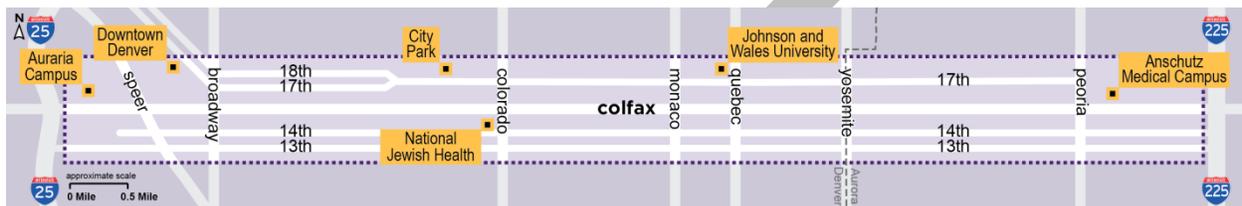


2 Purpose and Need

Proposed Project Location

The ten-mile project study area is focused on the area bounded roughly by I-25 on the west, I-225 on the east, 20th Avenue on the north, and 12th Avenue on the south, as shown in Figure 2-1. It includes the Auraria college campus and downtown Denver, City Park and National Jewish Health Hospital, Aurora’s Cultural Arts District in its historic downtown, and the Anschutz Medical Campus in Aurora.

Figure 2-1: Study Area



Purpose of This Proposed Project

The purpose of the Colfax Corridor Connections study is to develop a proposed project that includes a package of multi-modal transportation improvements in the East Colfax Avenue corridor. The proposed project would provide additional person-trip capacity in the East Colfax corridor through a high-quality, high-capacity, and cost-effective transit service. This new service would provide a faster, more reliable, and more comfortable passenger experience compared with existing bus service. The proposed project would improve local and regional accessibility, mobility, safety, transit travel times and reliability, and passenger facilities in this heavily transit-reliant corridor.

How did the public help shape the purpose and need statement?

The project team reviewed the proposed Purpose and Need statement with stakeholders and the general public and revised it based on a number of comments. Two issues in particular were enhanced based on public comment: an emphasis on safety, and a focus on promoting economic development.

Need for This Proposed Project

The need for this proposed project is described in the following:

- Need to accommodate increasing person-trip demand:** Residential and employment growth in the corridor and surrounding areas will result in increased person-trip demand (including transit, bicycle, and pedestrian trips) within, to, from, and through the corridor, with increased multimodal congestion and longer travel times in many segments of the corridor. Current roadway traffic in the corridor is generally at or over capacity during peak hours, and forecasts show that person-trip demand will increase by up to 20 to 30% in the corridor within the next 10 to 15 years. Several intersections in the corridor have a level of service (LOS) of E or F during peak periods, and several roadway segments in the corridor are congested for at least three hours per day.



- **Need to better serve existing transit users and encourage and accommodate new transit users:** The four existing bus routes that serve the corridor (RTD Routes 10, 15, 15L, and 20) are at or over capacity, especially during peak hours. Bus service on East Colfax during peak periods is almost at operational capacity, meaning that no additional buses can be accommodated without significant changes in infrastructure or operations. According to RTD, most bus routes in the corridor (especially those on East Colfax) exceed maximum loading standards during peak periods and at other times of the day (even with high-frequency and articulated buses). In addition, anticipated population and employment growth in the corridor will result in increased transit demand for both the transit-dependent and choice riders.
- **Need to identify and provide transportation improvements in conformance with established livability principles.** Any transportation investment recommended by this proposed project must adhere to the basic principles established by the US Department of Transportation (DOT) and its Interagency Partnership for Sustainable Communities by providing more transportation choices; promoting equitable, affordable housing; enhancing economic competitiveness; supporting existing communities; coordinating policies and leveraging investment; and valuing communities and neighborhoods.
- **Need to identify and provide transportation improvements without major acquisition of private properties:** Opportunities for roadway capacity improvements in the corridor are limited due to restricted right-of-way (ROW) in most areas, resulting in congestion in the corridor that will only worsen in the future. Therefore, additional trip capacity will need to be accommodated largely within the current ROW both to allow protection of existing private development and promote sustainable growth.
- **Need to accommodate increasing intra-corridor trips:** Residential and employment growth in all segments of the corridor is generating additional intra-corridor bi-directional trips of all types and using transportation modes that cannot be accommodated efficiently by the existing transportation system.
- **Need to identify and provide improved mobility and connectivity options:** While a number of alternative travel modes (including transit, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities and services) are currently available in different parts of the corridor and at differing levels of quality, there is a need to improve, enhance, and coordinate those alternative modes to accommodate the increased travel demand in many areas of the corridor and to and from other parts of the region. The availability of alternative modes will enhance overall livability of the corridor, promote a shift to those alternative modes, provide safer and more efficient pedestrian and bicycle connections, and promote better connectivity to other portions of the region.
- **Need to identify and provide affordable and fiscally sustainable improvements.** Any transportation investments or improvements recommended by this proposed project must be planned and designed to meet not only mobility needs, but also the financial constraints of the region. The Preferred Alternative must be both affordable and cost-effective at serving the transportation and livability needs and other requirements of the East Colfax Corridor.

