

Colfax BRT Next
Connecting Aurora: I-225 to Picadilly

Colfax BRT Next: State of the Corridor

Executive summary

Denver Regional Council of Governments and City of Aurora

June 2025

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Project background

What is Colfax BRT Next?

Colfax BRT Next is studying ways to improve travel along East Colfax Avenue, with Bus Rapid Transit between I-225 and Picadilly Road. The Denver Regional Council of Governments and City of Aurora are partnering to advance this study, which will conclude in 2026 with a locally preferred alternative and a pathway for securing funding for further project development and implementation.

Once implemented, BRT will move people more efficiently, safely and sustainably along the Colfax corridor between I-225 and Picadilly Road/E-470, and will connect to the East Colfax BRT project currently under construction between Denver and Aurora.

How does Colfax BRT Next relate to other plans?

The project aligns with the City of Aurora’s transportation planning efforts and DRCOG’s 2050 Regional Transportation Plan to implement a regional network of Bus Rapid Transit.

What are the goals of Colfax BRT Next?

-  Connect essential jobs and services to affordable housing
-  Increase transit capacity and efficiency
-  Enhance multimodal safety and access to transit
-  Encourage intentional land use patterns and economic development
-  Promote access to reliable and affordable transit services for all people
-  Support healthy families and communities while delivering a cost-effective transit solution

What is this document?

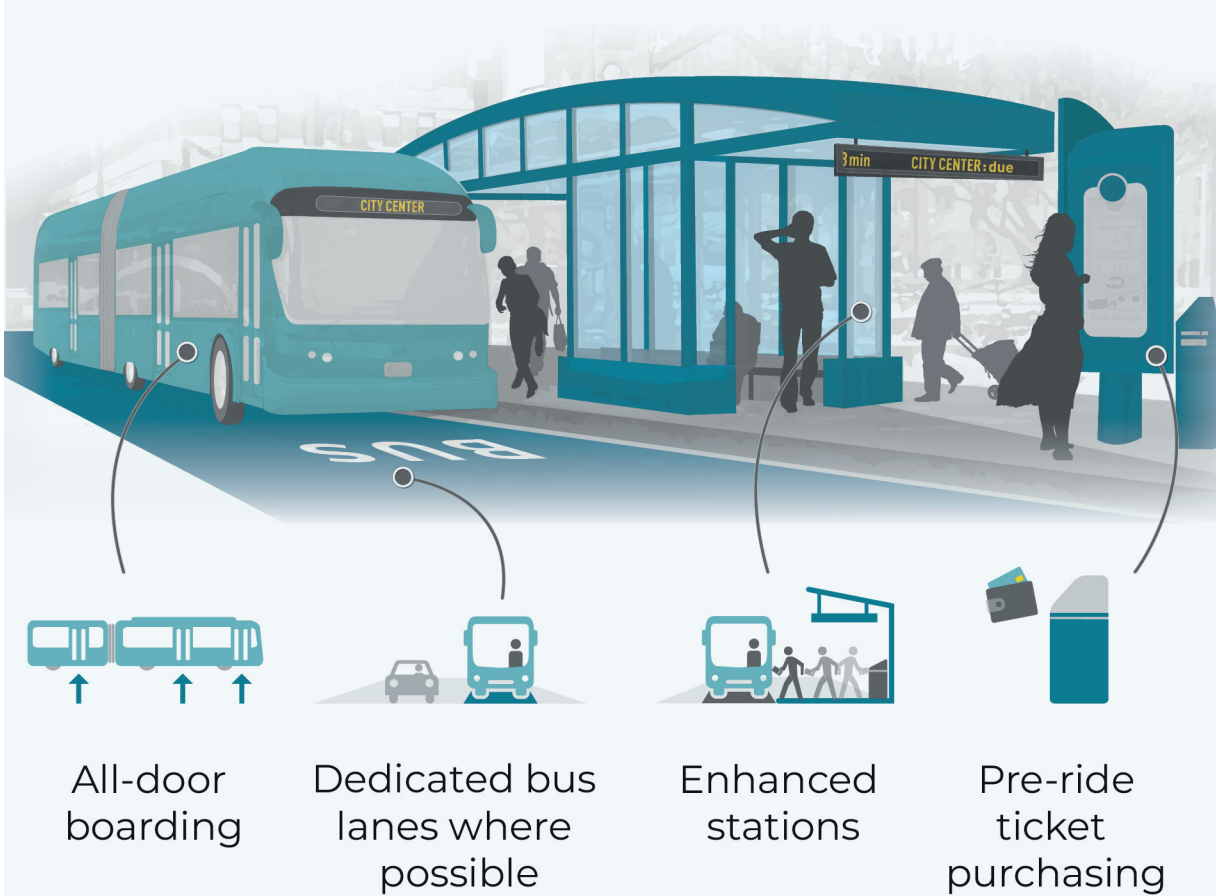
This document is the executive summary of the *State of the Corridor* report for the Colfax BRT Next study. It provides background information and a synthesis of key takeaways.

What is Bus Rapid Transit?

Bus Rapid Transit, also called BRT, is a bus system designed to move people more efficiently, reliably and safely.

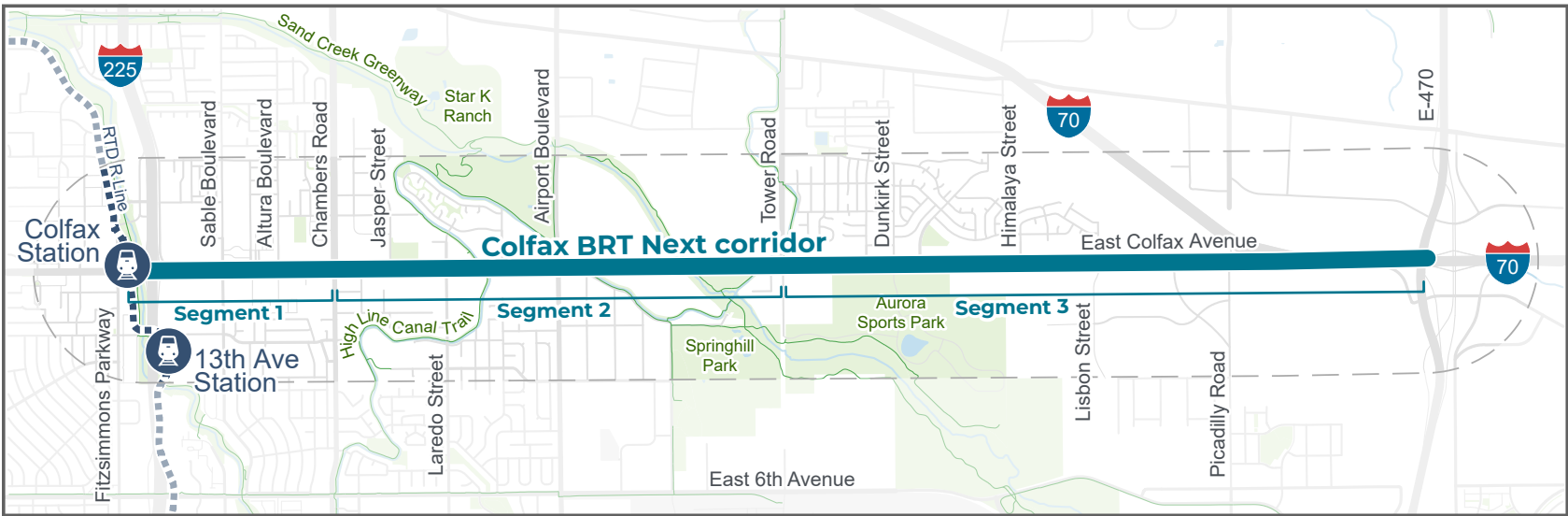
With BRT, buses come frequently all day—at least every 15 minutes from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. on weekdays, and at a minimum every 30 minutes on weekends.

BRT may also have features such as enhanced stations, all-door boarding, dedicated bus lanes and pre-ride ticket purchasing. These features improve rider comfort and minimize delays caused by frequent stops and traffic.



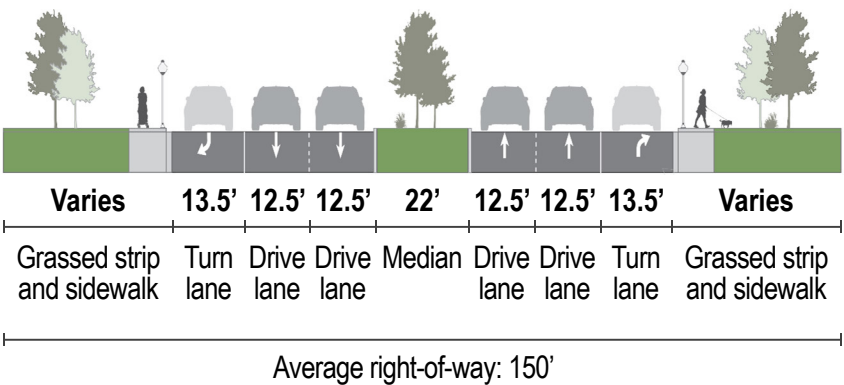
What is the Colfax BRT Next corridor and study area?

The Colfax BRT Next corridor transitions from a suburban four-lane street at Colfax Station at its west end to a rural divided highway at E-470 at its east end.



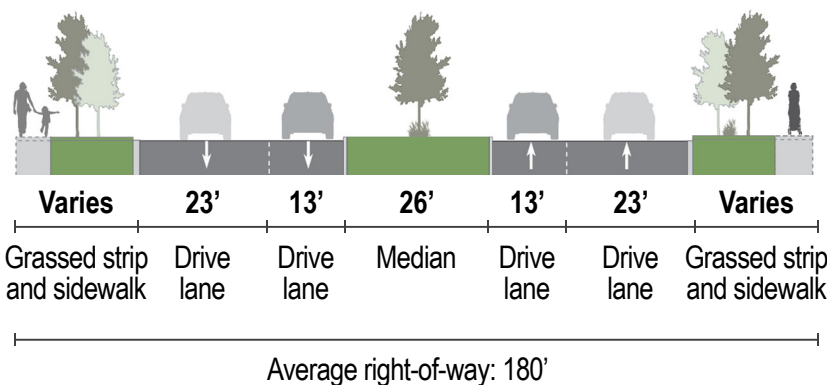
Colfax BRT Next corridor
Study area (half-mile)

Source: RTD, DRCOG, City of Aurora



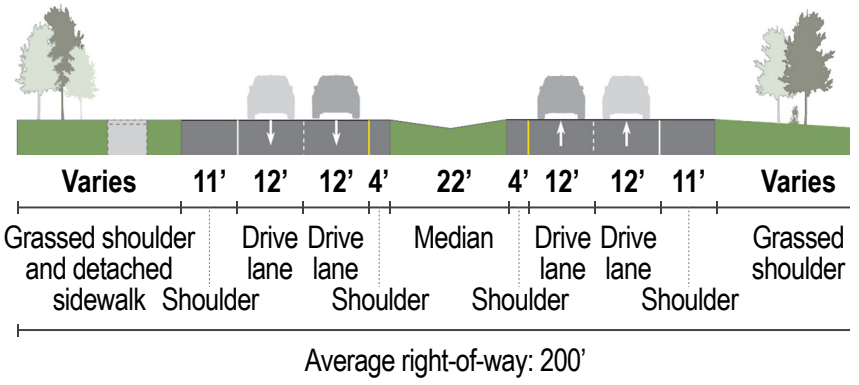
Segment 1: I-225 (Colfax Station) to Chambers Road

- Speed limit: 35 miles per hour
- Four general purpose drive lanes with additional right turn lanes in both directions



Segment 2: Chambers Road to Tower Road

- Speed limit: 40–45 miles per hour
- Four general purpose drive lanes including oversized outside lanes in both directions



Segment 3: Tower Road to Picadilly Road/E-470

- Speed limit: 55 miles per hour
- Four-lane rural highway with shoulders in both directions

Planned improvements

Several improvements are already planned or underway on the corridor, to support transportation for people walking, biking, taking transit, and driving.

- Intersection upgrades for East Colfax Avenue at Tower Road and at Picadilly Road
- A new interchange for I-70 at Picadilly Road
- The overall East Colfax BRT effort, which will increase the frequency of Routes 15 and 15L, with capital improvements underway west of the Colfax BRT Next corridor
- A High Line Canal Trail underpass to cross East Colfax Avenue near Laredo Street

Synthesis of key takeaways

This section synthesizes key takeaways from the full *State of the Corridor* report, and highlights what they mean for Colfax BRT Next.



Transit



Road safety and access to transit for people walking, rolling and bicycling



Land use, demographics, traffic and environmental conditions





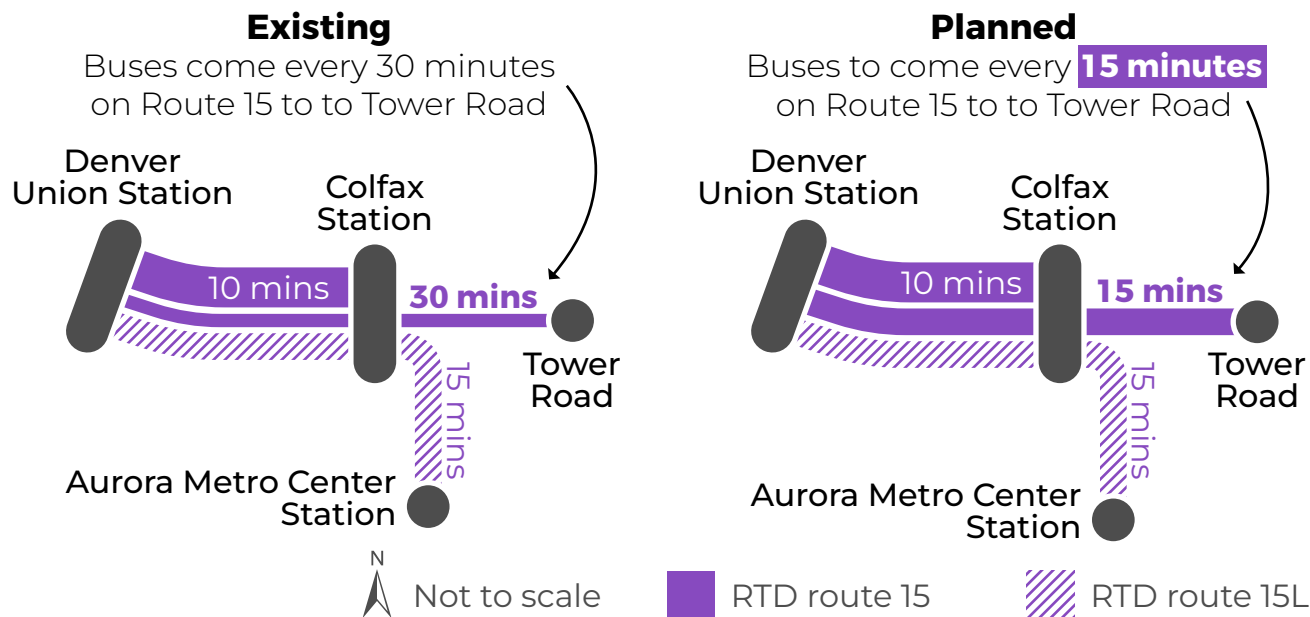
Transit

Routes 15 and 15L are the two core RTD routes serving East Colfax Avenue.

Route 15 provides local service, with trips ending at either Colfax Station (I-225) or continuing to Tower Road. Route 15L provides faster service with limited stops between downtown Denver and I-225, and ends at Aurora Metro Center Station, with service along South Sable Boulevard. Routes 153, 169, and 169L also operate on parts of East Colfax Avenue in the study area.

Route 15 has a complicated one-way loop east of Tower Road. The route makes several turns through the Tower Triangle neighborhood to change directions from outbound to inbound, and has an extended stop at Tower Road for a driver break, which can be confusing to riders.

More frequent bus service is planned for East Colfax Avenue, as part of the broader East Colfax BRT project. This will mean buses every 15 minutes to Tower Road, rather than every 30 minutes (current)—regardless of Colfax BRT Next.

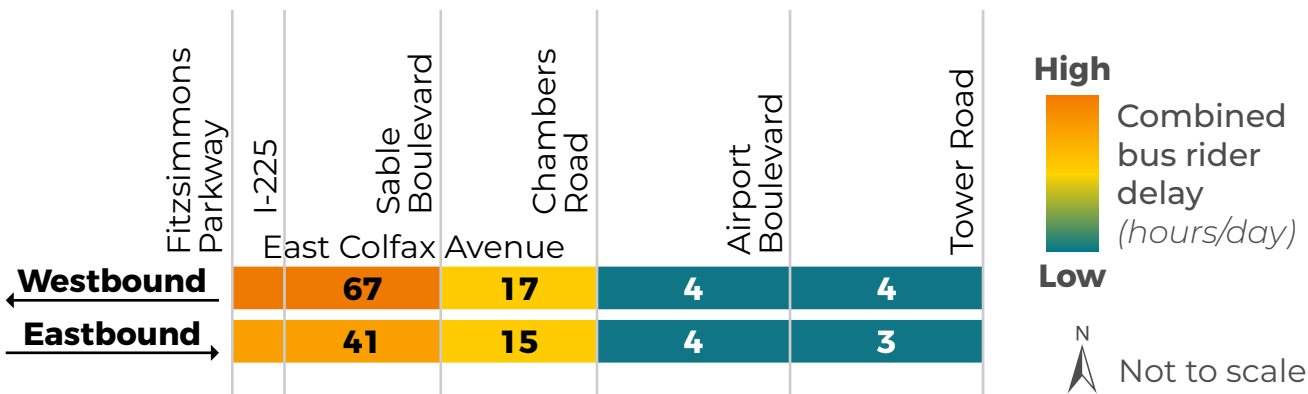


High ridership in the study area: approximately 1,000 people get on Route 15 and 700 on Route 15L each weekday. This is a modest increase from 2019 numbers, despite the COVID-19 pandemic.

Source: RTD, January – April 2019 and 2024

Only 63% of buses arrive on time on Routes 15 and 15L. This is well below RTD's target of at least 87% of buses arriving on time.

In the Colfax BRT Next study area, bus delays are worse between I-225 and Chambers Road. If we combine bus delay for all passengers, each weekday, this adds up to 92 hours westbound and 63 hours eastbound, mostly between I-225 and Chambers Road.



Source: City of Aurora, Fall 2023

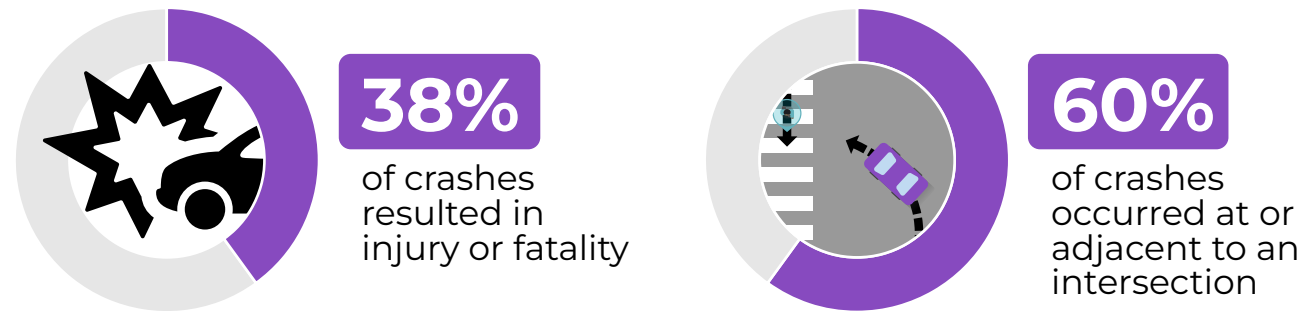
Why is this important for Colfax BRT Next?

- Corridor improvements on East Colfax Avenue can build on the benefits of frequent bus service planned for Route 15 east of Colfax Station, making transit faster and more convenient to use, as well as safer to access.
- Transit priority infrastructure—such as bus lanes and special traffic lights that help buses get through intersections—can make Routes 15 and 15L more dependable to riders, by reducing delay and helping buses arrive on time more often.
- Extending service to Picadilly Road may offer simpler routing and bus turnaround options for Route 15, making it easier for more riders to access the service.



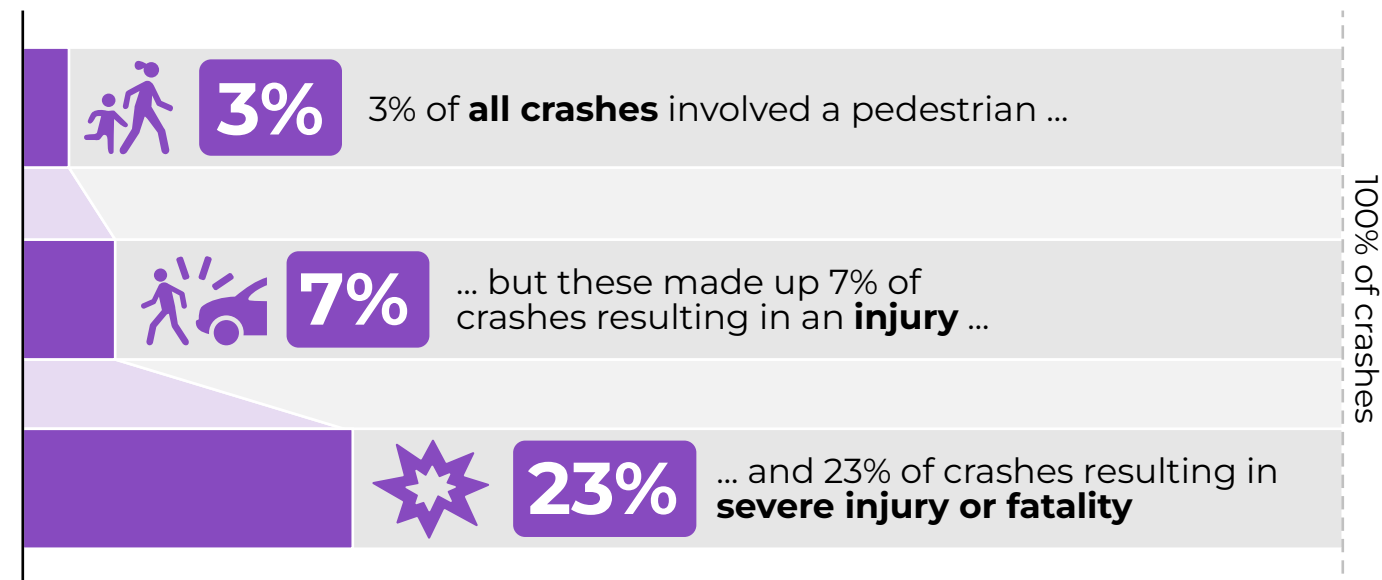
Road safety and access to transit for people walking, rolling and bicycling

With 38% of crashes resulting in injury or fatality (2021 – 2023), the Colfax BRT Next corridor is part of DRCOG's High-Injury Network. On average, 214 crashes were reported in the study area each year over this period, 60% of which occurred at or near intersections.



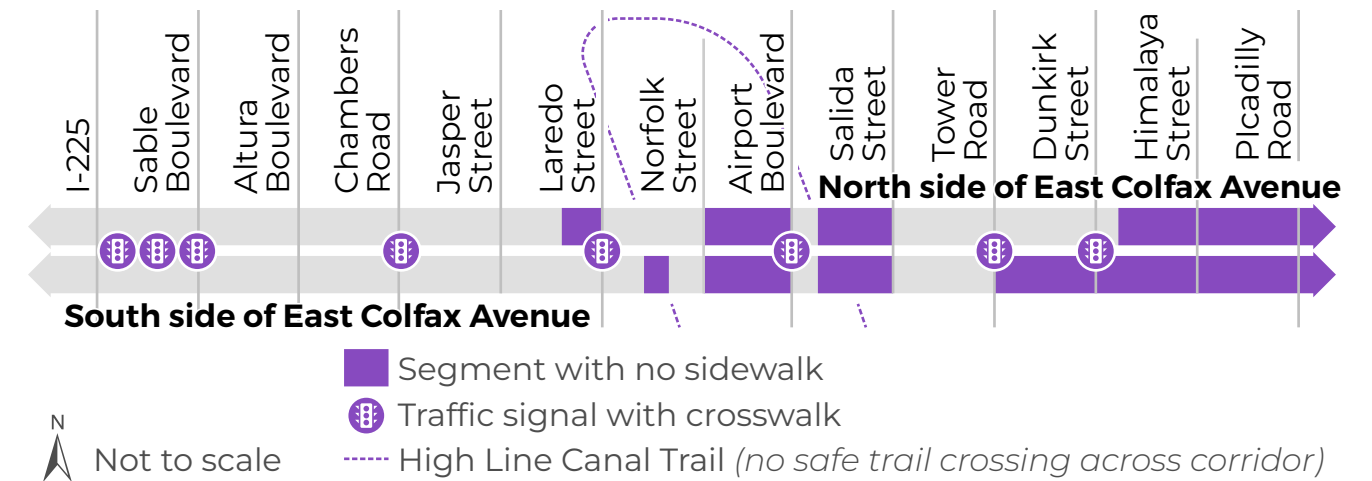
Source: City of Aurora, 2021 – 2023

Crashes disproportionately harm pedestrians. Only 3% of crashes in the study area involved a pedestrian (2021 – 2023). However, these made up 7% of crashes resulting in an injury and nearly a quarter (23%) of crashes resulting in a severe injury or fatality.



Source: City of Aurora, 2021 – 2023

The Colfax BRT Next corridor has several pedestrian and bike access challenges. These include missing sidewalks, segments that feel unsafe to walk on ("high-stress" segments), and long distances between places to safely cross East Colfax Avenue on foot or by bike. Further, the High Line Canal Trail intersects the corridor but lacks safe crossing infrastructure.



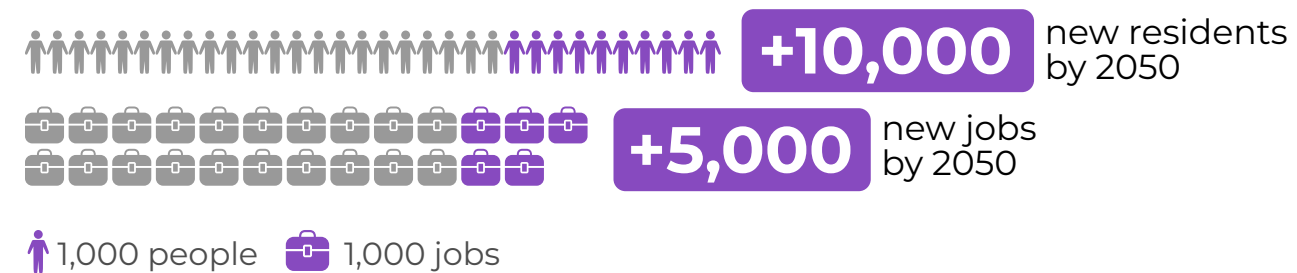
Why is this important for Colfax BRT Next?

- Nearly every transit trip begins with a person walking or rolling to their bus stop. Therefore, helping people safely get to bus stops is necessary for transit to be successful. Colfax BRT Next can improve safety, visibility and access with infrastructure like sidewalks, lighting, more frequent safe pedestrian crossings and bus stop amenities.
- Adding trail crossings and dedicated bicycle facilities increases safety and helps extend the reach of transit for people who wish to bike to the bus.
- Infrastructure to improve safety for people walking and biking also makes streets safer for all forms of transportation.



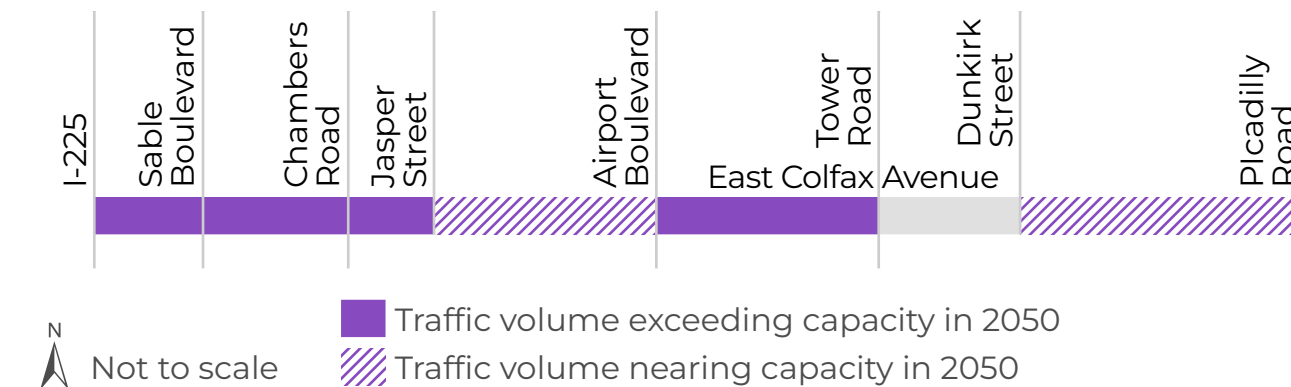
Land use, demographics, traffic and environmental conditions

Rapid growth will mean more people, more jobs, and more people taking transit. With roughly 22,000 residents and 20,000 jobs in 2023, The Colfax BRT Next study area is expected to add about 10,000 residents and 5,000 jobs by 2050. And in recent years, the percent of people who typically take transit has been growing. For example, 50% of households in the study area were renters in 2024, up from 38% in 2000.



Sources: 2023 American Community Survey, DRCOG, Esri Business Analyst

By 2050, projections indicate a 40% increase in vehicle miles traveled, which could worsen traffic congestion on East Colfax Avenue, particularly between I-225 and Tower Road, where traffic volume may exceed capacity.

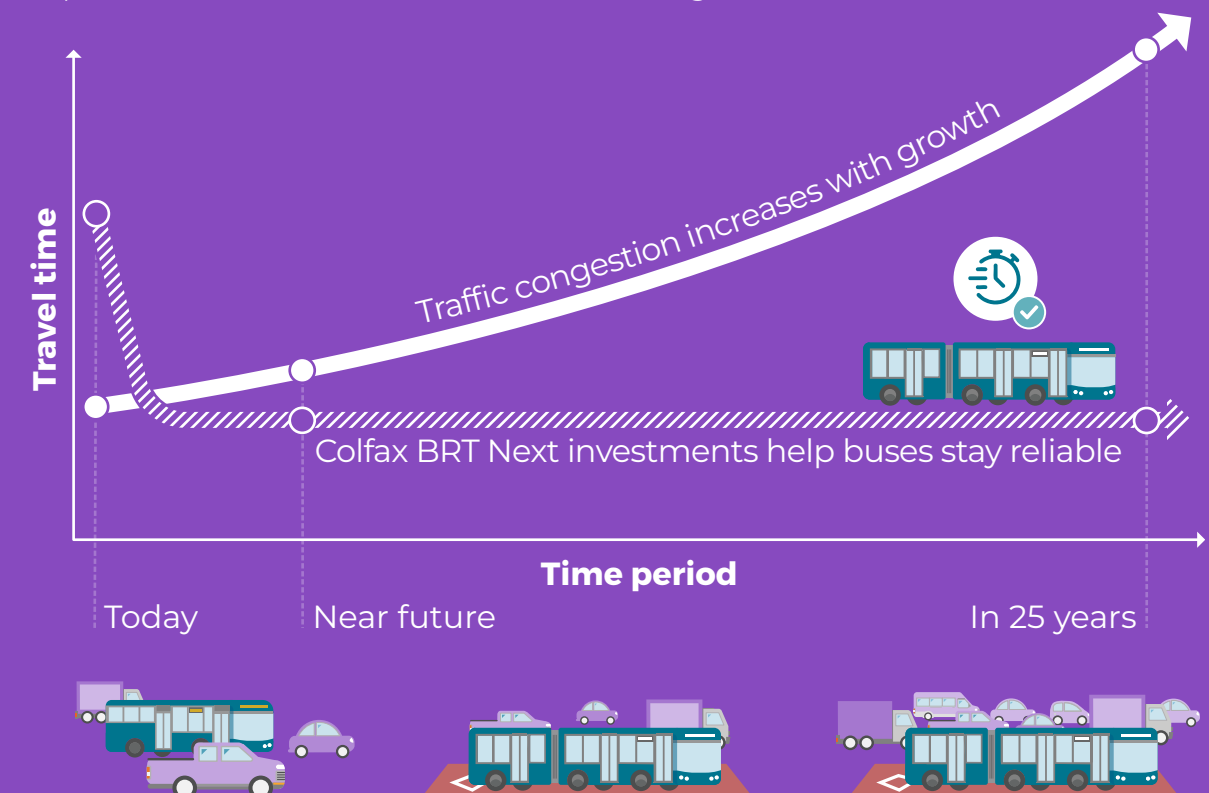


Source: DRCOG

Environmental conditions along the corridor present minimal concerns at this stage. However, wetlands, floodplains, and endangered species remain considerations. Also, marginalized communities are a priority, given the high percentage of minority and low-income populations in the study area.

Why is this important for Colfax BRT Next?

- Shifting people from driving to transit can mitigate the traffic that would otherwise accompany growth. This is because transit is a space-efficient form of transportation relative to driving. Colfax BRT Next can provide reliable and safe transit for the large increase in jobs and people that are anticipated within the study area and beyond.
- Colfax BRT Next investments can increase opportunities for people in and around the study area—many of whom disproportionately benefit from transit—by providing affordable access to jobs and other destinations.
- Investments in transit priority today can help transit remain a reliable option into the future, when traffic congestion increases.



Timeline and next steps



Learn more and stay up to date on Colfax BRT Next
at engage.drcog.org/ColfaxNext