



From the ground up

The buildup of the dirt roadway embankments for the new section of Interstate 25 between City Center Drive and the Runyon Field area is in its early stages.

COURTESY PHOTO/COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

LOCAL

Dirt work well underway at I-25-Ilex construction site

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THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN

Construction crews continue to set the table for the new section of Interstate 25 between City Center Drive and the Runyon Field area.

And it's a big, long table. When finished, the state Department of Transportation estimates 952,000 tons of dirt — equal to 1,200 full railroad cars — will have been hauled in by truck to build the roadway embankment that will serve as the base for the new section of interstate.

The new embankment — a series of long, wide earthen columns — will be built up 30 feet or higher along much of the nearly half-mile stretch between City Center Drive and the Runyon Field area.

The new roadway will go on top, interrupted only by a series of four bridges over the area's roads and railroad tracks.

Gone will be the aged, industrial-looking series of viaducts, embankments and bridges that motorists now use.

Once the dirt and new roadway is in place, the new section of interstate will rise about 30 to 40 feet off the surrounding ground, or about 10 to 15 feet higher in elevation than the current section of freeway, state Department of Transportation officials say.

The dirt work — still in the early stages — is one of many parts of the I-25-Ilex interchange and roadway replacement project now underway or nearly completed. The project began in July 2015 and is set for



CHIEFTAIN PHOTOS/JOHN JAQUES

Decorative retaining walls border the new D Street that will connect Santa Fe Avenue with the Runyon Field area. The new D Street will replace Ilex Street, which will be closed to make room for the area's new I-25 interchange.

The project began in July 2015 and is set for completion by fall 2017.



Even before painting, the image of a ballplayer sliding into base stands out in the new sculptured retaining walls.

completion by fall 2017.

Elsewhere in the project area:

Crews are nearing completion on the widening of the bridges over City Center Drive and Santa Fe Avenue.

The decorative retaining walls along the future D

Street are in place.

Local utilities continue to relocate or replace their infrastructure in the project area. The job of relocating all of the utilities from Ilex Street to the future D Street is complete.

SEE I-25, 2C

PLAYING BALL

Interstate 25 motorists are getting their first glimpse of the star attraction at the new roadway entrance planned for the Runyon Field area.

Ahead of the construction of the new D Street, which will serve as the main road into the ballpark area, crews recently erected the first set of large decorative concrete retaining walls that feature a sculpted image of a ballplayer sliding into a base.

When painted, the "ballplayer" will be a sandy color that will pop out against a sky blue-colored background, according to the design plans. The image — titled "SAFE!" — is repeated on both sides of the new roadway.

The image was the top choice at public meetings held as part of the planning for the I-25-Ilex replacement project. Two other images considered were a baseball team in a dugout or a baseball lying on the grass.

"CDOT's thoughts were this will be a gateway for Runyon Field and if we can do something to promote that, that's what we wanted to do," said Scott Dalton, I-25-Ilex project manager for the Colorado Department of Transportation.

Julie Gameca, a landscape architect with THK Associates, said in a statement that the image offered a "strong sense of movement and relayed the excitement of both playing and watching the game."

"The panel also has very strong tactile design because it will be at a pedestrian level. The design team wanted to encourage interaction between the users of Runyon Field and the panel," she said.

The new roadway into the ballpark area will include sidewalks. The new road will replace the current Ilex Street entryway, which will be removed to make room for the area's new I-25 interchange, also now under construction.

