

## **DOTI Responses to Berkley Regis United Neighbors Zoning and Planning Committee questions on West 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue Corridor Study**

**December 27, 2024**

- 1. All three options being proposed have only one lane of through traffic each direction, effectively decreasing the existing traffic capacity by 50%. Are there average annual daily traffic numbers and projections to justify decreasing the capacity on 38<sup>th</sup> Ave? Are there Level of Service (LOS) numbers for AM/PM peak traffic times? What have been the changes in the traffic counts over the last ten years?**

Our analysis indicates that traffic volumes on West 38<sup>th</sup> Ave are currently below the roadway's capacity, meaning the corridor can accommodate existing demand with two travel lanes. That said, we recognize that certain areas, such as near Federal, do experience congestion during the PM peak hour. The project team has conducted a comprehensive traffic analysis, including average annual daily traffic (AADT) numbers, projections, and Level of Service (LOS) assessments for peak traffic times. A detailed report with this analysis will be available within the next month.

- 2. Residential density continues to increase along 38<sup>th</sup> Ave in Berkeley (e.g. 5-story apartment building at 38<sup>th</sup> and Tennyson, townhomes at 38<sup>th</sup> and Perry, apartments at 38<sup>th</sup> and Irving); with hundreds of additional residents, how can a decrease in traffic capacity be justified with no data from RTD supporting the premise that new residents will take public transit?**

Implementing BRT—whether full-scale (Alternative 2) or “light” BRT (Alternative 3)—significantly increases the corridor’s people-moving capacity. High-frequency bus routes operating in dedicated or partial bus lanes can carry up to four times more people per hour than general traffic lanes with infrequent buses.

By investing in high-quality transit infrastructure, amenities, and improved service, we can make transit a more attractive and competitive option, encouraging ridership over time. This approach aligns with Denver’s overall strategy for managing traffic congestion and providing mobility options for a growing population. While it’s not feasible to widen streets to accommodate more vehicles, we can use the existing space more efficiently by prioritizing solutions like BRT that move more people rather than just cars.

- 3. 38th Ave is a major east/west traffic corridor between downtown Denver and northwest Denver and the western suburbs. If traffic capacity is decreased on 38<sup>th</sup> Ave, are there projections for where the traffic will go? It is important to note that the Park Place viaduct is four lanes approaching I-25 from the east, three at Fox Street, two on the 38th Ave turn and would then squeeze into a single lane.**

The project team has conducted a detailed traffic analysis to support the recommendation for a lane reduction, confirming that West 38<sup>th</sup> Ave can accommodate current demand with fewer

lanes and improved, high-frequency transit service. While much of the traffic will remain on 38<sup>th</sup>, some drivers may shift to alternative routes, such as I-70, and others may switch to transit as it becomes a more viable and attractive option. To address traffic diversion, DOTI will conduct a network-wide traffic analysis as a next step. This study will evaluate the impacts of traffic shifts, identify areas of concern, and recommend mitigation measures to ensure smooth traffic flow and minimize disruptions in the broader transportation network.

4. **At a previous corridor study meeting RTD bus schedule reliability numbers were presented, and they were not great. Amenities such as benches at the 38<sup>th</sup> and Sheridan bus stop are lacking; snow removal at the 38<sup>th</sup> and Wolff stop is frequently non-existent. Assumptions regarding increase of ridership by reducing traffic capacity is not based on current public perceptions of convenience, reliability, and safety. With no RTD participation at these public meetings, what message can you give to the public regarding the efficacy of the three proposed options?**

DOTI and RTD recognize the challenges with Route 38's reliability and the lack of transit amenities along the corridor. This project is designed to address these issues by making recommendations to improve transit speed and reliability, install high-quality infrastructure and amenities, and enhance the overall rider experience. While RTD was unable to attend the July public meeting, they remain an active partner in this project.

5. **Why is BRT recommended as Option 2? Data and input from 2019 (pre-Covid) is seriously out of date? Employment and transportation patterns have experienced major changes in the past five years. Also, please note that the Near Northwest Area Plan does not address issues and concerns west of Federal. Berkeley and West Highlands do not have a small area plan and there is currently no schedule for development of such plans.**

The recommendation for BRT on West 38<sup>th</sup> Ave stems from [RTD's Regional BRT Feasibility Study](#) (2020) and [Denver Moves: Transit](#) (2019), which are regional/citywide plans. While traffic levels in the Denver region have returned to pre-pandemic levels, transit ridership has not yet recovered, highlighting the need for DOTI and RTD to take further steps to realize the visions outlined in these plans. To ensure the recommendations align with current transportation patterns, the project team prepared an Existing Conditions report using post-covid data. We acknowledge that the Near Northwest Area Plan did not extend west of Federal. The neighborhoods of Berkeley and West Highland fall under the "Far Northwest" area. For more information about Denver's Neighborhood Planning Initiative, please visit this [link](#).

6. **We have not seen any ridership numbers for the #38 bus line – what is being used to justify the cost and impact of BRT? BRT is new approach to public transit and would entail the use of precious square footage within constrained streets/rights-of-way. With no BRT project even under construction, there is no proof that the BRT system works the way it is intended/envisioned/designed; it seems premature to design 38<sup>th</sup> Ave to accommodate BRT.**

The justification for BRT on West 38<sup>th</sup> Ave is based on data and analysis from multiple planning efforts, including RTD's Regional BRT Feasibility Study (2020) and Denver's Denver Moves:

Transit (2019), which identified BRT as a critical investment for enhancing mobility in key corridors like 38<sup>th</sup>.

Average daily passenger load for route 38 was around 800 in fall 2019, which fell to 400 in fall 2020, and rose to 700 in fall 2023. While current ridership numbers for route 38 are low, this reflects the existing transit service's limitations, such as infrequent buses and lack of infrastructure. BRT addresses these challenges by offering faster, more reliable, and higher-capacity service, which has been shown to significantly increase ridership in cities that have implemented it. For example, BRT systems in cities like Minneapolis, Indianapolis, and Seattle have demonstrated the potential to attract new transit riders and improve traffic congestion.

We recognize that Denver does not yet have an operational BRT corridor, but this project reflects the city's forward-looking approach to investing in proven transit solutions that maximize the use of constrained rights-of-way. The decision to plan for BRT on 38th Avenue is not premature but part of a strategic effort to align with Denver's broader goals of improving mobility, reducing traffic congestion, and supporting sustainable growth.

**7. Is BRT planned only between Fox and Sheridan? What happens east and west of the project corridor?**

Past plans have recommended BRT on West 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue from Wheat Ridge to Downtown Denver. The exact routing would be determined with RTD and additional public input during a subsequent service planning phase.

**8. Two of the three options presented have major changes for RTD service. Current service on the #38 bus line is sub-standard, yet there have been no representatives from RTD at the two public meetings or the business owners meeting held so far for this corridor study. Where is RTD, why are they not attending these public meetings?**

See answer to question 4.

**9. Options 2 & 3 – street parking goes away. How does this impact businesses along 38<sup>th</sup> Ave – does this move parking into the neighborhoods north and south of 38<sup>th</sup> Ave? What input have you received from businesses along 38th Ave?**

It's important to note that Option 3 offers the opportunity to retain some street parking. Along much of West 38th Avenue, sidewalks are currently substandard. To improve pedestrian conditions and provide space for green infrastructure, parking may need to be repurposed in certain areas. However, side-street parking will still be available.

Research shows that people-friendly streets with high-quality public transportation can benefit local businesses by increasing foot traffic and enhancing the overall appeal of the area. DOTI has received positive feedback from many businesses along the corridor, though a few have

expressed concerns about parking. We remain committed to working with business owners to address their concerns as the project progresses.

**10. Who is responsible for maintaining the green infrastructure proposed for all three options?**

**This is a difficult environment for street trees. Without a firm commitment for regular maintenance and watering, it's a great concept and a waste of money.**

Maintenance of the proposed green infrastructure will vary depending on the specific elements. DOTI's Division of Green Infrastructure will manage any stormwater capture and filtration infrastructure that meets their criteria. Other street trees and landscaping may be maintained by adjacent property owners, Business Improvement Districts, or other special districts. A detailed maintenance plan will be developed before implementation to ensure the long-term viability and effectiveness of these improvements.

**11. Severe icing and snow accumulation is a problem on east-bound 38<sup>th</sup> Ave during the winter, especially adjacent to the 5-story apartment buildings. This not only affects traffic flow but creates a hazardous environment for pedestrians and bus riders attempting to access the busses. Can DOTI commit to better snow removal, not just pushing the drifts onto the right-hand lane and sidewalk?**

Lack of snow clearance can be frustrating, particularly where there is little to no space for excess snow storage such as sidewalk buffers or auxiliary lanes. Redesigning the corridor with wider sidewalks and buffer zones, as proposed in Alternatives 1 and 3, will help make snow clearance more manageable and improve accessibility for pedestrians and transit riders. DOTI's [Snow Removal Program](#) is committed to improving safety and mobility by efficiently plowing city streets, prioritizing key routes, and minimizing traffic disruptions during winter weather. Please report any uncleared or icy sidewalks to 311 so that the City can connect property owners with appropriate resources to get sidewalks cleared.