



MAIN STREET DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

AUGUST 2022

What is this Downtown Demonstration Project?

The Main Street Demonstration Project is a test of numerous concepts and ideas to slow traffic, improve safety, and promote a vibrant Main Street for people and businesses. All improvements are temporary. The goal of this project is to explore what works and doesn't work before we develop a final plan for Main Street and consider making any permanent improvements. The City received just over \$100,000 in grant funding from CDOT to help pay for this project.

Main Street is wider than it needs to be to accommodate traffic demands for the next 20+ years. This encourages drivers to go faster and increases truck traffic, which results in an unpleasant experience for those visiting downtown. By eliminating unneeded lanes, traffic

is "calmed" and pedestrian crossing distances are shortened. The reclaimed space can be used for improvements including outdoor dining or retail, public gathering or seating areas, or bicycle lanes that also serve as a safety buffer between traffic and parking.

What are some advantages of this plan to calm traffic?

Reducing Main Street to one travel lane in each direction naturally calms traffic by encouraging slower speeds and trucks to use the bypass. Additionally, this lane reduction creates safer pedestrian crossings by reducing the highway crossing distance and creating space for pedestrian refuge islands at unsignalized locations. On-street bicycle lanes provide a safe bicycle connection through downtown Delta, as well as a buffer between parking and travel lanes. The added amenity zones provide ample opportunity for community gathering, business use, and overall improved pedestrian experience.

According to "Colorado Downtown Streets, A Tool for Communities, Planners, and Engineers" Glenwood Springs saw a 10% increase in revenues at bars and restaurants due to the installation of outdoor dining and a widened pedestrian walkway despite removing some on-street parking. In addition, the book mentions that people who arrive by foot spend more money at the businesses, increasing business revenues and sales tax. User-friendly streets also increase property values. There are many other benefits of great streets like safety, accessibility, and supporting a healthy environment and community. For more information, see the full book, infographics, and videos here: <https://cdola.colorado.gov/colorado-downtown-streets>.



Why didn't the City use this money to improve other streets that are in worse shape?

The City applied for a grant from CDOT that is specifically for Main Street focused projects, and therefore can't use this particular grant to pay for non-Main Street projects. However, the City is working on other roads throughout our City using budgeted capital funds and other grant funds. For example, we received grant funding from CDOT to rebuild 4th Street and the project is currently being design with construction beginning early 2023.

Did the City get CDOT's approval for the project?

The City worked very closely with CDOT on this project including coordination on the traffic engineering study and on planning the Demonstration Project. A special use permit application was granted by CDOT in early 2022 to allow for the installation of the project.

Will trucks be prohibited from downtown?

No, Main Street remains a CDOT owned, State Highway and will continue to follow their rules for use. However, things like reduced roadway width, pedestrian crossings, and other traffic calming measures can naturally discourage trucks from using Main Street. Truck traffic will be encouraged to bypass downtown via Confluence Drive through the use of improved signage to the bypass.

Will CDOT take over Confluence Drive as the State Highway rather than Main Street?

CDOT cannot make Confluence Drive (also known as the Bypass or Alternative Truck Route) the official State Highway rather than Main Street because the City did not follow the procedures for environmental clearance as required by CDOT. This in no way impacts the safety or integrity of the roadway. It just means the impact of the road on the environment was not evaluated per CDOT standards.

However, in 2019 the wheels were set in motion with CDOT to explore ways to achieve the same outcome on Main Street that a swap with CDOT would accomplish. In 2019, then Mayor Ron Austin wrote a letter to the DCI that does an excellent job of describing the challenge of a CDOT swap, and outlines the birth of this project. You can read that letter here:

https://www.deltacountyindependent.com/opinion/your-mayors-perspective/article_c798812a-32e5-5b9f-98c8-0b92affe91a7.html.

Will eliminating traffic lanes lead to congestion?

No, a traffic engineering analysis approved by CDOT shows that one lane in each direction on Main Street will work for years to come with minimal delay to traffic. The analysis included pre-COVID traffic counts, recent improvements to the US 50/Hwy 92 intersection, 20-year traffic growth, and consideration of local truck traffic patterns. In addition, the bypass can accommodate increased traffic from large trucks and folks hurrying through town.



Will the speed limit be lowered on Main Street?

This demonstration project does not include reducing the speed limit but traffic is naturally calmed by reduced road width and other calming elements. This may allow for a reduced speed limit in the future.

How will this affect parking along Main Street?

A study of parking conducted in 2019 showed that during the midday peak, only 59 of the 109 spaces available on Main Street north of 6th St were used. Meanwhile, 195 spaces were available in public parking lots typically located within a block of Main Street. In general, downtown was found to have more than enough parking off of Main to accommodate existing demands. However, we heard that parking is important to local business so some parking on each block was retained with the potential for loading or short term parking to be added in final plans. An overall reduction of parking spaces means more room for amenities. Diagonal parking is not allowed by CDOT on a State Highway for safety reasons. The City developed a Parking App to help residents and visitors find public parking: <https://cityofdelta.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=ae1281faf6c140509b69c3b46df6e383>.

Why was a bike lane added?

CDOT is encouraging bike lanes and pedestrian improvements in projects they fund. This increases mobility for the whole community, not just for those traveling by car. While bikes have not been a common sight on Main Street; that could change with a designated bike lane. The inclusion of bike lanes in this project tests if they make sense in our final plans. If we were to make permanent changes to Main Street including bike lanes, the bike lane would go along Main to the southern intersection with Confluence Drive.

From a functional standpoint, the bike lane helps meet other needs including creating a buffer between parked cars, moving traffic, and parklet areas. Clearly, anyone that chooses to ride a bicycle needs to exercise extreme caution. If you are a biker and use the bike lanes, we would love to hear about your experience.

What about adding traffic lights on G Road and Highway 348?

The City heard safety concerns brought up about the Confluence Drive at G Road/5th Street and Highway 348 intersections. To address these concerns, a consultant was hired to study the need for a traffic light at those intersections. The cars and trucks at those intersections have been counted and have found that there is enough traffic to justify a traffic light at G Road/5th Street but not at Highway 348. We will continue to work on ideas and solutions to improve the safety and flow of these intersections.

Are semi trucks allowed on Confluence Drive?

Semis are absolutely allowed and encouraged to use Confluence Drive. In fact, it was specifically designed for this purpose. This is the official alternative truck route of the City. New signage has been installed to help direct trucks to Confluence Drive. If truckers have issues or concerns with Confluence Drive, we would love to hear from them to see if we can address those issues or concerns.



Is hazmat allowed on Confluence Drive?

After the City received feedback indicating there was some confusion around the designated hazmat route, the City reached out to CDOT and Colorado State Patrol to clarify. In early May 2022, the Colorado State Patrol Department of Public Safety designated Confluence Drive as a temporary, alternate route for hazardous materials carriers operating in the Delta area. Though trucks carrying hazardous materials have always been able to use Confluence Drive, it is now officially designated as a temporary route. This designation will remain in place for 12 months with the option for extension. Notice was given to hazmat carriers through the Colorado Motor Carriers Association and the Colorado-Wyoming Petroleum Marketers Association.

Can emergency responders use the 5th Street Intersection?

The changes at 5th Street (that have been removed) did not prevent the fire department, or any other emergency responder, from using the 5th Street intersection in any way. Emergency responders were able to drive over the delineator posts. In fact, the City met with the Fire Department well before installing the demonstration project and revised the plans to include the knock down delineators, rather than more serious barriers, at the Fire Department's suggestion.

Closing off east-west traffic and left turns from Main onto 5th Street was to reduce opportunities for accidents by restricting vehicular movements. The Demonstration Project is also exploring what a pedestrian friendly intersection could look like. Frankly, the delineator posts, which were included at this location at the request of the fire department, were not working well for testing a pedestrian intersection and were removed. This intersection is back to full movement.

Will the City only consider comments from City residents?

No. All input is welcome! Please share your comments, questions, and concerns through the surveys provided.

How is the City going to evaluate comments and input?

The City has gathered a lot of feedback through the initial survey. This feedback has been utilized to identify what changes we needed to make and what information we needed to share. We will be releasing a new survey to gather more specific feedback. Please provide your email address in any survey so we can keep you informed. The raw data collected from the survey is available on our website. We continue to meet with Main Street businesses and gather their input as well.

The City is collecting data to inform any final designs like sales tax trends and traffic counts on Main Street and Confluence Drive to see if traffic patterns are shifting. We will also evaluate usage of parking on Main Street. Ultimately, all input and data will be used to inform a final plan for the future of Main Street. We will coordinate with CDOT, meet with Main Street businesses, and make these plans available for public input before anything is finalized.

