

CHOOSE YOUR MOVE



US 36
EXPRESS LANES PROJECT

XPRESS

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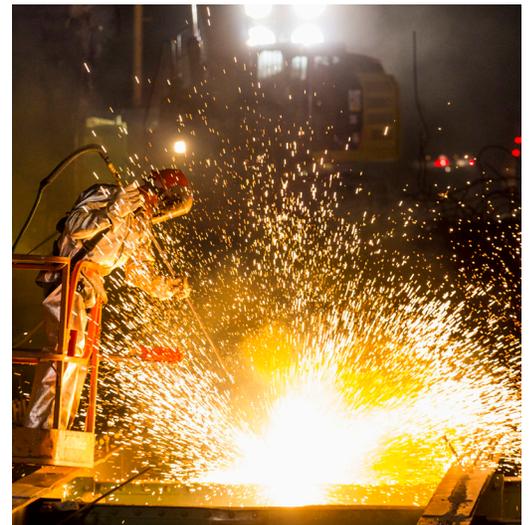
Multiple backhoes demolish Sheridan bridge

SHERIDAN BRIDGE HAS FALLEN DOWN

Built in the '50's and widened in the '70's, the original Sheridan Boulevard bridge structure is one of five bridges being fully replaced on the US 36 Express Lanes Project. The new bridge will be 62 feet wider and 22 feet longer than its aging predecessor.

Along with the bridge replacements, Sheridan's four on- and off-ramps are being reconstructed, and improvements will be made to the Westminster Center Park-n-Ride, including new canopies with enhanced weather protection.

The first phase of the new Sheridan Boulevard bridge construction began last summer and was finished last month. Traffic was moved to the new portion of the bridge in January.



Lancing the steel girders

Once traffic was in its new alignment, the demolition of the old structure began. Crews removed 14 steel girders that were approximately 187 feet long and weighed 46,000 pounds each.

The second portion of the Sheridan Boulevard bridge construction is beginning. Throughout February and March, crews are constructing the bridge support structure. Drivers can expect to see the new bridge, with all its updates and improvements, this fall.

US 36 EXPRESS LANES PROJECT ENGAGES IN PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) and the High Performance Transportation Enterprise (HPTE) are implementing a public-private partnership (P3) for Phase 2 of the US 36 Express Lanes Project. Plenary Roads Denver represents the private sector on Phase 2 of the US 36 Express Lanes Project, and they will team with CDOT and HPTE to provide transportation improvements and services to the traveling public for the next 50 years.

The P3 arrangement enables the project to be completed 20 years sooner than originally planned because the current federal and state fuel taxes do not provide enough revenue to fund the amount of highway projects necessary to repair Colorado's aging infrastructure and prepare for growth. Because Plenary Roads Denver is able to pay the cost upfront and assume all of the financial risk, CDOT does not have to wait for tax revenue to fund this particular infrastructure project. P3s are becoming more and more popular throughout the country as other states face the same funding challenges as Colorado, and the structures allow for shared risk between the private and public partners.

Plenary's reimbursement of their upfront costs depends completely on the usage of the toll lanes on US 36 and the 7.7-mile express-toll operation on I-25 between downtown Denver and Pecos Street on US 36. The general purpose lanes will remain free of charge on US 36 and I-25 – at no time will either highway become a complete toll road – and Plenary cannot increase the tolls without the approval of the HPTE board.

It's important to note that although Plenary will be responsible for operations and maintenance of the project for the next 50 years, CDOT upholds ownership of US 36. Plenary must adhere to strict standards set forth by HPTE to ensure the highway is maintained to specific performance measures, as Plenary must return to the state a highway in first-class condition at the end of the concession agreement.

WHAT ARE THE FACTS ABOUT THE HOV/EXPRESS LANES?

Inquiries are rolling in about the future US 36 Express Lanes and what changes people will see regarding its use. Upon completion of the project, an express lane will be open in both directions on US 36. These lanes will serve High Occupancy Vehicles (HOV), the new Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system and drivers with fewer than three people who choose to pay a toll. There will still be two general purpose lanes in each direction that will not be tolled for commuters who do not meet the HOV passenger requirements or do not want to pay the tolls.

The new BRT system will give commuters reliable travel times between Denver and Boulder. To help ensure these travel times, cars using the HOV lane will need three or more passengers to avoid paying the toll fees. Single or double occupant vehicles that want to utilize the HOV lane can pay a toll – similar to the tolls on I-25's HOV lanes. Motorcycles are still allowed by federal law to use the express lane, regardless of whether they carry one or two passengers.

Toll rates have not yet been established for the project, but are expected to range from \$0.60 to \$4.45 depending on the time of day. Rates will be lower during non-peak travel times when traffic is lighter and higher during periods of heavier congestion. Electronic signs will clearly display the current toll price prior to entrance points.

Watch for more updates on the future plans for the HOV lanes as the project gets closer to completion.

RTD Northwest Rail Line vs. CDOT US 36 Express Lanes Project

The Northwest Rail Line will be a 41-mile commuter rail line connecting Denver Union Station to Adams County, Westminster, Broomfield, Louisville, Boulder and Longmont. The Northwest Rail Line is part of the Regional Transportation District's original FasTracks program that was passed in 2004 and is currently still in the planning process.

These projects are often confused due to their proximity to one another. However, the FasTracks program has always included two improvement projects for the northwest area – the Northwest Rail Line and the US 36 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Project – as separate projects. The Northwest Rail Line is led by RTD, while the US 36 Express Lanes Project is led by CDOT, but includes funding from RTD.

Through a five-year environmental process, it was decided that a multimodal solution including BRT was the best mode of transportation for US 36 based on a variety of criteria, including the narrow right-of-way available along the highway.

The Northwest Rail Line was always intended to run along the existing railroad tracks that connect downtown Denver to Boulder and Longmont. Commuter rail was decided as the mode due to the ability to use the existing tracks instead of building more than 40 miles of new track. For more information on the FasTracks Program, visit www.rtd-fastracks.com.