

FOR THE EXCLUSIVE USE OF DENVERNEWS@BIZJOURNALS.COM

From the Denver Business Journal:

<https://www.bizjournals.com/denver/news/2026/08/27/western-center-infrastructure-grants-lost.html>

SUBSCRIBER CONTENT:

Transportation

Denver left with tab for National Western Center projects after \$25M in federal grants rescinded



The new National Western Center will include more than 2.2 million square feet of indoor and outdoor space for year-round events.

PROVIDED BY CITY OF DENVER



By [Lincoln Roch](#) – Intern, Denver Business Journal
Aug 27, 2026

Listen to this article 4 min

Story Highlights

- Denver lost \$25 million in federal grants rescinded by Congress in July 2025.
- The city funded most infrastructure projects locally after federal money disappeared.
- Railroad crossing and environmental remediation projects still lack identified funding sources.

Denver has been left with the tab for several infrastructure projects around the National Western Center after \$25 million in federal grants were rescinded in 2025.

In March 2024, Denver was [awarded \\$35.4 million](#) from the [U.S. Department of Transportation](#)'s Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods grant program. The money was earmarked for projects to improve connections at the National Western Center campus and in the Elyria-Swansea and Globeville neighborhoods.

The 2022 Inflation Reduction Act allocated \$3.2 billion to USDOT for the grant program meant to fund projects reconnecting communities adversely affected by highway construction during the mid-20th century. Elyria-Swansea and Globeville were dissected for the construction of Interstate 70 during that time period.

"When Colorado built the I-70 corridor, Globeville and Elyria-Swansea – diverse, working-class neighborhoods – were cut off from one another and from central Denver," Sen. John Hickenlooper said in a news release when the grants were awarded. "This investment from our Inflation Reduction Act will right this wrong and reconnect them both."

The grants would have covered roughly half the \$69 million price tag for four projects in the Elyria-Swansea and Globeville area.

The projects included a \$29 million bridge crossing South Platte River from the Western Center to 48th Avenue and a greenway to address storm runoff, a \$23 million pedestrian bridge connecting the RTD station at Brighton Boulevard and 48th Avenue with the campus, \$500,000 for improved railroad crossings on National Western Drive and \$12 million for environmental remediation work at a former bus storage facility next to the Johnson Recreation Center.

The grant funding was supposed to cover \$23 million for the two bridges and greenway, \$450,000 for the railroad crossings and \$12 million for the environmental remediation, according to Denver Department of Finance spokesperson Laura Swartz. The only project to secure its funding was the RTD station pedestrian bridge, which received \$10 million from USDOT in January 2025. In July 2025, Congress passed a budget reconciliation law that rescinded the grants for all projects that had not already received the funds.

The majority of the projects have since been funded locally through other sources, according to Swartz. The stormwater project was funded by the Wastewater Management Enterprise Fund and the South Platte bridge, named the Bettie Cram Bridge, was funded through the city's Capital Improvement Program. The rest of the RTD station's pedestrian bridge was funded by money authorized by voters in 2015 for use at the National Western Center, Swartz said.

The Bettie Cram Bridge project came in under budget, and \$1.3 million in leftover funds from the CIP were used to match a state grant to [build a pedestrian bridge](#) connecting the future Denver Summit FC stadium with RTD's Interstate 25 station, according to previous Denver Business Journal reporting.

"Because the Betty Cram Bridge came in so far under anticipated expenditures for the construction, we were able to see that savings and allocate some of those savings for the match," Laura Wachter, the city's director of capital management and financing, told council members earlier in August.

Funding for the railroad crossings and environmental remediation has not been identified, although they remain important projects for the coming years, Swartz said.

In 2025, Denver [authorized up to \\$800 million](#) for an expansion of the National Western Center that includes a 160-room hotel, a 4,500-seat and 570-stall equestrian events center, a parking garage, some workforce housing and a 4,000-square-foot community building, according to previous DBJ reporting. Construction on the equestrian center development is expected to be completed in 2028, city documents say.

[Sign up here](#) for the Denver Business Journal's free morning and afternoon daily email newsletters to receive the latest business news impacting the Denver-metro area. [Download](#) the free Business Journal app for breaking news alerts on your phone.