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Traffic Engineering Services - Frequently Asked Questions

Neighborhood Meeting Questions

1) Why are there no parking signs on Lowry Blvd from Quebec on toward Fairmont?

Lowry is designed as an arterial roadway and the width will not accommodate on street parking. There are no plans for on street parking on Lowry. Lowry is not yet a public street and is still maintained by the developer (the Lowry Redevelopment Authority).

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2) Why are there no restrictions on trucks between Alameda and 6th on Quebec?

This situation should be rectified shortly. Truck restriction signs can and will be placed in this area.

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3) Why are they building walls (i.e. Sound Barriers) on the West side of Quebec but not on the East side from Bayaud to 1st?

The walls being constructed are architectural and are not being constructed as any required sound barriers. These are features that are being constructed by the developer. Questions can be addressed by the Lowry Redevelopment Authority (LRA). The LRA can be reached at 303-343-0276.

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4) Help! We need a stop sign or light at Lowry/Rosemary and Parking lot. Who can help us?

Lowry is a roundabout controlled arterial street that would make installation of a stop sign at this particular location ill advised. The corridor has not yet been accepted as a City and County of Denver Street. More specific answers to short term questions can be posed to the Lowry Redevelopment Authority.

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5) Can we get a walkway constructed just North of Alameda across Quebec Street to facilitate Lowry Park Heights kids going to the new Lowry elementary school?

Probably not; but, it's not completely out of the question. Pedestrian walkways are major structures that involve major design and construction costs. Unfortunately when constructed in urban settings where there are nearby signalized intersections they are seldom used. People tend to cross streets in the gaps in traffic instead of climbing over a bridge. In most cases, a pedestrian walkway requires a major investment for little improvement.

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6) When will left turn signals be installed at Akron and Hampden?

There are no current plans to install a protected left (green arrow) phase at this intersection. (See answer to question 13 for more information on protected left phasing)

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7) Traffic Control at new Wal-Mart construction.

We are unsure of the location or the issue to be addressed by this question. Please contact Transportation Engineering at 720-865-3150 to clarify question. We will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

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8) What is the criteria for a mid block traffic light?

The mid block lights placed on one way streets serve two purposes, speed control and gap control.

Speed control is established by timing the lights in the corridor to allow vehicles travelling the speed limit continuous movement. The only times a vehicle will hit red lights are when entering the corridor or if traveling above (or below) the speed limit.

On high volume streets with free flowing traffic, sufficient gaps in traffic are few and far between causing significant delays for travelers (cars, bikes, and pedestrians) wishing to either cross the flow of traffic or enter the flow of traffic. Signals stopping traffic will cause the vehicles to group together or form "platoons" creating gaps in the main

street traffic, thus allowing vehicles from the side streets sufficient time to cross or enter the main street.

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9) Explain the effectiveness of the “Roundabout” in controlling traffic flow?

A Roundabout is a type of intersection treatment like a traffic signal or stop sign. When used appropriately, a roundabout can be more efficient and safer than other treatments in moving traffic.

Modern roundabouts, while appearing similar to many old “traffic circles” have significant operational differences. In a roundabout the circulating traffic has right-of-way over traffic entering the roundabout, all entries are “Yield controlled”, as well as other specific design features. Roundabout operation include less severe collisions, more efficient movement of all traffic through the intersections, and as a result of less delay, less air pollution. Roundabouts are typically more expensive than signals to install and require more land to construct.

Bicycles either use the roundabout as a vehicle or are provided a “bypass” around the circulating roadway if size and speed are too great. Pedestrians are provided designated cross walks at least one car length behind the entering cars and are provided a “refuge” halfway across the street.

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10) What are the options for slowing the cars on my neighborhood streets? 25 mph is not enforced. We need slow bumps or something similar to slow people down when enforcement officers are not around.

“Slow-bumps”, “Speed Humps”, “Speed Tables”, etc. are all variations of vertical deflections used to reduce speeds. The City and County of Denver currently does not install these devices for several reasons. On a grid system of roadways like Denver’s, speed humps tend to divert traffic to neighboring streets. This simply moves the problem from one block to the next. Further objections to these type of devices include, interference with snow removal operations, increased emergency response time, increased noise

and pollution (similar to stop sign installation) from braking and accelerating vehicles, and only localized control of speed. This policy is under review; but, no changes are anticipated.

What options are available to a community? Physical changes to a roadway cross section are often the most effective way that the Transportation Engineering section can impact speed of drivers. Unfortunately, modifying an existing street extremely expensive. The Transportation Engineering Department is reviewing the feasibility of such devices as "mini-roundabouts" and intersection narrowings (neckdowns, and bulb outs). These devices require funding and provisions for maintenance.

On collector streets where striping exists, modifications to lane widths and edge lines can sometimes improve the perceived speed of vehicles. Local streets seldom have any lane markings. And, in most cases, very little is accomplished with additional signing.

A few communities have started "grass roots" campaigns to address driver behavior. These programs include yard signs and speed pledges to inform drivers of their impacts on everybody's neighborhoods and encourage people to drive more responsibly. Your local neighborhood association should have further information on these type programs.

Finally, the Denver Police Department has recently started a "Neighborhood Speedwatch program". Under this program, residents can borrow a radar gun from the police department to record vehicle speeds. Owners of speeding vehicles will be sent a letter from the police indicating that their vehicle was seen speeding on the recorded date. In addition the Denver Police Department has actively pursued trying to enforce local street speeds as well as strategically place advisory speed trailers. (Speed trailers are the portable signs that state the posted speed limit and notify drivers of their speed.)

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11) Lights mid block not effective on 13th and 14th. Chance of moving to intersections?

(See answer to Question number 8 for reasons for mid-block signals)

Speed and gap control can still be accomplished with the signals at intersections; however, not only is there the cost of moving the existing signals, but also there would be a cost to purchase and install new signals to control the side street. In addition, signals tend

to attract traffic on the side streets increasing volume.

The short answer is, "Yes, there could be a chance to move the signals to intersections; but, it would involve time and money spent for a very small or negligible improvement in operation."

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12) Alameda to 6th on Quebec was raised to 35 from 30. This is residential/ school area. Why was it raised? How can we get it lowered back to 30!

The speed limit was 30 mph before Lowry opened and the street was striped for only two lanes of traffic (one in each direction). Since Lowry has reopened and Quebec is now 4 lanes the speed limit has been raised to its design speed of 35 mph. There is no residential access off of Quebec and no school on Quebec.

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13) In two years I've never been able to get completely turned into Mississippi (from Dayton) before left turn light changes even when I'm first car in line.

The current policy for protected left (green arrow) phases is to keep them as short as possible. Some locations have a two second protected left phase. The rationale for the short left turn phase is an effort to make the overall delay at an intersection as low as possible. The longer the protected left phase the less time there is available for through movements. Through movements are typically much heavier than left turn movements and left turn movements are less efficient. This policy is currently under review; but, there are no changes to left turn phasing currently planned.

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14) Why do some green left turn arrows come on before the green light and some after the green light?

Typically in Denver the "Protected Left turn Phase" (Green Arrow) leads the green for the through movements because most left turns are "Protected/ Permissive". (Permissive phase is the green circle where left turners yield to the through vehicles). In cases where left turns are only allowed on the

green arrow the protected phase can "lag" or come after the through movements. Depending on vehicle speeds and spacing between signals, lagging the protected left turns can facilitate moving the through traffic through the signalized corridor.

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15) Left green arrow on Leetsdale and Quebec is way too short (to turn left to Quebec South.

(See answer to number 13 above.)

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16) 30 mph speed limit on Tamarac South of Yale to Hampden should be 35 mph as it is on Quebec (Tamarac) North of Yale.

While the cross section of this road is similar North and South of Yale, the road has several curves South of Yale, and less visibility. For these reasons, the speed limit is 30 mph.

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17) Do all neighbors at an intersection need to agree to a new stop sign?

In marginal locations where it is unclear that there will be an improvement to safety or operation of an intersection the Transportation Engineering Department does require approval from the property owners adjacent to the intersection. This is because these properties will bear the brunt of the side effects of stop sign placement. To install the stop signs these properties will usually need to give up on-street parking, endure more noise as cars brake and accelerate, and are most effected by the increased pollution of vehicle acceleration.

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18) When will a turn signal be installed at the corner of Hampden and Akron? This would be a left turn signal as you are going east on Hampden. There have been numerous accidents and a recent death.

Currently, there are no plans for a left turn arrow at this location. This concern has been passed on to our signal division. We will perform a signal / accident study and post the results at a later date.

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19) How is the traffic flow going to be handled in the up-coming construction of the Super Wal-Mart proposed for construction just south of the E. 9100 to Havana corridor?

The actual development is outside of Denver; however, access will be through the City and County of Denver. As such, the developer will be required to submit a Transportation Engineering Plan to us that details access and right of way requirements. Additionally, a development of this type will likely be required to perform an engineering study evaluating the traffic impacts of their development.

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20) I understand there is money allocated for sound barriers along state highways. Since Hampden is highway 285, how can our homeowners association request the construction of a barrier. The traffic noise is becoming quite bothersome and with the new shopping center it will be even worse.

The program for constructing sound walls on existing roadways has been cancelled by the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT). There is no money available for the construction of Sound Walls along existing roadways. For more information regarding noise policies on state highways you can contact Ms. Chris Paulsen (Chris.Paulsen@dot.state.co.us or 303-757-9930) or Mr. Rick Willard (303-757-9904) at CDOT.

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