

303 Artway/Montbello Corridor

A Denver Regional Council of Governments
Corridor and Community-Based Transportation
Program Study



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Introduction

303 ARTWAY HERITAGE TRAIL & MONTBELLO LOOP

The 303 ArtWay Heritage Trail and the Montbello Loop are two community-developed projects in Northeast Denver that have involved nearly a decade of planning efforts. While there has been considerable community-led visioning for these projects, they are considered to be not fully implementable by the City of Denver. The 303 ArtWay and Montbello Loop Implementation Plan addresses the need for additional planning efforts to move these two projects forward towards implementation. Further coordination and analysis will help better position both projects for inclusion in the City's Capital Improvement Program budget, federal grant proposals, potential bonds, and other creative funding sources for implementation.

The project team consists of the following: The Denver Regional Council of Governments, project lead; The Trust for Public Land, project nominator; the City and County of Denver, the local jurisdiction who would be responsible for infrastructure implementation; Radian, primary project manager and community engagement specialist for the 303 ArtWay; Montbello Organizing Committee, project co-lead and community engagement specialist for the Montbello Loop; and Toole Design Group, who will provide technical assistance. Through a highly collaborative and community-centered approach, the project team will work to develop a clear analysis of existing planning efforts, conduct a feasibility review in alignment with the Denver's Department of Transportation and Infrastructure (DOTI) standards and design guidelines, develop preliminary conceptual designs for each project, and outline priority next steps and recommendations in order to move each project on to successful implementation. This summary will provide an overview of the history of these projects, the original community-developed vision and goals, existing infrastructure conditions, relevant ongoing and future related implementation efforts, feasibility of the existing plans, and next steps.



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303 Artway Heritage Trail

BACKGROUND AND ORIGINAL GOALS AND VISION

The 303 ArtWay Heritage Trail is a future four-mile pedestrian and bike loop connecting RTD's 40th and Colorado station to key destinations within Northeast Park Hill. The Heritage Trail is a community-driven project, with local stakeholders playing a major role in both the location and the design of the future urban path. The 303 ArtWay will highlight the visionaries, artists, leaders and community activists who have brought so much life to this historically unique and diverse neighborhood, all while increasing safety and connectivity throughout the Northeast Park Hill community.



The project focuses on the following goals:

1. Increase connectivity and mobility between the 40th and Colorado Transit Station, the Dahlia Camps, and Holly Square.
2. Highlight local artists while focusing on Northeast Park Hill's rich history, heritage and culture.
3. Encourage walking, biking and transit use.
4. Improve sidewalks and bike infrastructure, creating safer routes throughout Northeast Park Hill.
5. Reduce traffic speeds in the neighborhood to create safer streets.
6. Promote a healthy and active lifestyle.



Since 2014, the project team has facilitated community engagement in this area to support community-identified priorities that determine the future of the neighborhood. In May 2020, the project team finalized the [303 Artway Heritage Trail Corridor Study](#) documenting Phase I of the project.

The 70-page report, co-developed with the 303 Artway Steering Committee, summarizes years of research, community engagement, stakeholder partnerships, and technical expertise. It outlines community-identified priorities, including infrastructure improvements, cultural heritage, safety, and addressing the neighborhood's needs and inequities.

Additionally, the study covers transportation accessibility, traffic fatality data, affordable housing, infrastructure needs, public arts strategy, and policy review. Community input was gathered through design charrettes, neighborhood walks, pop-up events, and surveys.

Building upon the success of the Corridor Study, since 2020 the 303 Artway project team has coordinated ongoing engagement in the neighborhood, including annual community events such as Park Hill Day of Legends, Trunk or Treat, Bike to Work Day, and more to gather additional community input on the trail's brand concept, design, sign locations, murals, and which community members to honor as local legends.

IMPLEMENTATION EFFORTS AND EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE

CURRENT AND UPCOMING RELATED IMPLEMENTATION EFFORTS

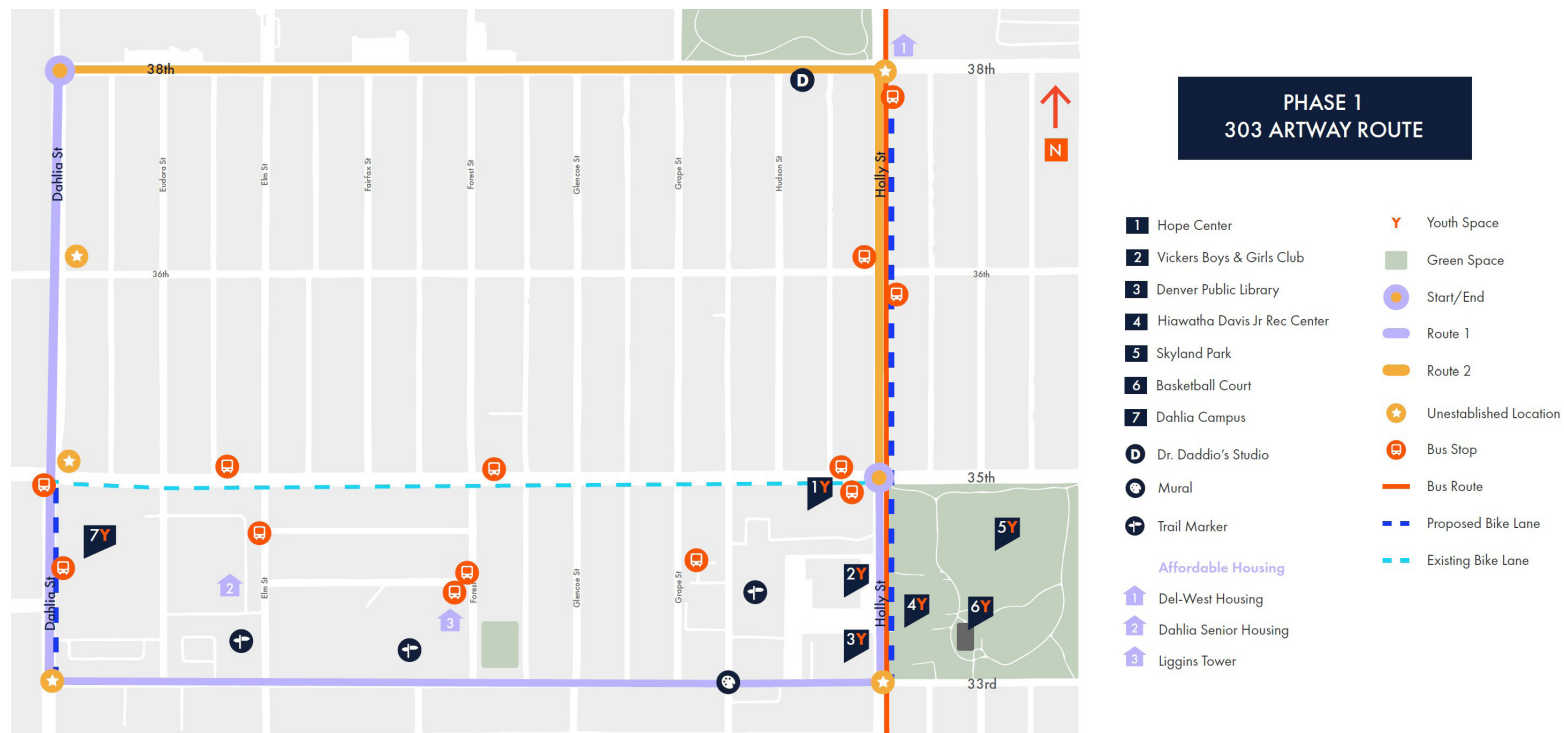


Figure 1. Phase I of the 303 ArtWay Heritage Trail

In 2023 there was a contentious city-wide ballot measure asking Denverites whether they wanted to preserve the Park Hill Golf Course or open it up to housing and mixed-use development. The final vote determined that the land would remain as a golf course, and the area was subsequently fenced off. Due to its closure and the voting process, the project team faced great uncertainty regarding the future 303 ArtWay's route. The project team determined that it would be best to take a phased approach for implementation until there was more clarity and guidance on

whether or not the golf course would be made available. For this reason, planned implementation includes two phases: the proposed Phase I route which focuses on neighborhood organizations, resources, and key amenities in Northeast Park Hill; and Phase II, which will connect the 303 ArtWay safely across Colorado Boulevard to the 40th and Colorado Commuter Rail Station.

In 2025, Mayor Mike Johnston announced that the city would be negotiating a land swap deal with the owner of the Park Hill Golf Course, allowing them to develop the land into a city-owned regional park. As of the writing this Executive Summary, the park is currently in its planning phase, and the project team is hopeful that its future design will include a pathway for the Phase II route of the 303 ArtWay.

Implementation of the Phase I route for the 303 ArtWay Heritage Trail will bring a decade of community engagement, design, and planning into action funded by the Colorado Health Foundation. This phase includes the construction and installation of wayfinding signage, interactive “playstations” for youth movement and play, and an audio storytelling experience to showcase the neighborhood’s history and culture. Further, the route will connect key amenities throughout the neighborhood such as the Hiawatha Davis Jr. Rec Center, Skyland Park, the Vickers Boys and Girls Club, the Hope Center, the Pauline Robinson Denver Public Library Branch, Denver Health, and the Dahlia WellPower Campus.

The project team anticipates completing the installation of Phase I signage by early 2026 with community playstations installed by 2027. The Phase II route, which aims to successfully connect the Northeast Park Hill neighborhood to the 40th and Colorado RTD station, is in development.

The proposed route will include infrastructure and feasibility recommendations from this study, with an emphasis on increased accessibility, safety, and connectivity. Residents will continue to have opportunities to provide feedback on the Phase II route via pop-up events, surveys, public meetings, and neighborhood walks.

Since the completion of the 303 ArtWay Heritage Trail Corridor Study in 2020, the City and County of Denver has completed various infrastructure improvements along important connecting corridors, including Bruce Randolph Avenue, 35th Avenue, 40th Avenue, and Smith Road. Significant pedestrian and bicycle connectivity gaps are still present today along the proposed 303 ArtWay route, impacting safety and access to key neighborhood destinations. Sidewalk deficiencies (sidewalks less than 4 ft wide) are substantial barriers to mobility in the area, especially along 38th Avenue and Holly Street, and there are no plans for sidewalk improvements in the near future.

Critical crossings remain unaddressed, with limited pedestrian safety upgrades implemented despite community-identified priorities included in the Corridor Study. While the City and County of Denver has improved some bicycle infrastructure in the area, including installing a new bike lane on 35th Avenue, major segments along Dahlia Street, Holly Street, and 40th Avenue remain incomplete.



Figure 2. Phase II Draft of the 303 ArtWay Heritage Trail

EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE

Several streets in the Phase I route are recommended for bicycle facilities by DOTI. Both Dahlia Street and Holly Street are recommended for neighborhood bikeways and 38th Avenue is recommended for a buffered bike lane. However, there are gaps in the existing and proposed network for both Phases I and II, including a small portion of 40th Avenue connecting to the 40th and Colorado Station, and 33rd Avenue.

While there have been some recent crashes along the Phase I route, only one crash at 36th Ave and Dahlia St resulted in a serious injury. Most of the crashes in the study area, including a high density of both fatal and serious injury crashes, have been along Colorado Blvd. This highlights the importance of having a connection through the future Park Hill Park to limit pedestrians and bicyclists needing to travel along Colorado Blvd. Future safety improvements to Colorado Blvd and the underpass connection will also be critical components to ensuring a comfortable and safe journey along the 303 ArtWay to connect across Colorado Blvd to the 40th and Colorado Station.



Figure 4. Crash hotspots in the 303 ArtWay study area.



FEASIBILITY ANALYSIS

As part of the 303 ArtWay and Montbello Loop Implementation Plan, the project team conducted interviews with DOTI staff. The goal of these interviews was to assess how these community-driven projects align with current city transportation plans and projects and identify feasible next steps for implementation. The discussion focused on three topics: the feasibility of 38th and 33rd Avenues as part of the 303 ArtWay route, updates regarding Park Hill Park, and how this project can secure DOTI buy-in.

The project team overviewed the 303 ArtWay Phase 1 route with DOTI staff, noting that improving walking and biking conditions could require the removal of parking and the acquisition of right-of-way. DOTI staff raised concerns about 38th Avenue due to high traffic volumes and the likelihood that adding a protected bike lane would necessitate the removal of parking. While 36th Avenue or 35th Avenue may be possible alternatives to 38th Avenue for east-west bike connectivity, 38th Avenue remains a potential route for future bike infrastructure and an important corridor due to its historical and cultural significance to the neighborhood.

Regarding the Park Hill Park Plan, DOTI staff noted that many of the initial alignments recommended in the previous Denver Moves: Bikes Plan were based on the now-canceled redevelopment of the Park Hill Golf Course. With that site now becoming Park Hill Park, there is more flexibility for rethinking connections. The shift in land use will likely result in the redevelopment of

the surrounding industrial area, which will open opportunities for integrating bike and pedestrian infrastructure. However, challenges navigating private and historic properties in the neighborhood will persist and will result in the need for more in-depth discussions to advance recommendations for new bike and pedestrian connections.

DOTI staff emphasized that the 303 ArtWay should continue to focus on placemaking and the pedestrian experience and recommended aligning with DOTI's Sidewalk Program and proposed or upcoming bikeway projects. The City is prioritizing areas without any sidewalks over those with narrow "Hollywood sidewalks," which the project team should consider when developing recommendations. DOTI staff made clear that this project must make a strong case for corridor connections and safety improvements to secure buy-in from DOTI and deliver truly implementable recommendations. Extensive community engagement and support will be crucial for advancing improvements to segments and intersections along the Phase 1 route. This will be particularly important for any parking removal and right-of-way acquisition on stretches where sidewalk or bikeway improvements are identified.

Based on the interviews with DOTI staff, existing conditions analysis of the study area, and proposed and planned projects from various local agencies, the project team determined the feasibility of previous recommendations from the 303 ArtWay Heritage Trail Corridor Study and

overall implementation. The project team identified several recommendations as feasible or conditionally feasible. These include:

- Adding ADA-accessible sidewalks along 38th Avenue, 33rd Avenue, and Holly Street, where gaps and narrow sidewalk conditions have been identified, pending alignment with the DOTI Sidewalk Program, potential parking removal and right of way acquisition.
- Installing enhanced lighting along Colorado Blvd in coordination with the Colorado Department of Transportation.
- Pedestrian safety upgrades at intersections near Smith Elementary (35th Avenue and Holly Street), the Vickers Boys and Girls Club, and 33rd Avenue and Holly Street, which are supported by multiple city plans.
- Building an access point to Park Hill Park at Dahlia Street and 38th Avenue, which DOTI staff have confirmed, is included in the Park Hill Park Plan.
- Other interventions, such as wayfinding signage, intersection murals, and community bike education events, will face few barriers and can most likely be implemented with a DOTI partnership.

Other recommendations may be only partially feasible, such as implementing multimodal improvements on 33rd Avenue. Pedestrian improvements on 33rd Avenue generally

align with DOTI's priorities, but bike infrastructure would be difficult to construct due to spatial constraints, existing roadway classification, and city priorities. Recommendations deemed unfeasible include painting bike lanes on Dahlia Street, as DOTI has recommended designating Dahlia Street as a neighborhood bikeway. Segments on 35th Avenue, Colorado Boulevard, and Bruce Randolph Avenue that were part of the previous study are now excluded from Phase 1, rendering earlier recommendations, like sidewalk widening between Skyland Park and Smith Elementary or rebuilding alley curb ramps along 35th Avenue, no longer applicable.

The feasibility analysis confirms that many elements of the 303 ArtWay are aligned with current city plans and standards and are likely to be implementable, particularly pedestrian safety and placemaking components. However, implementing bikeway improvements will be far more challenging due to space constraints on the Phase 1 route.

Additionally, improving multimodal infrastructure will be easier on some Phase 1 corridors than others, like 38th Avenue. The successful implementation of infrastructure improvements along the 303 ArtWay hinges on careful alignment with DOTI programs, community support for changes such as parking removal, and responsiveness to right-of-way limitations. This project must demonstrate value to both community members and city agencies in terms of safety, connectivity, and cultural significance to move forward.

3

Montbello Loop

BACKGROUND AND ORIGINAL GOALS AND VISION

The Montbello Loop is a vibrant community initiative designed to encourage active transportation and foster community engagement. This innovative concept seeks to create a pedestrian-friendly pathway that connects key areas within the neighborhood, providing a safe and enjoyable way to explore the local surroundings.

By promoting walking and cycling as a means of transportation, the Montbello Loop aims to reduce reliance on vehicles, enhance physical activity, and cultivate a stronger sense of community. It encourages residents and visitors alike to embrace the beauty of Montbello on foot or on wheels, fostering connections and interactions along the way.

As articulated in the [Montbello Loop Community Vision and Concept](#), published in 2023, the Montbello Loop is a community-authored vision that can advance equity through investments in the built environment for justice, health and well-being, mobility, access to opportunity, and the right to move safely in the community, community power and community organizing, and climate change adaptation and mitigation. Montbello residents, leaders, and representatives collaborated to offer guidance and collectively reached the decisions that are documented in the Community Vision and Concept.

In partnership with the Montbello Loop Advisory Committee, Trust for Public Land, Living Ecology Studio, and Toole Design Group, the Montbello Organizing Committee published a 90-page vision and concept proposal for the future Montbello Loop. The feedback and direction received from the FreshLo Partners directly informed the project approach, structure, and process. The FreshLo Partners consist of twenty-six organizations. In addition to the FreshLo Partners, the project is guided by the Advisory Committee, consisting of committed Montbello residents, Montbello community leaders, and Montbello organization representatives. Members directly informed all parts of the Montbello Loop Community Vision and Concept and were indispensable, vital participants throughout the entire process. Additionally, Montbello residents were welcome to attend all project meetings and the project was a collective effort, including two Community Work Sessions to advance the content through a collaborative and transparent process.

Rooted in this vision, the project focuses on the following key goals:

1. Create a safe and accessible pathway for people to walk/bike/roll in Montbello, and make it more enjoyable and comfortable to walk/bike/roll by including lighting, shade, trees, plants, and art.
2. Ensure people who do not drive or who do not have access to a car (youth, older adults, people who choose not to drive, and others) can safely and comfortably access places and services in Montbello, including other transportation options such as: public transportation, buses, and electronic mobility devices.
3. Connect parks, schools, community gardens, and community places in Montbello.
4. Improve health and wellness for Montbello residents.
5. Strengthen social connections and support community cohesion in Montbello.

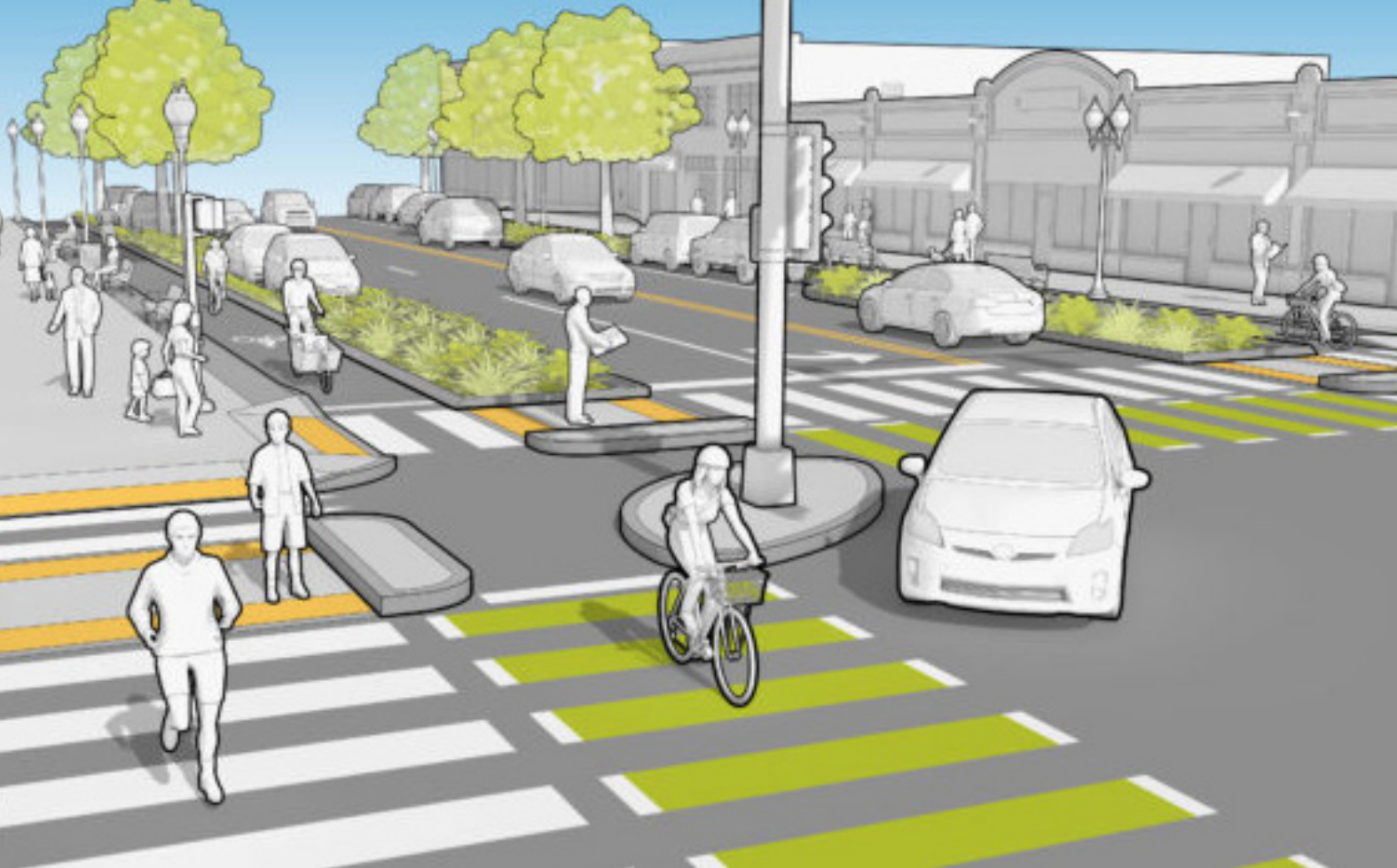
CURRENT AND UPCOMING RELATED IMPLEMENTATION EFFORTS

There have been several related implementation efforts since the publishing of the Vision and Concept in 2023. Montbello Organizing Committee recently launched the Electric Bike Library & Electric Van Rental program, completed the FreshLo Hub residences, and is partnering with the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure on the Montbello Channel Improvement project along Uvalda street. Additionally, recently installed wide sidewalks and planting strips along 46th Avenue and near the FreshLo Hub have advanced implementation of the Montbello Loop.

The Channel Improvement project addresses long-standing public safety concerns by transforming the existing concrete channel into a greenway with a multi-use path. The project includes intersection improvements, dedicated bike lanes, and enhanced sidewalks to create a safer and more accessible space for all users. While the project is focused on Uvalda Street, design changes will occur at the intersection at Maxwell Place and Uvalda Street, including constructing a roundabout and bump-outs to extend the sidewalk at the intersection's corners, and reduce lanes on Maxwell Place to one lane in each direction at the intersection. These intersection improvements will directly impact the Montbello Loop and implement some of the design elements proposed in the Vision and Concept plan.

The Department of Transportation and Infrastructure has plans for additional improvements in the area unrelated to the Montbello Loop that will overlap with or directly affect the Montbello Loop, including improvements for Peoria Street to add multimodal connectivity from E 37th Avenue to E 56th Avenue. This project, which will be constructed in phases over the next several years, includes signalization and crossing upgrades at Peoria Street and 46th Avenue.





After the completion of the 2023 plan, the proposed route was refined based on community input and according to the direction provided by the Advisory Committee. Advisory Committee members vetted and approved the revised proposed route, but both the Project Management Team and the Advisory Committee members agree additional vetting of the route will need to be completed as part of future phases of the project, especially along segments with driveways and high-parking use. The proposed pathway route connects local destinations in the neighborhood and is located along existing streets that currently have narrow sidewalks and minimal or no on-street bicycle facilities.

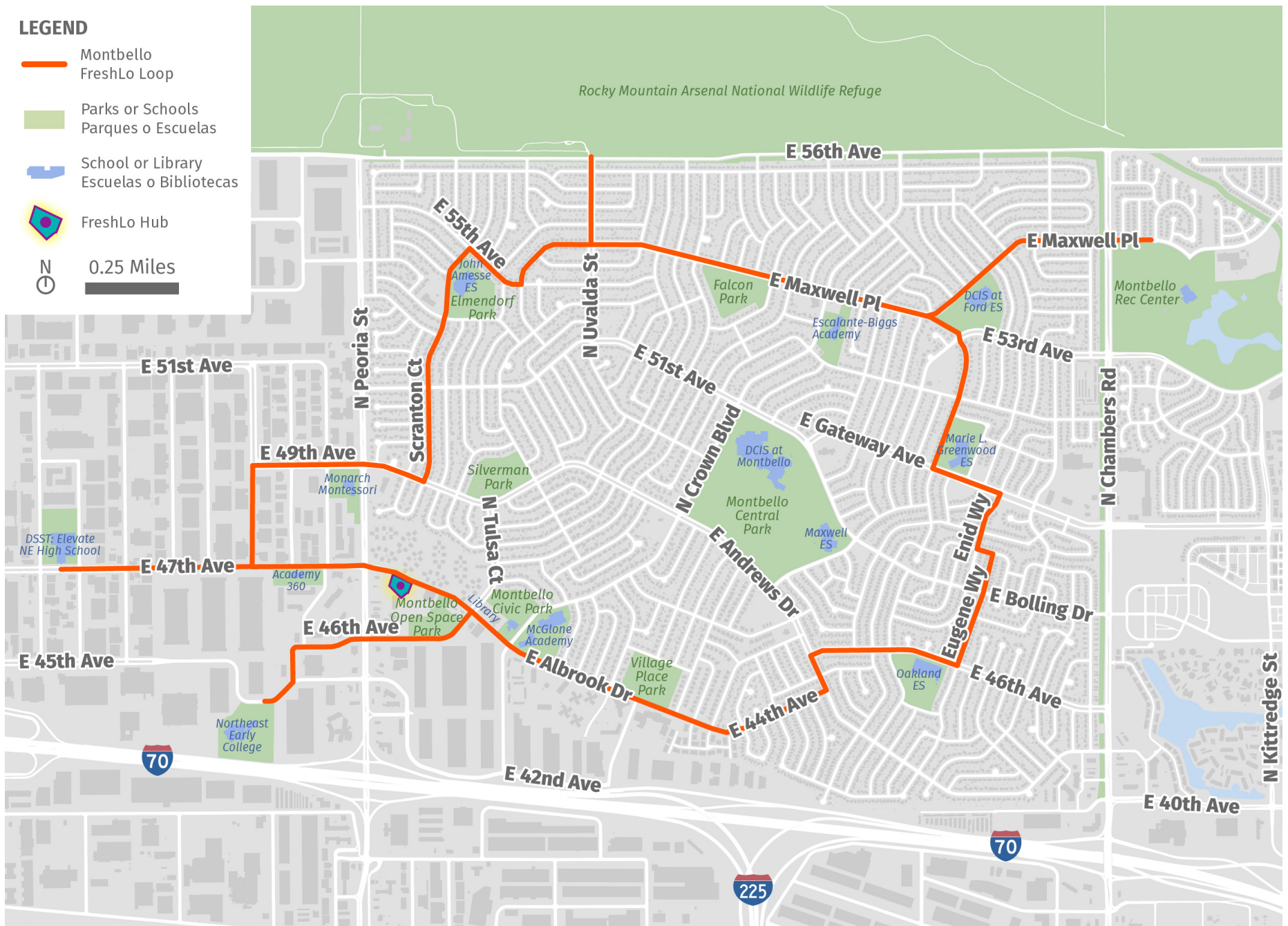


Figure 5. Proposed route for the Montbello Loop

EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE

Most of the proposed Montbello Loop route is recommended by DOTI for bicycle facilities, including protected bike lanes and neighborhood bikeways. Maxwell Place has recently been updated in Denver Moves Bikes to be recommended for a protected bike lane. The one remaining gap without any current or recommended bicycle facility is on E 46th Avenue.

There have been a considerable number of crashes, including many that resulted in serious injuries or fatalities, along the proposed Montbello Loop route. The section of the Montbello Loop that includes E 47th Avenue and Albrook Drive has had the most serious injury and fatal crashes and supports the need for a protected bike lane. There were also quite a few serious injury crashes on E 46th Avenue, which is not currently recommended for any bicycle facilities.

FEASIBILITY ANALYSIS

The project team conducted interviews with DOTI staff to assess how the Montbello Loop aligns with current city transportation plans and projects and identify feasible next steps for implementation.

In reviewing the designs for various segments and intersections along the Montbello Loop, as recommended in the Montbello Loop Community Vision and Concept Plan, DOTI staff identified several overlapping projects. The City

is planning to install or is already constructing protected bike lanes along Albrook Drive, Maxwell Place, and Uvalda St. Key intersections along Peoria Street, including Andrews Drive, 46th Avenue, and 44th Avenue, are also receiving safety upgrades. DOTI staff emphasized that aligning the Montbello Loop with the overall transportation goals of the area, particularly in terms of pedestrian access and safety, is a priority.

DOTI staff strongly advised against the currently proposed multi-use path on arterials along the Montbello Loop, instead encouraging alignment with the City's recommended protected bike lanes on each side of the street, even if it means removing travel lanes. This aligns with best practices for safety, as protected bike lanes on roads with higher traffic volumes provide a safer and more effective solution compared to shared-use paths. That said, the project team believes that there is an opportunity to incorporate protected bike lanes alongside the currently proposed 12 ft multi-use path.

To move the Montbello Loop forward, design concepts must be implementable and grounded in feasibility. Projects that are part of the Vibrant Denver Bond or that provide clear safety improvements will likely be prioritized for implementation. DOTI staff emphasized the importance of demonstrating community support, especially in areas

where parking removal is probable, such as along Albrook Drive or Peoria Street, and in residential areas or near schools where opposition may be more pronounced. DOTI staff also noted that coordinating with the City to address logistical issues, such as channel closures along some of the route, will be necessary.

Based on interviews with DOTI staff, existing conditions analysis of the study area, and proposed and planned projects from various local agencies, the project team assessed the feasibility of previous recommendations from the Montbello Loop Vision and Concept Plan, as well as the overall implementation. Several intersections and segments are already partially or fully implemented, including Albrook Drive near FreshLo and 46th Avenue.

The recommendations at 50th and Enid Way and along 46th Avenue/Tulsa Circuit are the only prior recommendations considered entirely feasible, as the proposed 12-ft multi-use path and other design elements could be implemented alongside facilities proposed by DOTI.

The project team found that recommended infrastructure at most segments and intersections is only partially feasible due to inconsistencies with current bikeway designs, city-recommended bike facilities, and constraints created by infrastructure, such as bump-outs, buffered bike lanes, and protected lanes installed since 2023. The designs proposed by the previous plan would most likely need to be revised slightly or significantly at the following locations:

- Gateway Avenue and Enid Way
- DCIS at Ford Elementary
- Andrews Drive and Scranton Street
- Maxwell Place and Crown Boulevard
- Gateway Avenue and Durham Circuit
- 44th Avenue and Andrews Drive
- Albrook Drive and 46th Avenue (only recommendations along Albrook Drive)

Implementation on Albrook Drive/44th Avenue will face obstacles due to limited space, existing on-street parking, and misalignment with plans for protected bike lanes, as confirmed by DOTI staff. Previously recommended designs at 47th Avenue and Oakland Street, and 47th Avenue and Nome Street are likely not feasible as proposed due to conflicts with future protected bike lanes and bus boarding islands. Meanwhile, the intersection at 50th and Enid Way is more feasible and aligns with DOTI bikeway plans.

The feasibility review shows that many Montbello Loop segments may require redesign or coordination to meet current city standards. Implementation is most likely to succeed in areas where improvements align with already funded projects, enhance safety, and avoid significant design conflicts. Community support will be essential, particularly in locations where trade-offs (like parking removal or lane reductions) are needed to meet feasibility requirements.



Figure 6. Existing and proposed bicycle facilities in the Montbello Loop study area.



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NEXT STEPS FOR THE 303 ARTWAY AND MONTBELLO LOOP IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

In the coming months, the project team will develop new short and long-term recommendations and engage with the communities in Northeast Park Hill and Montbello. There will be opportunities to discuss the tradeoffs of different options, and the communities will have the opportunity to vote on initial concept design plans as well.

