

# CITY COUNCIL COMMUNICATION



**MEETING DATE:** September 14, 2021

**ITEM NUMBER:** 3

**SECOND READING:**

{{customfields.ResoOrdNumber}}

**TYPE OF ITEM:** Informational

**PRESENTED BY:**

Phil Greenwald, Transportation Planning, Phil.Greenwald@longmontcolorado.gov  
Alden Jenkins, PWNR Engineering, Alden.Jenkins@longmontcolorado.gov

**SUBJECT/AGENDA TITLE:**

Coffman Street Busway Alternatives Update

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

After approximately 6 months of work with the full project team, including a consultant firm, internal and external partners; staff has defined three different alternatives to consider for moving one into final design:

1. Center-running bus lanes
2. Side-running bus lanes
3. Mixed traffic/Side-running Hybrid

Each option has its own strengths and weaknesses, with the primary concerns being impacts on the existing corridor character, the historic tree canopy, on-street parking, and overall access to properties along the corridor. Based on the team's review and input from corridor-adjacent property and business owners, City staff is moving forward on completing the full design of Alternative 3, the Mixed traffic/Side-running Hybrid option, for the Coffman Street Busway.

**COUNCIL OPTIONS:**

1. Unless directed otherwise, City staff will move forward on completing the full design of Alternative 3, the Mixed traffic/Side-running Hybrid option, for the Coffman Street Busway.

**RECOMMENDED OPTIONS:**

See above.

**FISCAL IMPACT & FUND SOURCE FOR RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

N/A, funding for design is the same regardless of the Alternative.

## **BACKGROUND AND ISSUE ANALYSIS:**

As part of the 2018 Enhanced Multi-Use Corridor (EMUC) plan, a new vision for Coffman Street between 1st and 9th Avenues was ultimately accepted by City Council. In 2019, the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) began accepting applications for Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) dollars tied to federal funding allocated to the State. In partnership with Boulder County and the City of Boulder, our three jurisdictions were awarded federal funding for three separate Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) projects in the SH-119 corridor between Longmont and Boulder.

Longmont's BRT project is the Coffman Street Busway. This new connection between the existing transit center at 8th and Coffman, and the new transit hub at 1st and Main offers a unique opportunity to provide a robust multi-modal connection through the historic Old Town of Longmont.

The purpose for this new multiuse/multimodal corridor has many objectives:

- Moving regional and local buses from a high volume, constricted corridor along Main Street to a separated bus lane on the Coffman corridor.
- Creating a separated bicycle facility, linking the Saint Vrain Greenway corridor to the central business district of downtown, the transit stops along Coffman Street, and neighborhoods/bike facilities north, east, and west of downtown.
- Providing wider, safer places for people to walk in the downtown, supporting transit use.
- Enhancing the Coffman Street corridor providing a new opportunities for business and residents to access efficient and reliable transportation choices.

The first phase of this project is to complete Final Design of the corridor, with input from the surrounding community, adjacent land and business owners, and utility providers within the corridor. This phase will last approximately 16 months and will be completed by the 2nd quarter of 2022. The current timeline has construction beginning on the project in late 2022, with project completion by 2024.

## **CORRIDOR ALTERNATIVES**

After approximately 6 months of work with the full project team, including a consultant firm, staff has defined three different alternatives:

- 1. Center-running bus lanes**
- 2. Side-running bus lanes**
- 3. Mixed traffic/Side-running Hybrid**

All the design alternatives include the following:

- Separated (protected) bike lanes
- Pedestrian access improvements
- Some level of impact to single occupant vehicles
- The addition of a signalized intersection at 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and Coffman Street
- Elimination of one or two traffic signals in the rest of the corridor
- Impacts to on-street vehicle parking
- Impacts to existing corridor character
- Tree preservation/improved landscaping

### **Specific to Center-running Transit Lanes**

- Minimal transit conflicts with vehicles/bikes/pedestrians
- Efficient transit operations, but not supported by RTD
- Significant impact to existing corridor character
- Significant restriction to personal vehicle access
- No left-turns to/from driveways or at some intersections
- High potential for negative impact to corridor character
- Limited tree preservation and improved landscaping

### **Specific to Side-running Transit Lanes**

- Moderate transit conflicts with vehicles/bikes/pedestrians
- Efficient transit operations, and RTD's preferred alternative
- Slightly less significant impact to existing corridor character
- Some impacts to personal vehicle access
- Left-turns prohibited at some intersections
- Moderate potential for negative impact to corridor character
- Moderate level of tree preservation and improved landscaping

### **Specific to Mixed traffic/Side-running Hybrid**

- Moderate transit conflicts with vehicles/bikes/pedestrians
- Lower level of transit operations, though RTD is willing to support
- Reduced impact on existing corridor character
- Less on-street parking eliminated
- Low impact to personal vehicle access
- Lowest potential for negative impacts to the corridor character.
- Bike facilities have greatest level of separation from other modes
- Pedestrian facilities have greatest level of separation from other modes
- Highest level of tree preservation and improved landscaping

## **PUBLIC OUTREACH**

During this ½ year process, the project team was also able to solicit comments from the broader community on the project goals as well as provide a more targeted survey to the surrounding, most impacted residents, business owners and other property owners about the overall project. On top of these survey efforts, the project team held four meetings in the corridor to do “block-by-block” outreach over two separate days.

Generally the City-wide responses, over 200 total, embraced the project as positive, with a large emphasis on safety as a critical component of the project. Not many questionnaires to the adjacent property owners were received by the project team, so an effort was made to meet with people along the corridor. This outreach was accomplished through four separate in-person meetings corresponding to 2-block sections of the corridor. The meetings were held both early and late in the day in late June 2021, with no restrictions on attendance.

These block-by-block meetings yielded some much more interactive dialogue and the chance to ask people along the corridor about their preferred alternative. Overwhelmingly, the people living and working in this corridor chose the Mixed traffic/Side-running Hybrid option as least impactful option to the existing tree canopy, vehicle access, and on-street parking, which were the items most mentioned during these meetings.

The project team will present the Mixed traffic/Side-running Hybrid alternative to the public in Fall 2021.

## **CRITERIA AND SUSTAINABILITY EVALUATION SYSTEM REPORT**

In addition to the surveys and in-person efforts for public outreach to evaluate the alternatives, the project team developed criteria to measure and evaluate the three alternative alignments. The criteria ranged from safety factors to potential tree removals to impacts to current infrastructure and overall cost of the project (see attachment). The Mixed traffic/Side-running Hybrid alternative scored higher than the other two alternatives in most of the categories.

Similarly, the three alternatives were scored in the City’s Sustainability Evaluation System (SES) and a summary report was generated (see attached). Again, the Mixed traffic/Side-running Hybrid scored the highest of the three alternatives, and outperformed the “do nothing” action as well.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OTHER BOARDS**

Staff reported to the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) and Longmont Downtown Development Authority (LDDA) Board on the various alternatives. After presenting the data, both Boards formally voted to agree that the Mixed traffic/Side-running Hybrid alternative should move to the next phase of design.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Unless directed otherwise, and with the level of work over the last 6 months creating the various alternatives, the public input before, during and after the alternative creation, and the measures against specific criteria and a SES analysis; staff is moving forward with the Mixed traffic /Side Running Hybrid option for further design in the Coffman Street Busway project process.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Coffman Street Busway Alternative Comparisons (Block-by-Block)  
Coffman Street Busway SES Report  
Coffman Street Busway Evaluation Summary