

Pioneering sustainable travel options

THE U.S. 36 CORRIDOR

The U.S. 36 corridor is the transportation lifeline of our northwest Denver metropolitan region. It supports our workforce and businesses by serving as a conduit for transporting goods and services, while residents and visitors use it to access social opportunities, entertainment and recreation. A safe and reliable transportation network, with U.S. 36 as its backbone, is essential to the health of our economy and the health of our communities.

Colorado is ranked No. 1 in the country for labor and growth prospects and the sixth-best state for business.
-Forbes, 2008

- **U.S. 36 is an economically significant corridor** that has spurred dramatic economic development and employment within the state since it was constructed in the early 1950s.
- **It is anchored by Denver and Boulder**, two of the largest employment centers in the state. The corridor hosts global companies and a high concentration of prominent industries such as renewable energy, aerospace, bioscience, high tech, federal government, higher education and manufacturing.
- **U.S. 36 boasts impressive employment statistics.** The Denver metro area has 160,150 businesses and 1,227,650 employees. Of these, the U.S. 36 corridor has 26,765 businesses and 200,278 jobs, which represents 16.7% of businesses and 16.3% of jobs region-wide.
- **Since 2004, Colorado's economy has outperformed the national economy** in areas such as employment, population and income growth. State economists agree that strategic development of the U.S. 36 corridor will help Colorado continue to outperform the U.S. economy for the foreseeable future.

THE PROBLEM

Unfortunately, the economic growth and prosperity of the U.S. 36 corridor is threatened by our aging transportation system. Our roads and bridges were never designed to meet our modern daily capacity and load demands, while maintenance has fallen far behind – and Colorado does not have the funds to fix the problems. Without increased resources, it will not be possible to simply maintain the current condition of U.S. 36, let alone improve our vital transportation system, and that's a problem for the following reasons:

- **Traffic congestion is increasing.** U.S. 36 commuters experience 3-4 hours of severe congestion every day, and traffic will slow to a virtual standstill if there is measurable snowfall or an accident.
- **Demand for transit is unmet.** Every day, 13,500 commuters use transit along U.S. 36, but more commuters want to ride the bus. U.S. 36 already has the highest transit ridership in the Regional Transportation District (RTD) system.
- **It's getting worse.** By the year 2035, population along U.S. 36 is expected to increase by 28% while employment will grow by 53%.
- **U.S. 36 is aging.** Colorado roads are designed to last 20 years, but U.S. 36 has sections that are more than 50 years old. One-third of the asphalt on U.S. 36 has less than 5 years of service life remaining.
- **Our bridges are crumbling.** Ten bridges along U.S. 36 are rated "structurally deficient" or "functionally obsolete," according to state and federal standards.
- **The time to act is now.** If no action is taken to improve mobility along U.S. 36, existing traffic congestion will worsen and spill over onto adjacent arterials and into neighborhoods, resulting in more congestion, longer delays, safety hazards and poorer air quality throughout the corridor.

THE SOLUTION

The long-term transportation plan for U.S. 36, called the Preferred Alternative, identifies a sustainable, multi-modal solution that includes Bus Rapid Transit, HOV/HOT lanes and a corridor-wide commuter bikeway.

- **The U.S. 36 Preferred Alternative will be a national model** of an innovative, integrated multi-modal transportation system.
- **The cost of these critical improvements** is an estimated \$1.3 billion, but there is only \$711 million available for U.S. 36 over the next 20 years according to current projections, and that money cannot be accessed until 2021, at the earliest.

THE OPPORTUNITY

Two critical funding opportunities, either of which could help build a portion of the U.S. 36 plan, are currently on the table. Without these funds, we will have to wait 10 years for another significant funding opportunity. We need action now to bring meaningful transportation investments to U.S. 36. Here's what you can do to help:

- **Contact your local, state and federal elected officials** and urge them to support U.S. 36 transportation improvements.
- **Donate to the Help Us Fix U.S. 36 campaign.** Help Us Fix U.S. 36 is a grassroots political campaign spearheaded by 36 Commuting Solutions to raise awareness of and garner funding for necessary U.S. 36 transportation improvements.
- **Become a transportation leader.** Join the 36 Commuting Solutions coalition and educate others in your community about the problem.

About the Preferred Alternative:

In July 2008, FTA, FHWA, RTD, CDOT and the U.S. 36 coalition agreed on a package of multi-modal improvements that will be the Preferred Alternative in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The following paragraphs describe the components of this multi-modal recommendation:

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)

Bus Rapid Transit, as the name suggests, will offer rapid service from Union Station in Denver to Boulder and points in between. The new BRT line will include ramp and side-loading stations, supported by parking facilities and local transit services with specific premium components.

HOT/HOV Expansion with Transit Priority

The plan calls for one buffer-separated, managed lane in each direction of U.S. 36 that extends the existing HOT lane on I-25 to Foothills Parkway in Boulder. While this lane will be open to High Occupancy Vehicles and Single Occupancy Vehicle toll users, transit will have the highest priority.

Bikeway

Cyclists would gain a new 18-mile commuter bikeway, to be constructed adjacent to the highway or connecting to existing bicycling facilities.

Sustainable Project Benefits

- The multi-modal plan will reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) and carbon emissions while increasing energy independence.
- Portions of the overall project can be built in phases as funding becomes available.
- Expedited construction of the HOV/HOT lane will result in immediate mobility improvements.
- The corridor-wide bikeway between Boulder and Westminster will connect with the local network.
- The BRT system will provide one-way travel time savings of up to 20 minutes.

About 36 Commuting Solutions: We are a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization founded in 1998 with the mission to enhance mobility for commuters along the U.S. 36 corridor for today and the future. Our private/public membership coalition consists of nearly 50 businesses and seven local governments between Westminster and Longmont. Together, we advocate for transportation funding and improvements to the U.S. 36 corridor. Contact us: 36commutingsolutions.org; 350 Interlocken Blvd., Ste. 250, Broomfield, CO 80021; 303-439-8517; audrey@36commutingsolutions.org.