



Gold Corridor Ward Station/Ridge Road Catalytic Project Final Report - Executive Summary



I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) conducted this study in conjunction with the cities of Wheat Ridge and Arvada to plan multi-modal access improvements to the Wheat Ridge-Ward Station (Ward Station), which will be the western end-of-line station for the Regional Transportation District (RTD) Gold Line Commuter Rail, scheduled to open for service in 2016.

For the planning phase of the study, the larger Planning Study Area was used, allowing for planning of multi-modal connections between the Ward Station and the surrounding major arterial streets: Ward Road to the west and Kipling Street to the east. These two arterial streets are approximately 1.5 miles apart. The second phase of the project consisted of a conceptual design study for future improvements to Ridge Road between Miller Street and Tabor Street (approximately 0.9 mile)—the Focus Study Area.

Based on the survey and evaluation of existing and future conditions, a series of multi-modal improvement needs was developed to improve access to the Ward and Arvada Ridge stations and the transit-oriented development (TOD) planned in the station areas. The needs are summarized below and, where appropriate, depicted on **Figure 1**.

Bus Routes

RTD is currently conducting a study to develop preliminary plans for bus rerouting with the opening of the Gold Line in 2016. It is expected that RTD will coordinate with Wheat Ridge and Arvada and other key stakeholders in refining the preliminary plan to develop a final bus plan for implementation with the Gold Line opening. Following is a summary of the key needs that have been identified by participants in the Ward Station/Ridge Road Catalytic Project for consideration in the bus planning.

- ▶ Existing Route 72X, connecting between downtown Denver and western Arvada, is expected to be eliminated with the opening of the Gold Line. A new local route or routes should be established to replace Route 72X to provide service between the Ward Station and neighborhoods in Arvada, Wheat Ridge, and Jefferson County to the west. This route should also include a stop south of the Ward Station near the Ward Road/north Interstate 70 (I-70) Frontage Road intersection to service the Kaiser Permanente facility.
- ▶ Route 44 along 44th Avenue currently stops at the park-n-Ride northwest of the I-70/Kipling Street interchange, which provides relatively close accessibility for Kaiser Permanente. When the park-n-Ride is closed with the opening of the Ward Station, RTD should explore routing the 44 bus to provide a stop which directly serves Kaiser Permanente.



Figure 1
Recommended Access Improvements

50th Avenue/Ward Road Traffic Signal

- ▶ A traffic signal is recommended at the 50th Avenue/Ward Road intersection as soon as it can be approved, funded, and constructed. With this signal, 50th Avenue would become the primary access route between the Ward Station and Ward Road for drivers coming to and exiting the station from the north or south. A signal would provide a safe bicycle and pedestrian crossing of Ward Road from the station, extending bike/pedestrian connectivity with the planned bicycle lanes and sidewalks on the 50th Avenue/Ridge Road extension west of the station. Additionally, a signal would allow RTD buses accessing the station to use 50th Avenue for both ingress and egress, reducing bus travel times and eliminating the impacts of buses that would otherwise use 52nd Avenue.

Bike and Pedestrian Connections to Ward Road

Figure 1 shows three different bike and pedestrian improvements in the vicinity of the Ward Station that are recommended in the short term to coincide with or follow soon after the 2016 opening of the Gold Line, including:

- ▶ Improvement to the Tabor Street/north I-70 Frontage Road route from the station to Ward Road, including on-street bike lanes and continuous sidewalks. These improvements have been funded and are programmed by Wheat Ridge.
- ▶ Create a signed bike route on the Taft Street/52nd Avenue route between the station and Ward Road. Additional improvement to this section of 52nd Avenue may be explored in the mid- to long-range future, but a short-range signing of this route to direct bicyclists from Ridge Road to the existing traffic signal at 52nd Avenue/Ward Road and not through the busy Ward Station area is recommended.
- ▶ Continuous sidewalks along the east side of Ward Road between 52nd Avenue and the north I-70 Frontage Road are needed as close to the Ward Station opening as possible to allow for safe and convenient walking routes between the station and the existing Ward Road signalized crossings and businesses along the street.

Ridge Road Complete Street

Improvements to Ridge Road between the Ward Station and Miller Street are recommended and are discussed in greater detail in **Chapter V**. Recommended improvements include on-street bike lanes in both directions, continuous sidewalks on the north side of the street, and center left-turn lanes where needed.

Kipling Street Access

The City of Arvada is currently exploring options to develop a Kipling Street intersection to provide more direct access for the TOD site north of the Arvada Ridge Station. This intersection would also improve the directness of access for Red Rocks Community College and its planned expansion, as well as for other existing and future land uses on both sides of Kipling Street.