Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

What is the proposed roadway configuration?

The project proposes converting the existing four-lane roadway into a three-lane configuration consisting of one through lane in each direction and a center two-way left-turn lane.

The proposed configuration is designed to fit within the existing roadway footprint while providing a safer and more organized traffic flow through downtown Tonopah. The dedicated center turn lane will allow vehicles to make left turns without stopping in an active through lane, while also creating opportunities for improved pedestrian facilities and other safety enhancements.

Why is NDOT proposing three lanes instead of keeping the existing four lanes?

The proposed configuration is intended to address existing safety and operational concerns along the downtown corridor.

Under the current configuration, vehicles making left turns may stop within an active travel lane, potentially causing other drivers to change lanes suddenly to avoid them. The proposed center two-way left-turn lane provides a dedicated space for these turning movements, helping reduce conflicts and improve traffic predictability.

The proposed configuration also provides opportunities to improve pedestrian crossings, sidewalk accessibility, and other safety features within the existing roadway footprint.

The objective is not simply to reduce the number of lanes, but to develop a roadway configuration that better balances traffic operations, safety, and accessibility for the community.

A report by Smart Growth America shows that "complete streets" can not only reduce crashes and injuries but can boost employment, economic development, and more. The Federal Highway Administration notes that such transformations can be especially important for rural main streets, where through travel and local access can create traffic safety challenges.

How will the proposed roadway configuration improve safety?

The proposed improvements incorporate nationally recognized roadway safety practices that have been successfully implemented in small communities across the country. These improvements are designed to create a safer, more efficient and predictable roadway environment for motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists and all other roadway users.*

Key safety enhancements for downtown Tonopah include:

- **Dedicated center turn lane:** Provides a designated space for left-turning vehicles, reducing conflicts with through traffic and the need for sudden lane changes.
- **Improved pedestrian crossings:** The project includes enhanced pedestrian crossings at strategic locations throughout the downtown corridor, including the proposed installation of Rectangular Rapid-Flashing Beacons (RRFBs) at select locations to improve pedestrian visibility and increase driver awareness. To support these improvements, NDOT conducted a pedestrian LiDAR study to evaluate pedestrian activity and crossing patterns along the corridor. The study helped identify appropriate pedestrian crossing locations and assess which locations meet the applicable criteria for RRFB installation.
- **Enhanced pedestrian lighting:** Improves visibility at designated crossings, particularly during nighttime and low-light conditions.
- **Wider, ADA-compliant sidewalks:** Improves pedestrian accessibility, mobility, and connectivity throughout downtown.

Together, these improvements are intended to reduce potential traffic conflict points, improve visibility, and create a more accessible and safer downtown corridor.

*National and supporting safety data can be found as an attachment.

Won't fewer travel lanes cause congestion?

The proposed configuration has been evaluated using recorded traffic volumes and anticipated roadway operations in downtown Tonopah. Based on these evaluations, the configuration is expected to accommodate existing traffic demands while improving safety and traffic organization.*

Although the number of through lanes will be reduced, the addition of a dedicated two-way center turn lane will allow left-turning vehicles to move out of the through lane while waiting for a safe gap in opposing traffic. This helps reduce interruptions to through traffic and minimizes the need for drivers to make sudden lane changes around turning vehicles.

The proposed configuration is also intended to provide a more predictable driving environment for passenger vehicles and commercial trucks traveling through downtown.

The project team will continue evaluating traffic operations, including truck movements and turning requirements, as the design progresses.

*Data used in evaluating the proposed configuration in regards to traffic congestion can be found as an attachment.

Is the speed limit changing?

No. The existing 25 MPH posted speed limit through downtown Tonopah will remain unchanged. The proposed improvements are not intended to reduce the posted speed limit but rather to create a safer, more organized, and more predictable roadway environment for all users.

Will there still be on-street parking?

Yes. The proposed design preserves most of the existing on-street parking throughout downtown Tonopah.

A limited number of parking spaces may need to be removed or modified to accommodate necessary safety improvements, pedestrian crossings, intersection operations, and other roadway features.

We recognize that convenient parking and access are important to downtown businesses, residents, and visitors. The project team has been carefully evaluating the proposed parking layout and continues to explore opportunities to preserve as many parking spaces as practical while enhancing roadway use for all.

Parking layouts are not finalized and will be further refined as the design progresses.

How will the proposed roadway configuration accommodate large trucks and emergency vehicles?

U.S. 6 / U.S. 95 is an important regional transportation corridor serving passenger vehicles, commercial trucks, and emergency responders.

The proposed roadway configuration is being developed with these users in mind, including appropriate travel lane widths, turning movements, and roadway clearances. The project team will continue coordinating with transportation and emergency service stakeholders to evaluate the operational needs of larger vehicles and emergency responders.

How will the project improve drainage and reduce flooding?

The project includes significant improvements to the existing storm drainage system to better manage stormwater runoff and reduce the potential for roadway flooding.

The proposed drainage improvements are being designed to accommodate a 25-year storm event, consistent with applicable design criteria. Improvements will include upgrading existing drainage facilities and installing new stormwater infrastructure where needed.

These improvements are intended to reduce water accumulation on the roadway, improve drainage efficiency, and help protect the roadway and surrounding infrastructure from stormwater-related damage.

While no drainage system can eliminate all flooding risks, the proposed upgrades will provide a more reliable and resilient drainage system for downtown Tonopah.

Will the project replace the existing water and sewer lines?

Yes. The project includes coordinated improvements to the Town of Tonopah's existing water and sewer infrastructure within the project limits.

These improvements are intended to address aging underground facilities, improve long-term service reliability, and reduce the likelihood of future roadway excavation for utility replacement.

By coordinating utility improvements with roadway reconstruction, the project can reduce duplicated construction activities, future pavement disturbances, and associated disruptions to downtown businesses and residents.

Will lighting be added?

Yes. The project includes enhanced lighting at designated pedestrian crossings and decorative street lighting within the downtown area.

The decorative lighting is primarily intended to enhance the appearance and historic character of downtown Tonopah, rather than provide roadway illumination. However, it may also provide supplemental lighting along pedestrian areas, contributing to a more welcoming and comfortable downtown environment.

Recognizing Tonopah's reputation for its exceptionally dark night skies and outstanding stargazing opportunities, the decorative lighting will be designed with consideration for minimizing unnecessary light pollution and glare while preserving the community's unique nighttime environment.

Together, these improvements are intended to enhance pedestrian visibility, complement downtown aesthetics, and respect Tonopah's treasured dark skies.

Will landscaping and aesthetic improvements be included?

Yes. In addition to roadway and infrastructure improvements, the project includes streetscape enhancements intended to complement the character of downtown Tonopah.

Proposed features include gateway signage, decorative stamped concrete, and decorative rock mulch in appropriate locations.

These improvements are intended to complement the community's historic character, create a more welcoming downtown environment, and provide attractive, low-maintenance features suited to Tonopah's desert climate. Specific locations and design details will be refined as the project advances.

How will this project benefit the Tonopah community?

The project is a significant investment in the safety, accessibility, infrastructure, and long-term operations of downtown Tonopah.

The proposed improvements are intended to provide several important community benefits:

- **Safer travel:** A more organized roadway configuration with a dedicated center turn lane will help reduce sudden lane changes and conflicts between turning and through vehicles.
- **Improved pedestrian accessibility:** Wider ADA-compliant sidewalks, enhanced crossings, and improved lighting will make downtown more accessible and safer for pedestrians.
- **More predictable traffic operations:** The roadway configuration is designed to better manage passenger vehicles, commercial trucks, and turning movements through the downtown corridor.
- **Improved drainage:** Upgraded stormwater infrastructure will help reduce roadway flooding and improve long-term pavement performance.
- **More reliable utilities:** Coordinated water and sewer improvements will help address aging infrastructure and reduce the potential for future service disruptions.
- **Long-term cost efficiency:** Coordinating roadway reconstruction with underground utility replacement will help minimize the need to repeatedly excavate and repave the roadway, reducing future disruptions and avoiding unnecessary duplication of construction costs.
- **Enhanced downtown environment:** Streetscape improvements will help preserve and complement Tonopah's historic character while creating a welcoming environment for residents, businesses, and visitors.

Overall, the project is intended to address existing transportation and infrastructure needs while supporting the community's long-term safety, mobility, and economic vitality.

Is funding dedicated to this project?

Yes. Funding has been secured and is currently available to advance the project.

The project is supported through a combination of federal and state transportation funding sources. NDOT is also actively pursuing additional grant opportunities to supplement available funding and support the project's delivery.

As the design progresses, project costs and funding needs will continue to be evaluated to ensure the improvements can be delivered responsibly and within available resources.

When will construction start and how long will it take?

Construction is anticipated to begin in late 2029, following completion of final design, necessary approvals, and project advertisement and award.

The specific construction schedule, duration, and sequence of work have not yet been finalized. These details will be developed as the design advances, taking into consideration roadway reconstruction, underground utility work, traffic management, and access to downtown businesses and properties.

NDOT recognizes the importance of maintaining access and minimizing disruptions to the community during construction. Construction staging, traffic control measures, and anticipated impacts will be further evaluated and communicated to the public before construction begins.

The anticipated schedule is subject to change based on final design, funding, approvals, and other project delivery considerations.

How will access to downtown businesses be maintained during construction?

Maintaining access to downtown businesses, residences, and public facilities will be an important consideration in developing the construction staging and traffic management plans.

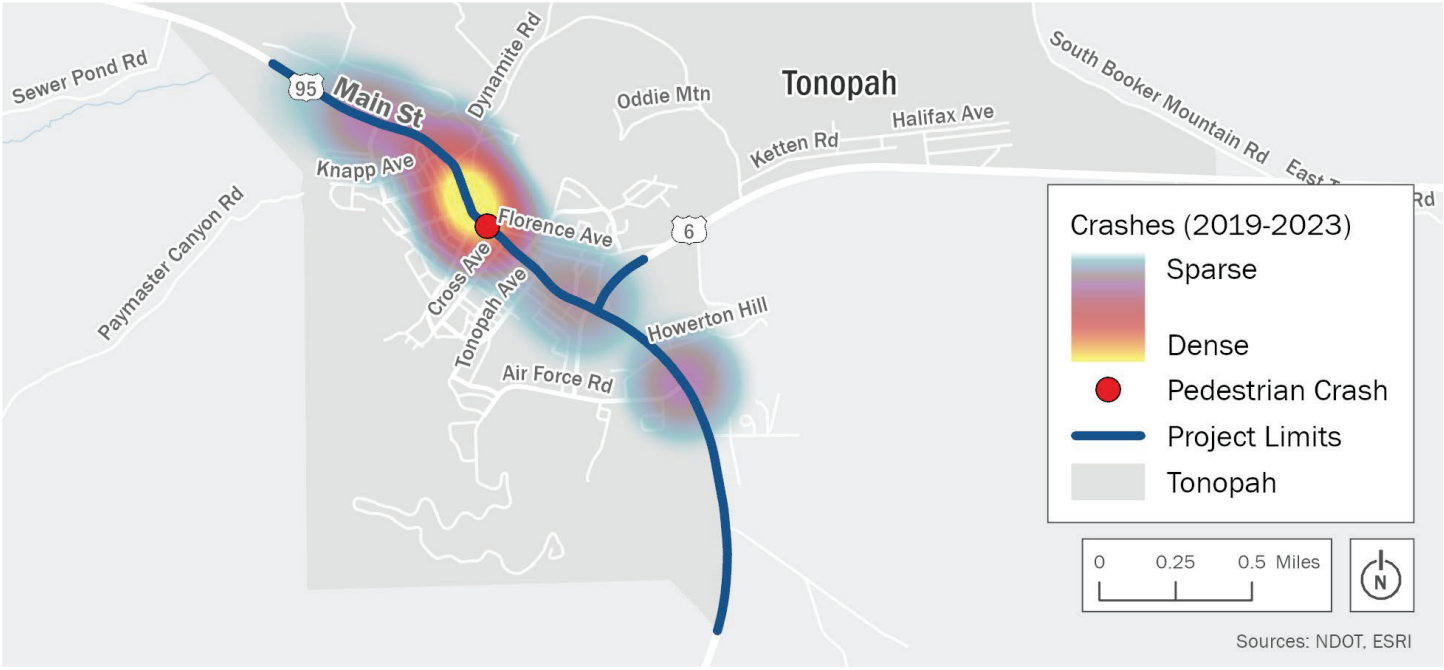
The project team will evaluate phased construction approaches, temporary access arrangements, pedestrian routes, and traffic control measures to minimize disruptions to the extent practical.

Specific access and traffic management plans will be shared with the community before construction begins.

SAFETY INFORMATION

Crash Data

A review of reported crash data along the U.S. 6 / U.S. 95 corridor identified **33 crashes between 2019 and 2023**, including 4 injury crashes and 29 property-damage-only crashes.



The crash records include angle, rear-end, sideswipe, and non-collision crashes. These crash types highlight the importance of improving traffic organization, turning movements, roadway visibility, and overall safety throughout the corridor.

National Research on Proposed Roadway Configuration

National safety research has shown that converting a traditional four-lane undivided roadway into a three-lane configuration, consisting of one through lane in each direction and a center two-way left-turn lane, can **reduce overall crashes by approximately 19% to 47%**, depending on the characteristics of the corridor.*

Proposed Countermeasure	Benefit	Crash Reduction
Roadway Reconfiguration	Reduce total crashes, maintain more consistent speeds, more community-focused street environment	19-47%
Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons	Reduce pedestrian crashes	47%
	Increase motorist yielding	98%
High-Visibility Crosswalks	Reduce pedestrian injury	40%
Bicycle Lanes	Reduce total crashes	49%
Widened Sidewalks	Reduce pedestrian crashes	65-89%
Intersection Lighting	Reduce pedestrian crashes	42%
Two-way Center Left Turn Lane	Reduce injury crashes	28-48%

*https://highways.dot.gov/safety/proven-safety-countermeasures

TRAFFIC INFORMATION

Why the Proposed Configuration is a Good Fit

The proposed roadway configuration has been evaluated using historical traffic volumes, peak-hour traffic patterns, and nationally recognized roadway safety and traffic engineering guidance.



Based on the available traffic data, downtown Tonopah's traffic volumes fall within a range generally considered favorable for converting a four-lane undivided roadway into a three-lane configuration with one through lane in each direction and a center two-way left-turn lane.

Historical Traffic Volumes

Traffic records from 2014 through 2024 show that the Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT)* along U.S. 95 through downtown Tonopah has generally ranged between:

6,200 - 7,800
vehicles per day

In 2024:
6,650
vehicles per day

2025 Traffic Counts:

U.S. 6 south of Bryan Avenue
6,850
vehicles per day

U.S. 95 south of U.S. 6 intersection
5,400
vehicles per day

Peak-Hour Traffic Conditions

Hourly traffic data collected on May 19, 2022, identified the following typical weekday peak-hour volumes:

Morning
~ 278 SB | ~272 NB
vehicles per hour

Afternoon
~ 354 SB | ~300 NB
vehicles per hour

These volumes are below the approximately 750 vehicles per hour direction referenced in national research for evaluating roadway configurations.

Commercial Truck Traffic and Potential Congestion

U.S. 6 / U.S. 95 serves as an important regional transportation corridor, and commercial truck traffic is a significant consideration for the Tonopah community.

Approximately 8.5% of Tonopah's traffic consists of trucks.

The project team recognizes concerns that reducing the number of through lanes could result in vehicles traveling behind slower-moving trucks, potentially causing congestion.

Key Considerations:

- The proposed two-way center turn lane will give drivers a dedicated space to make left turns.
- The center turn lane is not intended to function as a passing lane.
- The relatively low overall traffic volumes and existing 25 MPH speed limit are important factors.

We will continue evaluating traffic data as the design progresses.

*https://gis.dot.nv.gov/trina/