



I-25: The New Pueblo Freeway



ILEX STREET TO CITY CENTER DRIVE

Colorado Department of Transportation

Summer 2018 eNewsletter

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

[For a PDF version, click here.](#)

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

That Was Then, This is Now

The I-25/Ilex Design-Build Project is entering the home stretch towards anticipated completion in December 2018 (weather dependent), and sometimes it's hard to remember how much work has been done already. So where was the project a year ago?

One milestone was the new D Street intersection at Santa Fe Avenue. To improve safety of the previous five-way intersection, Clark Street became a cul-de-sac to create a traditional four-way intersection. New drainage was installed, with new curb, gutter and sidewalks also added. The intersection now boasts improved pedestrian access with American's with Disabilities (ADA)-accessible ramps and dedicated crossings.

Another important milestone was work beginning on the new I-25 bridge over the Thomas Phelps Creek Trail. As some may remember, this new bridge was added after challenges securing an easement from the Union Pacific Railroad which made design changes necessary.

Also happening a year ago:

- * Girders set on I-25 over Gruma Drive
- * I-25 bridge over Indiana Avenue completed
- * Mesa Avenue bridge over I-25 rehabilitation
- * Northern Avenue bridge over I-25 rehabilitation
- * Mechanically Stabilized Earth (MSE) walls installed from Gruma Drive to City Center Drive
- * MSE walls installed from Thomas Phelps Creek Trail to Gruma Drive
- * Storm drainage installation completed on the northern portion of the project
- * Bridge deck construction on I-25 over Gruma Drive



I-25 bridge over Indiana Ave

What's happening now:

- 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

Final Configuration: December 2018

- * Truss bridge deck construction nearing completion and painting to begin
- * Painting/staining bridges and walls
- * MSE wall installed along southbound I-25 on-ramp from Santa Fe Avenue
- * Demolition of northbound and southbound viaducts completed - final demo over railroad tracks
- * New southbound on-ramp at City Center Drive construction beginning
- * Construction of drainage tie-ins and southbound ramps at Santa Fe Avenue nearing completion
- * D Street Bridge deck construction
- * MSE walls and pier work near Thomas Phelps Creek Trail
- * Gruma walls and bridge work preparation for girder set



MSE walls at D Street

The I-25/Ilex team is working diligently towards December 2018 when traffic will be moved into final configuration, reaching yet another project milestone. CDOT and the project team continue to appreciate the patience of the community and the traveling public while these several changes have taken place over the past year.

Aerial Photos of the I-25/Ilex Design-Build Project



Southbound I-25 On-Ramp at City Center Drive Closes July 17

The I-25/Ilex Design-Build team is closing the southbound I-25 on-ramp at City Center Drive/Exit 98B beginning Tuesday, July 17, when the I-25 southbound on-ramp at Santa Fe Avenue/Exit 98A reopens.

Project Completion:
April 2019

The City Center Drive southbound on-ramp will remain closed until December 2018, along with the I-25 southbound off-ramp at Santa Fe Avenue/US 50C.

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The closures are necessary to build new ramp connections to the newly built portion of the interstate, which include longer acceleration and deceleration lanes, increasing safety for merging traffic.

[For a detour map, click here.](#)

Quick Links

[Project Website](#)
[CDOT Website](#)

A Few Bumps in the Road

A common observation of the I-25/Ilex Design-Build project are the "bumps" on I-25 between Santa Fe/D Street and City Center Drive. The I-25/Ilex Design-Build team assures these bumps are temporary!

Traffic was shifted onto the newly built portion of I-25 this past Spring, but it is not yet in its final configuration. Construction is ongoing, and final paving will happen next Spring - creating a smooth roadway surface.

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The bridges and concrete surfaces are complete, but the asphalt leading up to and across the bridges still requires completion of a final mat. Pavement transitions were installed at each end of the four bridges crossing over the concrete bridge approaches, and were designed and built for the reduced speed posted through the construction zone.

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.

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

"We remind everyone the newly built roadway is still an active construction site, and travelers are driving in a temporary lane configuration with reduced lane and shoulder widths," said Jennifer Billings, CDOT Ilex Project Manager. "Motorists should drive the posted speed limit of 45mph for safety."

The project team did not complete the final paving for many reasons, but the most visually apparent reason is striping. If the team attempted final paving now, temporary striping would need to be applied. When temporary striping is removed it scars the roadway surface. The scarring can create confusion especially when the pavement is wet. By waiting for final paving, it ensures the best possible end-product, a priority for the I-25/Ilex team.

Environmental Mitigation: Minimizing Disturbance to Migratory Birds

An important part of the I-25/Ilex Design-Build project includes limiting the disturbance to any wildlife within, or adjacent to, construction areas to the maximum extent possible. More specifically, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) imposes a particular set of requirements related to migratory birds that must be carefully followed.

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

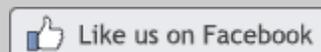
Funding

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

RAMP (Responsible Acceleration of Maintenance and Partnerships)



To maintain compliance with the MBTA on the Ilex project, the team conducts an annual survey to identify any raptor nests that may be affected by construction. This year, three raptor nests were identified within a half-mile of the project, one of which was confirmed occupied by a red-tailed hawk. In accordance with the MBTA, this nest and its occupants have been closely monitored for any signs of distress or disturbance caused by construction-related activities.

While under observation, a clutch of red-tailed hawk eggs hatched under the watchful eye of their mother, and the hatchlings matured over the course of several weeks. The team was surprised when performing a regular check on the nest recently and observed a large osprey sitting on the nest instead!

Many people are probably aware of red-tailed hawks, but ospreys are a bit more elusive around the area. Highly adept anglers, ospreys can hit the water surface with such force that they can completely



Photo of an osprey

submerge themselves on a fishing dive. With long-distance eyesight far superior to that of a human, this bird can scope its prey while hovering from a great height above the surface.

Ospreys are smaller than many raptors, and therefore must rely on nimbleness over power to ensure a successful hunt. When an osprey emerges from the water with a fish in its talons, to achieve lift and flight, it must quickly align the fish parallel to its direction of flight to achieve the greatest possible efficiency and aerodynamics. An eagle, on the other hand, relies on its superior size and power to forcefully rise from the surface of the water, and doesn't need to bother with aligning its catch.

The osprey is a magnificent animal, and the I-25/Ilex team is proud of the precautions it takes to keep these birds safe!

CDOT Increases Awareness for Pedestrian Safety

The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) is hoping to increase awareness of pedestrian safety. Pedestrian fatalities are on the rise with 93 lives lost last year across the state-up 11 percent from the 84 pedestrian fatalities in 2016-and up a whopping 45 percent from 2015, when 64 pedestrians died in the state of Colorado.

In Colorado, most crashes involving pedestrians occur at non-intersections. So CDOT wants to educate both

pedestrians and drivers on the importance of safety at crosswalks and intersections.

Nationally, about 5,000 pedestrians die each year and 70,000 pedestrians are injured in traffic accidents. Young children and the elderly are more likely to be killed or injured in a pedestrian crash than any other age group.

While it's easy to blame drivers, they are not always responsible for these accidents. Pedestrians can often be the cause of accidents from distractions, not crossing at a cross walk, not looking both ways, and for other reasons. These senseless tragedies don't have to happen. Review this advice for safe street crossing to avoid potential injuries. Always follow these steps when crossing a street:

- Before crossing, stop at the curb, edge of the road or corner before proceeding.
- Look left-right-left several times and over your shoulder for turning vehicles. If it's clear, begin crossing.
- Continue to check for traffic while crossing.
- Do not text, be on a phone, listening to loud music, or otherwise distracted while crossing the street.

These tips may seem like common sense, but in today's world people are increasingly distracted and take for granted or assume that vehicles will stop for pedestrians. CDOT wants to keep everyone safe, pedestrians and motorists alike, and hopes people will take a moment to be aware of their surroundings before crossing a street.

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.

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