

Major improvements ahead at I-25/Crossroads interchange

It's not the final solution, but it's a strong start.

Construction bids will soon be accepted for a \$6.5 million project at the Crossroads Boulevard exit at I-25. The improvements will ease traffic backups, reduce accidents and provide employment.

The project falls under the "shovel-ready" category and is being launched with the help of \$3 million in federal stimulus money.

The project will help to alleviate a traffic flow squeeze under the I-25 bridges across Crossroads Boulevard. The road under the bridges is only two-lanes wide, while the road on either side is four lanes.

A traffic backup can occur when a vehicle must wait to make a left turn. All the traffic behind that vehicle must wait too.

The ultimate solution will be replacing the I-25 bridges with wider-span bridges and a wider road beneath. The interim solution is the current project, which will include new I-25 entrance and exit ramps from Crossroads and a pair of roundabouts.

The ramps will be located further from the bridges and the two-lane squeeze, and the roundabouts will enable through-traffic to proceed while a left turn is being made.

There is currently no plan or money for the estimated \$20 million bridge replacement by the Colorado Department of Transportation. But the current improvements will be incorporated with bridge replacements whenever that might occur.

It is anticipated that bids will be opened, contracts approved and work begun this summer with project completion expected next spring, weather permitting.

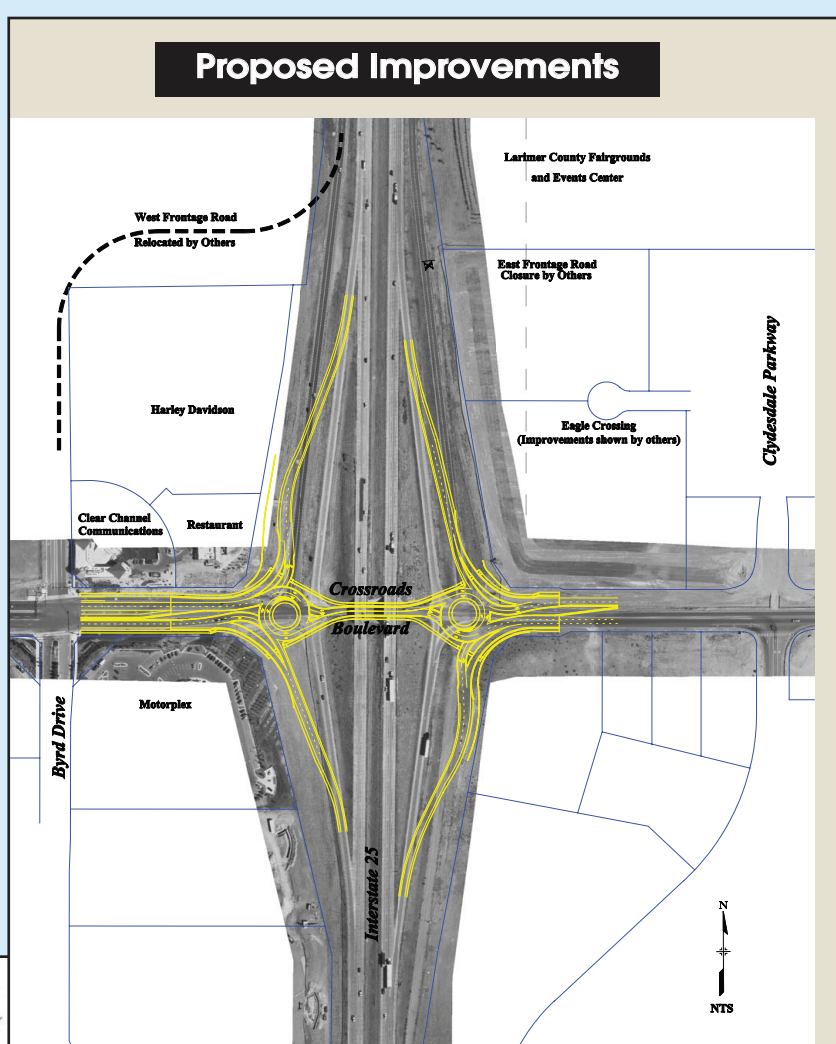
During the past few years, Crossroads Boulevard has been widened on both sides of I-25 to serve new developments — The Ranch, four new hotels, car and motorcycle dealerships, a restaurant and other buildings. But the under-bridge crunch remains.

At rush hour, backups occur. It's especially bad when there's a special event going on, such as a show at the Budweiser Events Center or the Clear Channel amphitheater.

Backups cause impatience, and impatient drivers sometimes take chances that result in accidents.

Roundabouts are proven to handle traffic flow better than stop signs, plus they reduce the frequency and severity of accidents. With the current four-into-two squeeze and ramp locations, traffic lights would only make the situation worse.

Relatively speaking, the construction project will not have a major impact on current traffic. The existing I-25 ramps will remain open while the new ramps are being built. In all, road closures are planned for just three weekends.

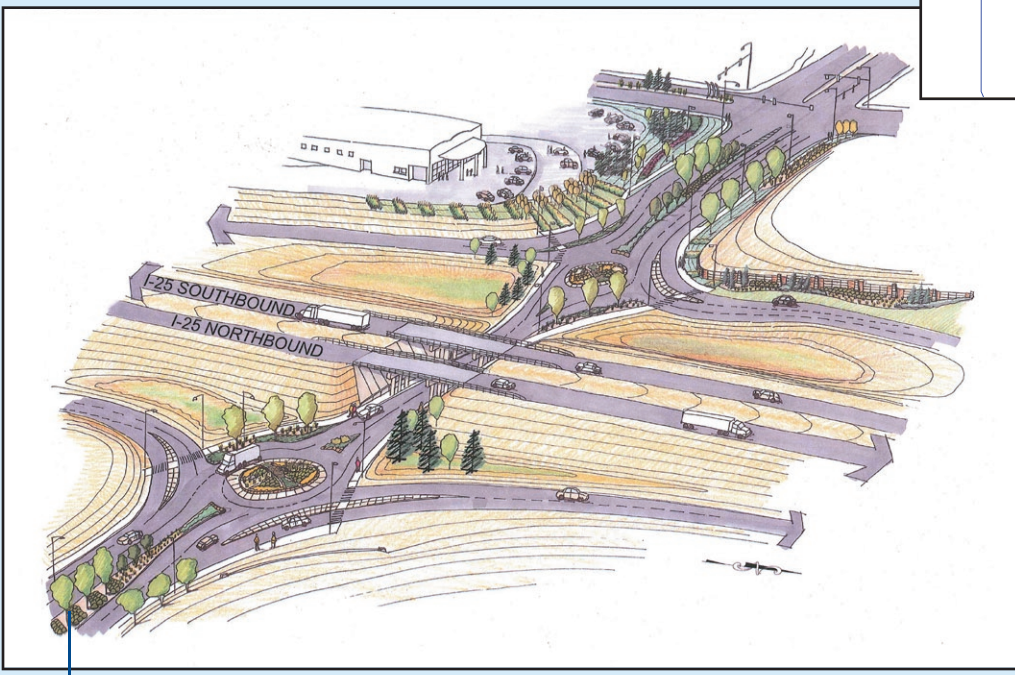


New and Old

The yellow lines provide an overview of the improvements planned for the Crossroads exit at I-25. New ramps and a pair of roundabouts will help alleviate backups and improve safety at the interchange, where backups are common due to four lanes squeezing to two under the Interstate.

Looking Good

Landscaping and grading will be major features of the Crossroads Boulevard improvement project. The finished product will improve traffic flow, safety and the overall appearance of the interchange.



Project benefits entire region

While the area nearest to the I-25/Crossroads exits will be the greatest beneficiary of the project, the improved interchange will actually have a regional effect. Crossroads Boulevard, which runs parallel to busy Hwy. 34, is becoming a regional artery, taking some of the load off Hwy. 34.

Crossroads has already been extended to the east side of Windsor connecting to Hwy. 257, the road that runs past the Kodak facility. Crossroads will soon be extended even further to Greeley's O Street.

A further benefit will be economic. The reality is that improved vehicle flow makes an area easier and more attractive to visit. Smoother traffic will encourage more visits to the businesses and facilities around the interchange.

Healthier businesses, less driver stress and safer intersections will be the result. In addition, a \$6.5 million project generates a lot of paychecks.

The money; where is it coming from?

The project will cost about \$6.5 million, with the funds coming from three major sources. Because the plans are already drawn—all 300+ pages—the project is ready to be bid and therefore qualifies as "shovel-ready." The project will receive \$3 million in federal stimulus funding.

An additional \$1.2 million will come from other federal funding. The rest, about \$2.3 million, comes from the fees paid by Centerra development, money already collected and set aside for public transportation improvements. No funding from the regular City budget is required.

All the funding currently exists. No additional fees, taxes or bonds will be required.

See the before/after video at www.cityofloveland.org

Want to get a better understanding of traffic flow at the Crossroads interchange? A new City-produced video explains the new construction project, including "before" and "after" animations of traffic traveling through the intersections.

The 5-minute video can be seen randomly on Loveland cable TV channel 16 or anytime on the City's website, from links on the home page or the News Desk section, Videos page.