



TO: Senator Bennet, Senator Hickenlooper and Congressman Crow

FROM: High Line Canal Conservancy
Josh Phillips, Director of Planning and Implementation

DATE: March 25, 2024

SUBJECT: High Line Canal Conservancy Letter of Support for the Havana Street Corridor Multimodal Improvements Project

The Organization

The High Line Canal Conservancy is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to preserve, protect and enhance the 71-mile long High Line Canal in partnership with the public. The Conservancy was formed in 2014 by a passionate coalition of private citizens to provide leadership and harness the region's commitment to protecting the future of the Canal--a 100-foot corridor comprising the canal channel, trail and adjacent vegetation. With support from local jurisdictions and in partnership with Denver Water, the Conservancy is working to ensure that the Canal is protected and enhanced as a natural and recreational corridor for future generations.

Community Outreach

Beginning in 2016, the Conservancy and Denver Water, in close collaboration with a host of regional partners, has engaged with over 5,000 people in a far-reaching community outreach process to envision the future of the High Line Canal. The result was a Community Vision Plan and a subsequent framework plan, The Plan for the High Line Canal. Through this process, the public and partners have focused on a vital future for the Canal as a recreational and environmental resource for people that prioritizes improved connectivity and access along the Canal.

The Resource

The High Line Canal Trail connects eleven different governmental jurisdictions and sees more than a million users annually. As it traverses the Denver metro area, the Canal beckons walkers, equestrians, families, nature-lovers, bicyclists and neighbors to recreate along its tree-lined banks. Today, the Canal is in a time of transition as Denver Water moves away from delivering irrigation water in the Canal. The Conservancy has spent the last seven years leading collaborative planning efforts, creating a community vision and a framework plan that envision a connected corridor for all communities. We are thrilled to write this letter of support, lending our endorsement to the City of Aurora's efforts to secure Congressionally Directed Spending for the Havana Street Corridor Multimodal Improvements project.



The Project

The City of Aurora is home to nearly 16 miles of the historic 71-mile High Line Canal, more than any other single municipality. The High Line Canal was central to the growth of the City of Aurora, providing irrigation water to a growing region, and remains an important historic and natural resource. The Canal's crossing at S. Havana Street is one of the most critical in Aurora. Trail users have prioritized this intersection for improved access and connectivity, improvements that will be supported by this multimodal project. Trail users have also identified S. Havana Street as an important connection from the Canal, providing access to transit and a unique cultural corridor within the City, connections that will be strengthened by this project.

During the planning effort for the High Line Canal, improved connectivity was a key theme, with community members interested in closing trail gaps and connecting to amenities across the region. This was particularly important in diverse communities, where the Canal serves as a transportation corridor that connects people to their desired destinations. The neighborhoods along the Canal in Aurora are some of the most diverse in the region, with populations that are 40% Latino and 23% African American on average, populations as diverse as the business community along the S. Havana Street Corridor. These populations have rates of zero vehicle ownership that are higher than the City average, highlighting the need for transportation options. These populations will benefit significantly from improved multimodal connections along this critical corridor and safer connections to the Canal trail.

Providing a safe place for transportation and recreation can also be a catalyst for public health in these communities. We are thrilled that the City of Aurora is committed to investing in these neighborhoods and improving multimodal connections along this cultural corridor. Support from our Colorado delegation for this request is extremely significant to the community and we ask you to support the City of Aurora's funding request for this important project.

Thank you for your consideration and please feel free to contact me with any additional questions or comments at josh.p@highlinecanal.org or 720-767-2452.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Josh Phillips".

Josh Phillips, Director of Planning and Implementation
High Line Canal Conservancy



Senator Bennet, Senator Hickenlooper, and Congressman Crow
Colorado Delegation

23 March 2024

Re: Havana Street Corridor Multimodal Improvements Project

Dear Senator Bennet, Senator Hickenlooper, and Congressman Crow,

On behalf of members of Bicycle Aurora, we are writing to provide our enthusiastic support efforts of the City of Aurora to seek Congressionally Directed Spending for the Havana Street Corridor Multimodal Improvements project.

Havana Street is an important transportation corridor in Aurora that today poorly serves public transit riders, pedestrians and bicycle riders. Havana Street sidewalks, street crossings and bikeways are poor, unsafe and today, in many areas, nonexistent. If we, as a nation ever want to reduce our carbon footprint, providing safe, efficient, effective and convenient infrastructure that encourages multimodal transportation options like walking, bike riding and the use of public transportation is an absolute must. Providing infrastructure supporting multimodal transportation along the Havana Corridor is a good starting point for this densely populated area of the Aurora-Denver region.

Bicycle Aurora is a group of concerned volunteer citizens and businesses interested in improving the quality of bicycle trails and routes throughout Aurora. We advocate for, and strongly support, expansion of the bicycle transportation network in the city to better serve the bicycling community as well as other bikeway users. We also work closely with Aurora transportation planners and meet monthly to discuss updates and bicycle transportation related impacts in the city.

We would appreciate your full support of funding for the Havana Street Corridor Multimodal Improvements Project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Tobiassen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline.

Tom Tobiassen
Bicycle Aurora



Executive Committee

Wynne Shaw, Chair
Jeff Baker, Vice Chair
Colleen Whitlow, Secretary
Richard Kondo, Treasurer
Steve Conklin, Immediate Past Chair
Douglas W. Rex, Executive Director

March 27, 2024

The Honorable Michael Bennet
261 Russell Senate Building
2 Constitution Avenue NE
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Hickenlooper
Russell Senate Office Building
2 Constitution Avenue NE
Suite SR-374
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jason Crow
1323 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Bennet, Senator Hickenlooper, and Representative Crow,

The Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) respectfully submits this letter of support for the City of Aurora's request for Congressionally Directed Spending for the Havana Street Corridor Multimodal Improvements project.

Havana Street is one of the most important and highly used transit corridors in Aurora, second only to Colfax. RTD Route 105 Havana Street serves on average 5,300 riders per day. Despite this, 31% of stops on Havana Street have no amenities. Transit ridership on the Havana Street corridor stayed high throughout COVID, and RTD data indicates much higher rates of passenger boardings on Havana Street in the very early morning (5:00 AM) than system wide. These two indicators reflect the level that essential service workers living on the corridor depend on Havana Street bus service.

Aurora has identified significant needed improvements addressing the multiple segments with no sidewalks, or sidewalks of substandard width, transit stops with no or limited passenger infrastructure, and limited pedestrian-scale lighting. Funding will be used to widen sidewalks, improve bus stops, and improve lighting.

21,000 households live within ½ mile of the Havana Street corridor. Approximately 3,400 of these households (16%) are without a motor vehicle, compared to 5.8% citywide; and 21% of the households qualify as low income, compared to 12% citywide. Within this area, 46.7% of residents identified as minorities, which is 10% higher than the city average. Individuals over 65 years of age account for 11.3% of the total population (compared to 10.8% citywide), and individuals with disabilities account for 6.4% of the total population. These population groups are more likely to rely on non-automobile travel, such as walking, bicycling, and transit. The area is also home to 209 real commercial properties and approximately 2,100 businesses.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this request from the City of Aurora. Please feel free to contact me at rpapsdorf@drcog.org if you have any questions or need further information.

Respectfully,



Ron Papsdorf
Director
Transportation Planning & Operations





Mayor
15151 E. Alameda Parkway, 5th Floor
Aurora, Colorado 80012
office 303.739.7015
fax 303.739.7594
email mcoffman@auroragov.org

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March 22, 2024

On behalf of the City of Aurora we are writing to support efforts to seek Congressionally Directed Spending for the Havana Street Corridor Multimodal Improvements project.

The Havana Street Corridor Study was adopted by City Council in 2023, and was the conclusion of a multi-year effort to create a corridor-wide transportation, land use and visioning study that promotes active pedestrian, bicycle and transit friendly places and safe and convenient travel along and across the Havana Street corridor. The resulting outcome was a set of 73 strategies focusing on pedestrian/bicycle, transit, vehicle, and land use & branding improvements.

Havana Street is also one of the most important and highly used transit corridors in Aurora, second only to Colfax. 21,000 households live within ½ mile of the Havana Street corridor, and have rates of zero vehicle ownership and low income status at rates higher than the city average. 16% of these households, approximately 3,400 households, are without a motor vehicle (compared to 5.8% citywide); and 21% of households qualify as low income (compared to 12% citywide).

Significant needed improvements identified included addressing multiple segments with no sidewalks, or sidewalks of substandard width, transit stops with no or limited passenger infrastructure, and limited presence of pedestrian-scale lighting. Support from our Colorado Senators for this request is extremely significant to the community and we ask you to support the City of Aurora's funding request for this important project.

Mike Coffman
Mayor

Dustin Zvonek
Mayor Pro Tem

Francoise Bergan
Council Member

Alison Coombs
Council Member

Steve Sundberg
Council Member

Ruben Medina
Council Member

Stephanie Hancock
Council Member

Crystal Murillo
Council Member

Danielle Jurinsky
Council Member

Angela Lawson
Council Member

Curtis Gardner
Council Member



COLORADO

Department of Transportation

Office of the Deputy Executive Director

March 25, 2024

The Honorable Jason Crow
1323 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

**Subject: CDOT acknowledgment of the City of Aurora's Havana Street Corridor
Multimodal Improvements project**

Dear Congressman Crow,

The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) understands that all requests for Community Funded Projects under the Highway Infrastructure Program require CDOT to ascertain if the project is eligible for funding and be good stewards of the funds if they are enacted.

On behalf of CDOT, I write this letter to acknowledge that:

1. This project is eligible for Federal-aid highway funding under title 23, US Code.
2. If a project is selected, CDOT will administer the enacted funds as required by federal regulations.
3. CDOT will include the project on the STIP once funding for the project is enacted.

CDOT agrees to follow the applicable requirements for the administration of federal dollars should the project receive funds.

Thank you for your consideration of the project.

Sincerely,

Herman F. Stockinger III

Herman Stockinger
Deputy Director
Colorado Department of Transportation



March 26, 2024

The Honorable Michael Bennet
U.S. Senate
261 Russell Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jason Crow
U.S. House of Representatives
1323 Longworth House Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Hickenlooper
U.S. Senate
374 Russell Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Bennet, Senator Hickenlooper, and Congressman Crow:

I write in support of the City of Aurora's efforts to seek Congressionally Directed Spending for the Havana Street Corridor Multimodal Improvements project.

Havana Street is also one of the most important and highly used transit corridors in Aurora, second only to Colfax Avenue. Significant needed improvements identified included addressing multiple segments with no sidewalks, or sidewalks of substandard width, transit stops with no or limited passenger infrastructure, and limited presence of pedestrian-scale lighting. Funding will be used to widen sidewalks, improve bus stops, and improve lighting.

Approximately 21,000 households are within ½ mile of the Havana Street corridor and have rates of zero-vehicle ownership and low-income status at rates higher than the city average. Among these households, 16%, or approximately 3,400, are without a motor vehicle (compared to 5.8% citywide); and 21% of households qualify as low income (compared to 12% citywide). Within this area, 46.7% of residents identified as minorities, which is 10% higher than the city average. Individuals over 65 years of age account for 11.3% of the total population (compared to 10.8% citywide), and individuals with disabilities account for 6.4% of the total population. These population groups are more likely to rely on non-automobile travel, such as walking, bicycling and using transit. This area is also home to 209 real commercial properties and approximately 2,100 businesses.

Havana Street is also one of the most important and highly used transit corridors in Aurora, second only to Colfax. RTD Route 105 Havana Street serves on average 5,300 customers per day. Despite this, 31% of stops on Havana Street have no amenities. Transit ridership on the Havana Street corridor remained relatively high throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, and RTD data indicates much higher rates of passenger boardings on Havana Street in the early morning hours at the commencement of the service day compared with systemwide ridership. These two indicators reflect the level that essential service workers living on the corridor depend on Havana Street transit service.

In closing, the support of the members of Colorado's Congressional delegation is critical to the City of Aurora's funding request for this important project. Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Debra A. Johnson
General Manager and CEO

Regional Transportation District
1660 Blake Street, Denver CO 80202



Dear Senator Bennet, Senator Hickenlooper, and Congressman Crow,

On behalf of the Aurora Chamber of Commerce, we are writing to support efforts of the City of Aurora to seek Congressionally Directed Spending for the Havana Street Corridor Multimodal Improvements project.

Havana Street is one of the most important and highly used transit corridors in Aurora, second only to Colfax. Significant needed improvements identified include addressing multiple segments with no sidewalks, or sidewalks of substandard width, transit stops with no or limited passenger infrastructure, and limited presence of pedestrian-scale lighting. Funding will be used to widen sidewalks, improve bus stops, and improve lighting.

21,000 households live within ½ mile of the Havana Street corridor, and have rates of low vehicle ownership and low income status which are higher than the city average. 16% of these households, approximately 3,400 households, are without a motor vehicle (compared to 5.8% citywide); and 21% of households qualify as low income (compared to 12% citywide). Within this area, 46.7% of residents identified as minorities, which is 10% higher than the city average. Individuals over 65 years of age account for 11.3% of the total population (compared to 10.8% citywide), and individuals with disabilities account for 6.4% of the total population. These population groups are more likely to rely on non-automobile travel, such as walking, bicycling and using transit. This area is also home to 209 real commercial properties and approximately 2100 businesses.

RTD Route 105 Havana Street serves on average 5,300 riders per day. Despite this, 31% of stops on Havana Street have no amenities. Transit ridership on the Havana Street corridor stayed high throughout COVID, and RTD data indicates much higher rates of passenger boardings on Havanan Street in the very early morning (5:00 AM) than system wide. These two indicators reflect the level that essential service workers living on the corridor depend on Havana Street bus service.

Support from our Colorado delegation for this request is extremely significant to the community and we ask you to support the City of Aurora's funding request for this necessary project.

Kind Regards,

Naomi Colwell
President/CEO
Aurora Chamber of Commerce
303-888-1961

14305 EAST ALAMEDA AVENUE, SUITE 300
AURORA, CO 80012
303-344-1500
Fax 303-344-1564
www.aurorachamber.org

Dear Senator Bennet, Senator Hickenlooper, and Congressman Crow,

On behalf of Aurora Immigrant & Refugee Commission, we are writing to support efforts of the City of Aurora to seek Congressionally Directed Spending for the Havana Street Corridor Multimodal Improvements project.

Havana Street is also one of the most important and highly used transit corridors in Aurora, second only to Colfax. Significant needed improvements identified included addressing multiple segments with no sidewalks, or sidewalks of substandard width, transit stops with no or limited passenger infrastructure, and limited presence of pedestrian-scale lighting. Funding will be used to widen sidewalks, improve bus stops, and improve lighting.

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Support from our Colorado delegation for this request is extremely significant to the community and we ask you to support the City of Aurora's funding request for this important project.

Kind Regards,



Ashvina Patel,
Chair



Komi Akpalo,
Vice-Chair