TO: Denver GO Bond Executive Committee

FROM: Colfax Collaborative

DATE: May 15, 2017

RE: Colfax Corridor Improvements Supplementary Material

On behalf of the 4 Colfax Business Improvement Districts, 6 City Council districts, 15 Denver neighborhoods and 930 local business owners–thank you for considering our GO Bond request for $20 million in critical pedestrian safety and mobility improvements on Colfax Avenue from Monaco Parkway to Sheridan Boulevard.

It has taken us more than 30 years to get here. Efforts to revitalize Colfax began in 1983; the last BID was created in late 2014. Each BID is led by civic-minded, local business leaders who are willing to pay extra taxes or fees each year to make our city’s main street better for everyone. This includes stepping up to maintain future improvements.

Colfax Avenue serves the daily needs of 75,000 residents, businesses and workers. New restaurants, stores and services create jobs and attract people from every part of Denver. Bus Rapid Transit will one day move 50,000 commuters through the corridor. And yet, Colfax is Denver’s most dangerous street, with 10 pedestrian fatalities in the last two years. We need major improvements to make it a more pedestrian-friendly, attractive and safe main street.

Colfax is an economic & mobility powerhouse with decades of deferred maintenance and under-investment.

**COLFAX CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS MEET FOUNDATIONAL CRITERIA & MORE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Governmental Purpose &amp; Alignment with Community Plans</th>
<th>✓</th>
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<tr>
<td>Our plans are consistent with the Main Street vision set forth in Blueprint Denver; streetscape and pedestrian improvements are recommended in 28 of 32 adopted plans for Colfax Avenue. Our plans are also aligned with Bus Rapid Transit, Colfax transit-oriented development planning, Denver Moves and Vision Zero.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Readiness, Leveraging &amp; Neighborhood Support</th>
<th>✓</th>
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<td>All of our plans will be at 30% design this year, through $500,000 in funding unanimously approved by City Council and the Mayor in 2016. 1,800 citizens signed a petition for this funding. The BIDs are leveraging this investment with $236,000 in planning and $2 million in maintenance in the first 10 years alone.</td>
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<td>We have broad neighborhood and political support for implementation within 5 years.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Safety</th>
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<td>Colfax Avenue is the city’s highest pedestrian crash corridor, with 10 fatalities in 2015-2016. Projects are all designed to enhance pedestrian safety.</td>
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<th>Return on Investment</th>
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<td>National research finds that public investment in safety and streetscape improvements can increase retail tax revenues by 30%, increase commercial land values by up to 300% and boost adjacent home values by up to 20%. More jobs, sales and property tax revenue for the city.</td>
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<td>Equity &amp; Geographic Distribution</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>Strengthen Mobility Network</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Infrastructure Preservation</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community &amp; Economic Development</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>10-Year Useful Life</td>
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$$ ECONOMIC VITALITY WITH PEDESTRIAN INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS $$
Plan Readiness, Mobility Networks & Funding Leveraging

East Colfax Avenue has been neglected for decade. A major commercial and transit corridor, it does more to divide our neighborhoods than to connect them. Colfax still operates like a state highway and is the City’s top pedestrian crash corridor. Despite area growth, there is virtually nothing in the built environment that supports people or a sense of place. **East Colfax needs to be a safer main street that better connects people to transit, jobs, school and everyday errands.**

This is the top priority of our new BID, created in late 2014. To date, we’ve invested more than $100,000 in assessment fees and economic development grant funds and have pledged an additional $400,000 over 10 years for maintenance costs. City Council unanimously approved $500,000 to bring our plans and other Colfax BID plans to 30% design by this fall. Our neighbors in Park Hill, Mayfair and Montclair enthusiastically participated in the planning and are supportive of this project, as are City Council districts 5 and 8.

It is essential that Colfax work for people as well as buses and cars.

Key Items In The Colfax Mayfair Improvement Plan

- Improved crosswalks
- Bulbouts at intersections
- Pedestrian lighting
- Median and sidewalk repair
- Street trees & green space
- Benches
- Trash cans

This $7 million improvement package, from Eudora Street to Monaco Parkway and including the Mayfair Town Center, will be maintained by the Colfax Mayfair Business Improvement District. Bike racks and public art will be funded separately. Preliminary budget analysis by Design Workshop.

Plan Alignment & Equity

Our plans are carefully aligned with Blueprint Denver, the East Colfax Plan, Mayfair Town Center plan and Denver Moves, as well as Bus Rapid Transit and storm water planning. All elements contribute toward pedestrian safety and the Vision Zero initiative. Regarding equity, our 200 businesses provide entry-level and retail service jobs. They serve a local market area reaching North Park Hill, east to East Montclair, south to Mayfair/Crestmoor Park and west to City Park. 40% of our immediate neighbors spend more than 30% of their income on rent.

GO Bond Fact Sheet: Bluebird District

Fund Denver’s Historic Main Street

The Bluebird Business Improvement District (BBID) is on Colfax Ave. between St. Paul and Colorado Boulevard. Our district offers key connections to bike routes, bus lines, City Park, National Jewish, Museum of Nature and Science and the Zoo. We have over 65 businesses and over 25,000 residents in the neighborhoods within our district.

We are zoned Main Street and private investment reflects a great main street environment. However, the Colfax Ave right of way has not kept up. **We need to invest in safer conditions for pedestrians on Denver’s historic main street.**

Project Description

**WHAT:** A combination of improvements will create safer crossing conditions including:

- Bulb-outs (curb extensions): Reduces crossing distance, increases the visibility of pedestrians to drivers and vice versa. Also increases sidewalk width for increased comfort.
- Median islands: Restricts turning and gives pedestrians a safe place to stop mid-crossing
- Pedestrian activated signal: Provides a signalized crossing midway between signalized intersections. Allows for the flow of traffic when pedestrians are not present.
- Additional on-street parking: Provides a buffer for pedestrians and can reduce traffic speeds

**WHERE:** Appropriate treatments for the needs and conditions at the following intersections of Colfax:

- **MADISON ST:** long distance between signalized intersections
- **ADAMS ST:** high pedestrian use area, location of Bluebird Theater and location of crashes (shown here)
- **ST. PAUL ST:** dangerous turning conditions, bike signal already in place
Safer pedestrian crossings are critical in the BBID

Our neighbors want to cross Colfax safely.

1. Area stakeholders volunteered time to map sidewalk and intersection conditions to determine trouble spots locations;
2. Focus groups with local business owners to hear their top concerns and issues; pedestrian safety was noted as a key economic concern;
3. Survey with over three hundred responses. The top priority of respondents was safely crossing Colfax Ave.
4. Out of space to expand for more cars. We need options to safely move around not in a vehicle.

So what have we done about it? We have invested!

1. TIME AND ENERGY: Worked with neighbors to paint artistic crosswalks on Colfax Ave. to draw attention to the issue.
2. MONEY: Hired a consultant to test feasibility and create designs for intersections in the district, $17,000.
3. COLLABORATION: This work compliments BRT and many City initiatives.
4. TIME AND ENERGY: We started working with our BID neighbors facing similar issues.
5. COLLABORATION: Worked with Public Works to pursue $500,000 in funds to further vet our intersection and designs and bring all of the BIDs designs up to 30% and shovel ready for GO Bond funding.
   ➢ When these funds were being cut, the four BIDs worked together and reached out to our stakeholders. Within four days we had over 1,800 petition signatures supporting the project. The funds were approved unanimously by our councilmembers.

This effort supports larger Denver Goals

1. Denver is investing in BRT on Colfax Ave. — Safer pedestrian conditions create an environment where users feel safe accessing this amazing investment.
2. Denver Vision Zero is focusing on targeted investment to high crash areas. Colfax Ave. is in need of investment to improve safety conditions.

Fund Leveraging

1. BBID Invested in initial engineering designs for this work, to ensure feasibility: $17K
2. BBID continues to invest on streetscape improvements and maintenance annually
3. BBID established a capital reserve fund in 2016 to prepare for maintenance to improvements: $35K in 2016, with additional investment planned annually
4. Investments will support continued private investment in BBID: $5-10M anticipated over 5 years
Colfax is Denver’s Original Main Street

The Colfax Ave BID spans from the State Capitol to East High School and serves the needs and desires of about 25,000 residents living within a 10 minute walk of this iconic street. And, according the Blueprint Denver Community Profile:

- 25-50% of the trips along Colfax are made by walking, and
- On average, there is less than one car per household

Yet, Colfax is part of the “high injury network” that has a higher incidence of severe and fatal collisions. The Park Avenue-Colfax-Franklin Street five-point intersection is one of the most dangerous for pedestrians in Denver and one of several intersections desperately needing improvements.

Safety commitment

The Colfax Ave BID spends $120,000 in street maintenance yearly, and spent $120,000 in 2016 to complete a Streetscape Plan identifying needed sidewalks and intersection improvements. Such improvements will make the street safer for pedestrians.

Increased Need

The Colfax Ave BID commits to maintain and increase current levels of maintenance and streetscape funding for a safer and friendlier street environment. Colfax buses already have the highest ridership in the city and Bus Rapid Transit will serve up to 50,000 riders daily. With the thousands of pedestrians already walking along Colfax daily, it is more urgent than ever for the city to invest in the infrastructure that will help Colfax live up to its potential as Denver’s iconic main street.
Blub-outs, Crosswalks, Bike Lanes, & Trees Improve Pedestrian Safety & Calm Traffic
GO Bond Fact Sheet

West Colfax Avenue has seen significant private investment in recent years, but public investment has lagged. This leaves the majority-minority and low-income residents of West Colfax who rely on walking and biking for transportation cut off from a growing number of amenities and abundant public transit. This project addresses a major barrier facing these residents: Colfax crossings and addresses Vision Zero goals of reducing traffic fatalities. Because we have aligned our projects with those on East Colfax through the Colfax Collaborative, it also establishes a consistent network across Colfax for a walkable transit-rich Main Street in Denver.

Location of Project:

Intersections of West Colfax Ave. between Utica and Osceola Streets, including several medians.

Project Description

Community process
The WCBID undertook extensive outreach to community members, property and business owners through its Re-imagine West Colfax design demonstration of changes to W Colfax to increase the pedestrian, bicycle and retail environment in 2015. With over 300 survey responses, as well as video interviews, the community identified the single top concern as pedestrian safety on sidewalks and crossing Colfax Ave. This data collection and surveying directly inform the proposed capital improvements that we hired HDR to engineer.

In addition to this recent community informed planning, this proposal is supported by extensive planning processes over the years, including the West Colfax Plan, which note pedestrian safety concerns as a priority and the need for additional public investment in the corridor. From a safety point of view, Colfax Ave. continues to struggle to create balanced mobility for all users and pedestrian-vehicles accidents continue at alarmingly high rates, and aligns with the Mayor’s Vision Zero initiative. These improvements support healthy living in the neighborhoods around West Colfax which rank at the very bottom of Denver neighborhoods according to DEH. They will create safe walking conditions to improve access to local goods, food and services.

Proposed improvements for 3 of the 9 intersections shown below include....
• **Pedestrian** bulbouts on the north and south side of Colfax Ave. to assist with safe crossings and **reduce crossing distance**, widen the sidewalk and provide additional visibility for pedestrians and vehicles.

• The **median islands** to restrict left turns and offer pedestrians a safe refuge midway through crossings.

• Pedestrian crossing signals will be enhanced to include a **leading pedestrian interval** and pedestrian crossing countdown timer.

• **Greening median islands and bulbouts** to further calm traffic and stimulate economic development on West Colfax

**Fund Leveraging:**

• Conceptual engineering plans for these proposed improvements: **$14,000**

• Maintenance of improvements in perpetuity; 10 year value: **$280,000**

• Private investment will flow from the revised cross-section of West Colfax established through this project. When properties are being redeveloped, those developers will be required to build in accordance to these cross-sections and install bulb-outs and greenery. This is conservatively estimated to leverage an additional **$3M-$5M** in the next 5 years