

56th Avenue Safety Improvements FAQ

Q: What is the timeline for the project?

A: Design and the development of construction documents are being completed in 2021. The design-builder selection process will begin in early 2021 and continue through summer 2021. Construction is expected to begin late 2021/early 2022 and is anticipated to be complete by late 2023.

Q: Can this project start sooner?

A: The team is now working on the requirements that the design-builder will need to comply with, and the City's Department of Transportation and Infrastructure (DOTI) is working on requesting qualifications from potential teams of contractors and designers related to their experience on this type of project. Once that selection process is complete, the design-builder will submit a more detailed project schedule which could include the ability to accelerate the project.

Q: How much has been funded for this project? Where is the funding coming from for this project?

A: \$27 million from the Bond measure has been designated to fund the 56th Avenue Improvements project.

Q: What is the Purpose of the Project?

A: As part of the *Elevate Denver Bond Program*, which voters approved in 2017 to help make our streets safer and more efficient for everyone, Denver's Department of Transportation & Infrastructure, or DOTI, will make several improvements along 56th Avenue from Peoria Street to Peña Boulevard to help move more people, safely, whether they're in a car, on a bike, on foot or taking transit. This corridor is used heavily as a parallel to I-70, carrying nearly 24,000 vehicles on average daily so congestion continues to be a problem, and adding an additional lane in each direction will help alleviate some of this congestion.

Q: What are the project goals?

A:

- Develop more convenient, safer access to the Montbello neighborhood from 56th Avenue.
- Improve mobility and capacity along the thoroughfare.
- Provide safe access from the neighborhood to the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge.
- Connect seamlessly with the Peña Boulevard interchange project.
- Install medians to enhance pedestrian and vehicular safety.
- Establish 56th Avenue as a gateway to the Montbello and Parkfield neighborhoods.
- Improve drainage along 56th Avenue and Uvalda Street.

Q: Are you widening 56th Avenue?

A: Yes, we are adding one lane in each direction to 56th Avenue between Peoria and Peña Boulevard.

Q: What will traffic impacts look like during construction?

A: As part of the process for selecting a design-build team, the City will review the team's plans for managing traffic during construction and look to minimize impacts. We anticipate minimal traffic impacts because the existing 56th Avenue will eventually become the eastbound lanes, so the widening will take

place north of the existing roadway. Pending Contractor traffic management plans, traffic is expected to remain open, eastbound and westbound (one lane in each direction) for the majority of the project, while the roadway is widened to the north; however, certain phases of construction may require short-term closures, traffic shifts and access changes. Once selected, the Contractor will be responsible for managing and handling traffic. There is not a Contractor or traffic plan in place at this time.

Q: Why aren't you able to add two lanes in each direction now?

A: We do not currently have sufficient funding to build the full 6-lane section.

Q: How much longer will it take for residents now to enter/exit my neighborhood since left turns will be restricted?

A: First and foremost, these right-in/right-out turn lane movements are added as a safety enhancement to keep motorists, pedestrians and bicyclists safe as they traverse this new 4-lane roadway. In terms of timing estimates, it depends on where exactly you live; however, by adding signalized intersections, this should help with wait times, especially during peak travel times. Once installed, the City will monitor traffic signal timing and adjust as needed.

Q: Will a protected bike lane be added as part of this project?

A: Providing safe multimodal facilities along roadways is a clear priority for DOTI and the City and County of Denver (CCD) leadership. For a busy and wide roadway such as 56th Avenue, separating bikes and pedestrians from cars provides a significant increase in safety. The path to be added on the north side of 56th Avenue provides a wide space that can be safely shared by bikes and pedestrians while keeping them away from cars.

Q: Will you be raising or lowering the speed limit along this stretch of 56th Avenue?

A: There is no plan to revise the speed limit. However, the addition of a raised median and three new traffic signals means that through traffic may be required to stop and/or slow more frequently.

Q: Are you coordinating with other projects in the area?

A: Yes, we work closely with other project leaders to coordinate work, public outreach, etc. This will be especially important once construction is underway to ensure we do not have any overlapping detours and are minimizing impacts to traveling public.

Q: How are you planning to make 56th Avenue a gateway to the Montbello and Parkfield neighborhoods?

A: We will be adding a median to separate eastbound and westbound traffic. We are still finalizing design for these medians but they will likely have trees, boulders, etc. We will also be enhancing connections by adding a multi-use trail.

Q: What about a pedestrian overpass on 56th Avenue?

A: We do not have sufficient funding to build a pedestrian overpass but we are enhancing safety for pedestrians throughout this corridor by adding/enhancing crosswalks at the two current and three new signalized intersections as well as adding a median and a multi-use path.

Q: How are you ensuring pedestrian safety to Arsenal?

A: To access the Arsenal on the north side of 56th Avenue, we will be adding/enhancing crosswalks at the two current and three new signalized intersections. Also, with the addition of the median, there will be

space for pedestrians to stop so they can wait for a safe crossing. A multi-use path on the north side of 56th Avenue will also connect to the trailheads that the Arsenal has completed.

Q: Will the project involve relocation of bus stops?

A: At this time, no. There are currently no bus stops along 56th Avenue and we don't expect to move any bus stops in the neighborhood (on the side streets).

Q: Will there be future bus stops on 56th Avenue as part of this project?

A: We are working with RTD throughout this project to coordinate their current and planned future bus service in the community.

Q: Where will crosswalks be along this stretch of 56th Avenue? Will there be adequate time for pedestrians to cross?

A: Crosswalks and pedestrian signals will be at every signalized intersection (Peoria Street, Uvalda Street, Crowne Boulevard, Chambers Road, and Memphis Street) and the design team will consider seniors and persons with disabilities when looking at the phasing and timing of the signals along 56th Avenue throughout design.

Q: Where will new traffic signals be installed?

A: New traffic signals will be installed at Uvalda Street, Crowne Boulevard and Memphis Street, and the traffic signals at Chambers Road and Peoria Street will be improved.

Q: Will improvements to 56th Avenue extend past Peoria Street? Perhaps along Central Park Boulevard?

A: There are no plans in place at the moment to extend past Peoria Street. It is not part of this project.

Q: Will you be able to turn into the new trailheads if you are travelling east on 56th Avenue?

A: Not directly, no. However, U-turns will be permitted at the Chambers Road and Uvalda Street signals.

Q: Are there any extra safety measures planned to protect deer and other wildlife at the Refuge?

A: Yes. One-way gates were installed at Chambers Road and Uvalda Street entrances to prevent wildlife from entering the Refuge through the fence.