

3.8 LAND USE

This section discusses existing and future planned land uses in the I-25 corridor and the local planning documents that are relevant to the study area. Potential land use impacts from the Build Alternatives were analyzed for compatibility with existing and future planned land use and for consistency with local plans and policies.

3.8.1 Existing Land Use

Land use adjacent to I-25 was identified through the Pueblo County Assessor's parcel database, aerial photography, and field observations.

Land use along the I-25 corridor is stable and reflects the fact that the project is located in the earliest-established sections of the City, including the original areas incorporated in 1870 and the Bessemer Company Town incorporated in 1886. Most of the urban area in the I-25 corridor was developed before 1948 and predates the highway, although some of the neighborhoods at the northern and southern project limits were developed in the 1950s and 1960s.

The I-25 corridor contains a mix of uses typical of an established city the age of Pueblo, including residential neighborhoods, commercial businesses, financial and

governmental centers, industrial sites, developed and undeveloped parks and open spaces, and undeveloped vacant lands. As shown in **Exhibit 3.8-1**, the majority of land use in the project area is residential. Further, almost 50 percent of the project area is made up of residential and industrial uses.

Of the land that is publicly-owned, the City and County own 80 percent, mostly for parks and open spaces. Other public land owners are the State of Colorado, the local school district, and religious and charitable organizations.

Existing land uses complement historical development patterns and physical land use constraints. Land adjacent to the rail tracks has been used as industrial sites and transfer points from rail to truck. The residential Bessemer Neighborhood adjacent to the historic Colorado Fuel & Iron (CF&I) plant, originally developed for employees of the plant, remains a cohesive neighborhood. The downtown area reflects activities associated with being the financial and governmental center of the region. The floodplains of the Arkansas River and Fountain Creek are used primarily for recreation, open space, and wildlife habitat and are restricted from development because of flooding concerns and dedicated recreation uses.

EXHIBIT 3.8-1
Existing Land Use in the Corridor Area¹

Land Use Category	Acres	Percent
Agriculture	25	0.9
Residential	822	28.1
Commercial	349	11.9
City, State, Public	248	8.5
Industrial	615	21.0
Parks and Open Space	390	13.3
Railroad	19	0.6
Undeveloped Vacant	460	15.7
TOTAL	2,928	

Source: CH2M HILL, 2010f; Pueblo County Assessors Office, 2004.

¹ Boundaries of corridor area used to determine the land use acreage are shown in **Exhibits 3.8-2 through 3.8-4**.

When I-25 was originally constructed in the 1950s, it was not compatible with adjacent land uses in the corridor. The highway divided some neighborhoods and closed local roads that once connected these neighborhoods to community services such as the local grocery store or church; however, over the last 50 years, adjacent land uses have evolved to accommodate the division. **Exhibits 3.8-2 through 3.8-5** illustrate the existing land use patterns in the corridor.

3.8.1.1 Local Plans and Policies

This section provides information about the following local plans and policies that are relevant to the New Pueblo Freeway project:

- ❖ *Pueblo Regional Development Plan: Pueblo's Comprehensive Plan (Pueblo Comprehensive Plan)* (Pueblo Area Council of Governments [PACOG], 2002)
- ❖ *Pueblo Area 2035 Long-Range Transportation Plan (Pueblo Regional Transportation Plan)* (PACOG, 2008)
- ❖ *Pueblo Roadway Corridor Right-of-Way Preservation Plan* (PACOG, 2000)
- ❖ *Central Pueblo Framework Plan* (PACOG, 2005)

Pueblo Comprehensive Plan

The *Pueblo Comprehensive Plan* was adopted by the Pueblo County Planning Commission, the Board of Pueblo County Commissioners, the Pueblo City Council, and PACOG in 2002 and amended in 2007, 2008, and 2011. The *Pueblo Comprehensive Plan* has a planning horizon of 2030 and was developed by PACOG to assist the region in accommodating the estimated future population of 200,000 people. The overall vision of the *Pueblo Comprehensive Plan* includes the following goals that are relevant to this project (PACOG, 2002):

- ❖ Maintain a strong and diverse job market and viable downtown.
- ❖ Maintain the character of Pueblo and preserve its natural setting and natural history while allowing for economic growth.
- ❖ Maintain the City's natural beauty, while still allowing reasonable and rational growth.

- ❖ Retain the intimate rural setting through thoughtful planning.
- ❖ Continue to preserve open space and agricultural land.
- ❖ Develop a well-planned and attractive community, particularly in the older areas.
- ❖ Provide recreational facilities that meet the full lifecycle of all citizens.
- ❖ Provide pedestrian trails and bikeways or greenways to connect neighborhoods.
- ❖ Plan thoughtfully and maintain infrastructure and public services.
- ❖ Build an efficient multi-modal transportation system that serves all citizens.
- ❖ Create strong, interconnected neighborhoods with all services and activities.

As noted within the *Pueblo Comprehensive Plan*, PACOG conducted a number of public meetings while developing the plan (PACOG, 2002). Citizens raised many concerns related to transportation and land use, including the lack of cross-town access and street connectivity in the region, traffic congestion, lack of pedestrian-friendly transportation systems, and the impact of traffic and roads on neighborhoods.

Pueblo Regional Transportation Plan

The *Pueblo Regional Transportation Plan* was produced by PACOG in January 2008 and amended in April 2011 (PACOG, 2008). This document serves as the 2035 regional transportation plan for the Pueblo area. The *Pueblo Regional Transportation Plan* consists of two primary sections, the Preferred Plan and the Fiscally Constrained Plan. The Preferred Plan identifies long-range improvements needed for the transportation network in the Pueblo region, without regard to available funding. The Fiscally Constrained Plan must include only those projects that can be funded with available funds from state and federal sources. The Fiscally Constrained Plan was updated in February 2011 and identifies projects that have been allocated funding and will be implemented by 2035.

Chapter 5 – Phased Project Implementation provides additional information on the funding sources available for this project.

EXHIBIT 3.8-2
Existing Land Use Patterns in the North Area



EXHIBIT 3.8-3
Existing Land Use Patterns in the South Area

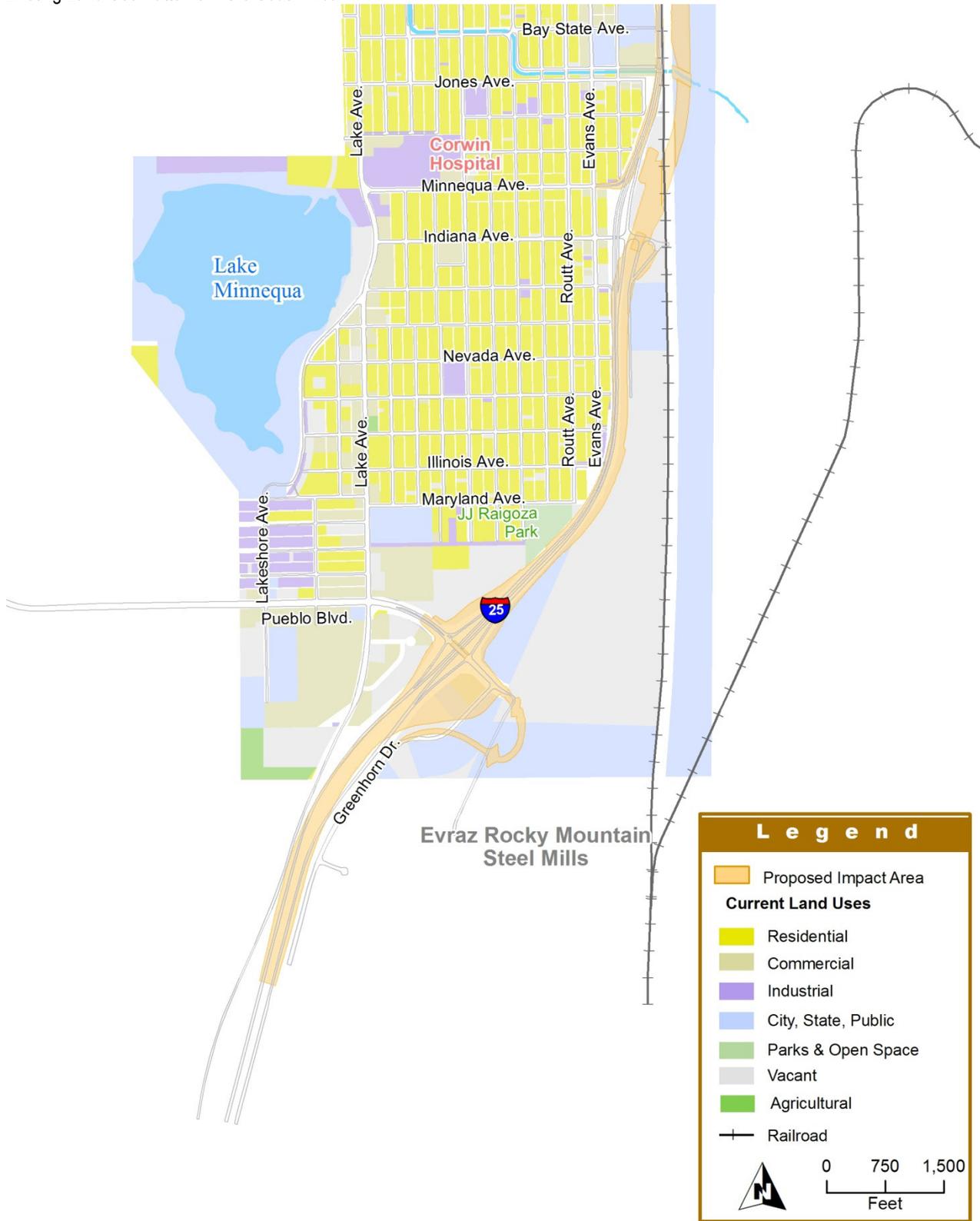


EXHIBIT 3.8-4
Existing Land Use Patterns in the Central Area – Existing I-25 Alternative

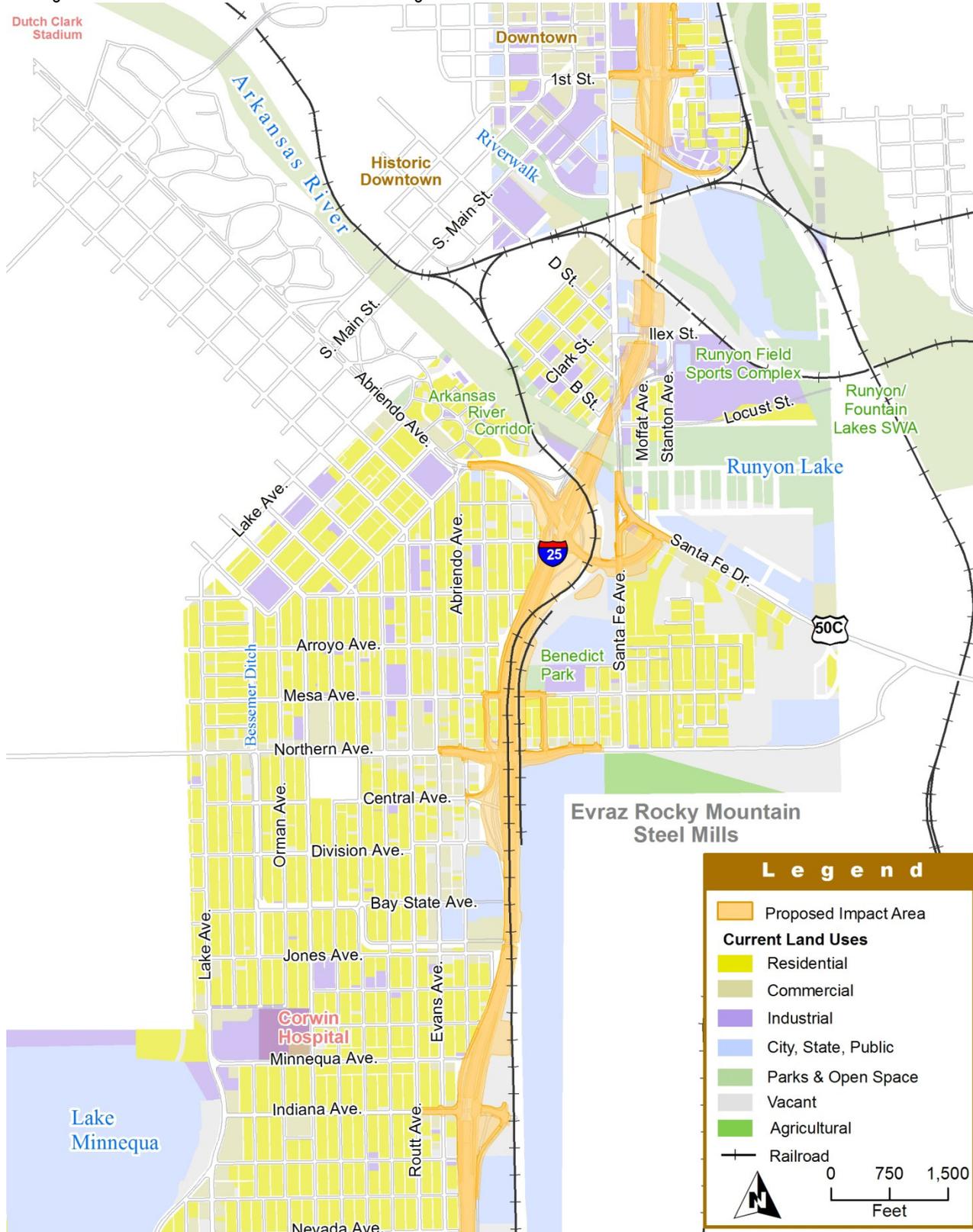
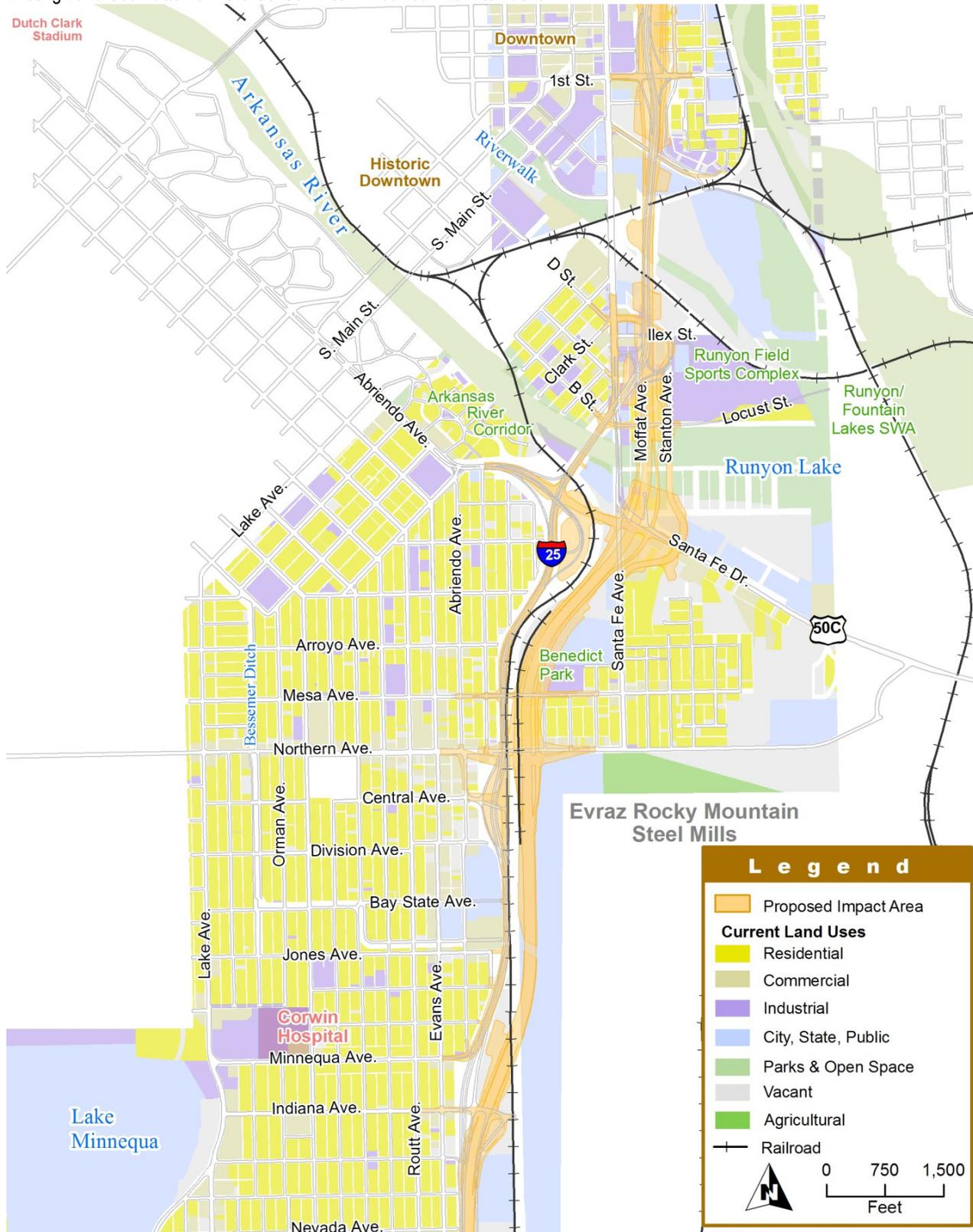


EXHIBIT 3.8-5
Existing Land Use Patterns in the Central Area – Modified I-25 Alternative



Pueblo Roadway Corridor Preservation Right-of-Way Plan

The PACOG Board adopted the *Pueblo Roadway Corridor Right-of-Way Preservation Plan* in December 2000 (PACOG, 2000). This plan provides for right-of-way (ROW) preservation along major transportation corridors. A north-south corridor to the east of I-25 is identified for corridor preservation to connect Dillon Drive to SH 227. There is no additional ROW identified for preservation along I-25.

Central Pueblo Framework Plan

The *Central Pueblo Framework Plan* (PACOG, 2005) serves as the primary document to guide development of the lower downtown area of Pueblo. The plan establishes three districts:

- ❖ **The Commercial District** – generally considered to be the area north of 1st Street and west of Santa Fe Avenue.
- ❖ **The Historic District** – located southwest of the Historic Arkansas Riverwalk of Pueblo.
- ❖ **The Civic District** – encompasses the Sangre de Cristo Arts Center and the areas south of 1st Street and west of Santa Fe Avenue. One of the major components of the plan is the importance of 1st Street as a gateway to central Pueblo. The street serves as a point of orientation to visitors and residents, and it is viewed as critical to creating an attractive entry into central Pueblo.

3.8.1.2 Future Land Use

Future land use along the I-25 corridor includes urban residential, arterial commercial, urban mixed use, institutional mixed use, special development area, and institutional mixed use. A special development area is defined by PACOG (2002) as an undeveloped area suitable for open space or Master Plan development scenarios. Several of these areas may be considered under-developed because they currently contain structures on the parcels.

As a developed corridor, future land use patterns along the I-25 corridor (shown in **Exhibits 3.8-6 through 3.8-9**) are expected to remain similar to the existing conditions, except for designated areas of change. Changes to existing land use will result from infill development and conversion of vacant land to commercial, residential, or industrial uses, as identified by the special development areas. The special development areas occur at three distinct locations across

the study area (shown in **Exhibits 3.8-6 through 3.8-9**). Development in these areas may have a minor “spill over” effect, serving to spur development to nearby locations.

The urban residential area calls for maintenance of an existing mixture of single-family detached homes, duplexes, and multi-family residences, yet allows for the development of neighborhood-scale commercial services within walking distance of residences. This conserves existing land uses while allowing the modernization of land use patterns where infill opportunities permit. The *Pueblo Comprehensive Plan* (PACOG, 2002) classifies the City (including the I-25 corridor) as a “Developed Urban Area” and describes its future character as mixed-use residential, commercial, and office development, with cultural and governmental facilities within the downtown area. The dominant land use will continue to be medium- to high-density residential consistent with the established patterns of development.

The *Pueblo Comprehensive Plan* estimates that the Pueblo regional population will grow by 60,000 persons (30 percent) by the year 2030 (PACOG, 2002). This corresponds to 73,000 jobs, for a gross land demand of 9,790 acres, and 30,100 residential units, for a gross land demand of 21,270 acres. The City will continue to serve as the major retail, office, and service center for the region (PACOG, 2002).

Land development outside of traditional City boundaries accommodated historic population increases. The recovery period after the flood of 1921 marked a new period of suburbanized development in Pueblo. Additionally, the advent of the automobile as a primary mode of transportation, combined with a use-based zoning code, ultimately reformed the land use patterns. Regionally, land development extending beyond traditional City boundaries broadened the distance between residences and employment centers. This suburbanization contributed to increased vehicle miles traveled. Future growth projections depend on development of peripheral lands in unincorporated Pueblo County to accommodate population and employment forecasts.

Further detail of land use in the project area may be found in the *Land Use and Economic Activity Technical Memorandum, New Pueblo Freeway* (CH2M HILL, 2010f).

EXHIBIT 3.8-6
Build Alternatives and Future Planned Land Use in the North Area

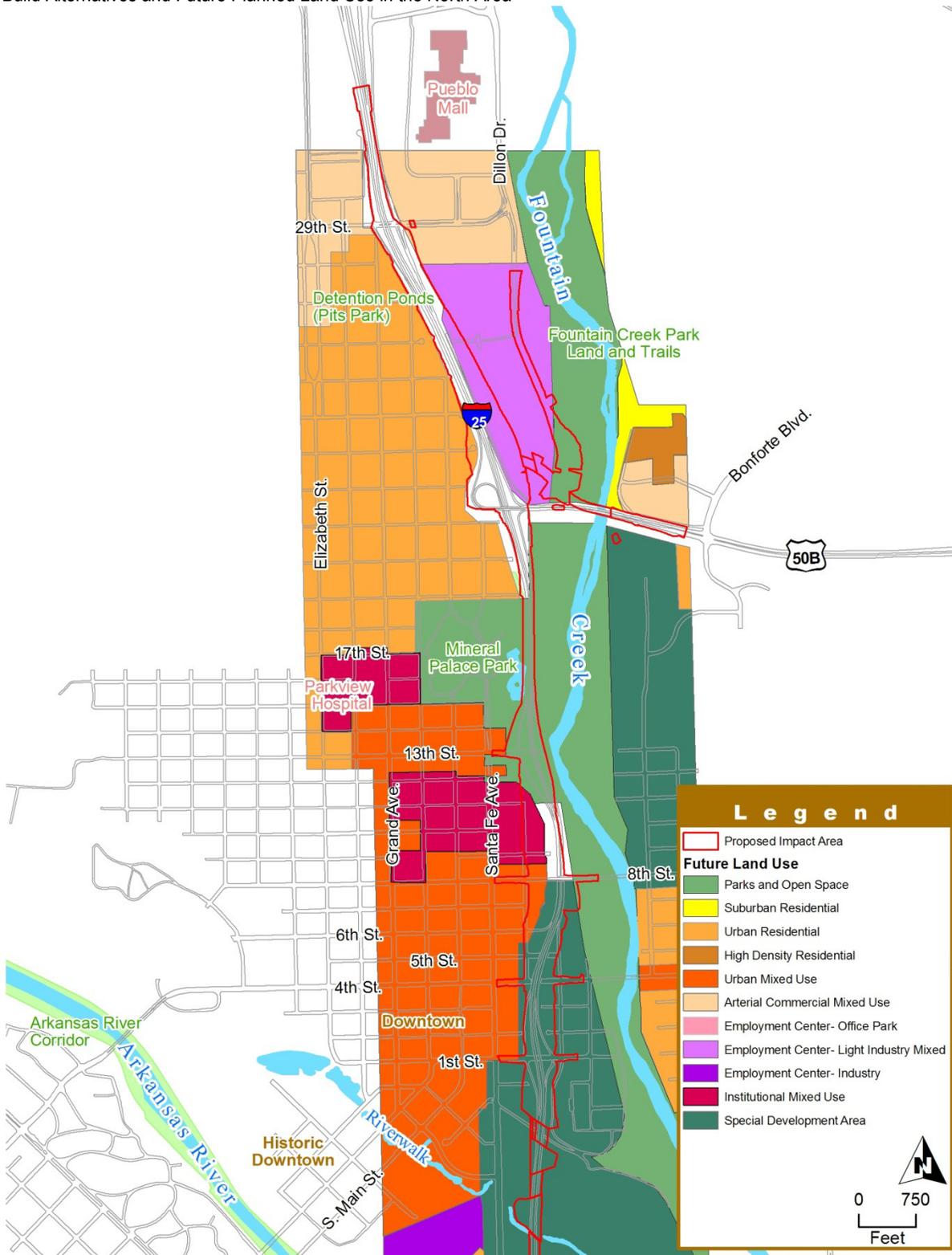


EXHIBIT 3.8-7
Build Alternatives and Future Planned Land Use in the South Area

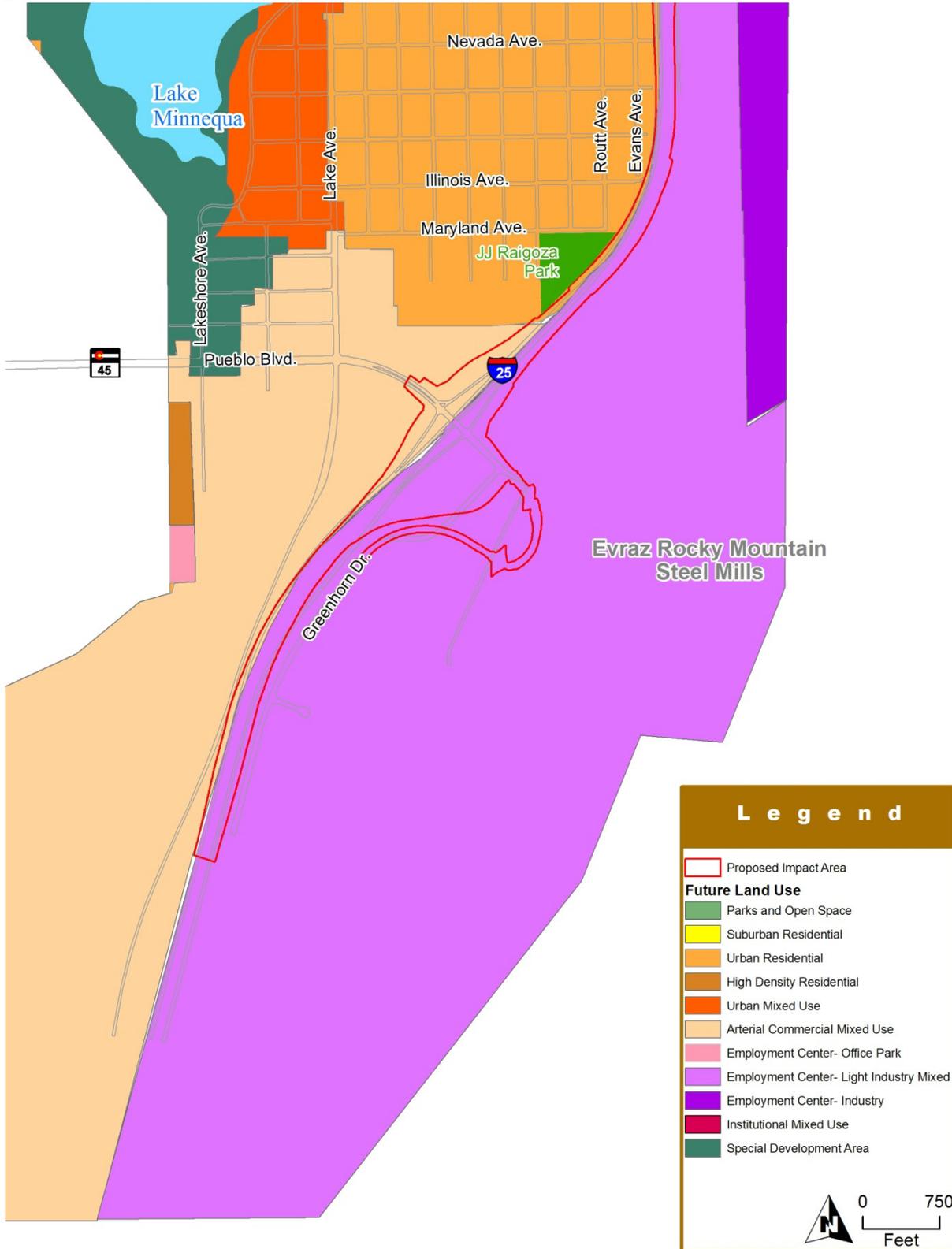


EXHIBIT 3.8-8
Existing I-25 Alternative and Future Planned Land Use in the Central Area

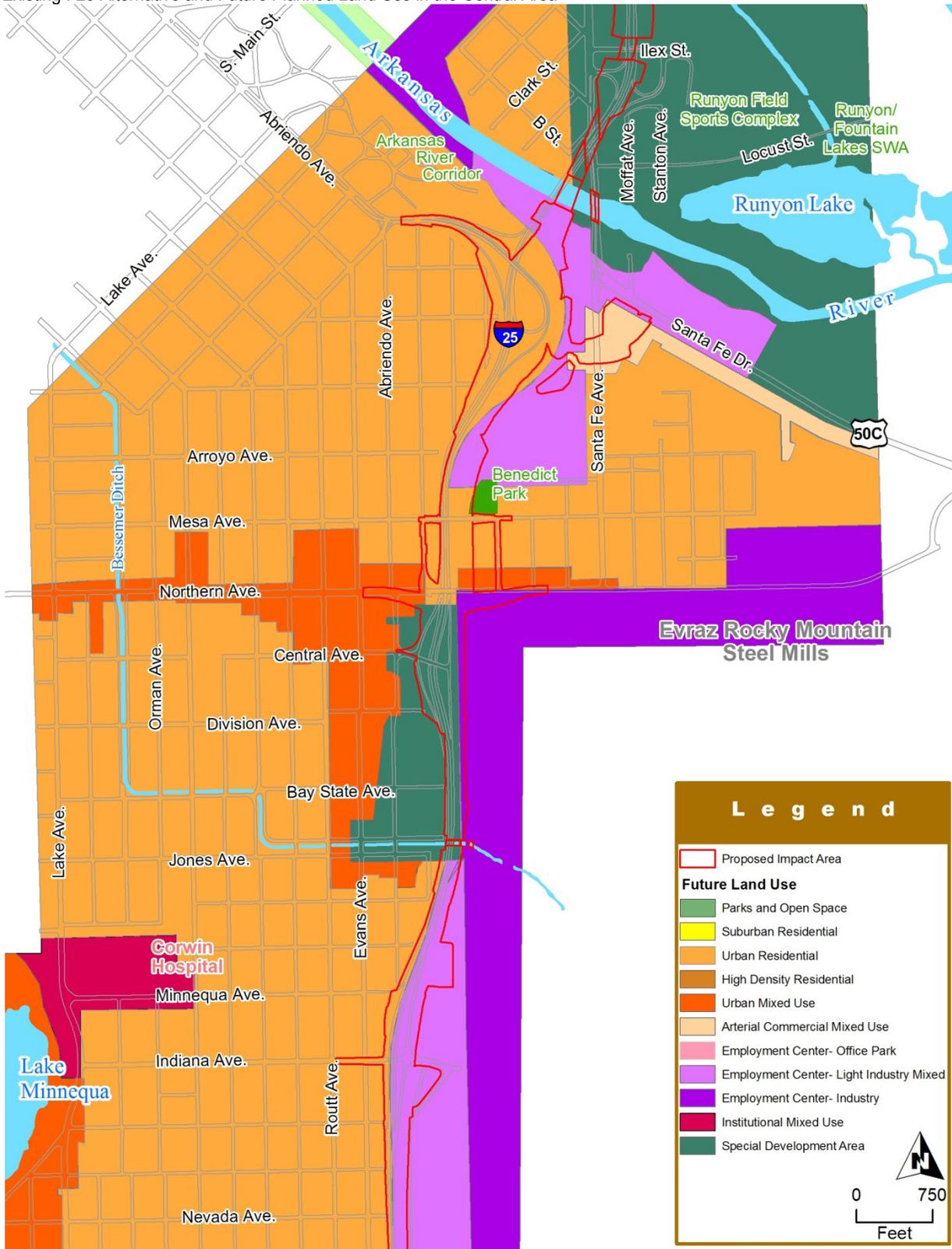
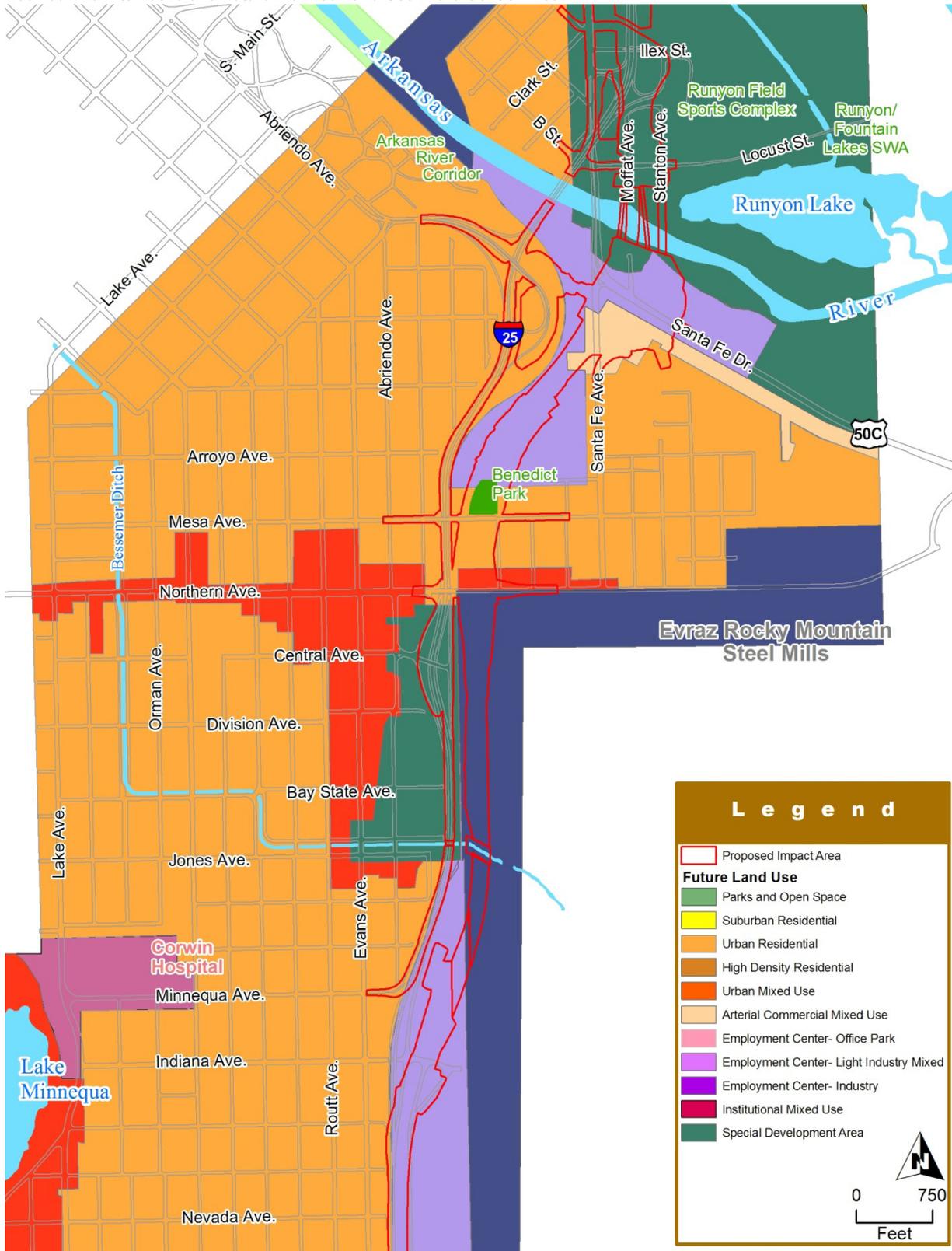


EXHIBIT 3.8-9
 Modified I-25 Alternative and Future Planned Land Use in the Central Area



3.8.2 Environmental Consequences

This portion of the land use analysis assesses the impacts of proposed improvements on land uses in the I-25 corridor, including compatibility with existing and planned future land uses. The alternatives are also analyzed for their consistency with local plans and policies.

3.8.2.1 No Action Alternative

Land Use

Existing land use patterns adjacent to I-25 would remain under the No Action Alternative. The No Action Alternative would not preclude the implementation of future planned land uses identified in the *Pueblo Comprehensive Plan* (PACOG, 2002), but due to the developed nature of the corridor, the No Action Alternative would likely have less influence on land use than community controls on growth and land use planning. Changes to existing land use would be privately-funded undertakings and would likely occur through redevelopment of underutilized sites and infill development.

Consistency with Local Plans and Policies

The No Action Alternative does not advance the goals of the adopted land use plans, but it does not preclude the implementation of planned future land uses or investments in infrastructure by others. This alternative would not fulfill the goals of reconnecting neighborhoods or providing a more efficient transportation system along I-25; therefore, I-25 would continue to act as a barrier between the east and west sides of Pueblo.

The No Action Alternative would be consistent with the *Pueblo Roadway Corridor Right-of-Way Preservation Plan* (PACOG, 2000) because it would not preclude any future improvements in areas identified for corridor preservation.

The *Central Pueblo Framework Plan* (PACOG, 2005) identifies 1st Street as an important gateway into Pueblo. The No Action Alternative would not provide improvements to 1st Street or its interchange with I-25, but it would not preclude landscaping or other design enhancements in this area.

3.8.2.2 Build Alternatives

Each of the Build Alternatives would require land acquisition for proposed improvements. Some land would be acquired and converted from its existing use to a transportation facility. Because the project is located in an already

developed urban corridor, it is not anticipated that the project would stimulate the redevelopment of existing land uses that surround the corridor, except in localized occurrences. The proposed improvements could make land available for public or private use in areas where existing CDOT or City transportation facilities would be vacated. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) executed between CDOT and the City of Pueblo (March 2010) documents the transfer of any such vacated CDOT land and identifies the land uses for such public parcels (see **Appendix F**). ROW transferred to the City from CDOT or City-vacated ROW could become privately-owned parcels.

Exhibits 3.8-10 and 3.8-11 provide acreages of acquisition by land use for each Build Alternative. Overall, the amount of land required for the Existing I-25 Alternative would total approximately 154 acres and is listed by land use category in **Exhibit 3.8-10**. Overall, the amount of land required for the Modified I-25 Alternative would total approximately 178 acres and is listed by land use category in **Exhibit 3.8-11**. The percent acquired shows the percentage of land that would be acquired by use within the corridor area; some rounding may occur.

Land acquisition is discussed further under each specific area (North, South, and Central). Additional information about land acquisitions in the corridor is detailed in **Section 3.4 Right-of-Way and Relocations**.

Growth Considerations

Both Build Alternatives would impact future growth in Pueblo as follows:

- ❖ The project would not provide additional access to available, undeveloped vacant land. It would improve access to established urban areas.
- ❖ Conversion of the built environment to more intensive uses in the I-25 corridor is not likely.
- ❖ Improvements to I-25 are not expected to prompt changes in economic, social, or demographic conditions within the City.
- ❖ Improvements to interchanges are expected to improve accessibility, especially in the downtown area. Changes to land use may occur on a localized scale, but given the developed nature of the corridor, overwhelming changes to the existing land use pattern are not anticipated.

EXHIBIT 3.8-10Acquired Parcels by Land Use under the Existing I-25 Alternative¹

Land Use Category	Acres	Percent of Total Acquired
Agriculture	0	0
Residential	8.50	5.5
Commercial	19.79	12.8
City, State, Public	3.52	2.3
Industrial	45.64	29.6
Parks and Open Space	11.8	7.6
Railroad	0.59	0.4
Undeveloped Vacant	64.47	41.8
TOTAL	154.31	

Source: CH2M HILL, 2010f.

¹Boundaries of corridor area used to determine land use acreage are shown in **Exhibits 3.8-2 through 3.8-5**.**EXHIBIT 3.8-11**Acquired Parcels by Land Use under the Modified I-25 Alternative¹

Land Use Category	Acres	Percent of Total Acquired
Agriculture	0	0
Residential	13.82	7.8
Commercial	18.78	10.6
City, State, Public	6.02	3.4
Industrial	56.37	31.7
Parks and Open Space	13.0	7.3
Railroad	0.59	0.3
Undeveloped Vacant	69.09	38.9
TOTAL	177.67	

Source: CH2M HILL, 2010f.

¹Boundaries of corridor area used to determine land use acreage are shown in **Exhibits 3.8-2 through 3.8-5**.

- ❖ I-25 is a mature, existing transportation facility, and improvements are not expected to increase the ability of Pueblo to capture new jobs or households into the regional economy.
- ❖ There is no evidence of pressure for development or redevelopment along I-25 through Pueblo that is challenging zoning ordinances or other existing land use controls. Improvements to I-25 are not expected to shape or have a strong influence on existing and future development trends.

North Area

Land Use. Land use changes due to proposed improvements would not change the overall land use patterns in the North Area of the corridor. Therefore, the Build Alternatives would be consistent with current land uses (**Exhibit 3.8-2**) and future planned land uses (**Exhibit 3.8-6**).

Improvements that would require additional parcels of land outside of current ROW or that would make new land available where existing transportation facilities would be vacated are discussed below:

- ❖ The existing interchange between I-25 and US 50B would be reconfigured from a partial cloverleaf to a split diamond interchange, and one-way frontage roads would be constructed between the interchange and 29th Street. The interchange and frontage roads require more land area adjacent to I-25; land use in this area is manufacturing and light assembly/warehousing. CDOT would vacate some existing ROW at the interchange. This vacated land has been identified as a potential site for a water quality pond.
- ❖ Dillon Drive would extend south to US 50B through a sparsely developed area and the Fountain Creek floodplain. The surrounding land use is manufacturing.
- ❖ Widening I-25 would require the conversion of some parkland to highway use at Mineral Palace Park and adjacent to Fountain Creek.
- ❖ The alignment of the highway would be straightened through downtown, and frontage roads would be added to connect the new split diamond interchange between 13th Street and 1st Street. Land use surrounding the straightened alignment and new frontage roads is primarily undeveloped vacant, with some office, commercial business, and single-family residential uses.

Consistency with Local Plans and Policies. The Build Alternatives would be consistent with the goals of the *Pueblo Comprehensive Plan* (PACOG, 2002).

The extension of Dillon Drive south to US 50B would occur in the corridor currently preserved for this purpose. Therefore, the Build Alternatives would be consistent with the *Pueblo Roadway Corridor Right-of-Way Preservation Plan* (PACOG, 2000).

The *Central Pueblo Framework Plan* (PACOG, 2005) identifies 1st Street as a primary entryway into Pueblo, and implementation of either Build Alternative would allow this gateway to be developed. Therefore, the Build Alternatives would be consistent with the plan.

South Area

Land Use. Land use changes due to proposed improvements would not change the overall land use patterns in the South Area of the corridor. Therefore, the Build Alternatives would be consistent with current land uses (**Exhibit 3.8-3**) and future planned land uses (**Exhibit 3.8-7**).

Improvements that would require additional land outside of current ROW or that would make new land available where existing transportation facilities would be abandoned are discussed below:

- ❖ The interchange at Pueblo Boulevard would be reconfigured to a partial cloverleaf interchange, and Greenhorn Drive would be realigned to the east of the interchange. The Greenhorn Drive realignment would extend through undeveloped vacant, light assembly/warehousing, and manufacturing land uses.

Consistency with Local Plans and Policies. The Build Alternatives would be consistent with the goals of the *Pueblo Comprehensive Plan* (PACOG, 2002). The *Pueblo Roadway Corridor Right-of-Way Preservation Plan* (PACOG, 2000) and the *Central Pueblo Framework Plan* (PACOG, 2005) are not relevant to this area of the corridor.

Central Area

Land use impacts in the Central Area of the corridor, from Ilex Street to Nevada Avenue (2 blocks south of Exit 96), vary by Build Alternative. The section below highlights improvements under each alternative that would impact land use in the Central Area. The section also discusses consistency of the alternatives with local plans and policies.

Existing I-25 Alternative

Land Use. The Existing I-25 Alternative would maintain the current I-25 alignment through the Central Area of the corridor. Land use changes due to proposed improvements would not change the overall land use patterns in the Central Area. Therefore, this alternative would be consistent with current land uses (**Exhibit 3.8-4**) and future planned land uses (**Exhibit 3.8-8**).

Improvements that would require additional land outside of current ROW or that would make new land available where existing transportation facilities would be abandoned are discussed below:

- ❖ The interchange at Abriendo Avenue would be reconfigured to a split diamond interchange between Northern Avenue and Abriendo Avenue with one-way frontage roads connecting the ramps. Abriendo Avenue would be connected to Santa Fe Drive to the east of I-25. Land use in this area is composed of urban residential and urban mixed-use.
- ❖ The interchange at Indiana Avenue would be reconfigured to provide a single point diamond interchange, with all ramps entering and exiting I-25 from Indiana Avenue. This improvement would convert some land east of the existing interchange to highway use. Land use in this area is urban residential to the west of I-25 and light industry to the east.

Consistency with Local Plans and Policies. The Existing I-25 Alternative would be consistent with goals of the *Pueblo Comprehensive Plan* (PACOG, 2002). The *Pueblo Roadway Corridor Right-of-Way Preservation Plan* (PACOG, 2000) and the *Central Pueblo Framework Plan* (PACOG, 2005) are not relevant to this area of the corridor.

Modified I-25 Alternative

Land Use. The Modified I-25 Alternative would move the I-25 alignment to the east between Ilex Street and Nevada Avenue. In most locations, land use changes due to proposed improvements would not change overall land use patterns in the Central Area. Therefore, this alternative would be consistent with current land uses (**Exhibit 3.8-5**) and future planned land uses (**Exhibit 3.8-9**). However, residential land uses adjacent to the Runyon Field Sports Complex would be removed due to the shift in the I-25 alignment. While this change in land use would not be consistent with current land uses, it would be consistent with future land use plans. The area surrounding the Runyon Field Sports Complex is identified as a special development area in the *Pueblo Comprehensive Plan* (PACOG, 2002) future land use plan (**Exhibit 3.8-9**), and the removal of residential land use from this area would be considered consistent with the future land use plan.

Improvements that would require additional land outside of current ROW or that would make new land available where

existing transportation facilities would be abandoned are discussed below:

- ❖ I-25 would shift east of its current alignment from Ilex Street to Nevada Avenue. As part of this shift, the interchange at Abriendo Avenue would be reconfigured to a split diamond interchange between Northern Avenue and Abriendo Avenue with one-way frontage roads connecting the ramps. The interchange at Indiana Avenue would be reconfigured to provide a single point diamond interchange. The new I-25 alignment would travel through single-family residential, open space, light assembly/warehousing, manufacturing, and undeveloped vacant land uses. Land would become available north and south of Central Avenue and between Minnequa Avenue and Aqua Avenue. The land adjacent to Central Avenue has been identified as a potential site for water quality ponds.
- ❖ Santa Fe Avenue would be extended south along the current I-25 alignment from Ilex Street to Minnequa Avenue, and Abriendo Avenue would be extended east to Santa Fe Drive. The current interchange between I-25 and Abriendo Avenue would become the location of an intersection between Abriendo Avenue and the new Santa Fe Avenue. Land would become available around this intersection, and the southeast corner of the intersection has been identified as a potential site for a water quality pond.
- ❖ Stanton Avenue would be rebuilt from Santa Fe Avenue on the north to the Runyon Field Sports Complex on the south. Stanton Avenue would then extend south over the Arkansas River and would connect to Santa Fe Avenue. The new road would extend through light assembly/warehousing, manufacturing, commercial business, and undeveloped vacant land uses.

Consistency with Local Plans and Policies. The Modified I-25 Alternative would be consistent with the *Pueblo Comprehensive Plan* (PACOG, 2002). The *Pueblo Roadway Corridor Right-of-Way Preservation Plan* (PACOG, 2000) and the *Central Pueblo Framework Plan* (PACOG, 2005) are not relevant to this area of the corridor.

3.8.3 Mitigation

No mitigation is necessary.