

BELTWAY TO TOMORROW

Frequently Asked Questions

Why do the Jefferson Economic Council and its partners support a completed beltway?

- 1.. A completed beltway will bring a healthier mix of jobs, homes and needed services to the northwest corridor and improve area travel, which today is inconvenient and sometimes dangerous. A detailed study of the benefits of completing the proposed final beltway connection is available at BWayNow.Com.
2. For 40 years, the Denver Regional Council of Governments and a wide array of jurisdictions and organizations have envisioned the completed beltway as key to smart and sustainable regional development.
3. Despite decades of planning, delays to building a completed parkway have been cost taxpayers millions of dollars. Still, more than 20 private companies have indicated they have interest in completing the beltway, and \$100 million in incentives and construction funds – set aside by Northwest Parkway, LLC – are available to help facilitate a public-private partnership to complete metro Denver’s beltway. The time to act is now!
4. A completed beltway will allow people across the region to circumvent the center of the metro area in their travels. Also, in the foreseeable future, the completed beltway will become crucial to regional travel. A completed beltway will provide regional connectivity with around the metro area and in cooperation with other major highways and transportation systems such as FasTracks.

Does research support completing the beltway?

Absolutely! A report by respected economist Patty Silverstein found that over the next 20 years, half of the economic and fiscal potential of Jefferson County is at risk if the metro beltway is not completed. The report said if we do not complete the beltway now, it will cost the region \$9 billion and 17,000 jobs.

The key findings of the “2007 Economic & Fiscal Impacts of Development in the Northwest Corridor Area Study,” prepared for Jefferson Economic Council by Development Research Partners may be found at BWayNow.Com. The report showed completing the beltway will attract a healthier mix of jobs, homes and needed services to the area, much of which is in Jefferson County. Without the beltway, much of the area will see more residential development, which has dominated the area for decades and drains resources without complementary commercial uses

Where is the proposed final beltway segment?

It is located in the northwest corridor area of metro Denver. The proposed final beltway segment would join the Northwest Parkway on the north and C-470 on the south.

When was the metro Denver beltway started?

Officially, the metro Denver beltway got underway in 1968 – 40 years ago this year – with the formation of the I-470 public highway authority. Initial construction of C-470, the southwest metro segment of the beltway from I-70 on the west to I-25 (Park Meadows/Highlands Ranch) on the south started 12 years later in 1980. The metro beltway has been under construction for nearly 30 years!

How much of the metro beltway is completed?

86 of 106 planned miles of the metro Denver beltway are complete – only about 20 miles in the northwest corridor remain to be finished of those 20 miles only 10 will be tolled. The proposed final beltway would extend from the Northwest Parkway near the Denver-Boulder Turnpike, I-36, on the north to C-470 at Sixth Avenue on the south

How many lanes are envisioned for the parkway??

A four-lane parkway is envisioned for most of the beltway connection, similar to the Evergreen Parkway or Foothills Parkway in Boulder or Highway 93 in Golden. The parkway will follow the existing state Highway 93 alignment to Sixth Avenue, which currently connects to C-470. Detailed maps are available at BWayNow.Com.

What are the regional benefits associated with the completion of the metro Denver beltway?

Today, fifty percent of residents in Jefferson County are forced to commute elsewhere for lack of local jobs, which have been planned along the proposed final beltway connection. When it is built, the completed beltway will improve the region's transportation system, safety and quality of life.

Regional transportation will operate more smoothly, especially as high priority reconstruction of I-70 between I-225 and I-25 advances; as I-76 is repaired and improved and other regional roadway improvements are made. The beltway also will be linked with FasTracks and other anticipated future transit initiatives.

How would the proposed final beltway connection differ from the rest of the metro beltway?

The proposed final beltway connection will provide a quick and easy alternative to already congested and often dangerous northwest corridor area arterials, including state highway 93, Indiana Ave., McIntyre Ave. and Wadsworth. We believe that speeds through Golden should be reduced and that the area should have more of a parkway feel.

Why is a public-private partnership beneficial for construction?

Public-private partnerships for decades have been the only way to complete many major highway and other transportations projects. Recent examples in the metro Denver area include the completion of E-470 and the Northwest Parkway.

As federal and state funding for major highways shrinks, PPPs are becoming the preferred way of financing, constructing, operating and maintaining major transportation projects; such funding is becoming a common worldwide practice. It allows for private

investment to share in the cost of construction. The idea is that the public will benefit from the infrastructure and the private business will benefit from its use. It's designed as a win-win for all involved, particularly given the tight state budget for building infrastructure.

Is CDOT, the Colorado Department of Transportation, involved in the process?

In 2003, CDOT stepped into the process of finding a way to complete the proposed final beltway connection. The cash-strapped agency will likely not be able to finance completing the beltway, which is why a public-private partnership makes sense for the Parkway. This spring, CDOT commissioners unanimously approved the parkway's System Level Study for the proposed intersections/interchanges with State Highways 128, 72, and 93.

Will tolls be charged along the proposed final beltway connection?

Yes, but only along 10 miles of the proposed final beltway connection, which are the last 10 miles of the metro beltway to be tolled. Tolls are commonplace in the development of many highways across the world and are charged already along more than 50 miles of the metro Denver beltway. Existing state roadways included in the final connection will not be tolled.

Is the parkway consistent with long-term planning in local communities?

Every community directly affected by the proposed final beltway connection, Jefferson County, Arvada, Broomfield and Golden have planned to accommodate the beltway. The beltway has been on Arvada's transportation plan since 1964. The Golden transportation plan included provision for an expressway replacing Colorado Highway 93 since 1983.

Golden obtained support from Arvada and other cities in its application for CDOT funds to relocate portions of state highway 93 and construct a new C-470 interchange at 6th Ave., as preliminary to extension and completion of the beltway. Golden also secured CDOT funding to relocate state highway 93 away from Washington St. through downtown Golden with the intent of removing regional traffic away from the center of the city on the future beltway.

How will the Jefferson Parkway protect open space and the environment?

In the northwest corridor area where the proposed final beltway connection would be located, right-of-way has been acquired over time and major investments have been made to protect abundant open space. More than 30,000 acres in the corridor near the proposed final beltway connection is open space, including the 6,000-acre Rocky Flats Wildlife Refuge.

Will transportation between the mountains and DIA improve?

Yes. Travelers now forced to travel along I-70 and I-25 through the core of the metro region will have the option of skirting the area via the proposed final beltway connection. The parkway will also reduce traffic pressure on the often-dangerous Highway 93 with by connecting U.S. 36.

Why is part of the metro Denver beltway tolled and part not?

The funding of highways has changed dramatically in the 40 years since the metro Denver beltway was conceived and in the nearly 30 years that it has been under construction.

Originally envisioned as an interstate highway, C-470, the southwest segment of the metro beltway, was ultimately built as a state highway and is not tolled. E-470, the 47-mile-long eastern beltway, is a tolled expressway and was funded through a public-private partnership, the E-470 Public Highway Authority – including eight jurisdiction members: Adams, Arapahoe and Douglas Counties and the cities of Aurora, Brighton, Commerce City, Thornton and the town of Parker. E-470 also passes through the City and County of Denver and Denver International Airport. The 11-mile-long Northwest Parkway also was developed through a public-private partnership, the Northwest Parkway Public Highway Authority.

Do other major metropolitan areas have beltways?

Yes. Most major cities have at least one beltway to provide a regional transportation option. Beltways provide easy and efficient connectivity around often-congested traffic corridors. The Denver metro area is now just 20 miles from gaining the critical transportation advantage...

Why not just improve area arterial highways?

We support the improvement of arterial roadways; however, proposing that those improvements would be able to handle projected growth and associated regional and local traffic is far-fetched. Also, there is no identified funding for improving arterial roadways in the area.

Does DRCOG support the completion of the beltway and will it be linked to bus and future transit?

Yes. The beltway is supported in DRCOG’s MetroVision 2035 regional planning document.