

16th Street Mall Environmental Assessment Public Meeting

May 1, 2019



THE PURPOSE OF THIS MEETING

- Recap project activities to date
- Present the highlights of the Environmental Assessment and get your thoughts
- Present schedule and next steps
- Learn how to stay involved



PRESENTATION CONTENT

- Present the project background and purpose
- Describe the Locally Preferred Alternative
- Discuss the project impacts and the proposed mitigation
- Encourage you to provide input and stay involved



PROJECT PARTNERS

- Regional Transportation District (RTD), City and County of Denver (CCD), Downtown Denver Partnership (DDP), Federal Transit Administration (FTA)
- Concern about maintenance issues and costs (\$1.3 M per year) launched several efforts between 2009 and 2016 to evaluate and study rehabilitation of the 16th Street Mall
- CCD also conducted a planning process regarding the use and configuration of the Mall with the goal of creating a place people wanted “to go to, not just go through”
- Spring 2017, RTD, CCD and DDP together initiated the 16th Street Mall Alternatives Analysis and Environmental Assessment (EA)



PROJECT FUNDING

- Denver Urban Renewal Authority Tax Increment Financing, FTA funds with RTD/CCD local match, and Elevate Denver Bond Program



FEDERAL INVOLVEMENT

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance is needed due to FTA funding

- Environmental Assessment considers Project effects on social/economic and natural resources when making project decisions

National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) consultation and US DOT Act Section 4(f) compliance is needed due to the Mall's historic designation

- Historically significant as an award-winning design by masters and for its impact on the growth of downtown Denver



PUBLIC INPUT TO DATE

Input from agencies, small groups, stakeholders, historic preservation groups, general public regarding themes of:

- More engaging activities
- Wider pedestrian sidewalks
- Improved ADA accessibility
- Maintain transit connectivity
- Pavement cracked, slippery
- Less maintenance
- Larger and healthier trees
- Outdated design
- Flexibility for different uses
- Keep granite pavers
- Replace granite pavers
- Keep diamond pattern
- Remove medians, provide more space by buildings
- Retain medians



THE MALL IS A MAJOR ATTRACTION AND THE MOST POPULAR SHOPPING AND ENTERTAINMENT

THE 16TH STREET MALL IS A MAJOR ATTRACTION AND THE MOST POPULAR SHOPPING AND ENTERTAINMENT DESTINATION FOR VISITORS TO METRO DENVER



Free RTD MallRide
weekday passengers:
39,000

Weekend average 25,000
annually 14,000,000



Downtown workforce:
134,000 people



Street-level businesses
on the mall:
200 restaurants and retail



Residential units:
5,700



Hotel rooms:
2,400
775 additional
summer 2019

THE MALL'S FIRST 35 YEARS

Transit/pedestrian mall designed to relieve bus congestion and create pedestrian destination to spur economic development

Mall History

Mall was designed by I.M. Pei and Associates and was opened in 1982



WHAT ARE THE MALL'S NEEDS FOR THE NEXT 35 YEARS?

PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PROJECT

The Mall needs a flexible and sustainable design to...

- Address deteriorating infrastructure
- Improve pedestrian and vehicle safety
- Maintain mobility for transit and all users
- Increase opportunities for public use

...while honoring Mall's use and iconic design

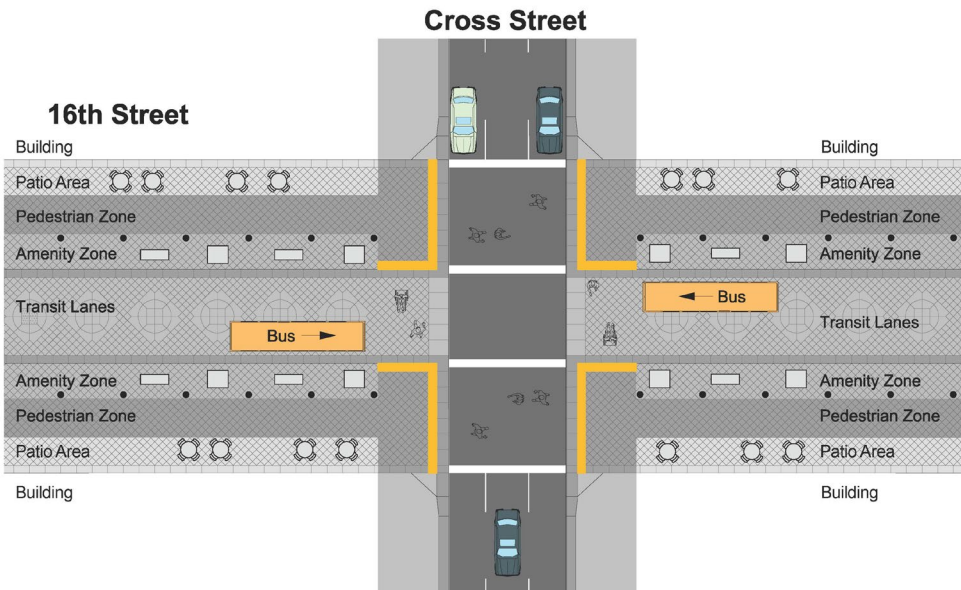
SEVERAL ALTERNATIVES WERE EVALUATED

- Five build alternatives and a No-Build were evaluated for meeting the Purpose and Need.
- A Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) was selected.
- An analysis to optimize the curb locations was completed on the LPA.
- A design option was developed in response to input during National Historic Preservation Act consultation.
- The EA evaluated both the LPA and the LPA Design Option



KEY FEATURES OF THE LPA

- Reflects features of the historic design
- Allocates space to address mobility, pedestrian safety, and public use
- Replaces failing pavement and tree systems

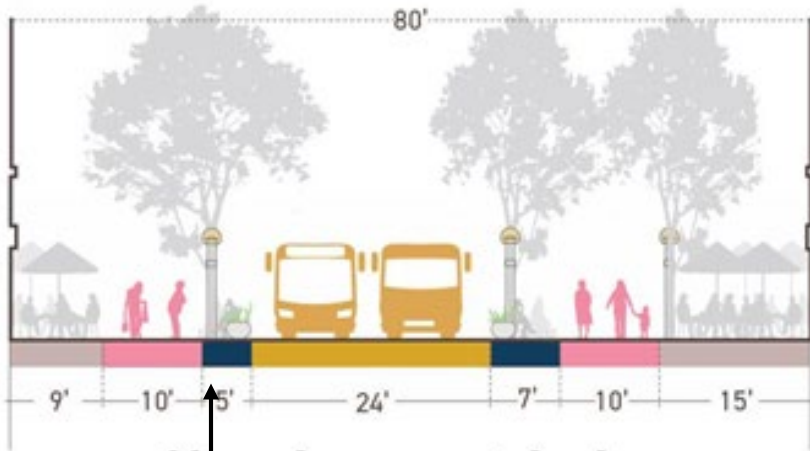


LPA INCLUDES FEATURES OF THE HISTORIC DESIGN

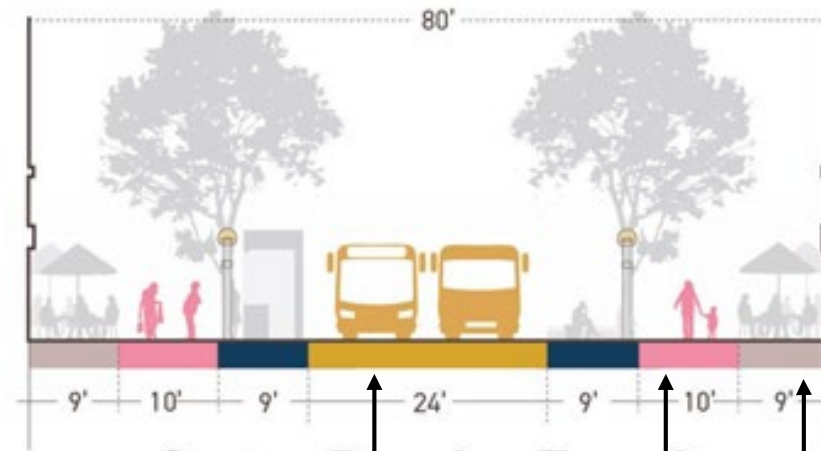
- Granite pavement pattern
- Symmetrical and asymmetrical block locations and transitions
- Tree and light spatial relationships
- Historic replica lights
- Reconstruct Cleveland-to-Broadway triangular block in historic configuration



LPA allocates space to address mobility, pedestrian safety, and public use



New Asymmetrical



Center Running Transit

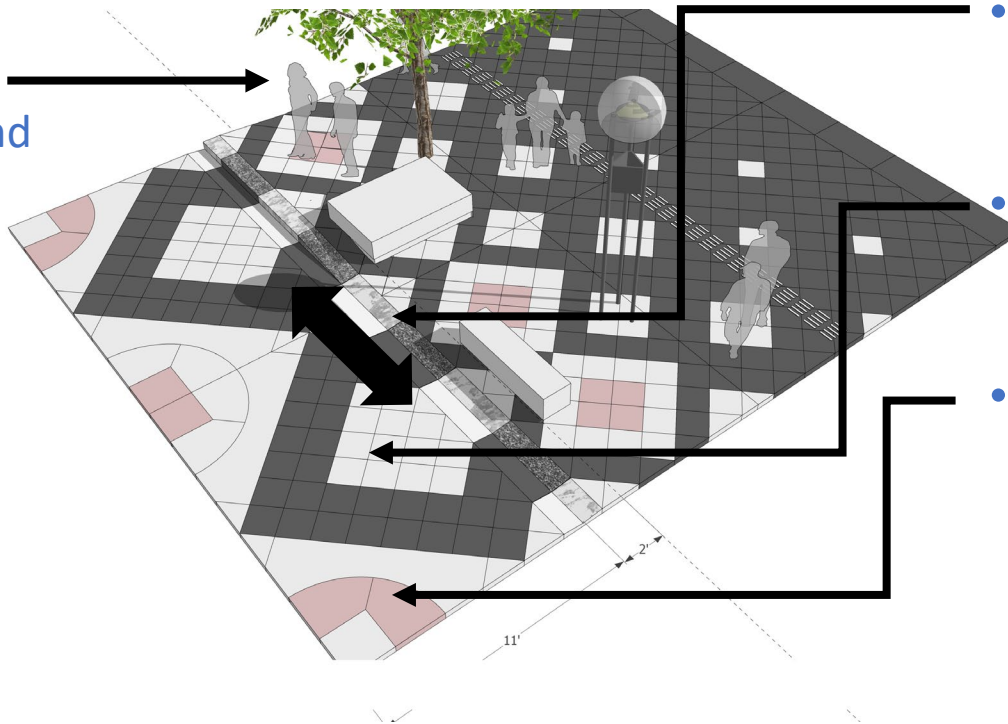
- REMOVE MEDIANS AND CONSOLIDATE TRANSIT
- 10 FOOT CLEAR PEDESTRIAN WALKWAYS
- RETAIN 9' PATIO SPACE NEXT TO THE BUILDINGS
- AMENITY ZONES WITH TREES FOR PUBLIC GATHERING

LPA replaces failing pavement improves drainage

Other features

Eliminate curbs along transit way except at bus stops, to provide flexibility in public use

New trees with better underground systems



- Better drainage to reduce maintenance
- New granite pavers in similar diamond pattern
- Improved surface friction for bus and pedestrian safety



TREE SELECTION CRITERIA

Tree selection criteria reflect both historic design criteria and CCD Forestry standards and diversity requirements

- Adaptability to Denver climate
- Size and crown spread
- Salt tolerance both (air and soil water)
- Tolerance to high pH soils
- Leaf, flower and litter issues
- Growth rate
- Disease and insect resistance
- Percentage in Denver's existing canopy / Genus and Family
- Form, leaf color and texture, and fall color
- Availability

GROWING THE TREES

Site Selection

- Grow within Front Range region in partnership with existing commercial nursery

Tree sourcing, procurement, and preparation phase

- Minimum 10 feet to first branch, with central leader or branching structure
- Sourced from location with similar climate

Contract growing phase

- Trees in specially designed containers
- Irrigation
- Root and structure pruning

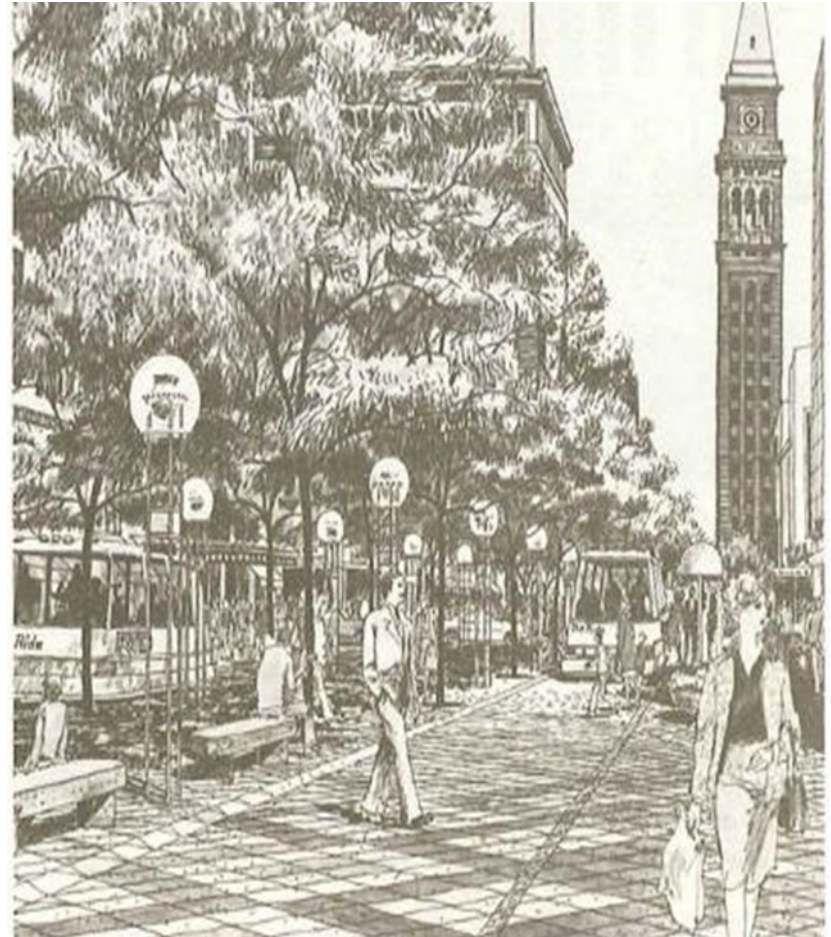
KEY PROJECT BENEFITS OF THE LPA

- Less disruption of transit operation because of reduced transitway maintenance
- Improved pedestrian safety and mobility with 10' clear walkways
- Complies with guidelines for ADA accessibility
- Activates public spaces which strengthens feelings of safety for users
- Improves long-term business revenues due to increased visitors



PERMANENT PROJECT IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS

- IMPACTS
 - Changes the historic features of the Mall
- MITIGATIONS
 - Commitments to rebuild with same or similar historic materials and spatial relationships
 - Ongoing consultation with historic preservation groups



CONSTRUCTION IMPACTS

- Disruption/detours of Free MallRide
- Noise, changes to access, disruption of pedestrian flow
- Potential business sales decline, particularly for businesses with many walk-in customers
- Visual disruption and reduced tree canopy
- Construction on the Mall is estimated to take between 2 ^{1/2} years and 4 years



MITIGATION FOR CONSTRUCTION IMPACTS

- Maintain reasonable access for businesses and pedestrians, including ADA access
- Provide timely public information, including additional signage, special events, and marketing
- Partner with business organizations to identify additional measures to reduce business impacts
- Develop a Traffic Mitigation Plan to address transit, traffic, and pedestrian access
- Additionally, typical construction mitigations for impacts such as noise and dust



HOW TO COMMENT ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

- At today's meetings
 - On project website via iPads
 - Hard copy comment forms
- By May 14
 - On project website
<https://www.denvergov.org/themallexperience>
 - Mail or email
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NEXT STEPS AND HOW TO STAY INVOLVED

- FTA and project partners will review all comments and consider them in determining how to move forward with the project
- Continue working with historic preservation groups on mitigation commitments



HOW TO STAY INVOLVED

- Planning on the Mall continues for the furnishings and activation
- More public opportunities for comments on furnishings, activation, and construction
- Please sign up for future communication regarding the Mall
- Please visit our project website
<https://www.denvergov.org/themallexperience>

