

**WORK SESSION AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY**  
City Council



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**STAFF**

Drew Brooks, Deputy Director, PDT  
Kaley Zeisel, Transfort, Director  
Annabelle Phillips, Transfort, Assistant Director

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**SUBJECT FOR DISCUSSION**

**West Elizabeth Enhanced Travel Corridor Project Update.**

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The purpose of this item is to update Councilmembers on the progress of the West Elizabeth Enhanced Travel Corridor project, including the status of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Capital Investment Grant (CIG) Small Starts application.

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**GENERAL DIRECTION SOUGHT AND SPECIFIC QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED**

1. What questions or feedback do Councilmembers have about a Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 CIG Small Starts application?
2. What questions or feedback do Councilmembers have about moving forward with the Foothills Transit Station/Roundabout independently of the rest of the project.

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**BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION**

In 2016 a study was completed of the West Elizabeth Corridor and an Enhanced Travel Corridor (ETC) plan was adopted by Fort Collins City Council. This ETC envisioned a multimodal corridor, including Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), Americans with Disabilities (ADA) compliant pedestrian facilities, and protected cycling lanes, that extended from Colorado State University(CSU) Main Campus west to a new transit center on the corner of West Elizabeth & Overland.

In 2019 the City was awarded \$750k in State funds to complete through 30% engineered design for the corridor. This phase of the design was completed in late 2022. An additional \$1.25M in funding was awarded to complete the design.

In July 2021 Transfort entered Project Development (PD) for the West Elizabeth ETC Project under Federal Transit Administration (FTA)'s Construction Investment Grant (CIG) Small Starts program. This is the first step an agency must take to be considered for CIG Small Starts funding.

In 2023, Transfort was awarded \$10.7M in Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) for the portion of the West Elizabeth ETC project encompassing the western terminus of the corridor – constructing a transit station on West Elizabeth & Overland and converting the current traditional intersection to a roundabout.

In August 2023, Transfort submitted a Project Ratings Request to FTA for this project for consideration of FY2025 federal funding. This is the next step toward qualifying for a Construction Grant Agreement under the CIG Small Starts program. To qualify to be recommended for CIG Small Starts funding a project must score a Medium or higher. A summary of the budget and financial plan is below.

Additional funds are needed to complete design work in the amount of approximately \$3.0M. Transfort has been awarded CIG Planning funds that can be used toward this purpose. This scope also includes mission critical items such as work by Real Estate Services to research and prepare Right of Way (ROW) acquisition documents.

## **PROJECT OVERVIEW**

The West Elizabeth ETC project corridor extends approximately three miles east-west through Fort Collins, from South Overland Trail (where the new Foothills Transit Center will be constructed) to the CSU Transit Center on the Colorado State University campus and to the existing north-south MAX BRT line along Mason Street.

BRT along the entire corridor will operate in mixed traffic. The BRT service will operate 16 hours per day Monday through Saturday and 12 hours per day on Sundays, with 7.5 to 30-minute headways on weekdays and 15-minute headways on weekend days. Other key design elements of the planned corridor improvements include enhanced transit stations with ADA access, shelter from the elements, and route/schedule information; separated bike lanes; intersection improvements; and Advanced Traffic Management Systems (ATMS)/Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) technologies – this is a comprehensive multimodal project to enhance safety, comfort, and convenience for all users.

This project aims to mitigate several serious safety and accessibility issues that currently exist in the corridor. For example, during the period analyzed from January 2017 through December 2020, there were a total of 214 crashes in the corridor, including 1 fatal crash at West Elizabeth/Overland, 14 bike crashes and 2 pedestrian crashes. Currently, bike lanes and pedestrian facilities are inconsistent and uncomfortable. The design for the corridor will improve safety and accessibility for all modes of traffic throughout the full corridor, including design elements such as protected intersections, protected roundabouts, raised and protected bike lanes, and fully compliant ADA accessible sidewalks.

This project will allow Transfort to optimize how it delivers transit service throughout the corridor. A new transit station at West Elizabeth and Overland will increase mobility options in this area and eliminate the current need for buses to utilize neighborhood streets to turn around. The station and roundabout will allow for consolidation and realignment of existing transit service, meaning more frequent service to riders in the project area. The transit station will be designed to allow for the turnaround of larger, 60FT articulated buses, which will increase capacity in the corridor. Currently, high ridership is resulting in the need for trailer buses to ensure riders are not left behind at stops due to full buses. The addition of multimodal options at the station such as bike lanes and ADA compliant sidewalks, additional first mile/last mile options for utilizing transit and increase in frequency times by consolidating transit service, will reduce vehicle dependence.

## FUNDING PLAN

The chart below breaks down the estimated capital and operating costs to implement the West Elizabeth ETC Corridor, based on 30% design. This high-level project budget overview represents the cost of the full corridor, including the Foothills Transit Station and roundabout.

<b>Cost Category</b>	<b>Cost Estimate</b>
<b>Capital Construction</b>	\$ 71,626,000
<b>Right-of-Way Acquisition</b>	\$ 2,041,000
<b>Vehicles and Vehicle Infrastructure</b>	\$ 12,247,000
<b>Design and Construction Management</b>	\$ 14,096,000
<b>Contingency</b>	\$ 13,690,000
<b>*Capital Cost Total</b>	\$113,700,000
<b>*Annual Operational Increase</b>	\$ 2,000,000

*\*Cost estimates based on 30% design, may adjust as 100% design progresses*

The following sources have been identified to fund the design and construction of the West Elizabeth Corridor, including the Foothills Transit Station and roundabout. The chart below shows the funding sources and amounts, as well as which sources have already been funded.

### RAISE Funds

Transfort was awarded FY2023 Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) in the amount of \$10.7M for the construction of the Foothills Transit Station. A Budgeting for Outcomes (BFO) offer has been submitted for the 2025/2026 cycle to appropriate these funds with the required local match, which is being requested from transit 2050 sales tax funds as a one-time capital expense.

### Multimodal Options Funding (MMOF) Funding

MMOF funds and their local matches in the amount of \$1.5M and \$2.5M, collectively \$4.0M in design costs, have been awarded can be used as local match to the overall project.

### CIG Small Starts Funding

Transfort plans to request a 65% CIG Small Starts project share in its next project rating submittal. FTA guidance for the CIG Small Starts program advises that if the local financial commitment is rated at least Medium and the CIG Small Starts funding share is less than 50% of the project's capital cost, the Local Financial Commitment rating will be raised one level. In FY2025, the average CIG Small Starts funding share awarded was 55% of total project cost.

## City of Fort Collins 2050 Tax/Other Local Opportunities and Partnerships

Transfort plans to use a significant amount of revenue from the 2050 Sales Tax to meet the local match obligation. Other local opportunities and partnerships could come from a variety of sources, including State funds or local match contributions from Colorado State University or other partnerships.

<b>Design and Capital Costs Funding Sources – Full Project</b>		
<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Status</b>
<b>FTA CIG Small Starts</b>	\$ 65,650,000	TBD
<b>Local Match</b>	\$ 32,350,000	TBD
<b>RAISE Grant</b>	\$ 10,700,000	Funded
<b>Multimodal Options Fund Grants</b>	\$ 4,000,000	Funded
<b>In-Kind Land (CSU Foothills Campus)</b>	\$ 1,000,000	Funded
<b>Total</b>	\$113,700,000	

### **RATING REQUEST AND SCORING**

FTA's Project Rating score is aggregated from multiple criteria ratings for both Project Justification (6 separate criteria) and Local Financial Commitment (3 separate criteria); FTA assigns 50% weight to the Project Justification score and 50% to the Local Financial Commitment score. After submitting for a project rating in August 2023, Transfort was advised by FTA that the West Elizabeth ETC Project would be rated at an overall Medium-Low; with Project Justification receiving a Medium-Low score and Local Financial Commitment receiving a Medium Score.

Transfort received feedback from FTA regarding several areas in which the Project Justification score could potentially be increased and Staff are working to implement these recommendations to the extent possible prior to resubmitting the project in August 2024.

Transfort also plans to remove the Foothills Transit Station and roundabout scope from the next project rating submission. The station and roundabout scope of the project have independent utility separate from the rest of the West Elizabeth corridor and have already been awarded funding, funds that must be executed in a grant prior to September 30, 2027. This aspect of the project will significantly benefit community members by implementing additional mobility options and safe and accessible facilities in this area, as well as adding the potential for improved transit services throughout the entire corridor. This action has additional benefits related to the project rating submission including reducing the federal portion of the CIG Small Starts project and is anticipated to help boost Transfort's rating in several categories, including land use, economic development, and cost effectiveness.

## **NEXT STEPS**

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None.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

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1. Presentation