

Shoshana Lew
Executive Director, CDOT
2829 W. Howard Place
Denver, CO 80204

Dear Executive Director Lew,

As elected officials from the state and local level who represent thousands of constituents who live along I-25 Central, we are heartened to read the recent [Colorado Sun article](#) indicating CDOT has no immediate plans to widen the I-25 Valley Highway (also known as I-25 Central) and add new highway vehicle capacity.

As you work to finalize CDOT's latest 10-Year plan and next four years of priority investments, we ask that you take the final step and remove the I-25 Central project line-item and replace it with the kinds of mobility improvements that will better increase safety, reduce pollution, and enhance the quality of life for our communities and the broader region.

Widening the highway and adding new lanes and more vehicle capacity on I-25 between 20th Street and Santa Fe Drive is not the right solution now or over the long term.

[RMI recently documented](#) how highway expansions do not solve congestion and bring more vehicles (and the pollution that comes with them), which disproportionately hurts the communities surrounding them.

According to a [Denver Post report in 2019](#), the two neighborhoods bordering I-25 Central on the west, Valverde and Sun Valley, already have the highest rates of asthma in Denver, 254% and 253% higher than the state average respectively. In Valverde, 17% of the population lives below the poverty line and 89% are non-white. In Sun Valley, 81% of the population lives below the poverty line and 88% are non-white. Low income residents and residents of color have already paid the price for our transportation system by way of their health, as evidenced by this data.

We applaud your current focus on fixing bridges along that stretch of I-25 and identifying ways to expand rail service via Burnham Yard. The area around I-25 Central has numerous additional ways to improve transportation options including adding bus-rapid transit to major corridors like Federal, Colfax, Broadway/Lincoln, Alameda, and Colorado, and building our biking/walking access in neighborhoods, along the main streets and across I-25 with a goal of reconnecting communities.

To fully reflect the long-term vision of this corridor, we request that CDOT remove the catch-all line-item in the 10-year plan that could include massive highway expansions in the long term (the [PEL](#) has a \$1.5 billion lane expansion option), and shift capacity funding to multimodal transportation projects in these neighborhoods, which will increase residents' access to and from their communities while alleviating some of the air pollution impacts and giving people

more transportation options. This is an opportunity to use our transportation system to improve people's lives.

We recognize investments in I-25 itself are needed because of safety concerns but you should remove the broad I-25 Valley Highway line-item in your 10-Year plan and replace it with specific line items for bridge replacements or non-capacity safety improvements along that stretch in addition to the multimodal improvements mentioned above.

How you spend the state's funding is a direct reflection of the state's values. We applaud you for focusing on expanding options and increasing safety in the next few years instead of using limited dollars to add lanes that bring more cars and exacerbate our current problems.

Now is the time to take the final step and remove the I-25 Valley Highway line-item from the CDOT 10-Year plan and replace it with solutions that expand options that increase safety, reduce pollution, and enhance our quality of life for our communities and the broader region.

Sincerely,

Julie Gonzales
Senator, District 34

Serena Gonzales-Gutierrez
Representative, District 4

Councilwoman Amanda P. Sandoval
Denver City Council, District 1

Councilwoman Jamie Torres
Denver City Council, District 3

Councilman Jolon Clark
Denver City Council, District 7

Councilman Chris Hinds
Denver City Council, District 10

Councilwoman Debbie Ortega
Denver City Council, At-Large