

1 Introduction

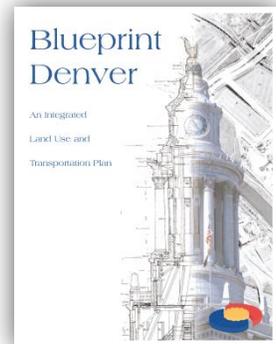
Purpose of this Document

In 2010, the City and County of Denver received a grant from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to conduct an Alternatives Analysis (AA) to evaluate the range of options for increasing person-trip capacity on the East Colfax Avenue corridor in Denver and Aurora, from approximately I-25 to I-225 (a distance of approximately ten miles). Improvements in this corridor are needed to address the growing travel demand and congestion along the East Colfax Avenue corridor and provide more efficient public transportation service. The purpose of this AA is to define the transportation needs in the study area, identify reasonable alternatives that address those needs, and provide information to the public and local decision-makers to help identify transportation modes and alignments to meet those needs. This AA report documents the process used to identify transportation alternatives in the study area, evaluate those alternatives, and develop recommendations for implementation. From there, Denver and its project partners can move forward to conduct an environmental analysis and design process, identify funding opportunities, and seek related approval needed to build and operate the final project.

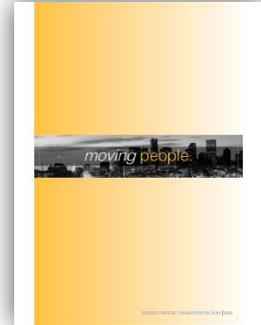
Previous Plans and Projects

There have been multiple studies and projects and studies preceding this analysis of the East Colfax corridor:

- In 2002, the City and County of Denver approved the plan called *Blueprint Denver*, which designated the East Colfax corridor as an “area of change,” meaning that it is an area of focused future growth. The plan notes, “Future residents and workers in these areas will have excellent access to efficient forms of transportation that include walking, biking, buses, and light rail. However, redevelopment in these areas does more than just reduce the potential traffic congestion in the City. New development can improve the economic base, provide jobs, and enhance the visual quality of buildings, streets, and neighborhoods, thereby positively affecting the quality of life in both the Areas of Change and in the surrounding neighborhoods.”
- In 2006, the City and County of Denver designated a “Main Street” zoning district for East Colfax Avenue to encourage redevelopment and revitalization of the corridor. This new zoning designation was incorporated into the City’s zoning code in 2010.
- Denver’s 2006 plan called *Greenprint Denver* represented the City’s action plan for sustainable development. It included goals aimed at reducing per capita greenhouse gas emissions, decreasing reliance on autos through public transit use, promoting transit-oriented development (TOD), and encouraging bicycle and pedestrian travel and enhancements.



- Denver’s 2008 *Strategic Transportation Plan* identified a need to accommodate a forecast 20-30% increase in person-trip demand in the East Colfax corridor by 2025 without growing “Denver’s road footprint.” It also noted that “about 75% of the traffic in the East Colfax Travel Shed are pass-through trips,” increasing to roughly 78% by 2030.
- Denver’s *Colfax Streetcar Feasibility Study*, completed in 2010, examined the potential for a streetcar project to accommodate the future person-trip demand in the Denver portion of the East Colfax Avenue Corridor. It noted that the four bus transit routes in the study area, currently carrying approximately 30,000 riders per day, make the corridor the highest-ridership bus corridor in the Regional Transportation District (RTD) system. The study concluded that a streetcar system was potentially feasible and should be considered in future studies as one option to accommodate future person-trip demand.
- RTD’s *Colfax Avenue Transit Priority Study*, completed in January 2014, examined near-term capital improvements to reduce transit travel times and improve reliability while increasing security and ridership along RTD’s 15 Limited route on East Colfax Avenue between Broadway and Yosemite Street. This project, conducted in cooperation with the City and County of Denver, considered a variety of amenities and improvements to facilitate bus movements in the corridor, and recommended improved basic amenities at all passenger stops, installation of security cameras, improved lighting, bus queue jumps and/or bypass lanes. Each of the amenities and improvements will be evaluated further during a more detailed design phase and closely coordinated with the Colfax Corridor Connections project during the environmental compliance phase for both projects.
- **Better Denver Bond Program:** In 2007, citizens in the City and County of Denver approved a bond program of more than 309 projects and \$500 million aimed at improving the City’s overall urban infrastructure. Projects along East Colfax Avenue included:
 - Colfax Business Improvement District (CBID) improvements from Grant Street to Columbine Street, including upgrades to pedestrian signals and improvements to general street lighting.
 - Greektown (Columbine Street to St. Paul Street) improvements, including new pedestrian signals, sidewalk and curb ramp improvements, and treescaping.
- **Denver Safety Enhancements (2013):** The City and County of Denver has recently undertaken a series of improvements to promote safety and enhance pedestrian and bicycle access along East Colfax Avenue, including:
 - Installation of new pedestrian crossing warning signs alongside the traffic signal displays on East Colfax Avenue at Garfield Street and on East Colfax Avenue at Fillmore Street.
 - Installation of new school warning signs alongside the traffic signal displays on East Colfax Avenue at Josephine, Columbine, and Elizabeth Streets.



- Installation of new school zone speed limit signage with double fines added to Josephine Street north of East Colfax Avenue adjacent to Denver East High School.
- Upgrading of the intersection of northbound Esplanade and 16th Avenue to an all-way stop so that both intersections of the Esplanade at 16th Avenue directly adjacent to Denver East High School will be all-way stops.
- Denver Traffic Engineering Services (TES) has contacted CDOT Region 1 and requested that the intersections of East Colfax Avenue at Fillmore, Adams, and Garfield Streets be given the top priority for discretionary safety funding for traffic signal reconstruction at signalized intersections on state highways in Denver that have not historically qualified for state hazard elimination (SHE) funding.
- A traffic signal warrant study is being conducted for the intersection of East Colfax Avenue at Steele Street to determine if a traffic or pedestrian volume signal warrant is met.
- Turn prohibition signs will be placed at the driveways on Garfield and Jackson Streets that provide access to the new Sprouts market, in-line retail, and fast food restaurant prohibiting vehicles from turning north toward 16th Avenue. Denver's Traffic Engineering Services has also directed the developer to supplement these turn prohibition signs with on-site pavement markings to re-enforce the turn restrictions.
- New 24-hour traffic counts will be conducted on 16th Avenue between Steele Street and Colorado Boulevard once additional in-line retail and a fast food restaurant next to Sprouts are open for business to compare those counts with 24-hour traffic counts previously conducted in December 2011.



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