

## Colorado Transportation Investment Office Memorandum

**To:** The CTIO Board of Directors

**From:** Simon Logan, Special Projects Lead and Policy Analyst

**Date:** August 20, 2025

**Subject:** Globeville and Elyria Swansea (GES) Tolling Equity Program Changes

### **Purpose:**

To seek approval of changes to the GES Tolling Equity Program by the Colorado Transportation Investment Office (CTIO)<sup>1</sup> Board of Directors related to adding an additional benefit that helps GES residents move in and around their community through the GES Connector.

### **Requested Action:**

CTIO staff is seeking approval of Resolution #477, which adds the GES Connector as an additional benefit to the program covering Saturdays and Sundays.

### **Background**

The 2017 Record of Decision (ROD) for the Central 70 project included a commitment for CTIO to develop an equity program to provide discounted access to the Express Lanes for low-income residents of the GES neighborhoods. The CTIO Board of Directors (CTIO Board) approved the program in April 2022. It has three main components:

#### 1. Benefits

- Toll credit (\$100) and a transponder for eligible residents to access the Express Lanes.
- Free Transit passes. Available within the community at various distribution sites.

#### 2. Eligibility:

- Residents of GES with an annual household income below 100 percent of the Area Median Income (AMI) and households displaced from GES due to eminent domain for the I-70 Central Project with an annual household income below 100 percent of the AMI. CDOT holds a list of these displaced households.
- Eligible residents don't have to choose one or the other; they can receive both benefits.

#### 2. Funding

- 15 percent of net toll revenue from the Central 70 Express Lanes is allocated for toll credits and transit passes, making this an ongoing benefit to the community.
- Administrative and start-up costs, up to \$1 million, provided by CDOT.

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<sup>1</sup> The High Performance Transportation Enterprise (HPTE) is now doing business as the Colorado Transportation Investment Office (CTIO). CTIO is how the enterprise refers to itself now and in the future. However, the HPTE name is retained for legislative and legal documents.

- CTIO covers the initial cost of the free transponder and promotional credit for all eligible residents.

In April, the CTIO Board of Directors discussed additional benefits that could be added to the program and directed staff to explore the GES Connector further.

## Background

### What is the Connector?

The Connector is a free ride-share service for GES - it also operates in Montbello and Gateway. It serves local neighborhood destinations and transit stations. This ride-share service aims to make it easier for residents to reach neighborhood destinations and connect to regional transit services provided by RTD. Riders download the Denver Connector mobile app to request rides using their smartphone or call (720) 905-4438 to request rides in English and Spanish.

It began as a pilot run by the City and County of Denver in Montbello in 2021. Because of the success of the program, it was extended to the Gateway and GES neighborhoods. All rides are free and available weekdays from 6 a.m. - 8 p.m. The service provides on-demand trips anywhere within select service area boundaries within the neighborhood, with a few exceptions (like a grocery store outside the boundaries of GES, which is considered a food desert). The service does not currently operate on the weekends (Saturdays/Sundays)

As directed by the CTIO Board, CTIO staff explored expanding this highly successful program in GES to weekends and took the following steps:

- Added a question to the Transit Pass Survey to capture feedback from the community to determine if there was support for its expansion.
  - The survey found overwhelming support (74% of respondents) for expanding the service.
- Held meetings with the current service provider and City and County of Denver staff to find out more information on the program, including community ridership levels, costs, and how they offset single-ride trips.
  - Extending the service to the weekends using the same operating hours is estimated to cost \$144k annually.
  - It has high utilization with an average of 90 rides per day, carrying an average of 140 passengers. Around 50% of all trips are shared trips.
  - Regular data and reporting requirements in the contract will allow CTIO to track key metrics such as greenhouse gas emissions reductions resulting from the program.
- Confirmed the contracting mechanisms to enter into an agreement with the current service provider to expand the service to Saturdays and Sundays.

## Options and Recommendation

- Review and approve Resolution #477 extending the service to Saturday and Sunday - **Staff Recommendation.**
- Review Resolution #477, but with instructions to add to the language. Staff would make the necessary revisions and return with a revised resolution.
- Do not approve Resolution #477.

## Next Steps

- 1) If approved, CTIO Staff will work with the current service provider to enter a contract to expand the service to Saturdays and Sundays (estimated to start in late Summer/early Fall)
- 2) CTIO staff will coordinate outreach with the vendor and the City and County of Denver on data sharing and NETC on communication, and outreach associated with the expansion of the service.
- 3) CTIO will provide another progress report on or before January 2026.

## Attachments:

- Attachment A: Resolution #477
- Attachment B: GES Connector Presentation
- Attachment C: 2025 Transit Pass Survey and comparison