



MEMORANDUM

TO: HIGH-PERFORMANCE TRANSPORTATION ENTERPRISE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
FROM: PIPER DARLINGTON, BUDGET AND SPECIAL PROJECTS MANAGER
DATE: MAY 19, 2021
SUBJECT: FEDERAL AND COLFAX INTERCHANGE UPDATE

Purpose:

To provide an update to the Board of Directors (the Board) on the Federal and Colfax Interchange transformation project.

Requested Action:

None, the purpose is informational only.

Background

Since 2016, CDOT has been involved in discussions with local agency and community leaders (including the West Colfax Business Improvement District (BID), among others) about potential transformational alternatives to both the Federal/Colfax interchange and the Colfax viaduct. CDOT also completed its internal study of interchange alternatives in 2016. In August 2019, City and County of Denver (CCD) and CDOT/HPTE staff signed a Letter of Commitment and began more a structured approach to build on the initial visioning work done by external stakeholders and assess options for the interchange. Under the Letter of Commitment, CCD would begin a \$500,000 study of alternatives that consider broad CCD goals (including storm water and drainage). CDOT/HPTE would contribute \$500,000 to a feasibility study to determine alternatives for delivering a potential project. This could include engaging the private sector through a public-private-partnership using the Right-of-Way (ROW) made available by reconfiguration of the interchange for redevelopment.

The CCD study kicked off in early 2020 and developed a comprehensive vision framework or "lens" (Attachment A) through which the options would be studied. As part of the project management team (PMT) for the project, CDOT staff has been advising on alternatives representing a range of designs, with a specific focus on safety, bike/pedestrian connectivity, congestion, ongoing use of the existing Federal bridge over Colfax, and more. With a range of alternatives acceptable to all stakeholders, CDOT/HPTE could proceed to the next step of a feasibility study. In addition, a study of the Colfax viaduct has begun in which options for greater bike/pedestrian mobility and community use of the viaduct are being explored.

Current Details

CCD is still in the process of compiling feedback from the PMT and determining the final alternatives that will be moved into the analysis by CDOT/HPTE. CDOT is focused on ensuring that those alternatives align with Department traffic and safety metrics and other criteria, including continued use of the Federal Bridge for vehicles. It is anticipated that the CCD study will be finalized in the next few months.

Next Steps

Staff will update the Board when the final alternative(s) have been selected, and HPTE will begin a feasibility study.

Attachment A: Federal and Colfax Vision Framework

	Equity	Resiliency	Connectivity	Health & Safety
Mobility	Create a pedestrian, bike and transit network that provides mutually beneficial access for all ages and abilities between existing and future uses.	Strengthen mobility options and create visibly integrated transportation modes that provide redundancy in the transportation system.	Develop cohesive multi-modal network that creates efficient access and supporting infrastructure between modes.	Redesign the interchange to ensure safe movements for all modes: pedestrians, bicycles, transit users, and vehicles. Create safe and comfortable access to public recreational uses.
Environmental & Stormwater	Manage local and regional stormwater to reduce flooding risks for existing properties and future development. Increase community education and awareness of flood risks.	Implement stormwater strategies that enable the community to recover quickly after storm events. Implement green infrastructure that addresses water quality, biodiversity, heat island effects and reduces the impacts of climate change.	Implement stormwater improvements that are compatible with and enhance mobility goals and development opportunities.	Design stormwater improvements that increase public safety by mitigating both local and regional flood risks. Integrate landscapes which improve water quality and create a healthy environment.
Land Use & Economics	Maximize development opportunities that accommodate affordable housing, locally-owned businesses, community-serving amenities, and job-training and employment opportunities for low-income community members.	Integrate a broad mix of mutually-supportive uses to create a strong integrated economic ecosystem.	Support transit-oriented development with land-use patterns, building features, and regional programs that facilitate residents, employers, employees, and visitors to use alternative transportation.	Promote pedestrian-scale development opportunities to facilitate easy access to healthy food, community services, recreation, and open space.
Open Space, Public Realm, & Placemaking	Plan open space that addresses the current needs and identity of the community and can be used in a variety of ways by a multiplicity of user groups now and in the future.	Create a flexible open space system that accommodates biodiversity, stormwater needs, heat island reduction, and economic stimulus that also fosters healthy lifestyles and a strong sense of community.	Stitch together open space and public realm to create clear, direct connections supported by wayfinding to and through the site.	Provide safe open spaces with access to nature and services for mental and physical well-being and healthy activities.