

## Lake County Gateways Mobility Plan

### Kick-Off Meeting

**Date:** 09.30.24

**Location:** Colorado Mountain College Leadville, 901 US-24, Leadville; New Discovery Building Room 218

---

This meeting is the kick-off meeting for the Lake County Gateways Mobility Plan project. These notes summarize the discussion and comments received from meeting attendees during the in-person meeting conducted at Colorado Mountain College. Agencies and stakeholders in attendance included Lake County, City of Leadville, Colorado Mountain College, Leadville Sanitation District, St. Vincent Hospital, and Grand West Estates Owners Association.

### Discussion:

The meeting began with discussion of each of the four project study locations. Attendees were provided with the opportunity to comment on existing challenges and opportunities related to mobility, access, and traffic safety in each location. These comments are summarized below.

#### Mountain View Village: Thoughts and Observations

##### 1. Bus Stops and Accessibility:

- There is one existing bus stop on the east side of the community, operated by Eagle Transit. This situation creates issues to access transit services for community members.
- The school bus pickup/drop-off occurs on both the east and west sides of the community.

##### 2. Undercrossing/Overcrossing Considerations:

- The feasibility of building under crossings or over crossings was discussed by the group to provide for safer street crossing of US 24.
- Financial responsibilities for such infrastructure would likely be shared between the county and other entities.
- Further discussions with the community and CDOT (Colorado Department of Transportation) are needed to explore these options and associated costs.

##### 3. Community Concerns:

- Attendees mentioned the community is divided by the highway, with residents residing on both sides of the highway.
- There is a speed limit feedback sign in place, but enforcement appears lax, leading to safety concerns for pedestrians, especially given the curve in the roadway and heavy traffic during peak hours and seasons.
- Many residents walk from the village to access services, yet there are no pedestrian facilities (like sidewalks) on US 24.

#### 4. Distance and Safety:

- The village community is located a long distance to key locations, such as Safeway. It is approximately 3-4 miles, making it challenging to walk without safe pedestrian pathways.
- Ensuring safe routes for children to school is a priority, and signage or directional guides could improve safety and accessibility.

#### 5. Expansion and Planning:

- Questions remain about potential park expansion and its impact on community access.

#### 6. Study Issues:

- Community engagement is critical, especially considering the predominantly Spanish-speaking population in the community.

#### 7. Alternative Routes and Commercial Traffic:

- The potential for increased commercial truck traffic on the alternative truck route poses challenges for pedestrian safety.
- Creative solutions will be necessary to balance commercial needs with community access.

#### 8. Crossing and Pathway Improvements:

- There was discussion about the possibility of creating pathways to connect the east and west sides more effectively.
- Engagement with the property owner will be needed to explore opportunities for better pedestrian access.

### Northern Gateway: Thoughts and Observations

#### 1. Traffic Plans and Changes:

- CDOT has plans to construct a roundabout for the intersection of Highway 91 and Highway 24.
- The section from the Shell station to 12th Street (near the Safeway) has undergone changes; Harrison Avenue was previously four lanes but is now only two, with the remaining lanes converted to parking. This raises questions about traffic flow and safety as vehicles transition from four lanes to two.

#### 2. Business Impacts:

- Traffic calming measures must consider the impact on local businesses. For instance, the Silver King is being converted into housing, moving away from its previous role as lodging.
- Nearby developments, such as the Rail Yards project, will eventually include commercial spaces, but currently, this area is primarily residential.

### 3. Development Phases:

- The Rail Yards community is undergoing several development phases:
- Phase 1: Nearly completed.
- Phase 2: Mostly drawn up, with some implementation already taking place.
- Phase 3: Planning is ongoing.
- Consulting team access to plans for these phases would be beneficial for understanding future development.

### 4. Master Planning for Housing:

- A master plan for attainable housing is in progress, with expectations for future access to these plans for the consulting team.

### 5. Traffic Safety Concerns:

- The intersection of 24 and 91 is particularly concerning due to high traffic and the potential for increased foot traffic, especially with the development of Gateway. Safety for pedestrians, including children going to parks and playgrounds, is critical.
- There's a need for CDOT to consider pedestrian traffic in their designs, not just vehicle flow.

### 6. Roundabouts and Traffic Flow:

- There is uncertainty about how well current designs accommodate both vehicular and pedestrian traffic, especially regarding roundabouts.
- The planning effort should include how to manage traffic patterns and ensure safety for all road users.

### 7. Potential Development Areas:

- The 48-acre parcel previously approved for development has expired, but interest remains for future development. Safety and accessibility in these areas will need to be prioritized.
- Planning documents for Gateway Village and the areas behind Safeway could provide insight into how these developments will unfold over time.

### 8. Integrating New Developments:

- Discussions are ongoing about integrating new residential and commercial developments into the existing downtown area.
- The Fremont Trail and other pedestrian pathways are crucial for improving connectivity across the region. Roundabouts could be designed to facilitate pedestrian crossings effectively.

#### 9. Parking and Bus Stop Issues:

- The current parking situation is problematic, especially with increased demand and a split between businesses. A more effective parking plan is needed.
- There have been informal discussions regarding park-and-ride solutions, but improvements are necessary for the current bus stop signage and accessibility.

#### 10. Future Discussions:

- Addressing the intersection's challenges is essential, and more in-depth discussions will be necessary to find workable solutions.

### Colorado Mountain College and Surrounding Area: Thoughts and Observations

#### 1. Crossing Safety:

- The existing crossing near Colorado Mountain College features a rapid flashing beacon, which is helpful but could be enhanced for better visibility and safety.
- Traffic associated with the RV dump station creates queuing issues, which may hinder access. A review of how RVs and trailers circulate in this area is needed.

#### 2. Student and Employee Input:

- Gathering feedback from college students and employees regarding the safety and accessibility of the crossing is essential.

#### 3. Traffic Flow Challenges

- Turning left or going straight from the crossing can be difficult due to high traffic speeds along US 24. A traffic signal could improve safety, especially given that student teams (like the mountain bike team) practice in the area.

#### 4. Holistic Intersection Analysis:

- The objective is to evaluate the entire intersection for vehicle flow, pedestrian safety, and cycling space. This will involve discussions between the county and CDOT to determine if a traffic signal or roundabout would be more appropriate.

#### 5. Visibility Concerns:

- Vehicle queuing at the RV dump station sometimes obstructs visibility, making it challenging for drivers to see oncoming traffic. Vehicles may need to "creep out" into the intersection, creating unsafe conditions.

#### 6. Sanitation District Project:

- The Sanitation District is planning to relocate the RV dump station on property to the west of Colorado Mountain College. They are currently working on preliminary plans and seeking budgeting and grants.

- Construction of the project is on hold to determine the appropriate location for the dump station with other nearby uses and changes resulting from this project.

#### 7. Future Development Considerations:

- Discussions have taken place regarding various development concepts for the tubing hill area, although some opportunities may be lost due to new projects.

#### 8. Increased Commercial Activity:

- The area is experiencing growth, with new businesses (taproom) wanting to establish themselves in a pedestrian-friendly manner along US 24. The aim is to steer away from traditional vehicular-centric developments.

#### 9. Traffic Patterns:

- Residents have reported issues with pedestrians crossing the highway, particularly in the vicinity of Big R, where individuals often cross at points other than designated intersections.

#### 10. Summer Events and Traffic Management:

- The building at the base of the tubing hill is heavily used during summer events, leading to significant traffic and parking challenges. Crossing guards may be needed during peak times.
- The intersection serves as a commercial truck bypass route during major events, which could be further evaluated for safety and effectiveness.

#### 11. School Traffic:

- There is substantial traffic generated with students moving between the college and the high school for dual enrollment classes.

#### Truck Diversion Route Discussion: Thoughts and Observations

The consulting team has reviewed an aerial map focusing on the west side of town regarding truck traffic. We're eager to hear your insights on where the truck issues are originating, including both local and regional generators. It's essential to consider if there's a need to include the east side of town in our analysis of potential alignments.

The consultant team was encouraged to speak with Howard Kurtz, a long-time Planning Commission member and former assessor. He has valuable insights into past discussions and the historical context of truck routes in the area.

#### 1. Gravel Pit Impact

- There's an active gravel pit nearby, which may not be a major customer, but the Climax Mine's increasing material needs could influence traffic patterns. Additionally, proposals are underway to bring mine tailings down through the historic mining district, using the intersection we previously discussed. This plan is still pending state approval, but it indicates ongoing mining activity that could affect truck traffic.

## 2. Highway Traffic Considerations

- It was noted that heavy truck traffic negatively impacts the community's perception, as many people use the downtown merely as a thoroughfare between counties. It's common for large vehicles, such as prefabricated homes, to block lanes, leading to frequent destruction of pedestrian crossing signs. Although there is concern about losing highway traffic, it's important to consider how it impacts the community and visitor experience.

## 3. Potential Bypass Route

- We're contemplating how a truck bypass might affect downtown traffic. Many truck drivers do not stop in town, yet they contribute significantly to congestion, especially during events. There's a notable influx of pedestrian traffic, particularly during busy seasons, and maintaining a pedestrian-friendly environment is crucial.

## 4. Safety Concerns

- The intersection at the base of the hairpin turn from Harrison Ave. raises significant safety concerns. Large vehicles often struggle to navigate the turn, creating a hazardous situation, especially for pedestrians and cyclists. We must consider these factors in any traffic management strategy.

## 5. Community Feedback

- The feedback from residents highlights the need for thoughtful planning in addressing truck traffic. The density of pedestrian activity, especially near schools and parks, requires us to ensure safe routes for everyone.

## 6. Next Steps

- We'll need to continue discussions regarding the integration of truck routes with community needs.
- Engaging with local stakeholders and examining historical data will be essential for informed planning.
- Future discussions will focus on potential solutions and public-private partnerships to enhance safety and accessibility.

## SCOPE OF WORK

- The consulting team is currently assessing existing conditions, providing an opportunity to gather insights from the group today and observe key locations in the field. The team will be collecting information from CDOT regarding traffic volumes and collision data, which is essential for understanding current traffic conditions. Additionally, the team may reach out to the County Sheriff for further data to comprehensively analyze current traffic conditions and collision history.
- Using this data, the team will develop various alternatives for each location. This critical phase of brainstorming and creating options is expected to occur during the December to February timeframe, following our fall assessment of existing conditions. In the spring, we will evaluate these alternatives to select the preferred options for each location. Given the complexity of each site, it's likely that we will consider multiple improvements and possibly implement them in phases.

- The project will also involve a design component, where the team will create preliminary conceptual designs for the preferred alternatives at each location. Ryan will lead this design effort, while Bill will remain involved as the project manager. This stage will include developing preliminary cost estimates for various improvements, helping us understand the financial requirements and identify potential funding sources, such as grants or partnerships with CDOT.
- Additionally, the team will conduct a high-level environmental review, particularly concerning the proposed truck bypass route. This review will identify potential environmental impacts and possible mitigation strategies, as well as any required permits.
- Public engagement is a crucial aspect of this project. The team has planned to conduct up to four community events, which may include open houses or participation in existing community events. We aim to schedule these engagements during December through February, while being mindful of potential holiday conflicts. We'll explore opportunities to collaborate with other community activities to maximize participation.
- To further engage the community, we will also distribute an online survey, utilizing a program called Maptionnaire. This tool allows residents to pin locations on a map and provide feedback on specific concerns, enhancing participation from those unable to attend events in person. We recognize that not all community members will be online, so we will ensure a balance of both in-person and digital engagement.
- In the spring, the team plans to conduct town hall meetings, providing a more formal platform for community input and potentially involving presentations from the county commission or city council.
- Following the design effort, we will compile project documentation, consolidating recommendations from this phase and preparing for the next stages of design as funding becomes available.
- This scope outlines our initial focus on fact-finding and feasibility studies, gradually narrowing down to a preferred alternative and its design.

### Questions and Discussion

- **Community Events:** Are there opportunities for community engagement in the fall? Explore events that coincide with the comprehensive plan update and other community initiatives to avoid engagement fatigue.
- **Outreach Strategy:** We are considering various communication methods, including mailing, social media outreach, and collecting email addresses during events to provide updates.
- **Location of Events:** We are flexible regarding where to hold these events—potentially at Mountain View, the college, or local community venues—to maximize participation.
- **Public Misunderstanding:** It's essential to clarify our goals early in the process, especially to dispel misconceptions about the project, such as the notion of building a new highway through town.

- Community Engagement Timing: We aim to coordinate timing effectively, possibly aligning with existing events or other community activities to enhance participation.
- Let's continue to brainstorm on effective outreach strategies and ways to keep the community informed and engaged throughout this process. If there are any other questions or suggestions, please feel free to share!