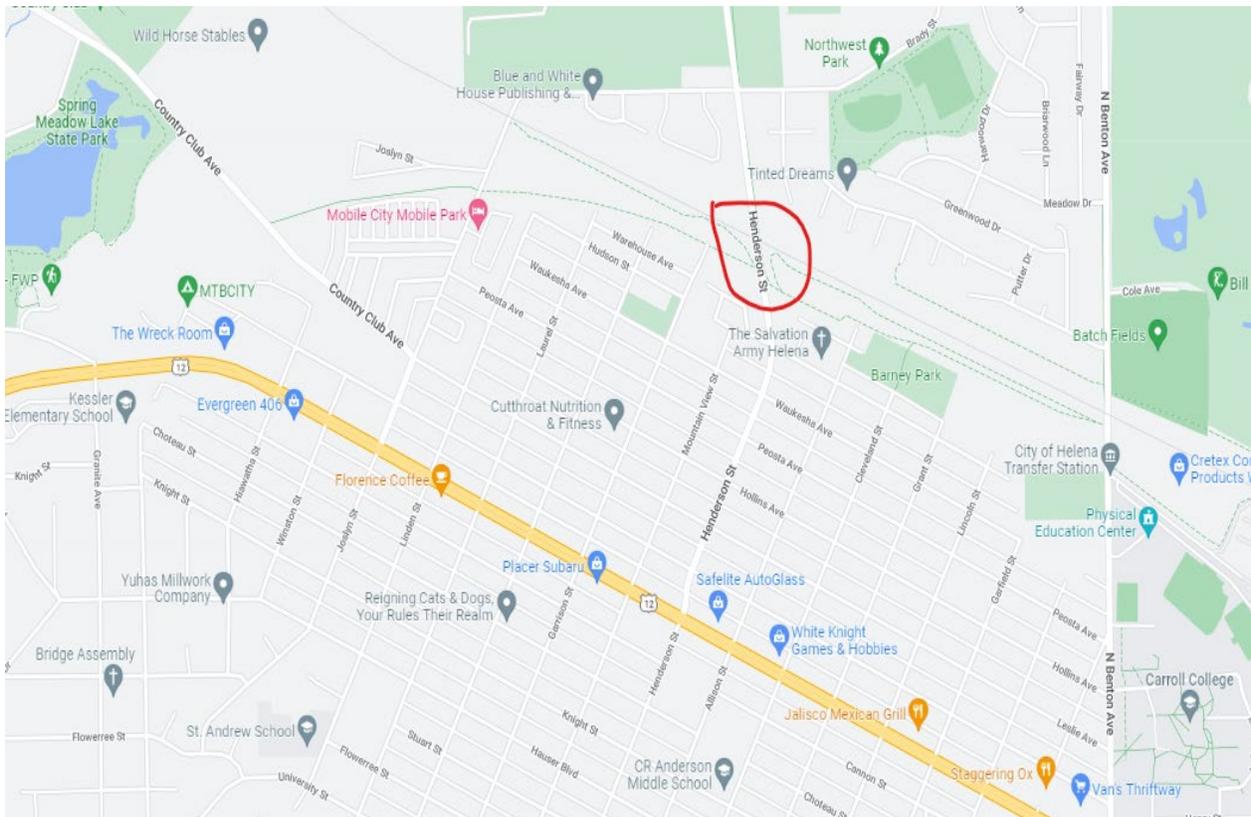
<sup>4</sup> For example, the state of Colorado’s Department of Transportation commissioned a study in 2016 that concluded that “the total economic and health benefits of bicycling estimated for the State of Colorado is approximately \$1.6 billion,” and “[t]he total economic and health benefits of walking calculated for the state of Colorado is approximately \$3.2 billion.” Co. Office of Econ. Dvlpt. & Int. Trade, *Economic and Health Benefits of Bicycling and Walking*, p. 4 (Oct. 6, 2016), available at: <https://www.codot.gov/programs/bikeped/building-a-bike-ped-friendly-community/bike-walk-study/assets/report-economic-and-health-benefits-of-bicycling-and-walking-in-colorado-2016-report>.

foods, streetlights, neighborhood cleanup, and other projects to revitalize public spaces. Recipients seeking to use funds for capital expenditures should refer to the section Capital Expenditures in General Provisions: Other, which describes additional eligibility standards that apply to uses of funds for capital expenditures.

See U.S. Dept. of Treasury, *Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds*, Final Rule, p. 4373 (p. 36 of pdf), (effective date: April 1, 2022), available at: <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2022-01-27/pdf/2022-00292.pdf>.

As discussed in the Department of Treasury’s Final Rule implementing guidelines governing disbursement of ARPA funds on the local level, under the category “Neighborhood features that promote improved health and safety outcomes,” the Department of Treasury found that “[a]llowing people access to nature, including parks, has been connected to decreased levels of mortality and illness and increased well-being,” and that “[e]ncouraging physical activity can also play a role in health outcomes, as a sedentary lifestyle is a risk factor for chronic diseases and more severe COVID-19 outcomes.” *Id.* Therefore, in support of allowing the use of ARPA funds for non-motorized improvements, the Department of Treasury concluded that doing so was a supportable action since “[p]arks, recreation facilities, and sidewalks can promote healthier living environments by allowing for safe and socially distanced recreation during the COVID-19 pandemic.” *Id.*

Below are figures representing the project location and the visual aspect of the problem:





## RECOMMENDATION

I recommend that the HCC pass the motion mentioned above on page 1 regarding advising the City Commission to use ARPA-related grants and other related funding sources to construct a bridge over Henderson Avenue along the Centennial Trail.

## POSITIVE OUTCOMES

As discussed above, this project is long overdue and badly needed. A bridge over Henderson Avenue will serve to enhance the connectivity of the west end of the Centennial Trail with the City's core and the east end of the Centennial Trail. Providing a dedicated east to west non-motorized separated multi-use pathway is critical to the Helena community's overall health and it cannot be done without removal of the major barrier that is the dangerous and inconvenient crossing of Henderson Avenue. I hope that the full HCC will support this Motion.

Respectfully submitted,

*/s/ Lowell J. Chandler*

Lowell Chandler

HCC District 3 Representative

Chandler4HCC@gmail.com