

Colfax Corridor Connections Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

This study of transit and mobility within the Colfax Avenue Corridor is being conducted by the City and County of Denver, in coordination with the Regional Transportation District (RTD), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) and City of Aurora. The study goal is to improve transit, overall mobility and livability within the corridor now and over the next 25 years.

Why is the City doing Colfax Corridor Connections?

East of I-25, Colfax Avenue is one of the City's highest traveled east-west transportation routes. During the peak hours, some intersections exceed capacity causing traffic congestion and travel delay. Over the next 20 years, the study area is expected to experience a 25% growth in person-trips (number of travelers), 67% growth in employment (jobs), and 25% growth in population. As a result, the need to address mobility for all modes of transportation within the Colfax Avenue Corridor study area is critical to improving safety and meeting the long-term economic viability and mobility needs.

What is the study area for Colfax Corridor Connections?

The study corridor (referred to as the "Colfax Avenue Corridor") is defined roughly as Colfax Avenue from I-25 on the west to I-225 on the east and 20th Avenue on the north to 12th Avenue on the south.

What alternatives were studied?

The study includes an analysis of many different mobility options and potential alignments in the Colfax Avenue Corridor. A broad range of alternatives were considered and narrowed down to three specific alternatives that best fit the purpose and need for the study. The alternatives included Enhanced Bus, Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), and Modern Streetcar. In addition, a range of alignments were considered that included Colfax Avenue, 13th Avenue/14th Avenue, 17th Avenue, and 20th Avenue/Montview Boulevard. The preferred alignment that best fit the project purpose and need was narrowed down to Colfax Avenue.

What is the Locally Preferred Alternative?

Following a comprehensive technical analysis, BRT on Colfax Avenue was identified as the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA). The BRT system would convert Colfax Avenue's outside travel lane in both directions to exclusive transit lanes during the weekday morning and evening peak travel periods (i.e., rush hour) for 4.7 miles of the corridor from Broadway to Syracuse Street. The inside travel lanes would remain available for all vehicles to use. The rest of the day and on weekends, buses would continue to operate in the outside travel lane with traffic.

What is Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)?

Bus Rapid Transit is an enhanced transit option that features upgraded vehicles, enhanced stations and operation in a dedicated transit lane wherever possible. Potential vehicle upgrades include recognizable/branded vehicles as well as low-floor and multi-door boarding features that make it easier and faster for all riders, especially those with special needs, to get on and off. Enhanced station amenities would feature real-time passenger information, off-bus ticketing, shelter and safety improvements. The proposed BRT system on Colfax would reliably operate buses every five minutes with the existing RTD Route 15 continuing to provide local bus service.

What does a dedicated transit lane (also referred to as an exclusive transit lane) mean?

For the purposes of the Colfax Corridor Connections study, a dedicated transit only lane is defined as a travel lane that is dedicated for use by transit vehicles only during the weekdays in the morning and evening peak hours of travel (6-9am and 3-7pm, i.e., rush hour). Along Colfax Avenue, the existing outside travel lane would be used as the dedicated transit only lane during peak hours in both directions for 4.7 miles of the corridor from Broadway to Syracuse Street.

During the dedicated, transit-only lane hours of operation, right-turns from the exclusive lanes and access to/from parking will still be permitted. This is similar to how the exclusive lanes work along Broadway/Lincoln in downtown Denver. On weekends and at all other times during the weekdays, approximately 18 hours daily, vehicular traffic on Colfax Avenue and the adjacent roadways would most likely not change due to the LPA.

What kind of impact does a dedicated transit only lane have on Colfax Avenue and adjacent roadways?

Congestion in the corridor is an issue today and it will increase with or without the project. Similarly, traffic diversion to adjacent streets occurs today and will only get worse in the future. As a result of dedicated transit lanes on Colfax during peak hours, our analysis shows minor diversion to the majority of adjacent streets. For the most part, the increase in traffic volume on adjacent streets did not result in significant delays. In the areas and intersections that showed potential for increased delays, operational improvements are being reviewed. These options include, but are not limited to; signal optimization, extended or new turning lanes, and minimal capacity improvements through re-striping or minor curb/gutter relocation (all within existing right-of-way).

What bicycle, pedestrian and other improvements are being studied?

A number of other transportation improvements are included in all of the alternatives under consideration as a part of this study. As the preliminary LPA undergoes a comprehensive environmental evaluation, a package of supplemental improvements will begin to be identified. These include existing bus service, roadway operations, bicycle/pedestrian facilities, signage/wayfinding, and more.

Will there be significant impacts to on-street parking in the corridor?

No. The preliminary LPA does not propose to remove the on-street parking, but rather utilize (to the greatest extent possible) the existing Colfax Avenue bus stop areas, which are anticipated to provide enough space for the proposed transit stop improvements. Upon completion and approval of the environmental compliance phase of the project and pending funding availability, a detailed design phase would be undertaken to finalize the stop area configurations.

Will this study connect with RTD's future I-225 Rail Line?

The study is taking into consideration how the overall FasTracks system and its I-225 Rail Line will influence transportation and mobility within the Colfax Avenue Corridor area and how those systems, including I-225, will interact with the intent of creating a cohesive transportation system that meets mobility needs.

How much does the study cost? Who is paying for it?

The estimated total cost for the study is \$3 million, which includes \$1 million in City and County of Denver funds and a \$2 million grant from the Federal Transit Administration. The grant included two main components, which were to: 1) undertake a transit alternatives analysis and environmental compliance (NEPA) study, and 2) further develop the regional long-range transportation model (FOCUS model) in partnership with RTD and DRCOG.



What are the expected benefits of this project?

The goal of Colfax Corridor Connections is to improve transit, overall mobility and livability within the corridor now and over the next 25 years. Project benefits include, but are not limited to:

- Projected 25% increase in person-trip capacity in the study area (i.e., enhancing transit will increase the total number of people that can travel along Colfax Avenue to/from their desired destinations)
- Improved safety, livability, accessibility and mobility options for all travelers
- Increased economic viability and investment by attracting new residential and commercial development
- Improved transit travel time of roughly 10 minutes during peak hours, saving time and money
- Improved access to 280,000 jobs and nearly 50 schools along and near Colfax Avenue
- Numerous bicycle, pedestrian and other transportation improvements
- Affordable and fiscally sustainable

How was the potential economic impact evaluated?

A high-level economic review was conducted through an analysis of case studies from peer cities, local/national developer and private-investor interviews, as well as an inventory of development potential for all parcels along Colfax Avenue within the study area. The economic analysis provided the following key findings:

- Shallow lot depth along Colfax Avenue limits the scope and scale of new development opportunities
- Investing in transit along Colfax Avenue will improve property values
- Developers and key stakeholders indicated the quality of the transit investment (e.g., bus stop amenities, aesthetics, level of transit priority, and other improvements) was important to their future (re)development and investment considerations along Colfax Avenue.

Will there be construction? When will it start?

Colfax Corridor Connections is a study to identify the specific transit and mobility option that best meets the overall transit demand and improves mobility in the corridor. The recommended BRT system now must compete for FTA funding and identify other local/regional funding sources before it can be implemented. Initial targets project that construction could begin no sooner than 2019-2020.

How can I get involved in the process?

Public input is essential to the success of this study. To ensure maximum public-participation, the City and County of Denver and its partners have and will continue to implement a proactive public-involvement program that is designed to be responsive to feedback from the community. Public input is vital to making decisions that are in the best overall interest of the communities within the Colfax Avenue Corridor. For more information on how to get involved, visit www.ColfaxCorridorConnections.com.

Does Bus Rapid Transit preclude streetcars in the future?

Implementing BRT along Colfax Avenue does not preclude the long-term vision of having streetcars operating along Colfax Avenue and/or in other areas. The City and County of Denver intends to undertake a transit master plan to help better define the future vision of mobility for all users within and to/from Denver, which will be conducted with extensive public involvement.



How are travel patterns forecasted in the study area?

DRCOG is responsible for maintaining a model that predicts how travel in the metro area will change in the future if planned projects are completed. As part of this study, RTD and DRCOG, in coordination with the City and County of Denver, have developed a new travel forecasting model (often referred to as the “FOCUS model”) that is a more detailed prediction tool for the region. One of the biggest benefits of the new model is its ability to more accurately account for the role walking and bicycle trips (either exclusively or as part of a trip that includes transit or vehicular travel) play in travel behavior. Given the strong role that walking and bicycling has in the Colfax Avenue Corridor, the new model is a valuable addition to this project.

Who is involved in Colfax Corridor Connections?

The City and County of Denver, RTD and DRCOG are collaborating to complete this study under the guidance of FTA and in coordination with the City of Aurora, the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) and a number of local/state/federal agencies throughout the study area. In addition, the study team has formed a Community Task Force comprised of representatives from registered neighborhood/business organizations, and community leaders to help deepen their engagement with local communities and understanding of the study.

How will this study connect with other studies/projects going on in the area?

From RTD’s FasTracks system and the redevelopment on and around the Anschutz Medical Campus to other long-range planning studies going on in the study area, there is no shortage of projects to consider. The Colfax Corridor Connections team is in regular communication with all project teams working in the corridor to ensure that the most current and reliable information is informing the study and process.

