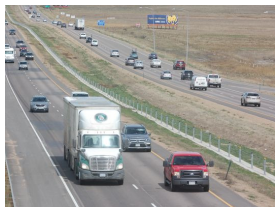


Windsor pledges \$1 million to I-25



Rob White, rwhite@coloradoan.com 1:50 a.m. MDT April 20, 2016



(Photo: Miles Blumhardt/The Beacon)

The Windsor Town Board recently agreed to put \$1 million toward adding lanes to Interstate 25 from roughly the Johnstown exit north to Fort Collins.

The money would serve as matching funds for the Colorado Department of Transportation to use toward the project.

"It's a lot of money, but the return is great," Windsor Town Board member Myles Baker said.

Two different federal grants are being applied for this month, both of which require matching local funds. CDOT and North Front Range Metropolitan Planning Organization are expected to fund a large portion of the match. CDOT is asking local communities positively impacted by potential improvements to help bridge a \$10 million funding gap.

WIDENING: ['Promising' moves for I-25 expansion in legislature \(/story/news/2016/04/09/promising-moves--25-expansion-legislature/82793186/\)](/story/news/2016/04/09/promising-moves--25-expansion-legislature/82793186/)

Windsor Town Manager Kelly Arnold told the board the \$1 million requested of Windsor by CDOT is feasible.

"Certainly over the next five years we have many things in our capital improvement program, but there is capacity, over a three-year period, to fund \$1 million towards this project," Arnold said. "... There are still uncertainties coming forth over the next five years in our capital expenditures and our revenue, but within (the) commitment I think we can deal with it and re-prioritize if need be."

A CDOT presentation indicated by 2040, Weld County's population is expected to increase to 567,000 and Larimer County's to 481,000 — nearly double the two-county population total from 2012. That means traffic volumes will continue to increase.

"If we as communities don't collaborate and take this on as partners with CDOT, if we just sit idly by and wait for CDOT to fund the solution ... it'll be our great-grandchildren who will actually benefit from the solution," outgoing Windsor mayor John Vazquez said. "If today is where we want to have the benefit, it's going to be incumbent upon us to find the solutions."

BUDGET PROPSAL: [Fort Collins manager plans \\$2M for I-25 expansion \(/story/news/2016/03/10/fort-collins-manager-plans-2m--25-expansion/81583260/\)](/story/news/2016/03/10/fort-collins-manager-plans-2m--25-expansion/81583260/)

The short-term solution, phase one of CDOT's "2035 solution" is a tolled express lane on I-25 from Colorado Highway 402 (near Johnstown) to Colorado Highway 14 (Mulberry Street in Fort Collins).

"This may not be the complete answer, but it could be a good answer," board member Ivan Adams said.

CDOT regional transportation director Johnny Olson told the Windsor Town Board last month that funding for the \$230 million project is expected to come from private financing backed by toll revenues (up to \$100 million), state funds (\$80 million), a TIGER (Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery grant (\$25 million) and local contributions (\$25 million). Though \$15 million to \$18 million in local funding had been secured, municipalities such as Windsor are being asked if they can find a bit more. Through a mill levy, Windsor was already expected to contribute about \$104,000 over five years.

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HELP: [CDOT road assistance comes to northern I-25 \(/story/news/2016/03/11/cdot-road-assistance-comes-northern--25/81637254/\)](http://story/news/2016/03/11/cdot-road-assistance-comes-northern--25/81637254/)

Other entities involved in the project include Fort Collins, Loveland and Johnstown.

"Local commitments really help in the grant process," Olson said. "And we know (Windsor) has been a good partner."

The improvements would include replacement of four bridges to accommodate the increased capacity.

Olson said he expects to hear about the TIGER grant decision in September. The application is due April 28.

Meanwhile, North Front Range is seeking a FASTLANE grant. The Fostering Advancements in Shipping and Transportation for the Long-term Achievement of National Efficiencies is being processed.

PROJECT: [I-70, not I-25, to be widened for \\$1.2 billion \(/story/news/2016/02/09/70-not-25-widened-12-billion/79844168/\)](http://story/news/2016/02/09/70-not-25-widened-12-billion/79844168/)

Separately, work will begin soon on a climbing lane at the "Berthoud Hill" area and on the I-25 bridge at Crossroads Boulevard

"It's our most congested area," Olson said of the Johnstown to Mulberry improvement. "It has a lot of local traffic commuting between the Windsor, Greeley, Fort Collins, Loveland and Timnath areas. So we felt that is the first location where we need to get a managed lane in so we can move people a little better."

Ultimately, it's hoped the improvements will kick-start funding for an additional lane for I-25 south to where the interstate widens to three lanes in each direction near Longmont.

Various other funding options for I-25 lane expansion over the years have failed to generate the money needed for the widening.

Arnold specified that Windsor's short-term uncertainties include:

- Final cost of its new public works facility, which it expects to come in at \$12 million to \$13 million, higher than its original projection of \$10 million
- Reduction of Severance tax revenue, which has been used to provide additional funding to street maintenance
- School district swimming pool improvements and any other related bond improvements
- Participation in a downtown redevelopment project that could include a new library or the redevelopment of "the mill."

Town staff recommended contributing to the I-25 improvement project. It believes the project is beneficial to all Windsor residents and businesses and fits the town's strategic plan, which includes developing and maintaining effective infrastructure.

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