

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Project Overview

The City of Wheat Ridge is studying the environmental impacts and preparing conceptual design plans for transportation improvements on Wadsworth Boulevard between 35th Avenue and I-70 (www.ci.wheatridge.co.us/wadsworth). Construction is projected to begin in 2019.

This project provides a special chance for Wheat Ridge to improve traffic operations, provide critical pedestrian and bicycle facilities and help improve the look and feel of this important gateway into the City. In 2015, the City secured a \$25 million TIP grant for this project offering a unique chance for Wheat Ridge to capitalize on a significant amount of federal funding to transform Wadsworth Boulevard into an effective state highway and a vibrant city center. But this money has strings – it was granted for use on the Wadsworth Widening project and cannot be put towards other City projects.

If the City cannot provide matching funds, or has to significantly alter the design on which the grant was based, the \$25 million dollars of funding will be forfeited back to other regional projects. If that occurs, any upgrades on Wadsworth would be left to Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT). Currently CDOT's plans for Wadsworth are to overlay new asphalt in 2020 and to eventually upgrade the traffic signals. Neither of these would improve the congestion that plagues the roadway today. If CDOT does eventually widen Wadsworth, they will almost certainly include a center median but may not provide for the other local priorities such as bicycle and pedestrian facilities or the enhanced streetscape.

Project Benefit

WHAT BENEFITS WILL COME FROM THIS PROJECT?

The Wadsworth Boulevard Widening benefits include:

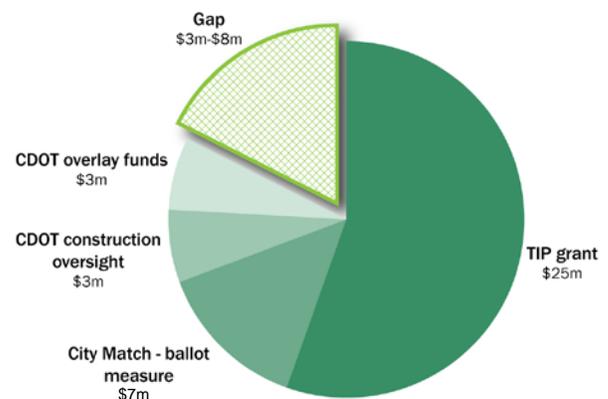
- Capacity improvements allowing a 52% increase in traffic throughput
- Average rush hour travel speeds that improve from 10 mph to 20 mph
- Two-way cycle track with bike-friendly connections to Clear Creek bikeway
- Continuous sidewalks along both sides of Wadsworth from 35th to Clear Creek Tail
- Improved transit facilities to complement RTD's increased frequency of bus route 76
- Enhanced streetscape with 10-feet of landscaped tree lawn

Project Funding

HOW HAS THIS PROJECT BEEN FUNDED?

The City of Wheat Ridge secured a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) grant in 2015 which is dedicated for funding the improvements on Wadsworth Boulevard. These improvements have been developed with public input through a Planning and Environmental Linkages Study and the ongoing Environmental Assessment. This generous grant covers 55% of the anticipated costs of the project, as currently designed. The grant requires that Wheat Ridge provide matching funds of about \$7M, which may be funded through the ballot initiative 2E. Additionally, the Colorado Department of Transportation has agreed to provide funds for construction oversight for the project valued at about \$3 million dollars, and another potential \$3 million that would have otherwise been dedicated to a future pavement overlay on Wadsworth.

In total, this funding covers about 82% of the anticipated project costs, leaving a \$3-8 million dollar gap that the city is working to fill through additional funding and by identifying money-saving opportunities on the project design where possible.



Access

WILL BUSINESSES ON WADSWORTH LOSE CONVENIENT ACCESS?

Local businesses are important to the City, and the Wadsworth Widening project will be providing access to all existing businesses.

Most business accesses will change to right-in/right-out access due to the addition of a raised median on Wadsworth Boulevard but there will be at least five (5) breaks in the median between 35th Avenue and Interstate 70 where we expect to allow left turns and U-turns.

We are looking at the possibility of consolidating several access points to improve the operation of the roadway and to improve safety for bikes and pedestrians. Where that occurs we will also plan on developing cross-access agreements with those businesses to enhance vehicle circulation.

WILL CARS IN THE CONTINUOUS FLOW INTERSECTIONS (CFI) LEFT TURN LANE BE ABLE TO TURN INTO A BUSINESS ALONGSIDE?

We are still working with the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) to determine if business access can be provided from the CFI left turn lanes.

Right-of-Way Impacts

COULD A SMALLER RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT ACHIEVE THE GOALS FOR WADSWORTH AS SET BY CDOT AND WHEAT RIDGE?

Through the entire planning process the City has sought the smallest possible roadway footprint. CDOT has agreed to 11-foot lanes in place of their standard 12 feet. The CFI design has allowed for a single left-turn lane instead of a double left turn lane. The current design with the CFIs at 38th and 44th provide the best traffic capacity with the least right-of-way width, while still meeting the other goals of the project.

The tree lawns, sidewalk, and bike path dimensions are based on the City streetscape guidelines and national standards.

WHAT ARE THE TYPICAL RIGHT OF WAY (ROW) ACQUISITION DIMENSIONS?

Based on the current design, which is still undergoing revisions:

Typical current ROW width	➤	100 feet	Where right-of-way is needed for the project, property owners are given just compensation for any land, building, improvements, or damages. State and federal guidelines dictate the process for right-of-way acquisition, the rights of property owners, and the definition of just compensation.
Typical proposed ROW width	➤	140 feet	
Widest Part of ROW	➤	158 feet across	
Average ROW needed on east side	➤	18 feet	
Average ROW needed on west side	➤	25 feet	

HOW MANY BUSINESSES WILL BE ACQUIRED DUE TO RIGHT OF WAY ACQUISITION?

In the PEL, the estimated total number of acquisitions was 10 properties. With additional design, the City has been able to decrease that to 3-4 businesses and 3-4 residential properties that will need to be acquired and relocated.

WILL BUSINESSES LOSE PARKING SPACES?

With the new sidewalk and tree lawns proposed in the project, many businesses will have their parking areas impacted. As part of the Environmental Assessment process the City is required to reasonably mitigate for any changes to their parking. We have invited property owners on the corridor to attend block-by-block meetings to discuss impacts to their properties and parking needs. Thus far, these conversations have been very productive and the City is confident it can find parking solutions for all the impacted property owners.

WILL BUSINESSES LOSE LANDSCAPING OR SIGNAGE ?

A goal of the project is to provide consistent street trees and tree lawn along the entire corridor which is lacking today. Anywhere that existing landscaping or signage needs to be removed, it will be replaced and/or property owners will be compensated.