

Thanks for your correspondence regarding the 30th Street Transportation Improvements Project. The project includes installation of a pedestrian, bicycle, transit stop and vehicular improvements on 30th Street, between Arapahoe and Valmont, so that the corridor functions better for all travel modes and supports the residents, employees, businesses and property owners along and adjacent to 30th Street.

In response to concerns expressed about the underpass portion of this project, including removal of mature trees and impact to local businesses, the city held a design charrette with property owners, tenants and interested community members, on Monday, Aug. 3, 2009. The design charrette focused on three options: refining the existing underpass design, looking at options to realign the ramps on the west side of the underpass, and possibilities to relocate the crossing to a different place on 30th Street.

One of the outcomes of the charrette was the creation of a “refined design” which added landscaping and art elements, and re-engineers aspects of the underpass to remove 11 to 13 fewer trees than the original design. The original design planned to cut down 27 trees in the vicinity of the underpass. The refined design will only remove 14 to 16 trees.

City staff provided an update on the charrette at a City Council study session on August 11th. Council was pleased with the outcomes of the charrette and the significant modifications to the design. Council indicated that it did not need to take further action on the project, allowing the project to move forward with the refined design. Construction is slated to begin in early 2010. City staff will work closely with adjacent property owners to minimize impact during construction and to finalize landscaping plans for the area.

BACKGROUND:

A staff memo in the July 2, 2009 City Council Weekly Information Packet (WIP) outlines the multiple plans and processes that have defined the vision for the 30th Street area and that identified the underpass as an important connection. The memo describes how the current project will contribute to implementation of that vision. A project fact sheet was also developed in early July to provide easy-to-read background information about the underpass and the rest of the 30th Street project.

Planning and design for the 30th Street Transportation Improvements Project began in 2007, and project construction is expected to begin in 2010 and take approximately 10 months to complete.

The replacement of the existing bridge over a ditch crossing (the Boulder Slough, just south of Pearl Street) includes the construction of a bike/pedestrian underpass that will provide flood control and travel benefits. The current bridge structure at this location is the lowest rated structure in the city of Boulder and is in need of being replaced. The bridge replacement also allows for on-street bike lanes along 30th Street.

The city was awarded a federal grant for the bike/pedestrian underpass, which accomplishes the additional goal of replacing a substandard structure, because it starts to put into place the first phase of bicycle and pedestrian connections to the future Boulder Transit Village, located at the northwest corner of 30th and Pearl streets. These connections are identified in the Transportation Master Plan and the connections plans for the Boulder Transit Village Area Plan and the Boulder Valley Regional Center Plan. If the bike/pedestrian underpass is removed from the project, the federal funding for this project component must be returned.

For more project information, including the refined design, a summary of charrette input and the August 2 staff memo to Council, go to the 30th Street project Web page at www.bouldertransportation.net or contact Noreen Walsh at walshn@bouldercolorado.gov or 303-441-3266.