

Phase One Public Engagement Report

Prepared by GBSM for the Colfax BRT Next Project Team

May 22, 2025

I. Executive Summary

Between January and April 2025, the project team conducted Phase One Community Engagement designed to **build broad community awareness** and understanding of the project; **solicit diverse stakeholder perspectives, priorities and preferences** to inform the Purpose & Need, existing conditions, potential alternatives, and future outreach efforts; and identify and **activate community ambassadors**.

The team utilized a variety of outreach and communications channels to achieve these goals including a project website, community survey, targeted pop-up events and focus groups, social media posts, canvassing, direct emails and an open house forum.

As a result of these efforts, the project team connected with an estimated 850 community members, generated interest from 52 community members in receiving future project updates, engaged 61 community members in a project survey and generated 5 news stories.

The following report summarizes key insights from Phase One engagement and outlines each event and effort in detail including the number of community members engaged and their feedback. Key findings from this phase of engagement have been incorporated into the project's goals that will guide the evaluation of alternatives.

II. Outreach Channels

The project team leveraged various channels to build community awareness of the project and engage the community to provide feedback. Table 1 identifies the events and activities associated with each outreach channel.

Table 1: Community Outreach Channels & Details

Channels	Details
Pop Up Events & Community Presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4/11: Altura Elementary School 4/17: Community College of Aurora 4/19: Engage Aurora Live! at Aurora Municipal Center 4/23: Hinkley High School 4/26: La Plaza Community Center 5/2: Laredo Elementary School
Focus Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5/2: Safilo Warehouse Management 5/13: Kenco Warehouse Employees
Email, Canvassing, Social Media, Newsletters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct email outreach to key community and business partners Targeted canvassing Social media promoting Engage Aurora Live! and survey engagement City of Aurora water bill promoting Engage Aurora Live! Website content
Community Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Available April 1 through May 5
Media Coverage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aurora offers final public feedback opportunity for transportation master plan <i>The Denver Gazette</i>, Kyla Pearce, March 31 GET ENGAGED: Aurora invites residents to share input on city projects at show and tell day, <i>The Sentinel Colorado</i>, March 31 Bus rapid transit could soon make its way to Aurora, provide east option on Colfax to Picadilly and E-470, <i>CBS News</i>, Brian Sherrod, April 17 Aurora looks to improve Colfax corridor with its own bus rapid transit project, <i>Denver7</i>, Claire Lavezzorio, April 20 City of Aurora Press Release, April 22 Aurora Now April 23, 2025, <i>AuroraTV</i>, April 23



III. Key Themes: Community Outreach

The project team identified several key themes that were common throughout the various outreach activities.

1. **Reliability:** Buses don't always come as scheduled.
2. **Frequency:** Buses don't come often enough to use them reliably; *"if you miss the bus, you have to wait another 30 minutes for the next one."*
3. **Safety:** Concern for personal safety at bus stops and on the bus due to those struggling with mental illness, homelessness or drug-use. Lack of comfortable and continuous sidewalks.
4. **Awareness/Useability of RTD:** Lack of awareness around RTD schedules, cost of transit and ticket purchasing. Desire among some to *"take the kids on bus/lite rail as an adventure."*
5. **Affordability:** Cost of bus rides and ensuring a cost-effective alternative to driving.
6. **Cleanliness:** Bus stops and corridor are *"muy sucio"* and uninviting.
7. **Access:** A mixed bag. Some appreciate access to RTD R-line, essential services; others wish the bus provided access to more places, more efficiently.

IV. Details from Pop-Up Events & Community Presentations

The following section captures the details of each public engagement event, including school presentations, Engage Aurora Live!, and pop-up events at Aurora Community College and La Plaza. Table 2 identifies the different events, project members in attendance, number of public attendees, and any key takeaways.

Table 2: Pop-Up Events & Details

Event/Date	Public Attendees	Takeaways
4/11: Coffee with the Principal at Altura Elementary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ~30 people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to increase reliability/frequency • Evaluate cost and affordability of transit options • Concern around safety on the bus and traveling along the corridor • Additional questions surfaced about the cost of RTD tickets and how to find information about RTD routes
4/17: Mobile Market at Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ~100 people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants recognized that the current transit system needs improvements



College of Aurora		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple participants mentioned that there used to be a campus bus stop but it has since been removed. When asked why, community members weren't sure. CCA staff seemed to think it was based on infrequency of use.
4/19: Engage Aurora Live! at Aurora Municipal Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~150 people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many attendees don't live in the project area, but frequently travel through it and were generally positive about the project and concept Corridor pain points were around the I-225 entrance/exit points and general feeling of discomfort / lack of safety / walking and riding While most attendees typically don't/rarely take the bus, they are open to considering it as an option and see the benefit of future transit expansion
4/23: Parent/Teacher Conference Presentation at Hinkley High School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20 adults 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants voiced concern over the traffic on Colfax Avenue being a primary issue Participants also shared feedback on many bus stops currently lacking shelter or seats The school was interested in coordinating a student focus group in the fall
4/26: Pop-up at La Plaza	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 250-300 people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One person took the printed Spanish survey, and one person took the online Spanish survey at the event. Folks who did not take the survey but provided general feedback on bus experience talked about increasing reliability on routes and safety/cleanliness. While most people do not currently take the bus, they seemed open to the project and concept.
5/2: Parent Coffee Presentation at Laredo Elementary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20 adults 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants voiced concerns around bus frequency and reliability, personal safety, lack of sidewalks, and confusion accessing information about and using RTD While many parents have children who are interested in taking the bus, parents expressed concern about issues of mental health and homelessness on buses



V. Engage Aurora Live! Map Activity

At the Engage Aurora Live event, people were asked about their experience traveling through and around the corridor, as well as any areas that were particularly easy/enjoyable as well as difficult or challenging. Table 3 captures results from the activity.

Table 3: Engage Aurora Live! Map Activity




		
<i>An area/something you like about traveling through the corridor</i>	<i>Where do you typically travel to/from along the corridor</i>	<i>An area/something you find challenging or is a pain point when traveling through the corridor</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aurora Sports Park is great – people living nearby are able to use it • Some bus stops near Sable have shelters • Interchange at E-470 • Using Airport Blvd. to get to the airport • Really spacious around Tower Triangle– good to run 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traveling from home • Parker via Cherry Creek trail to downtown Denver via e-bike • Chambers Square to access the gym • Drive from Quincy/Picadilly to get to work (in Inverness) • From High Line south to Aurora Sports Park to watch kids' soccer games 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General discomfort; don't feel safe walking or riding the bus • Comfort of sidewalks & bus stops • Bus stop amenities were removed at Tower due to trash • Highline crossing is uncomfortable • Quality of roads on Picadilly/Colfax • East of Picadilly feels uncomfortable • Congestion at I-225 on/off ramp • Vehicle speed; merging near Tower • Hard to get around via bus; takes too long



Figure 1: Photo of Map Activity with Associated Dots



The project team facilitated two focus groups with two separate warehouses in the Prologis Development Property. Table 4 identifies the different events, project members in attendance, number of public attendees, and any key takeaways.

Table 4: Focus Group Attendees & Details

Event/Date	Takeaways
5/2: Virtual Meeting with Safilo Warehouse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workers don't take the bus given lack of service but often carpool as they typically live near one another; often arrive before shift to accommodate partners' jobs A transit option could work if timing aligns with shifts and if the bus stop is within walking distance of the facility As the Amazon Warehouse is the largest employer in the area, it may make sense to locate a future bus stop near it This area will continue to grow and, with it, the demand for transportation services Trucks coming in and out of facility may present an obstacle There are not food options nearby that can be reached during lunch breaks so many employees use services like DoorDash
5/13: In Person Meeting with Kenco Warehouse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workers don't take the bus, rather folks typically drive in Workers consider road congestion and commute times when considering route options to get to work on time



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This area will continue to develop over the next decade, and with it, the demand for transportation services and greater infrastructure like restaurants or retail • Security and cleanliness are top of mind when considering public transportation options • A transit option could work as long as the stop is close enough to minimize walking, kept clean, and is predictable on timing
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VII. Survey Overview & Details

The project team launched a community survey to collect community feedback on the travel and transit experience along the corridor. The survey was available on the website from April 1 through May 5 and was promoted at in-person events and through several social media posts. Sixty (60) people responded to the survey: 59 online respondents; 1 respondent via print survey. Table 5 provides an overview of respondent demographics. Table 6 provides an overview of survey results.

Table 5: Respondent Overview

Survey Numbers	Language	Age	Gender	Race/Ethnicity
19 Bus Riders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 17 English-speaking • 2 Spanish-speaking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 aged 18-24 • 3 aged 25-34 • 3 aged 45-54 • 1 aged 65+ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 male • 3 female • 1 non-binary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 Black or African American • 3 Hispanic or Latino • 7 White
41 Non-Bus Riders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All English-speaking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 aged 18-24 • 4 aged 25-34 • 12 aged 35-44 • 11 aged 45-54 • 5 aged 55-64 • 7 aged 65+ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 male • 15 female • 1 non-binary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 American Indian or Alaska Native • 3 Asian • 3 Black or African American • 4 Hispanic or Latino • 23 White



Table 6: Survey Highlights

All Respondents	Non-Bus Riders	Bus Riders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most travel by car • Top concerns are congestion, speed, walking/biking comfort and personal safety • Improving bus service, reducing congestion and enhancing access to biking/walking trails & other destinations are top priorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Top barriers to riding 15/15L are bus experience (safety, cleanliness), frequency and convenience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most ride both 15/15L a few times a week to get to work/school or access services • Trips are typically longer (to Denver) and often involve transfers • Generally good: Bus reliability, stop locations and access to destinations • Areas of Improvement: Sidewalk comfort, bus experience and frequency

VIII. Other Outreach (*collateral, social media posts, email outreach, etc.*)

The project team designed and shared several project materials intended to build awareness and understanding of the project and promote the survey and key engagement events like Engage Aurora Live!. The following are examples of promotional materials. Not included below are the project overview slides and an insert in the City's water bill to promote the project and Engage Aurora Live.



Collateral

Project One Pager

About this project

Colfax BRT Next is studying ways to improve travel along East Colfax Avenue with bus rapid transit. DRCOG and the City of Aurora are partnering to advance the study, which will conclude in 2026 with a proposed design and implementation roadmap.

What is BRT?

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) is a high-capacity, efficient bus service that incorporates elements of light rail like **enhanced stations, all-door boarding, purchasing tickets before riding, and dedicated bus lanes**. BRT achieves high-quality service because it **minimizes delays** like making frequent stops and getting stuck in traffic at intersections.

Project goals

- Connect **essential jobs and services** to affordable housing.
- Encourage **land use patterns and economic development**.
- Increase **transit capacity and efficiency**.
- Promote access to **reliable, affordable** transit for everyone.
- Support **healthy families and communities** with affordable transit.
- Enhance **multimodal safety and access** to transit.

East Colfax BRT Extension project study area Source data: City of Aurora, RTD

Map disclaimer found at data.drcog.org/about. If you have difficulty using this document's content, please email access@drcog.org or call 303-455-1000. Please expect a response within 72 hours (three business days).

Learn more, sign up for updates and stay engaged! engage.drcog.org/ColfaxNext

Flyer

Improving the future of travel along East Colfax Avenue

The Colfax BRT Next Project is studying ways to make travel along the East Colfax Avenue corridor between I-225 and Picadilly Road/E-470 in Aurora faster, more efficient and convenient with bus rapid transit (BRT).

We want to hear from you!

Tell us what you like and what could be improved about traveling along East Colfax. Your input will inform the future design of bus rapid transit (BRT) from I-225 to Picadilly.

Connect with us at **Engage Aurora Live!**

Location
Aurora Municipal Center
15151 E. Alameda Parkway
Aurora, CO 80012

Date
Saturday, April 19
11 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Take the survey!

Scan the QR code to share your thoughts.

The event will be family friendly with free food and a Touch-a-Truck area. Visit EngageAurora.org/EngageAuroraLive to learn more!

Learn more, sign up for updates and stay engaged! engage.drcog.org/ColfaxNext

Learn about the future of bus travel along East Colfax Avenue

Come to Engage Aurora Live!

Date
Saturday
April 19, 2025
11 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Location
Aurora Municipal Center

Colfax BRT Next

We want to hear from you!

Share your thoughts on traveling along East Colfax Avenue in Aurora!

Scan the QR Code to take our survey!

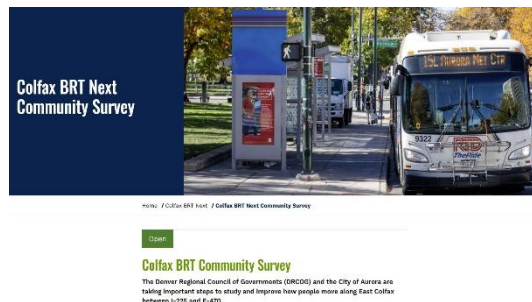
Want to learn more? Connect with us at **Engage Aurora Live!**

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Website and Survey

- [URL: engage.drcog.org/colfaxnext](https://engage.drcog.org/colfaxnext)
- [Survey Landing Page](#)



Media

- [Aurora offers final public feedback opportunity for transportation master plan](#) *The Denver Gazette*, Kyla Pearce, March 31
- [GET ENGAGED: Aurora invites residents to share input on city projects at show and tell day](#), *The Sentinel Colorado*, March 31
- [Bus rapid transit could soon make its way to Aurora, provide east option on Colfax to Picadilly and E-470](#), *CBS News*, Brian Sherrod, April 17
- [Aurora looks to improve Colfax corridor with its own bus rapid transit project.](#) *Denver7*, Claire Lavezzorio, April 20
- [City of Aurora Press Release](#), April 22
- [Aurora Now April 23, 2025](#), *AuroraTV*, April 23

IX. Email Subscribers

Throughout Phase One, the project team collected 56 email addresses from community members interested in receiving project updates.

