

Memorandum

To: US 6 CO 9 Project Team
From: Amelia DelGuercio, PE
Date: 10/31/2024
Re: US 6 & CO 9 Corridor Operations Study - Multimodal Improvements Memo

In 2023, the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) identified the need to take a data-driven approach to corridor operations and safety to identify efficiency improvements for United States Highway 6 (US 6) and Colorado State Highway 9 (CO 9) from Lake Dillon Drive (US 6) to Hamilton Creek Road (CO 9) within the context of existing and proposed land uses and infrastructure. As part of the corridor operations study, exploring opportunities to improve multimodal accommodations, including transit, bicycle and pedestrian improvements was identified as a key component to improving overall corridor operations and safety. The focus of this memo is to summarize existing multimodal facilities and identify potential improvements within the network that would encourage a mode shift by providing continuous, convenient and accessible alternatives to passenger vehicles.

Existing Conditions

Sidewalks or shared-use paths are present along CO 9 with a few notable gaps. The sidewalk along the east side of CO 9 has a gap between 3rd St and 5th St and stops at 6th Street with sidewalk being added between 6th Street and 12th Street as development occurs. Between 3rd St and 5th St, pedestrians can continue along the Lower Blue Recreational Path that follows the east side of the Blue River. The path does not provide access to the signalized intersection at 4th St which forces pedestrian to redirect either north to 6th St or south to Wildernest Rd for a designated crossing of CO 9. North of 6th St, pedestrians can continue along the shared use path on the west side of CO 9 to the north or use the Lower Blue Recreational Path. Due to the location of the recreational path, properties on the east side of CO 9 (west of the river) do not have access to the path.

On US 6, sidewalk exists from the interchange up to E. Anemone Trail on the south and to Little Beaver Trail on the south. While there are some informal paths created to the east, sidewalk is sparser east of E Anemone Trail, with no options along the mainline to reach Dillon Town Center. There are recreational shared use paths south of US 6, however, these paths do not provide access to businesses along the highway in this section.

There is an existing grade separated pedestrian crossing under CO 9 north of the Rainbow Drive/Wildernest Road intersection. All other marked crossings on the corridor are at signalized intersections. The existing roadway width and features make crossings difficult with up to seven lanes of traffic and a distance of more than 90 feet at certain intersections.

Summit Stage is a public transit option in the area and is operated by Summit County. There are two notable routes serving Silverthorne and Dillon areas. The Silverthorne Loop line provides service from Hamilton Creek Road to Rainbow Drive with 12 stops. The Silverthorne-Dillon-Keystone line provides service from Silverthorne Station to Dillon and extends out to Keystone with eight stops. During the day, both the Silverthorne Loop and Silverthorne-Dillon-Keystone routes run at 30-minute intervals during the summer and one-hour intervals during the winter. Night service shifts to one-hour intervals for the Silverthorne Loop while the Silverthorne-Dillon-Keystone route stops service until morning.

Silverthorne Station, located at Adams Avenue and 4th Street, serves as a transit hub for the area, with routes to Silverthorne, Dillon, Wildernest, Frisco, and Keystone. Other inter-regional transit options, such as Bustang and Greyhound, do not currently provide direct service to Silverthorne.

Recommended Improvements

With anticipated traffic growth, investing in a mode shift through additional infrastructure and transit service would benefit the system by reducing the number of vehicles using the corridor. Multimodal recommendations that connect work force housing with jobs and provide opportunities for visitors to get out of their cars or eliminate the need for their cars altogether can reduce the demand on US 6 and CO 9. The recommendations identified below provide the opportunity to broaden the accessibility and availability of alternative modes of transportation in Summit County.

Transit

Summit County adopted the *Summit Stage Short Range Transit Plan (SRTP)* for the years 2021 to 2025. The following goals are included:

- Restore service cut from existing routes during COVID
- Establish new express routes
- Develop organizational capacity
- Develop supportive infrastructure and fleet

Additionally, Summit Stage conducted an *Equity and Access Study* to supplement the *SRTP* in November 2021. The study focused on public outreach and community organizations to acquire input on the day-to-day operations of Summit Stage Transit for community users. Community members noted difficulty accessing stops, long travel times, issues with customer experience, and lack of awareness and information of existing Summit Stage Services.

Summit Stage provided a progress update of their implementation of the recommendation from the *SRTP* and *Equity and Access Study*. Operational improvements are underway, including increasing the number of available drivers and buses. Numerous existing bus stops have been upgraded with lighting and improved shelters for users. Microtransit services are currently being implemented in Breckenridge, Frisco, Silverthorne, and Dillon to reduce the first/last mile barrier for users of the transit services while also streamlining bus services along major corridors.

It is recommended to continue the implementation of the recommendations from the *SRTP* and *Equity and Access Study*. Additionally, local agencies in the area should develop a Long-Range Transit Plan to identify future demands of the surrounding area to align with the design year used for this study. A long-range transit plan should include investigation of improved accessibility of bus stops for residential areas, improved headways during peak times, and opportunities for inter-regional transit that could eliminate visiting vehicles. Summit Stage is currently in the process of forming a Regional Transit Agency including Park, Lake, and Grand Counties. Additional interregional services to Front Range metro areas should be investigated.

Bus Rapid Transit was considered at a high level with this study but was not carried forward due to the constraints of widening the highways through the I-70 interchange and the potential right-of-way impacts a bus lane would require.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure

There are multiple pedestrian improvements that would broaden the existing sidewalk network and provide easier options to cross US 6 and CO 9. The *Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities Map* attached to this memo highlights existing facilities and proposed improvements.

The west side of CO 9 has intermittent sidewalk gaps. Providing a continuous sidewalk alongside the west side CO 9 from Ruby Ranch Road to 3rd Street, approximately one mile of sidewalk, would serve the businesses and residents along this stretch. This would direct pedestrians to designated crossings at signalized intersections and allow for access to local businesses and the Silverthorne Downtown area. In addition to the proposed signalization of Ruby Ranch Road and CO 9 intersection, a crosswalk at the intersection would serve the local neighborhoods and provide pedestrian access to nearby recreational trails. In addition, one option at 4th Street considered and described in more detail in the *US 6 CO 9 Operations Study Access Management Summary* is a focus on pedestrian crossings at 4th Street that includes a signalized $\frac{3}{4}$ movement for southbound CO 9 traffic and a protected pedestrian crossing with refuge on the south side of the intersection. While the option creates additional congestion at 6th Street, operations are acceptable if the Town of Silverthorne would like to pursue implementation of this crossing between the downtown core and the performing arts center.

Similarly, implementation of a shared-use path along the north side of US 6 from the EB I-70 on-ramp to Lake Dillon Drive would provide access to the Dillon Downtown area, in addition to multiple other businesses along Dillon Ridge Road and Stephens Way. In addition to providing multimodal access to those businesses along US 6, a shared-use path may be a more desirable option for casual or commuter bicyclists who do not wish to detour south to the existing Lower Blue Recreational Path.

For bicyclists who would prefer to be separated from US 6 / CO 9, there are opportunities to extend the existing bicycle network off the mainline. Bicycle lanes could be provided on Adams Avenue from Buffalo Mountain Drive to Willow Brook Road in combination with the existing bicycle lanes on Brian Avenue to provide an off-system route for cyclists. In addition, implementing bicycle lanes along Little Beaver Trail would allow residents of the Dillon Valley neighborhood to bike to the Silverthorne or Dillon downtown areas and beyond.

The corridor was also evaluated for potential grade separated crossing locations and two potential locations were identified in the evaluation. The first location is an underpass at Straight Creek, adjacent to the EB I-70 on-ramp. Additionally, the shared-use path could be extended to the Lower Blue River Recreational Path south of US 6, providing further interconnectivity of trails in the area. The second grade-separated crossing identified was a pedestrian bridge located at Lake Dillon Dr. Combining this with the shared use path along US 6 would simplify pedestrian access to the Dillon Downtown Area.

Other non-infrastructure improvements could encourage a mode shift in the area. Parking regulations could be modified to decrease the availability of parking locations or charge for parking, conversely encouraging more pedestrian and transit usage. Other micromobility options, such as e-bikes or e-scooters may be beneficial alongside the infrastructure improvements. A re-alignment of Little Beaver Trail to Steven's Way may provide an opportunity for a centralized micromobility hub in the area to support these options.

In summary, as part of the broader corridor study along US 6 and CO 9, pedestrian and transit opportunities for improvement were evaluated. Sidewalk, transit, and bicycle infrastructure needs to be convenient and accessible to efficiently serve the community. Improvements proposed include



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filling in sidewalk gaps, adding/extending bicycles lanes, providing shared use paths, constructing grade-separated crossings, implementing the SRTP, and investigating long-range transit improvements including inter-regional transit opportunities. The intent of the improvements listed is to encourage a mode shift by enhancing transit, pedestrian, and bike options. By making these multimodal alternatives more viable in the community, more users will choose them instead of personal vehicles, thus reducing the vehicular travel demand.

Attachments:

US 6 & CO 9 - Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities Map