

## Rex and Meridian Roads Intersection Project Frequently Asked Questions

**1. Q: Why is the Rex & Meridian Intersection Project necessary?**

**A:** This project is vital for enhancing the safety of Rex Road and Meridian Road as well as improving efficiency of the intersection. It addresses critical issues by adding turning lanes and a traffic signal while also improving obstructed sightlines.

**2. Q: What improvements are being made?**

**A:** The project includes installing a traffic signal, improving sight distance, widening Meridian to four lanes, adding turn lanes on Rex, and enhancing roadside ditches and stormwater management.

**3. Q: How is this project funded?**

**A:** The project carries an estimated cost of \$8.5 million, covering construction and utility relocation expenses, which is sourced from El Paso County's Road Impact Fee funds. These funds originate from fees assessed to property owners in unincorporated El Paso County upon receiving approval for new development contributing to increased traffic. The Road Impact Fee Program commenced on December 1, 2012 and bases the amount of the fee on the type of use established with a new development.

**4. Q: What is the anticipated impact on traffic flow and safety?**

**A:** During construction: We are committed to minimizing disruptions to the traveling public. Construction will be phased to ensure that traffic flow is maintained as much as possible during the work. There may be a need to reduce speeds and ask the traveling public to slow down through the construction zone. And, although we don't anticipate there will be a need for detours or lane closures, the contractor may request such measures to expedite project completion. That will be evaluated by the project team. We also will be working with the contractor on how to best minimize construction impacts during school drop off and pick up times.

Once the project is complete: We expect a significant improvement in traffic flow as well as making the roadways and the intersection safer for all road users.

**5. Q: What crashes have occurred at this intersection?**

**A:** According to data pulled from the Colorado Department of Transportation, from 2012 to 2022, there has been an increase in traffic crashes at this location during that time. We deeply empathize with those who have suffered due to crashes at this location. This project is a step toward enhancing overall community safety.

**6. Q: Given recent fatal accidents in the area, would traffic cameras generally help prevent accidents?**

**A:** Based on the information available to us, it does not appear that traffic cameras would have influenced the outcome of recent accidents. There are no definitive studies that we are aware of that show traffic cameras help prevent accidents.

**7. Q: How can I find out more about the project and construction updates?**

**A:** More information is available on the County Webpage. The ongoing progress e-newsletters will also be regularly posted to [www.elpasoco.com](http://www.elpasoco.com).

We also encourage the public to sign up to receive the regular e-newsletters that will communicate construction-related impacts and progress. Sign up by sending an email requesting to be added to the distribution to:

[RexMeridianImprovements@gmail.com](mailto:RexMeridianImprovements@gmail.com)

**Project Phone Number:** 719-428-0208



**8. Q: When will the construction begin and end?**

**A.** Construction is set to begin in early 2024 and is expected to extend through late 2025. The project Public Information Team will distribute media releases and e-newsletters notifying the public of the exact start date of construction. Sign up by emailing a request to be added to the distribution list to: [RexMeridianImprovements@gmail.com](mailto:RexMeridianImprovements@gmail.com)

**9. Q: Is installing additional traffic control devices always the answer when there is a crash or fatality?**

**A.**

- The safety of our roadways is always our first priority.
- The goal of evaluating locations and reviewing accident reports is to determine if any changes can be made to **enhance** the safety of our roadways.
- No two intersections are the same. Each intersection has its own unique characteristics that must be evaluated to determine if additional traffic control devices would enhance safety.
- Installing too many traffic control devices that are not required can lead to ineffectiveness and negatively impact traffic flow.

**Frequently Asked Questions from Dec. 14, 2023 Public Meeting – (edited for brevity)**

**Q: How Will the traffic lights be controlled?**

**A:** Traffic lights are set based on the amount of directional traffic in the intersection. We will be monitoring the traffic flow during and following construction and adjusting timing as needed.

**Q: Where is the traffic going to be diverted to during construction?**

A: We don't anticipate at this time that detours will be needed during construction. Once the contractor is onboard, we will have a better idea of the construction phasing and what, if any, detours might be required.

**Q: Where will the trail crossing be at the intersection of Rex & Meridian roads? Will a crossing be added at the southwest corner of the intersection / safe crossing from west to east.**

A: The existing trail along the east side of Meridian Road connects across Rex Road at the crosswalk. There may be a need to close that crosswalk during construction and identify an alternate route. Once the contractor is onboard, we will be able discuss construction phasing and an alternate route for the trail. There are no plans to add additional crossings or crosswalks at the Meridian and Rex roads intersection. To be ADA (Americans with Disabilities) compliant, crosswalks need to connect to something, such as a sidewalk. As of now there isn't a sidewalk on the west side of Meridian.

**Q: When relocating utilities, will homeowners be without utilities?**

A: At this time, we don't anticipate utility outages related to the project construction. If the contractor should require any temporary outages, homeowners will be notified in advance as to the time of the outage and the duration.

**Q: What will happen to existing mailboxes during construction?**

A: The Contractor will notify the homeowner in advance of relocation activities and will also coordinate with the U.S. Postal Service about temporary mailbox locations.

**Q: Will traffic be detoured through neighborhoods?**

A: We don't anticipate detours will be needed related to the project construction and therefore, the County will not promote detours through neighborhoods. However, as we communicate the construction impacts, we typically suggest that alternate routes are advised. Drivers will typically find their own way around projects to avoid construction impacts.

**Q: How is safety being considered for that intersection during construction? Is there any plan to do anything about the "REX Raceway" of speeding traffic?**

A: With the start of construction near the end of January, the implementation of safety measures such as reduced speed limits, and the presence of flaggers, will contribute to reducing vehicle speeds. Unfortunately, driving behaviors cannot easily be mitigated if drivers choose to not obey speed limits and signs, so enforcement is typically the only option at that point. We will monitor speeds through the construction zone and notify public safety officials about any ongoing issues.

**Q: What will be the construction zone speed limit?**

A: A concrete reduced speed limit during construction has not yet been identified. Once the contractor is onboard and construction phasing has been identified, the reduced speed limit will be posted on signs through the construction zone.

**Q: Do we know the number of crashes that have occurred at the Rex/Meridian intersection?**

A: We do not have the exact numbers of crashes, at this time. It's crucial to acknowledge that each crash is unique and there are many causes. The various reasons for crashes don't always show up on the traffic crash reports. Some crashes can be totally unrelated to road conditions such as distracted driving, speeding, poor weather conditions, etc.

**Q: Will school buses still be allowed to park along the roadway?**

A: Buses are no longer parking there and will not be allowed to do so in the construction zone.

**Q: Uniform shoulders? Will there be any work done to the shoulders as part of the project?**

A: Shoulders will be added to both sides of Meridian Road as part of the project. The shoulders will be 6 feet wide on each side.

**Q: Is the project design set to the point that changes can no longer be made, such as to the grading or by changing the configuration to a roundabout instead of a traffic light?**

A: Any major design changes such as grading, or a roundabout is not an option for the project. The design was finalized quite some time ago and funding secured based partially on public feedback that a roundabout was not preferred. Changing the design would have set the project back a considerable amount of time and the County knew that expediting improvements was the top priority.

**Q: Why was a traffic signal chosen as the preferred design when in the 2020 study it indicated a Level of Service D, while a roundabout indicated a Level of Service C.**

A: A traffic signal was selected as the preferred design over a roundabout due to higher initial costs for construction, and a need for more right-of-way than a traffic signal. Additionally, a roundabout cannot give priority to one movement which can create more delays to the major movements with high traffic volume. The level of service analyzed in the traffic study was a projection of the 2040 traffic volumes and real-world traffic volumes may be different, resulting in a better level of service.