

3.21 RELATIONSHIP OF LOCAL SHORT TERM USES VERSUS LONG-TERM PRODUCTIVITY

Short-term impacts and uses of the environment are generally associated with the construction phase of a project. These impacts need to be assessed relative to the long-term gains associated with the project to determine if impacts are generally acceptable or can be mitigated by the benefits of the project.

Implementation of either of the Build Alternatives (the Existing I-25 Alternative and Modified I-25 Alternative) would involve the use of environmental resources to reach the long-term productivity gains and benefits offered by that Build Alternative. These uses and benefits vary between the No Action Alternative and the Build Alternatives. Short-term impacts on existing noise levels, visual resources, water quality, parks, community resources, and neighborhoods should be evaluated for residents and business owners affected during construction. Traffic delays and detours could result in loss of revenue for businesses and cause disruption or delays for local residents.

3.21.1 No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative would result in fewer temporary impacts (or short-term uses of resources). However, due to the condition of the existing facilities, current deficiencies such as bridge obsolescence, roadway safety, and decreased mobility and accessibility, as well as future congestion, would remain on I-25.

3.21.2 Build Alternatives

The Build Alternatives would have similar environmental uses and long-term benefits; consequently, they are discussed together. Each Build Alternative would use environmental resources typical of large-scale road construction projects. The Build Alternatives would assist in the long-term safety and mobility and increased capacity of the I-25 corridor. The Build Alternatives also would improve safety and overall emergency response times. These long-term beneficial effects of the Build Alternatives outweigh the potentially great but mitigated short-term impacts on the environment that would result primarily from project construction. Construction can be “staged” to minimize some of the short-term uses.

Short-term uses associated with the Build Alternatives include:

- ❖ Loss of soil through erosion and fugitive dust.
- ❖ Temporary disruption of traffic in the proposed construction areas.
- ❖ Temporary degradation of air quality due to reduced traffic speed through construction zones and use of heavy equipment.
- ❖ Temporary impacts on businesses and residents as a result of detours or modifications of access and emergency vehicle response time.
- ❖ Temporary impacts on water resources as a result of increased run-off, chemical compounds, or disturbance of geological substrate during construction.
- ❖ Increased energy consumption during construction.
- ❖ Temporary visual impacts associated with construction staging during construction for corridor travelers.
- ❖ Potential for light and noise pollution affecting adjacent residential areas during construction.
- ❖ Temporary noise and/or vibration impacts due to construction.
- ❖ Temporary use of land for construction staging and storage of materials.
- ❖ Temporary impacts to local parks and recreation opportunities from trail closures and restricted access during construction.
- ❖ Relocation of businesses and residences from current locations.

Where possible, these short-term uses would be mitigated as discussed in each of the resource sections in this chapter.

Long-term uses of resources that would result from the Build Alternatives include permanent use of land use, air quality, and water quality, as described in detail in **Section 3.8 Land Use**, **Section 3.10 Air Quality**, and **Section 3.15 Water Quality**.

The following long-term benefits of the Build Alternatives are anticipated to outweigh the commitment of these resources:

- ❖ Improved safety and mobility on Pueblo’s primary north-south transportation corridor for local and regional motorists.

- ❖ Re-establishment of local east-west road connections, which would improve local access.
- ❖ Capture and treatment of all stormwater runoff that falls within CDOT right-of-way, improving the quality of water that re-enters receiving water bodies and benefitting downstream users, if mitigation occurs.
- ❖ Improved open water habitat for fish and wildlife species due to improved water quality, if mitigation occurs.
- ❖ Modernization of outdated and deteriorating highway facilities, including addition of capacity to accommodate future demands, resulting in less congestion for local and regional motorists.
- ❖ Increased park acreage with improved park facilities for local residents, if mitigation occurs.
- ❖ Reconnection of neighborhoods severed by the original construction of I-25.
- ❖ Reduced noise in many neighborhoods adjacent to the corridor, if mitigation occurs.
- ❖ Coordinated aesthetic design of highway structures regionally throughout Pueblo.
- ❖ Improved local emergency vehicle access.
- ❖ Improved access to businesses within the study area.

3.21.3 Mitigation

No mitigation is required.