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I-25: The New Pueblo Freeway



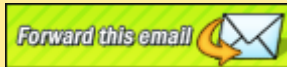
ILEX STREET TO CITY CENTER DRIVE

Colorado Department of Transportation

May 2018 eNewsletter

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Please forward/share this email with others who may have an interest in the Ilex Design-Build project.

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Current Design Work

- Landscaping & irrigation plans complete
- ITS Design nearing completion

Current Construction

- All roadway and structural work is complete on the I-25 over Indiana segment. Staining touch-ups to be completed in spring for 100% completion
- Work is complete on the Mesa bridge structure, signing & roadway. Staining

City Center On-Ramp Reopens in Temporary Configuration

Earlier this month, the southbound I-25 City Center on-ramp closed in conjunction with the second major traffic shift. The ramp will reopen in a temporary configuration next week.

The contractor worked to mill, or remove the paved surface area, of the existing ramp, then began placing embankment for the temporary ramp. Once embankment grading is finished, crews will pave the temporary ramp which crosses over the former southbound I-25 lanes and connects to the temporary alignment just north of the new Interstate-25 bridge over Gruma Drive.

"We want to stress that when the City Center Drive on-ramp reopens that this is a temporary ramp and won't actually seem much different than the original ramp," said Jennifer Billings, CDOT Project Manager. "The new, permanent on-ramp will be much longer than the existing ramp, providing an improved merging environment."

The new, permanent City Center Drive southbound on-ramp will be built later this summer, and reopen by the end of the year.

Bridge Demolition Progresses on Ilex Project

The past few months have seen two major traffic shifts on Interstate-25 where both northbound and southbound traffic was shifted into a temporary configuration onto the newly built roadway.

While traffic is shifted, the previous bridge viaducts will be demolished. The stereotypical image of demolition is a wrecking ball or explosives; however, these are rarely used in highway bridge demolition. For a typical highway bridge, hydraulic excavators sit on the deck removing concrete with

touch-ups this spring for 100% completion

- US 50C Truss Bridge over Arkansas River painting & deck pour this spring
- Northern Ave bridge completed Phase 3, finalizing slab on SE corner, waterproof membrane & asphalt ongoing
- Clark and D Street cul-de-sac sidewalk, lighting & landscaping completing this spring
- MSE walls along SB I-25 on-ramp from Santa Fe Ave
- Grading & finalization of Pond A by Gruma Ave
- MSE walls at I-25 bridge over Thomas Phelps Creek Trail complete
- Storm drainage installation on the north and south approaches of the project
- Demolition of existing NB I-25 beginning April

Upcoming Construction

- Phase II Construction of D Street Bridge, Iron Phoenix, CML & Gruma
- Pile driving at all mainline bridges
- MSE wall construction at all mainline bridges

Project Schedule

Northbound I-25: Spring 2015 to Spring 2018

Southbound I-25: Fall 2017 to Winter 2018

Bridge Rehabilitations: Summer 2015 to Spring 2018

a hydraulic hammer, and then excavators or cranes remove the girders.



Demolition work in progress

This process is also known as systematic deconstruction, and involves a great deal of engineering to protect the lives of workers, and to prevent damage to any other structure in close proximity. Basically, nearly as much engineering analysis is needed to demolish a structure as to initially build it.

The demolition process also involves separating the reinforcing steel from the concrete. The steel is wound into bunches that almost resemble balls of yarn. This process is done using excavators with processor attachments. Once the separation process is complete, the concrete rubble and steel "yarn balls" are taken to a scrap yard for recycling.



Final Configuration:
December 2018

Project Completion:
April 2019

Scrap steel "balls" after being separated from concrete

A total of 53 spans will be removed from the north viaducts over Gruma Drive and the railroad, and the south viaducts over D Street and Thomas Phelps Creek Trail.

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Quick Links

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Latest Aerial Video of the Ilex Project



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What the Project Involves

The Ilex interchange is the first segment to be constructed as part of the New Pueblo Freeway.

The project consists of replacing bridges on I-25 between Ilex Street and City Center Drive in Pueblo. Work includes rehabilitation of bridges on northbound I-25 over Santa Fe Avenue (US 50C), I-25 over Indiana Avenue, on the Santa Fe Avenue (US 50C) bridge over the Arkansas River, and on Northern Avenue and Mesa Avenue over I-25.

Environmental Mitigation: Paying Attention to Big-Eared Bats

Transportation projects such as the I-25/Ilex Design-Build Project have the potential to impact federally and state-listed animal species and their habitat. According to the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), the state-listed Townsend's big-eared bat (*Corynorhinus townsendii*) could potentially be found within the project area. Although they are mainly known to roost in open caves, they may also be found in cracks and crevasses in structures such as those along the I-25 corridor.

These bats are non-migratory and generally sedentary, residing in pine forests and arid desert scrub habitats ranging throughout the western U.S. from British Columbia into central Mexico. They are a medium-sized bat which gets its descriptive name from very long ears, which can reach lengths of 38mm. Summer maternity colonies range in size from a few dozen to hundreds of bats. However, the Townsend's Big-eared bat population, like other North American bat species, has experienced dramatic declines due to habitat loss and the effects of white-nose syndrome, a deadly disease affecting North American bats.



Townsend's big-eared bat

Structurally deficient bridges on I-25 over Gruma Drive, the Union Pacific Railroad, and Ilex Street will also be removed and replaced.

Interchange ramps will be lengthened to provide safer transitions onto and off of the Interstate, especially the 1st Street ramp to southbound I-25. Roadway curves will be softened to improve visibility and provide a smoother ride for motorists.

Local roadway improvements are included at D Street, Ilex Street, Bennett Street cul-de-sac, Clark Street cul-de-sac, and along Santa Fe Avenue.

Bridges will be widened at City Center Drive and I-25 over Santa Fe Avenue (widened to the median).

Noise abatement will also occur along some segments of I-25.

Project Partners

- Colorado Department of Transportation
- Federal Highway Administration
- City of Pueblo
- Pueblo County
- The Community

Funding

State of Colorado revenues from a safety fee placed on vehicle registrations have helped fund the Ilex Design-Build project.

Funding sources for the project:

Bridge Enterprise

Due to the widespread range of these bats, many transportation projects have the potential to impact this species, including the I-25/Ilex Design-Build project. It has been documented that bats will abandon roost sites after human interference, so the project team conducts annual bat surveys. Bat surveys are generally conducted in May as colonies establish between March and June, with pups being born between May and July. The project team is committed to preserving roosting/breeding habitat and individual bats if they are observed on structures within the project area.

CDOT and The Cannabis Conversation

The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) launched a new drugged driving initiative called The Cannabis Conversation to learn more about the effect of marijuana on driving.


Colorado continues to see marijuana-involved traffic crashes resulting in serious consequences and is seeking the community's input to spark a meaningful conversation. Through this conversation, CDOT is looking to learn why some people drive under the influence of marijuana, what the public perceives as dangers of doing so, determine what would convince someone to not drive high, and better understand the norms and opinions from multiple perspectives around driving high.

The Cannabis Conversation is a statewide, multi-year initiative involving not just the public and marijuana consumers, but also industry influencers, law enforcement, local government, and other stakeholders to ensure all angles and perspectives of the issue are recognized.

For years, CDOT and its partners have worked to educate the public about the dangers of driving high and provide marijuana consumers with information on how to stay safe, such as planning for a safe, sober ride. Although past campaigns have greatly increased knowledge about the legal consequences of driving high, our state still has a long way to go to reach the goal of zero deaths on Colorado roads. Consider:

- In 2016, there were 77 fatalities involving a driver impaired by active tetrahydrocannabinol (THC).
 - Recent public education efforts have resulted in more than 90 percent of marijuana consumers knowing they can get cited for Driving Under the Influence (DUI) for driving high.
 - Still more than 50 percent of users consistently report driving high in the last 30 days.
 - More than 60 people are arrested each day in Colorado for DUIs resulting from drug or alcohol

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- One-third of fatalities involved an impaired driver, equaling 196 fatalities.
- More than 17 percent of all DUI arrests from the Colorado State Patrol in 2016 involved marijuana.
- According to a 2016 survey conducted by CDOT, 55 percent of marijuana users said they believed it was safe to drive under the influence of marijuana.

Colorado law enforcement officers are trained in the detection of impairment of alcohol and drugs, and many are specially trained drug recognition experts (DREs). These officers can detect physical signs of drug impairment. DREs are viewed as one of the most effective law enforcement tools in efforts to reduce drugged driving. From 2012 to 2014, there was a 68 percent increase in the number of drug recognition experts trained in Colorado.

Everyone is invited to join the conversation at <http://sgiz.mobi/s3/CannabisConversation> - whether or not you consume cannabis. The only requirement is providing open and honest feedback with the goal of identifying practical solutions to make Colorado's roads safer.

Additional Project Information

For more information about the I-25 Ilex Design-Build project, visit the [CDOT website project page](#). To receive future Ilex Design-Build project e-newsletters and construction notices, send an email to i25ilex@PublicInfoTeam.com requesting to be added to the email list.