

-North Nevada Transit Connectivity Study- Final Public Meeting Q&A Responses

- **Enhanced Transit Justification**

- Why is enhanced transit justified when current buses are not full?
 - Both ends of the corridor (Downtown COS and the UCCS area) are already experiencing significant growth and the North Nevada Redevelopment Area is anticipated to see substantial growth in the future. This service is intended to encourage new trips generated by growth to use transit instead of personal vehicles to help mitigate anticipated future traffic congestion and environmental impacts.
- What impact will the Covid-19 pandemic have on future transit demand?
 - Long-term impacts from the pandemic cannot be determined at this time, but future studies on this service will take into account ridership trends after the pandemic has ended.

- **Proposed Transit Operations**

- How fast is the proposed BRT service anticipated to operate?
 - The proposed BRT service will run at the same speed as existing buses and general traffic flow along either of the routes still under consideration.
- How large are the BRT vehicles going to be?
 - With the anticipated level of ridership, the BRT vehicles will be approximately the same size as existing MMT buses (standard 35'-40' buses).
- Will the BRT buses be diesel or electric?
 - Either diesel or electric buses can be implemented; a decision on the specific buses would be determined in a future study.
- Will the BRT buses be louder than existing buses?
 - No, the noise levels will be the same as existing buses if diesel vehicles are acquired, and quieter if electric vehicles are acquired.
- What does transit signal priority do?
 - Transit signal priority helps keep buses on schedule by making minor adjustments to traffic signal timing (such as holding green lights longer or starting green times sooner on the transit route if a bus is behind schedule). It must maintain all ADA-mandated pedestrian crossing times.
- Why is utilizing the BNSF right-of-way along North Nevada Avenue considered when using the Rock Island Railroad (RIRR) right-of-way between I-25 and Nevada Avenue is not considered?

- The City has been in talks with BNSF about acquiring their right-of-way for years; which is not the case with the RIRR. The proposed alignments are also not dependent on the BNSF right-of-way for Phase 1 and 2 implementation.
- Why not continue to evaluate streetcar?
 - There are several challenges to implementing streetcar including capital cost (several times higher than BRT Light and requires a new maintenance facility), phasing (streetcar cannot be phased like BRT and would require acquiring the BNSF right-of-way sooner), and future scalability (the City desires to create premium transit network in the future with a single mode, which is less feasible with streetcar). However, streetcar could still be chosen as the preferred mode in future phases of study and it is recommended that no investments made in the corridor preclude conversion to streetcar in the future.
- Why not create an express service between Downtown and UCCS that avoids neighborhoods in between?
 - The demand between just these two locations is not enough to justify enhanced transit and it misses several important destinations, including the North Nevada Redevelopment Area, Penrose Hospital, and Colorado College.
- Why keep the existing Route 9 and eliminate Route 19?
 - The existing Route 19 mirrors the proposed service and would be replaced by the more frequent and efficient BRT service. Route 9 serves heavily transit-dependent populations along Cascade Avenue north of Fillmore Street and provides a direct connection to the main portion of the UCCS campus.
- Are there any plans to convert this service to light rail in the future?
 - No. Light rail is not considered a justifiable investment within the planning horizon and is not being considered by the City.
- **Safety**
 - What will be the impact on pedestrian safety, especially around schools?
 - Buses are not inherently a safety risk and are operated by professional drivers who have undergone extensive safety training and testing before being allowed to operate buses.
 - How would emergency vehicles operate with dedicated transit lanes?
 - Emergency vehicles will be permitted to use the dedicated lanes while responding to calls.
 - Is it save to have shared bus/bike lanes?
 - Yes, this treatment is used around the United States and abroad. Buses can merge into general traffic to go around cyclists when necessary.
 - Does transit signal priority have a negative impact on safety?

- No. Transit signal priority has not been shown to degrade safety where it has been implemented.
- **Neighborhood Impacts**
 - What will stations look like in the historic neighborhoods?
 - Specific designs will be determined in a future phase of study but are recommended to be context-specific to align with the surrounding areas and meet requirements on historic districts.
 - What are the anticipated impacts to adjacent neighborhoods?
 - There are minimal impacts related to noise, pollution, or vibration are anticipated to result from this new service compared to existing conditions along the corridor. However, more detailed environmental reviews will be conducted in future phases of study as part of a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis.
 - Is there proposed roadway widening or a loss of on-street parking through the Near North End or Old North End?
 - No widening is required for the Nevada Avenue alternative and on-street parking would be retained. For the Weber Street alternative, minor widening would be required to retain on-street parking and provide dedicated transit lanes.
 - What are anticipated impacts to traffic through residential neighborhoods?
 - More refined traffic analyses at the system level will be performed as part of the ConnectCOS project.
- **NTCS Process, Engagement, and Feedback**
 - How has previous engagement factored into the study recommendations?
 - The study team has informed key decisions throughout the study process including the preferred transit mode and alignments. Engagement results also factored directly into the alignment evaluation matrix where the locally preferred alignments were recommended for future study.
 - How does this study align with previous planning efforts?
 - This study was conducted based on a recommendation from the North Nevada Redevelopment Plan and North Nevada Transportation Sub-Plan, both of which have been adopted by the City Council. The efforts in this plan are also in alignment with the vision put forth in PlanCOS and recommendations related to land use and connectivity. Exploring the feasibility of an enhanced transit service within the North Nevada study area has been recommended by citywide studies as early as 2004 as part of the City of Colorado Springs Rapid Transit Feasibility Study and System Master Plan.
- **Future Phases of Study**
 - What environmental and historic reviews will be conducted?

- If federal funding is used, an environmental review under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) will be required, and will include a Section 106 review specifically looking at historic impacts. If federal funding is not used, the project will be subject to review by the City Historic Preservation Board and State Historic Preservation Office.
- Who will pay for constructing this service?
 - The exact funding mix will be determined in a future phase of study, but will likely be a mix of federal, state, regional, and local funding.
- Are there plans to extend the service further north?
 - Not at this time.

Please send any additional questions to Brian.Vitulli@coloradosprings.gov