



April 30, 2018

Ryan Billings
Senior Transportation Planner
Denver Public Works | Policy, Planning and Sustainability

Dear Ryan,

We are writing on behalf of the Denver Streets Partnership to express our support for center-running bus rapid transit (BRT) on East Colfax and to recommend principles that should guide the design of the project to ensure a successful outcome.

The Denver Streets Partnership (DSP) is a coalition of community organizations advocating for people-friendly streets in Denver. On people-friendly streets, walking, biking, and transit are the first mobility choices for all people regardless of age, income, and ability. People-friendly streets are more than just layers of concrete and asphalt. They are living conduits that connect us to jobs, schools, services, and amenities, and they enable everyone to participate in and benefit from Denver's growth.

Travel modeling suggests that implementation of BRT on East Colfax will lead to a dramatic shift in how people move along the corridor, with twice as many people riding the bus each day (50,000) compared to driving (25,000) by the year 2030. The East Colfax BRT project is therefore an important opportunity to demonstrate how transformation of major arterials like Colfax Avenue will help achieve Denver's goals of reducing single-occupant vehicle mode share to 50% and eliminating traffic fatalities and serious injuries by 2030 as a Vision Zero City. With these goals in mind, the Denver Streets Partnership recommends the following guiding principles:

- 1. Optimize bus stop spacing to support faster transit travel time.** Community members have identified increased speed and service reliability as two of the top benefits and opportunities of the BRT project. Bus stops spaced too closely together slow down service for everyone. Optimal stop spacing - ideally half a mile apart, allowing convenient quarter-mile (five-minute) walks to closest stop - will shorten overall travel times despite requiring longer walks for some to reach the stop. The City should consider adding signalized intersections where necessary to support this stop spacing. These recommendations are consistent with recommendations regarding stop spacing recently provided to the City by the Colorado Cross-Disability Coalition.
- 2. Improve pedestrian and bicycle connectivity to bus stops.** Given the increased distance between stops, improvements to pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure connecting to the stops must be an integral part of the project, not an afterthought. These improvements should not be limited to Colfax itself, but should be implemented along all routes that people are likely to use when accessing the BRT line on foot or by

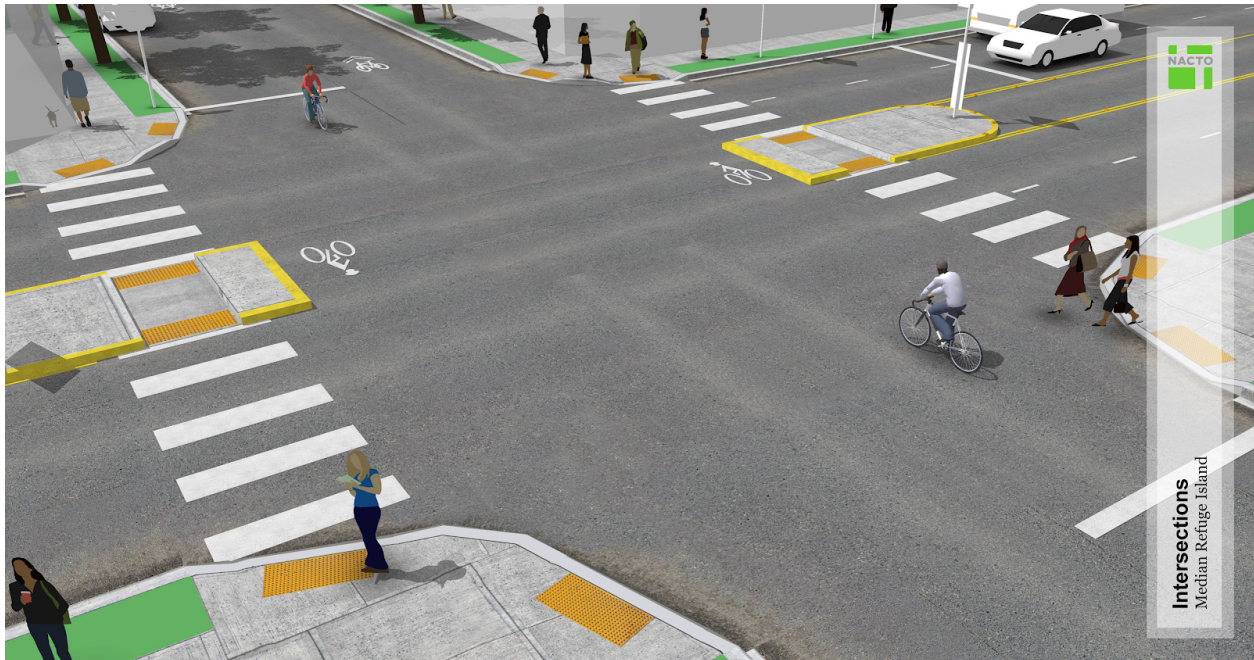
bike. Specific improvements that would ensure safe access for people of all ages, incomes, and abilities include the following:

- a. Repairs to damaged sidewalks;
- b. Upgrades to sidewalks that do not currently meet ADA standards;
- c. Construction of new sidewalks where they are missing;
- d. “Low stress” bicycle facilities along key north-south routes connecting to Colfax, and east-west routes parallel to Colfax;
- e. Bicycle parking;
- f. Pedestrian and bicycle oriented wayfinding; and
- g. Streetscaping that includes trees, greenery, and pedestrian-scale lighting.

3. Provide safe pedestrian and bicyclist crossing opportunities at all intersections.

East Colfax must facilitate the movement of people traveling east and west, and also north and south. The dramatic increase in transit ridership associated with BRT inherently means that more people also will walk and bike along the corridor and seek to cross Colfax using the most direct route possible. In addition to adding fully-signalized intersections where appropriate along the corridor, the City should implement treatments, such as median refuges, that allow people walking and biking, regardless of age or ability, to safely cross at non-signalized intersections (see examples pictured below).





4. **Maximize safety through traffic calming, speed limit reductions, and turn restrictions.** East Colfax BRT has tremendous potential to reduce traffic fatalities and serious injuries on a street that is currently part of Denver’s High Injury Network, simply by reducing the number of general purpose traffic lanes from four to two and by reducing pedestrian exposure to traffic through shortened crossing distances. The City should further enhance safety along the Colfax corridor by:
 - a. Reducing the speed limit to 25 mph;
 - b. Restricting left turns and U-turns to signalized intersections with left turn arrows;
 - c. Prohibiting right turns on red;
 - d. Minimizing the width of general purpose travel lanes; and
 - e. Implementing bulbouts, speed tables, and other geometric treatments to calm traffic on streets that cross or run parallel to East Colfax. This will increase safety on these streets and also mitigate the impact of vehicular traffic diverted away from East Colfax.

5. **Locate stops to maximize connectivity to the larger transit network.** The value of public investment in the East Colfax BRT project will increase exponentially through connections to other high-priority transit routes currently being identified through the Denver Moves Transit Plan. Bus stop locations should therefore consider existing routes and potential future routes such as Park Ave.

6. **Increase the frequency of service.** While the dedication of transit lanes and other changes to the street design will significantly improve the speed and reliability of transit service on East Colfax, the City should simultaneously work with RTD to increase the frequency of service. For transit to be truly competitive with private vehicles, passengers need to be confident that their wait times will be short and the next bus will arrive soon. The Denverright planning process highlighted the need for higher frequency routes, with the public ranking “higher frequency bus service” as the top spending priority for Denver’s transit resources.

7. **Plan for the continued evolution of Colfax.** The travel behaviors and mobility priorities of Denver residents have changed significantly over just the past ten years and will continue to evolve in the future. Limited right-of-way on East Colfax requires the community to make hard choices among the different types of modes the corridor can accommodate. Although the current plan does not include the addition of bicycle lanes on East Colfax, the design should allow for these facilities in the future, for example if on-street parking becomes less of a priority for the community.

8. **Act now to preserve and create affordable housing along the East Colfax corridor.** Housing and transportation are typically the two biggest household expenses. Walking, biking, and transit are the most affordable forms of transportation, and the City should proactively ensure that investment in the East Colfax BRT project does not lead to displacement or exclusion of the very households that stand to benefit the most from increased mobility options. City policies and funding should aim to preserve existing affordable housing in the neighborhoods adjacent to East Colfax and also promote dense, mixed-income, mixed-use development along the corridor, so as to maximize the number of people who can use the transit system to meet their daily needs.

If you have any questions about these recommendations, please contact Jill Locantore at jill.locantore@walkdenver.org or 303-895-6376.

Thank you for your consideration,

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