

SOCIAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE
TECHNICAL REPORT
FOR THE
6TH AVENUE PARKWAY EXTENSION
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AFB.....	Air Force Base
CDOT	Colorado Department of Transportation
DOLA.....	Department of Local Affairs
E-470	E-470 Tollway
EA.....	Environmental Assessment
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
HHS.....	Department of Health and Human Services
HUD.....	Department of Housing and Urban Development
MFI	Median Family Income
NEPA.....	National Environmental Policy Act
SH 30	State Highway 30
USDOT	United States Department of Transportation

1. INTRODUCTION

This technical report has been prepared in support of the 6th Avenue Parkway Extension Environmental Assessment (EA) extending 6th Avenue from State Highway 30 (SH 30) to the E-470 Tollway (E-470). This technical report evaluates the effects of the Proposed Action and the No Action Alternative with respect to social resources and environmental justice.

1.1 Proposed Action

The Proposed Action would extend the 6th Avenue Parkway for approximately 2 miles along a new alignment, connecting existing 6th Avenue/SH 30 to the west with the existing 6th Avenue Parkway at E-470 to the east. This would close a gap in the existing major arterial street system, reducing out of direction travel and improving the efficiency and reliability of the transportation system. The Proposed Action would be a six-lane arterial roadway with a raised median and sidewalks.

Six initial alternatives were developed and screened through three screening levels to identify the Proposed Action. The alternatives screening is summarized in **Appendix A1 Alternatives Technical Report** of the EA. Details of the Proposed Action are presented in **Appendix A2 Conceptual Design Plans** of the EA.

The Proposed Action is shown on **Figure 1**. Major elements of the Proposed Action are identified by number from west to east on **Figure 1**, and include the following:

Element 1. Tie into existing 6th Avenue/SH 30: 6th Avenue/SH 30 is an existing two-lane arterial. At the western end of the Proposed Action, a signalized “thru-tee” type intersection would be constructed connecting the Proposed Action roadway to existing 6th Avenue/SH 30. This new signalized intersection would include bypass lanes for the eastbound SH 30 through movement or a thru-tee signalized intersection with bypass lanes for both the eastbound SH 30 through movement. The tie-in would be an urban curb and gutter section with three 12-foot travel lanes in each direction to connect to future 6-lane section to the west. A 10-foot sidewalk would be located on both the north and south sides of the roadway.

Element 2. Triple Creek Trail realignment and connections: A portion of the existing Triple Creek Trail would be realigned and would pass beneath the Proposed Action roadway which would be on a bridge at this location (see Element 3 in **Figure 1**). The Triple Creek Trail would be connected to 6th Avenue via a spur trail to the sidewalk constructed along the south side of the new roadway. The Triple Creek Trail is a 10-foot wide soft surface trail that serves equestrians, bicyclists and pedestrians. The realigned portion would match the existing width and surface. A 10-foot sidewalk on both sides of the bridge (Element 3) would provide connections to the trail. The southern terminus of the trail is currently at the Coal Creek Arena, and further extension to the south is planned by the City of Aurora.

Element 3. Roadway bridge over Sand Creek: Immediately east of the new intersection with existing 6th Avenue/SH 30 (Element 1 in **Figure 1**), the roadway would be elevated onto a six-lane bridge crossing over Sand Creek and its associated floodplain/floodway, and over the Triple Creek Trail. The bridge length and profile would be set to minimize impacts to Sand Creek, while still providing a minimum 10-foot vertical clearance over the Triple Creek Trail. The bridge would have a median and sidewalks. The bridge would be approximately 680 feet in length with 5 variable length spans supported on four piers. The bridge would be

designed to be compatible with the surrounding environment and to allow wildlife connectivity along Sand Creek and the Triple Creek Trail.

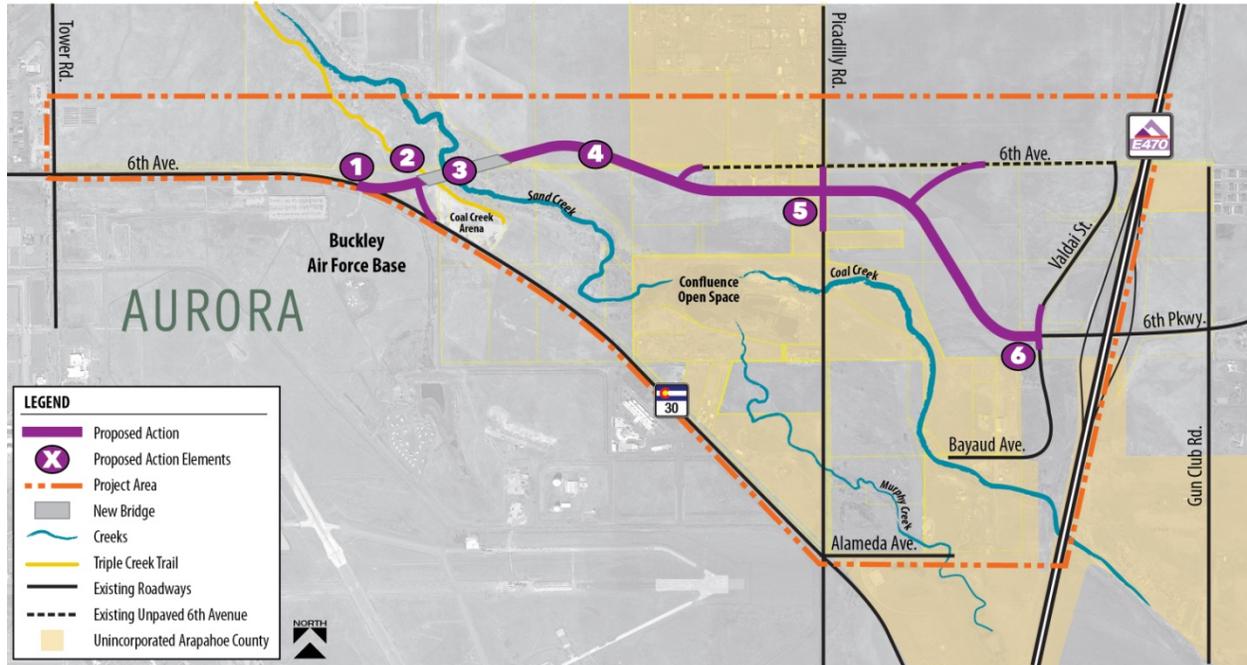
Element 4. 6th Avenue Parkway arterial roadway: The 6th Avenue Parkway extension would consist of a 144-foot wide, six-lane arterial roadway (three lanes in each direction) with a raised vegetated median. There would be curb and gutter and 10-foot wide sidewalks on the north and south sides of the roadway. The Proposed Action would provide two new access connections from the Proposed Action to two existing portions of 6th Avenue. One of these connections would provide access to the existing residences along unpaved 6th Avenue, west of Picadilly Road. The second connection would extend northeast from the Proposed Action to unpaved 6th Avenue to areas planned for development east of Picadilly Road.

Element 5. Intersection with Picadilly Road: The Proposed Action roadway would cross Picadilly Road, which is an existing north-south road. A signalized intersection would be constructed at this location. Picadilly Road is currently two lanes, but the City of Aurora anticipates that expansion to six lanes would occur in the future as a different project. Therefore, the intersection would be configured such that future expansion of Picadilly Road to six lanes can be accommodated and is not precluded.

Element 6. Tie into existing 6th Avenue Parkway at E-470: On its eastern end, the Proposed Action roadway would tie into the existing E-470 interchange, which currently truncates at this location, forming a connection with the existing 6th Parkway to the east of the interchange. The intersection tie-in at Valdai Street and 6th Avenue Parkway would be signalized. This connection would allow access from the west via the Proposed Action to the E-470 interchange and to the existing 6th Avenue Parkway extending to the east of E-470.

In addition to these transportation elements, the Proposed Action would include permanent roadway stormwater drainage with water quality features for roadway runoff and accommodate offsite stormwater flows. Details of drainage and water quality features are presented in **Appendix A6 Floodplains and Drainage Assessment Technical Report** of the EA.

Figure 1 Proposed Action



Note: Numbers in graphic correspond with text above.

1.2 No Action Alternative

If the Proposed Action is not selected for implementation, there would be no improvements made to 6th Avenue beyond the existing and committed transportation system. The No Action Alternative was carried forward as a baseline comparison for environmental analysis purposes.

2. SOCIAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ASSESSMENT

This technical report describes the social resources, including general population characteristics, housing, and community and public service facilities. The technical report also includes an environmental justice evaluation.

3. EXISTING CONDITIONS

3.1 *Demographics and Community Characteristics*

The project area, located within Arapahoe County, is situated on the eastern edge of the City of Aurora (**Figure 1**). As shown on **Figure 2**, the census tracts/census block groups used for the analysis are large and extend well beyond the project area; therefore, a community study area was established for analysis, as shown on **Figure 2**. This community study area provides a broader characterization of the communities that the Proposed Action has the potential to affect.

The U.S. Census Bureau FactFinder website (2014) provided the most current socioeconomic data available for year 2010 by census block group. The data was collected for the census tracts/census block groups located within and adjacent to the community study area. The community study area includes Census Tract 71.04 (Block Group 1 and Block Group 2) and Census Tract 71.05 (Block Group 1 and Block Group 2) (**Figure 2**). Some datasets used for this analysis were available at the census block group level, while other datasets were available at the larger census tract level.

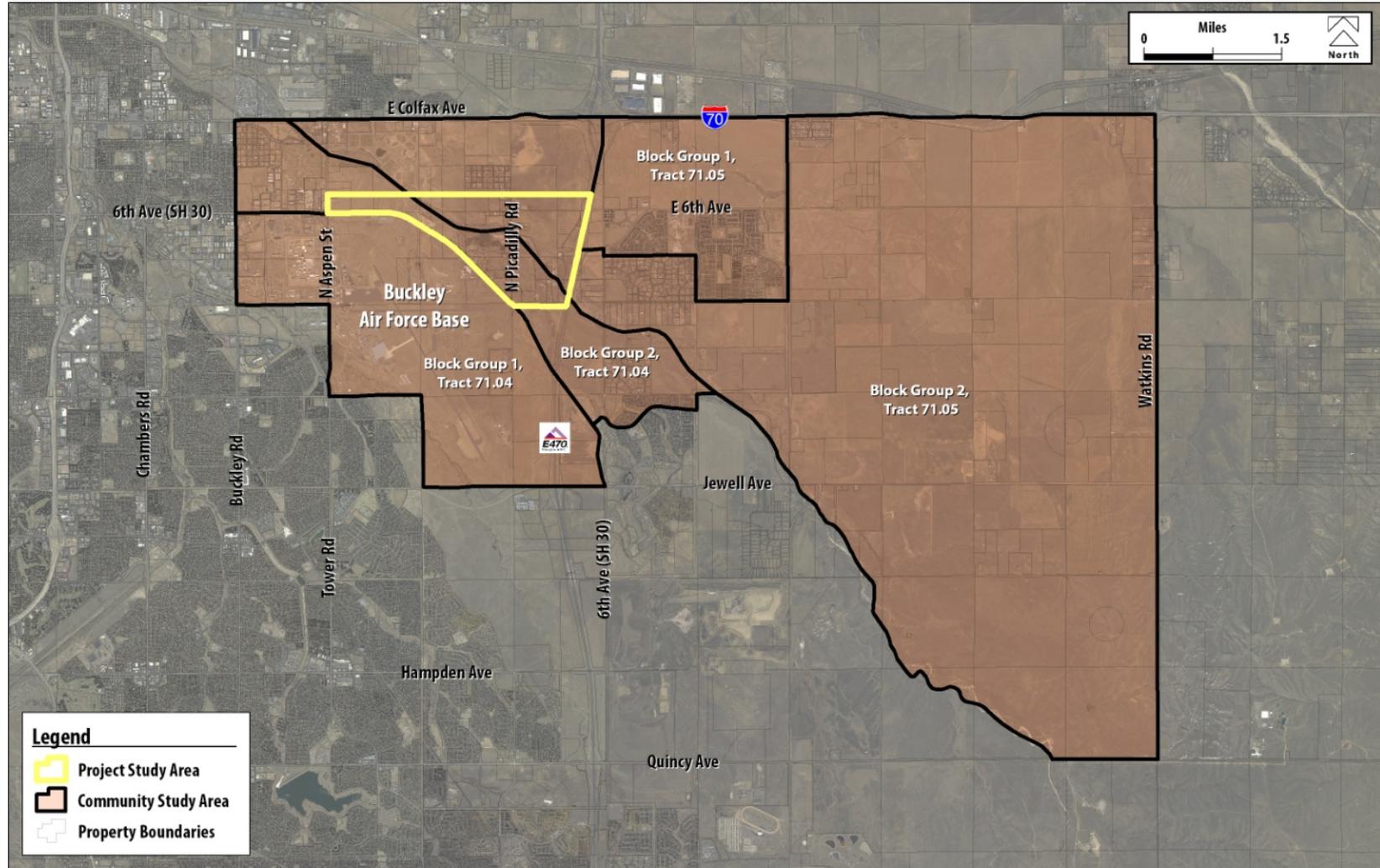
Given the sparse development in the eastern portion of the community study area within Census Tract 71.05 Block Group 2, the analysis focused on the middle and western portion of this Tract.

The community study area contains Buckley Air Force Base (AFB) and its on-base housing units, scattered rural residences located along Picadilly Road, established housing developments east of E-470, and residences north to Colfax Avenue. Socioeconomic characteristics, including population, households/housing, and employment, are generally described for Arapahoe County, the City of Aurora, and the four census block groups within the community study area.

3.1.1 Population and Housing

The population of Arapahoe County in 2010 was 571,914, according to revised U.S. Census Bureau data from 2013 (**Table 1**). The population of the City of Aurora in 2013 was 325,078. In the 2013 Census revised count from 2010, the population of the entire community study area was 5,917 (**Table 1**). According to the Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) (October 2014), Arapahoe County's population is expected to increase to 851,440 persons by 2040, an increase of 49 percent.

Figure 2 Community Study Area



114046-01 - Community Study Area

Table 1 Average Household Size and Housing Information within the Community Study Area

Area	Population*	Average Household Size**	Housing Units***			
			Total	Owner Occupied (Percent)	Renter Occupied (Percent)	Vacant (Percent)
Colorado	5,029,196	2.49	2,212,898	58.4	30.7	10.8
City of Aurora	325,078	2.65	131,040	55.7	37.3	7.0
Arapahoe County	571,914	2.53	226,052	60.2	33.8	6.0
Census Tract 71.04, Block Group 1	1,248	3.21	327	0.61	93.0	6.4
Census Tract 71.04, Block Group 2	1,566	2.93	555	81.8	14.6	3.6
Census Tract 71.05, Block Group 1	1,730	2.76	679	83.8	8.4	7.8
Census Tract 71.05, Block Group 2	1,373	2.76	558	74.2	14.9	10.9

* U.S. Census 2010 (Revised Count 8/2/2013)

** U.S. Census 2010 (P17: Average Household Size by Age)

*** U.S. Census 2010 (H3: Occupancy Status and QT-H1: General Housing Characteristics)

In 2010, Arapahoe County contained 226,052 households, with an average size of 2.53 persons per household. The average household size for the State of Colorado is 2.49 persons per household, and the average household size for the census tract block groups within the community study area ranges from 2.76 to 3.21 (**Table 1**).

According to the 2010 Census data, there are 2,119 housing units in the community study area. Vacant units account for 7.3 percent of the total number of housing units within the community study area.

Located within the community study area, Buckley AFB has on base housing for military troops. This housing is typically rented, resulting in a lower percentage of owner occupied units in Census Tract 71.04, Block Group 1.

3.1.2 Employment

Table 2 shows employment statistics (2009–2013) for Arapahoe County, City of Aurora, and census tracts within the community study area (**Figure 2**). Employment data from the U.S. Census was only available down to the census tract level; therefore, the information included in **Table 2** extends beyond the community study area to include all of Census Tracts 71.04 and 71.05.

Table 2 Employment Characteristics within the Community Study Area

Area	# of Persons Employed*	Armed Forces Members (percent of # of Persons Employed)
Colorado	2,509,777	0.8
City of Aurora	158,576	0.7
Arapahoe County	295,023	0.4
Census Tract 71.04	2,047	15.5
Census Tract 71.05	1,924	3.4

* Represents Employment in Civilian Labor Force
American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2009–2013 (DP03)

Unemployment within the census tracts ranged from 3.7 percent to 5.6 percent, which is lower than the unemployment percentage within the state (8.5 percent). Employment with the Armed Forces is higher than that of the state, which is expected because Buckley AFB is contained within the census tracts. It should be noted that unemployment numbers change regularly, and as of September 2015, unemployment in Colorado was low compared with that of the United States.

3.1.3 Means of Transportation for Commuters

Information on means of transportation from the U.S. Census was only available down to the census tract level. Therefore, information included in **Table 3** extends beyond the community study area to include all of Census Tracts 71.04 and 71.05.

Overall, most commuters within the census tracts drive personal vehicles (alone). The percentage of people using public transportation or walking to work ranges from 0.3 percent (Census Tract 71.05) to 5.7 percent (Census Tract 71.04). This is less than the percentage of people commuting by public transportation or walking within the City or Aurora, Arapahoe County, and Colorado.

Table 3 Means of Transportation for Commuters

Area	Commuting to Work by Public Transportation or Walking (Percent)	Car, Truck, or Van (Drove Alone)
Colorado	6.3	74.8
City of Aurora	7.6	76.0
Arapahoe County	6.3	78.1
Census Tract 71.04	5.7	78.7
Census Tract 71.05	0.3	80.9

American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2009–2013 (DP03)
Includes workers 16 years and over

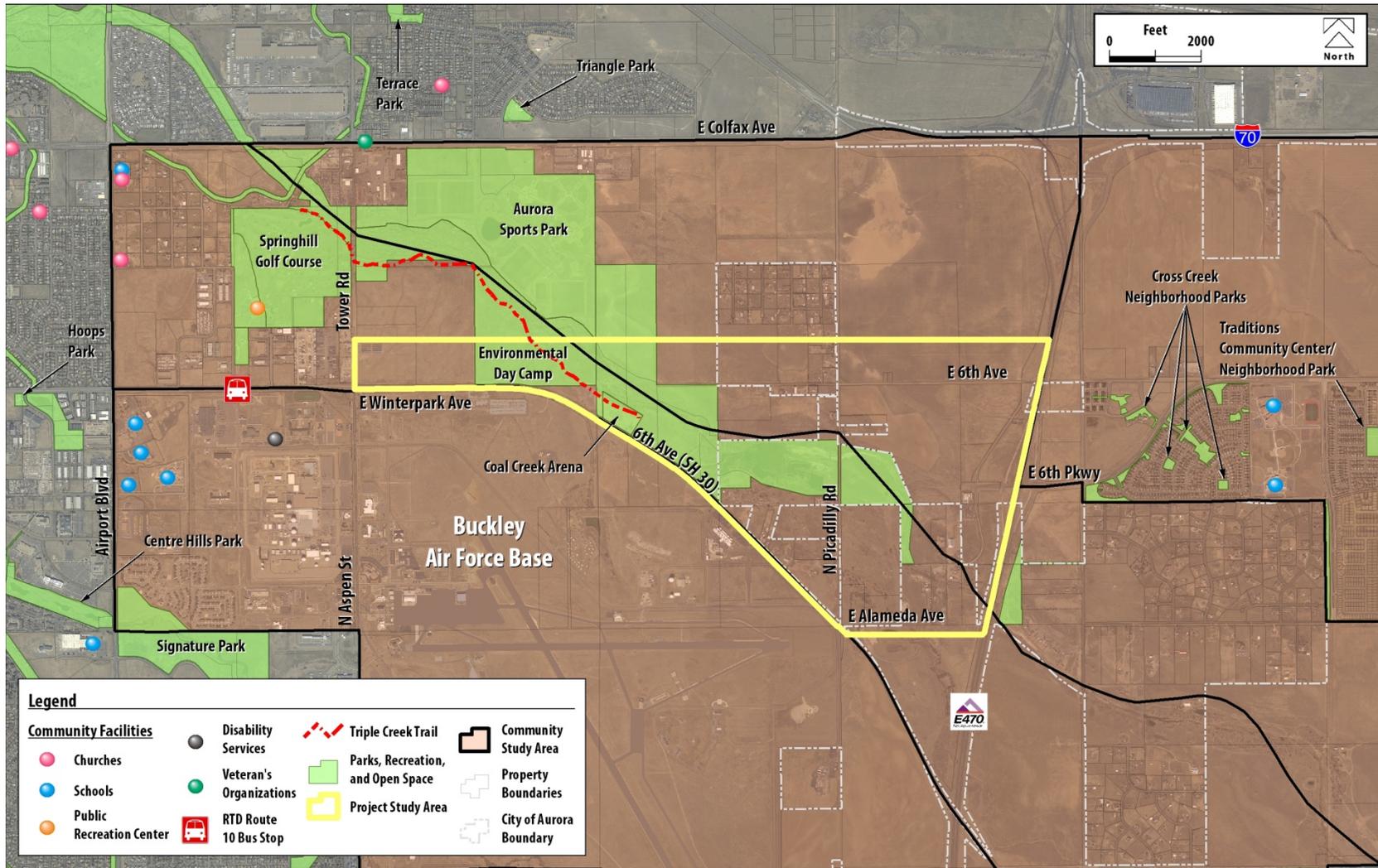
3.1.4 Community Resources

Community and public service facilities are important factors in maintaining community cohesion. Social and community resources include libraries, grocery stores, transportation facilities (such as bus stops), credit unions, places of worship, post offices, schools, and recreational facilities. Facilities within the eastern portion of the community study area are minimal, which coincides with the sparse populations. Facilities within the western portion provide the best context as it relates to where the Proposed Action would occur. **Figure 3** shows the following community and public service facilities identified within the western portion of the community study area:

- Churches
- Schools
- Public recreation centers
- Disability services
- Veteran’s organizations
- Regional Transportation District bus stops
- Parks, recreation, and open spaces

The public values parks, recreation, and open spaces within the community study area and views them as important public resources. These resources are discussed separately in **Appendix A16 Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Section 4(f) and 6(f) Analysis Technical Report**.

Figure 3 Community Facilities within the Community Study Area



114046-01 - Community_Facilities_8x11_NoText

3.2 Environmental Justice Analysis

Environmental justice refers to social equity in sharing the benefits and burdens of specific projects or programs, which is an important component of all City of Aurora transportation projects. Socioeconomic information was collected for populations within the community study area to develop an understanding of the potential impacts and possible benefits of the Proposed Action to the local community, including any identified minority and/or low-income populations.

The analysis followed the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) policy regarding environmental justice (FHWA Order 6640.23A) and the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) *Guidance on Environmental Justice and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)* (USDOT, 2011), as identified in the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) *NEPA Manual* (CDOT, 2014).

The evaluation of potential impacts to minority and low-income populations followed the guidance summarized in the CDOT *NEPA Manual* (CDOT, 2014). The following sources provided the data used for the socioeconomic analysis:

- U.S. Census Bureau 2009–2013
- Colorado DOLA
- Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
- American Community Survey data

3.2.1 Minority Populations

Table 4 presents the race and ethnicity information for the census tract block groups within the community study area, Arapahoe County, the City of Aurora, and the State of Colorado.

Minority is defined as a person who is Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, Asian, American Indian/Alaskan Native, or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander (FHWA, 2012). Minority population is defined as any readily identifiable group of minority persons who live in geographic proximity, and, if circumstances warrant, geographically dispersed/transient persons who will be similarly affected by a proposed FHWA program, policy, or activity.

The race information from the 2010 U.S. Census Bureau includes the following categories: White, Black/African American, Asian, American Indian/Alaskan Native, or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander. The 2010 U.S. Census Bureau data also contain information about ethnicity. It is important to note that people of Hispanic/Latino origin, which FHWA defines as minority, may identify with any race.

Table 4 Race and Ethnicity

Area	Race (percent) ¹					Ethnicity (percent)
	Non Hispanic/Latino Whites	Black/African American	Asian	American Indian/Alaskan Natives	Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islanders	Hispanic/Latino (of any race) ^{2,3}
Colorado	70.0	4.0	2.8	1.1	0.13	20.7
Arapahoe County	63.3	10.2	5.1	0.76	0.20	18.5
Aurora	47.3	15.7	4.9	0.95	0.31	28.7
Census Tract 71.04, Block Group 1	61.1	14.4	14.9	0.80	0.72	14.5
Census Tract 71.04, Block Group 2	67.0	8.8	5.1	0.32	0.96	16.8
Census Tract 71.05, Block Group 1	69.7	12.7	2.4	0.64	0.06	13.5
Census Tract 71.05, Block Group 2	66.6	2.2	1.5	1.7	0.44	25.3

¹P5, "Hispanic or Latino Origin by Race" data.

²P3, "Race" data.

³People who identify their origin as Hispanic or Latino Populations may be of any race.

BOLD indicate those numbers that are higher than the County or City percentages.

Note: Percentages will not add up to 100 percent due to the overlap of race and ethnicity. "The sum is larger than the total population because people who provided more than one race response are included in the total of each race they reported" (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012).

Based on the information presented in **Table 4**, the following observations can be made about the race/ethnicity demographics of the community study area:

- The percentage of Hispanic/Latino individuals within Arapahoe County is slightly lower than the population within Colorado. Approximately 18.5 percent of the population within Arapahoe County is Hispanic/Latino, compared to 20.7 percent of the population within the State of Colorado.
- The percentage of Hispanic/Latino individuals within the City of Aurora is higher than the population within Colorado. Approximately 28.7 percent of the population within the City

of Aurora is Hispanic/Latino, compared to 20.7 percent of the population within the State of Colorado.

- The Hispanic/Latino population makes the largest proportion of the total minority population in the community study area.
- The census block groups in the community study area generally have similar proportions of other minorities as the Arapahoe County average.

According to the Interagency Working Group on Environmental Justice (established by Executive Order 12898), a “Non-Hispanic/Latino White” percentage of less than 50 percent implies a minority population of greater than 50 percent, which indicates that there is a “Minority Population” (CEQ, 1997).

The census block groups within the community study area have “Non-Hispanic/Latino White” populations that are greater than 50 percent and range from 61.1 percent to 69.7 percent. However, census tract 71.04, Block Group 1 has a slightly higher percentage (45.32 percent) of minority populations than Arapahoe County (34.76 percent).

3.2.2 Low-Income Populations

Low-income, as defined by FHWA Order 6640.23A *Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations* (2012) includes “...a person whose median household income is at or below the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) poverty guidelines,” and a low-income population is defined as “any readily identifiable group of low-income persons who live in geographic proximity, and, if circumstances warrant, geographically dispersed/transient persons who will be similarly affected by a proposed FHWA program, policy, or activity.”

The 2013 HHS poverty guidelines for a low-income two-person and three-person household are \$15,510 and \$19,530, respectively. The median household income in Arapahoe County is \$60,651, which is slightly higher than the state median household income (\$58,433). The percent of people living below the poverty level in the past 12 months is slightly lower in Arapahoe County (12.1 percent) compared to the state (13.2 percent). Census Tract 71.04 and Census Tract 71.05 have lower percentages of people living below the poverty level compared to the state and county percentages.

Table 5 Income and Poverty within the Community Study Area

Area	Median Household Income (2012 Inflation Adjusted Dollars)	Income in the Past 12 Months is Below the Poverty Level (Percent)*
Colorado	58,433	13.2
City of Aurora	50,987	16.7
Arapahoe County	60,651	12.1
Census Tract 71.04	88,864	3.7
Census Tract 71.05	92,587	7.7

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2009–2013 (DP03)

* Includes all people whose income in the past 12 months is below the poverty level.

The methodology identified in the *CDOT NEPA Manual* (2014) was used to identify the low-income threshold for Arapahoe County based on an average household size of 2.53 people. Based on the HUD Income Limits Documentation System, the median family income (MFI) estimate for Arapahoe County in 2014 was \$76,700 (HUD, 2014). Per the environmental justice guidance in the *CDOT NEPA Manual* (2014), a low-income threshold was calculated based on the MFI identified above. The low-income threshold for the 2.53 average household size in Arapahoe County was determined to be \$19,619 based on the extremely low-income limits (that is, families whose incomes do not exceed 30 percent of the MFI for the area). Because census income statistics are divided into increments of \$5,000, any household (regardless of the number of people) in Arapahoe County with an income less than \$20,000 is considered low-income. Approximately 12.1 percent of households in Arapahoe County are considered low-income.

The low-income threshold derived for Arapahoe County was used to calculate the percentage of low-income households based on the County derived extremely low-income threshold of \$19,619 for each census tract adjacent to the project (**Table 6**).

Table 6 Percentage of Low-Income Households

Area	Low-Income Households (%)
Arapahoe County	12.1
Census Tract 71.04	4.1
Census Tract 71.05	4.4

Source: U.S. Census 2009–2013 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates Dataset B19001: Household Income in the Past 12 Months (In 2013 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars) and 2010 Census Dataset P17: Average Household Size by Age and www.huduser.org FY 2014 Income Limits Documentation System.

Based on the analysis, low-income households range from 4.1 percent to 4.4 percent within the census tracts, as compared to 12.1 percent for Arapahoe County (**Table 6**).

4. IMPACT EVALUATION

4.1 *No Action Alternative*

With the No Action Alternative, low-income and minority populations present within the community study area would continue to experience out of direction travel as experienced by all populations. These out of direction travel problems, including traffic congestion, would continue to grow more severe over time and would be experienced by all populations.

4.2 *Proposed Action*

4.2.1 *Impacts*

The Proposed Action would not require the relocation or displacement of residential dwellings, businesses, places of worship, or community facilities. Acquisition of right-of-way and easements would occur as part of the project, discussed in further detail in **Appendix A14 *Right-of-Way and Relocations Technical Report***. Any acquisitions would comply with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 as amended (Public Law 100-17).

The Proposed Action would offer several benefits that are expected to be shared equitably across demographic groups and communities, including:

- Decreased travel times
- Decreased vehicle miles traveled
- Improved safety and mobility
- Enhanced access to recreational facilities

The Proposed Action would cause some delays and detours during construction. During these times, travel within the community study area would take longer due to construction delays but would be limited because the road is on a new alignment. All travelers within the community study area would equally experience negative impacts.

Appendix A of this technical report provides a compiled table of the impacts for insertion into the EA.

5. MITIGATION

Construction will require the City of Aurora to coordinate with the local communities to provide advance notification of construction delays, as well as employ construction practices to minimize the disruption of traffic flow. Access to residential dwellings will be maintained at all times throughout construction. A way-finding and signage system to ease travel conditions for motorists will be implemented.

Appendix B provides a compiled table of the mitigation for insertion into the EA.

5.1 *Environmental Justice Conclusion*

Based on project and population information, it has been concluded that low-income and/or minority populations within the community study area would incur no disproportionate impacts. Generally, project impacts and benefits will be equally shared among all populations and will not be disproportionately borne by low-income and minority populations. Therefore, this project has met the provisions of Executive Order 12898 and FHWA Order 6640.23, and no further environmental justice analysis is required.

6. REFERENCES

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Appendix A Resource Impact Table

Resource	Context	No Action Alternative	Proposed Action
<p>Social Resources and Environmental Justice</p>	<p>The project area is within the eastern portion of the City of Aurora. Community facilities, including churches, schools, parks, recreation, and open space, are located within and adjacent to the community study area. Percentages of low-income and minority populations present within the community study area are generally lower than those of surrounding areas.</p>	<p>Would not displace community facilities or resources and would not result in disproportionately high or adverse impacts to low-income and/or minority populations.</p> <p>Would continue out of direction travel within the eastern portion of the City of Aurora.</p>	<p>Would not displace community facilities or resources and would not result in disproportionately high or adverse impacts to low-income and/or minority populations.</p> <p>Would cause some delays and detours during construction. During these times, travel within the study area would take longer due to construction delays. All travelers within the study area would experience negative impacts.</p> <p>Would offer several benefits that are expected to be shared equitably across demographic groups and communities including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Decreased travel times ■ Decreased vehicle miles traveled ■ Improved safety and mobility ■ Enhanced access to recreational facilities

Appendix B Resource Mitigation Table

Mitigation Category	Proposed Action Impact	Mitigation Commitments for the 6 th Avenue Extension Project	Responsible Branch	Timing/Phase that Mitigation will be Implemented
Social Resources and Environmental Justice	Delays and detours during construction	Coordinate with the local communities to provide advance notification of construction delays. Use construction practices that will minimize the disruption of traffic flow.	City of Aurora	Construction
Social Resources and Environmental Justice	Delays and detours during construction	Maintain access to residential dwellings at all times throughout construction.	City of Aurora	Construction
Social Resources and Environmental Justice	Delays and detours during construction	Maintain or provide alternate access to ensure connectivity between the transportation network and individual parcels.	City of Aurora	Construction