

US 6/Wadsworth



**Environmental
Assessment**

Socioeconomic Conditions Technical Memorandum

CDOT Project STU #0062-019 (15215)

CH2M HILL Project No. 358660

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CH2MHILL



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Acronyms and Abbreviations

CDOT	Colorado Department of Transportation
dBA	decibel (A-weighted Scale)
EA	Environmental Assessment
ESL	English as a Second Language
TM	technical memorandum

Socioeconomics

Introduction

This technical memorandum (TM), prepared in support of the US 6 and Wadsworth Boulevard Environmental Assessment (EA), provides a review of existing social and economic conditions and evaluates the potential for impacts as a result of the proposed project.

Social characteristics evaluated include population demographics, neighborhood characteristics, community resources such as schools and religious institutions, and public transportation services. Economic characteristics evaluated include income, employment, and business and economic development.

Socioeconomic conditions are described in general for Lakewood and the neighborhoods that surround the US 6/Wadsworth Blvd. interchange. Housing, community resources, and economic development were evaluated in greater detail for the area adjacent to the proposed project. For information regarding Environmental Justice, refer to the *Environmental Justice Technical Memorandum*.

Affected Environment

Demographic and Neighborhood Characteristics

Four neighborhoods surround the US 6/Wadsworth Blvd. interchange: Eiber, Molholm/Two Creeks, North Alameda, and Creighton (Exhibit 3). Collectively, these neighborhoods make up 20 percent of Lakewood's population. Population is relatively stable and evenly distributed, except near the Lakewood Country Club, where single-family residential lots are larger and the population is slightly less dense. Lakewood's population was 144,428 in 2006, with an additional 7,882 residents anticipated by 2020 (*Census 2000*; City of Lakewood, 2007). Because much of the city is already developed, future growth will likely occur as infill development.

The proposed project is surrounded by a mix of residences and businesses. Residential areas consist primarily of single-family housing with some multi-family housing in the northern portion of the project area. Neighborhoods are well established with active neighborhood associations, and all have adopted neighborhood area plans with the exception of Creighton (described in the *Land Use Technical Memorandum*). Transportation concerns identified by these groups include neighborhood cut-through traffic, traffic congestion and capacity along Wadsworth Blvd., increased growth and density of development, traffic noise, and safety.

Exhibits 1 and 2 show the demographic characteristics from the 1990 and 2000 decennial census for Lakewood and the neighborhoods that surround the US 6/Wadsworth Blvd. interchange.

EXHIBIT 1
Demographic Characteristics, 1990

Statistic	Eiber	Molholm/ Two Creeks	North Alameda	Creighton	Lakewood
Population	5,531	5,325	7,858	4,852	126,481
Households	2,535	2,354	2,968	1,815	51,657
Age Distribution					
Under 5 years	7%	9%	8%	6%	7%
5-14 years	11%	11%	14%	12%	11%
15-21 years	9%	7%	8%	11%	8%
22-49 years	47%	45%	41%	39%	47%
50-64 years	13%	12%	13%	17%	15%
65 years and over	13%	15%	14%	15%	11%
Median Household Income	\$25,086	\$19,561	\$29,859	\$39,866	\$34,054
Labor Force (civilian)	3,231	2,742	4,057	2,567	74,553
Employment	3,023	2,574	3,748	2,447	70,987
Unemployment	208	168	309	120	3,566
Median Home Value	\$93,600	\$82,100	\$84,000	\$91,800	\$91,200

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Summary File 1 (SF 1) and Summary File 3 (SF 3) 1990; City of Lakewood Neighborhood Profiles, No Date. http://www.ci.lakewood.co.us/CPD/pdfs/community/Neigh_Profiles.pdf. Accessed October 8, 2008.

EXHIBIT 2
Demographic Characteristics, 2000

Statistic	Eiber	Molholm/ Two Creeks	North Alameda	Creighton	Lakewood
Population	6,454	6,366	8,032	4,657	144,089
Households	2,770	2,945	2,929	1,755	60,653
Age Distribution					
Under 5 years	7%	8%	8%	4%	6%
5-14 years	12%	12%	14%	12%	12%
15-21 years	9%	8%	9%	15%	9%
22-49 years	45%	45%	42%	36%	45%
50-64 years	14%	14%	13%	15%	16%
65 years and over	13%	13%	14%	18%	12%
Median Household Income	\$40,271	\$34,527	\$43,077	\$57,303	\$48,109
Labor Force (civilian)	3,752	3,321	4,194	2,596	81,847
Employment	3,536	3,151	3,922	2,440	79,034
Unemployment	216	170	272	156	2,813
Median Home Value	\$185,900	\$161,900	\$155,650	\$172,000	\$174,900

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Summary File 1 (SF 1) and Summary File 3 (SF 3) 2000; City of Lakewood Neighborhood Profiles, No Date. http://www.ci.lakewood.co.us/CPD/pdfs/community/Neigh_Profiles.pdf. Accessed October 8, 2008.

Community Resources

Community resources within 0.5 mile of the proposed project are shown in Exhibit 3, and include schools, park and recreation facilities, religious institutions, and emergency services. No community centers or public libraries are located within 0.5 mile of the proposed project.

Schools

The proposed project is located in Jefferson County school district and lies within the district boundaries of four public elementary schools (Eiber, Molholm, Stein, and South Lakewood), three public middle schools (Wheat Ridge, O'Connell, and Creighton), and three public high schools (Jefferson, Alameda, and Lakewood). Many of these schools are located more than 1 mile from the proposed project and, therefore, do not appear in Exhibit 3.

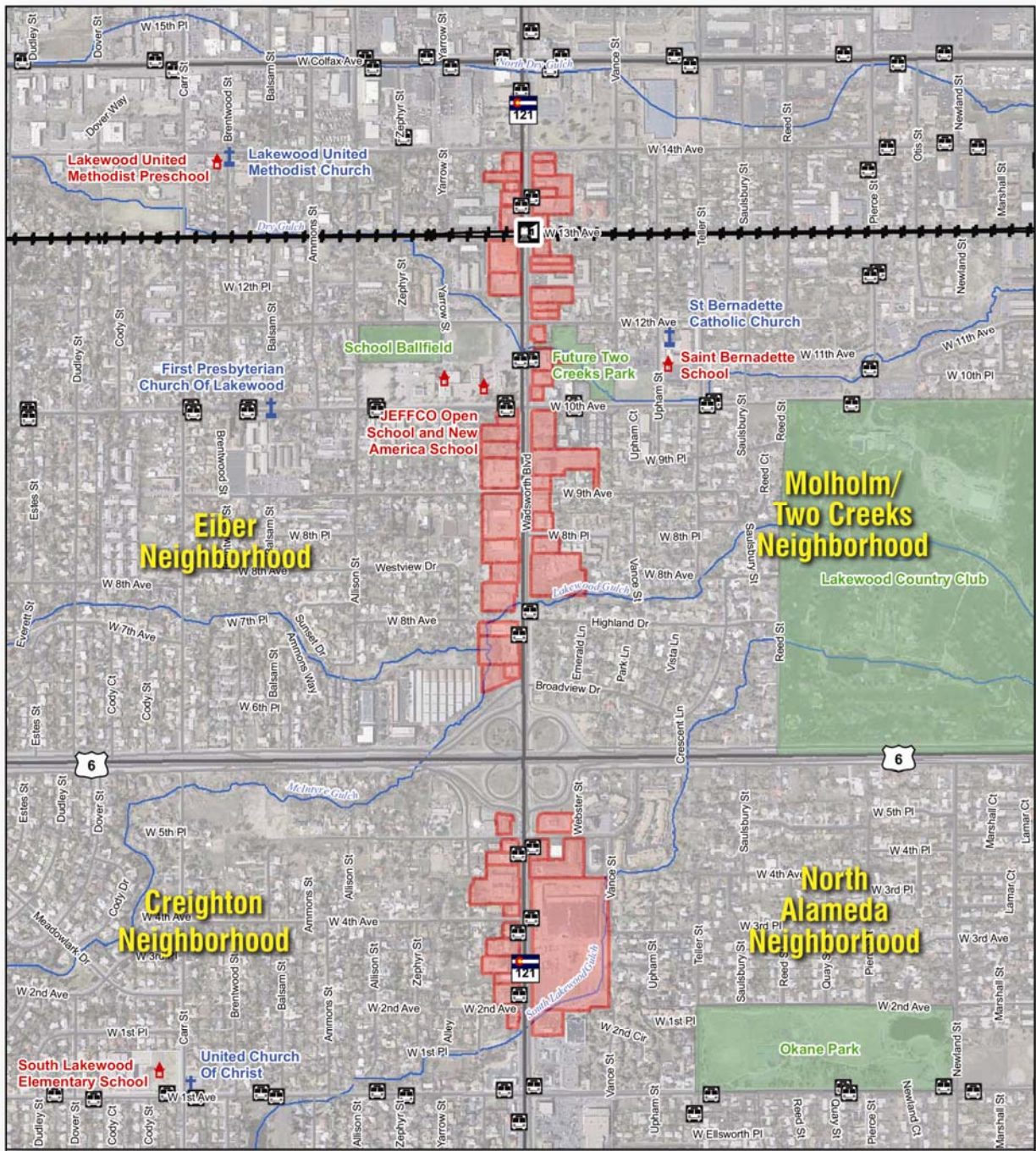
Jefferson County public schools comply with U.S. Department of Education standards for collecting and reporting racial and ethnic data. No data, however, are available on the number of students speaking languages other than English at most of the schools. Research by the project team revealed that a Spanish language informational brochure is available for download on the Eiber Elementary School website. Molholm Elementary School has four "English as a Second Language" (ESL) staff members. Stein Elementary School had a total enrollment of 850 students during the 2004-2005 school year, more than 250 of which spoke a language other than English at home. For 90 percent of those children, that language was Spanish. O'Connell Middle School, meanwhile, has four ESL staff, while Jefferson High School has five ESL staff members.

Jefferson County public schools also participate in the National School Lunch Program, which provides free or reduced-rate lunches to students. This program is administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and follows federal income eligibility guidelines to determine student eligibility. Exhibit 4 summarizes racial characteristics and eligibility for the free or reduced-rate lunch programs for each public school in comparison with the Jefferson County school district averages.

The New America School and Jefferson County Open School, located at the intersection of Wadsworth Blvd. and 10th Avenue, draw students from throughout Jefferson County. Jefferson County Open School is open to all residents of Jefferson County and serves grades kindergarten through 12. Of the school's total enrollment, 17.4 percent are minority students, 25.0 percent are eligible for the free lunch program, and 6.3 percent are eligible for the reduced-rate lunch program. The percentage of minority students at Jefferson County Open School is similar to the district-wide average, while the percentages of those eligible for the free or reduced-rate lunch programs are higher than district-wide averages.

Buses currently access the school on 10th Avenue, and parents access the school from 12th Avenue. The school is waiting for the next bond to pass in hopes of constructing a new school building off 12th Avenue and replacing the current building (located on 10th Avenue) with athletic fields. Should this occur, all traffic will access the school from 12th Avenue.

EXHIBIT 3
Community Resources within 0.5 Mile of the Proposed Project



Legend

Future Light Rail Station (RTD)	Businesses Adjacent to Wadsworth Boulevard	Church
Future Light Rail Line (RTD)	Parks/Golf Course	School
Bus Stop		

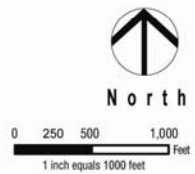


EXHIBIT 4
Public School Demographics

Elementary Schools					
Statistic	Eiber	Molholm	Stein	South Lakewood	Jefferson County
% Minority ¹	59.5%	71.1%	81.7%	31.9%	23.1%
% Eligible for free lunch	66.2%	75.4%	68.1%	20.5%	15.5%
% Eligible for reduced-rate lunch	8.4%	9.6%	9.3%	7.2%	4.7%
Middle Schools					
Statistic	Wheat Ridge	O'Connell	Creighton		Jefferson County
% Minority ¹	68.8%	61.3%	32.5%		23.1%
% Eligible for free lunch	66.2%	52.8%	28.7%		15.5%
% Eligible for reduced-rate lunch	10.2%	10.2%	8.6%		4.7%
High Schools					
Statistic	Jefferson	Alameda	Lakewood		Jefferson County
% Minority ¹	77.7%	58.1%	26.6%		23.1%
% Eligible for free lunch	53.3%	48.2%	15.0%		15.5%
% Eligible for reduced-rate lunch	7.1%	14.8%	3.7%		4.7%

Source: Jefferson County School District. School Profiles, 2004 – 2006.

¹ Minority is defined by the following racial and ethnic categories: American Indian, Alaska native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and Hispanic or Latino.

The project team met with the principal of Jefferson County Open School to discuss the project and any issues that may need to be addressed. The principal indicated that public transportation was important to the school community and that a number of students use transit to access the school. The principal also noted that students are required to complete internships as part of the curriculum, and area businesses offer some of these internship opportunities.

The New America School is a public charter high school dedicated to providing intensive English language instruction to non-native-English-speaking young adults between the ages of 16 and 21. Enrollment at the school was approximately 100 students in its inaugural 2006-2007 school year. The school is located on Wadsworth Blvd. between 10th and 12th Avenues.

Two other schools are located near the proposed project: St. Bernadette School, a private Catholic school at 1100 Upham Street, and Lakewood United Methodist Preschool and Parents' Day Out program, located at 1390 Brentwood Street.

Religious Institutions

Four religious institutions are located within 0.5 mile of the proposed project. These include Lakewood United Methodist Church, St. Bernadette Catholic Church, First Presbyterian Church of Lakewood, and United Church of Christ (Exhibit 3). As noted previously, Lakewood United Methodist Church and St. Bernadette Catholic Church also operate schools.

Parks and Recreational Facilities

As shown in Exhibit 3, three existing and one planned park and recreational resource are located within 0.5 mile of the proposed project. Existing facilities include Lakewood Country Club, Okane Park, and the ballfield associated with the Jefferson County Open School/New America School.

Two Creeks Park is a planned recreation facility located on the east side of Wadsworth between 10th and 12th Avenues, along the Dry Gulch drainage. Lakewood acquired the property in 2007 using Jefferson County Open Space funds. The property is not currently used for recreation or park purposes because it lacks infrastructure, and the City does not have funds to develop the property in the next five years.

None of the parks or recreation facilities in the vicinity of the US 6 and Wadsworth project was constructed with grants from the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Therefore, a Section 6(f) Evaluation is not required.

Emergency Services

The Lakewood Police and West Metro Fire Rescue provide police, fire, and emergency medical services in the project area. The project team interviewed these agencies to identify issues associated with the project. Emergency services were particularly concerned about the effect raised medians would have on response times. If raised medians are constructed, the agencies would like to ensure that there are openings at cross streets to eliminate the need for emergency vehicles to make U-turns. Emergency services also expressed concern about delays and detours during construction.

Public Transportation

Four local bus routes and one express bus route serve the project area. Route 76 travels along Wadsworth Blvd. and has the highest ridership of all bus routes in Lakewood. Local bus routes also run along Colfax Avenue, 10th Avenue, and 1st Avenue. A number of express buses travel along US 6. In the future, the West Corridor light rail line will traverse Wadsworth Blvd. on 13th Avenue and serve residents via a park-n-Ride station at Wadsworth Blvd. as well as smaller walk-up stations within the surrounding neighborhoods.

Economic Conditions

General economic characteristics are included in Exhibit 1. Wadsworth Blvd. is a regionally important highway that connects south Jefferson County with the City and County of Broomfield, and provides access to Lakewood's City Center and large commercial developments along Colfax Avenue and Wadsworth Blvd. Approximately 72 local

businesses are located adjacent to Wadsworth Blvd. between 1st and 14th Avenues. Business types include automotive, beauty salons, services, convenience stores, gas stations, medical services, restaurants, retail shopping, and veterinary services. Exhibit 5 identifies businesses adjacent to Wadsworth Blvd. by their service types.

Two business associations, the West Colfax Community Association and the Alameda Gateway Community Association, are active in the project area. Although few of the businesses located along Wadsworth Blvd. are members of either association, transportation improvements on Wadsworth Blvd. are of interest to both organizations.

The City of Lakewood anticipates an increase in economic development within the corridor over the next 20 years. The city began planning for redevelopment in 2005 in response to light rail stations planned within the city. Existing redevelopment projects north and south of the proposed project, and the future West Corridor light rail line along 13th Avenue, will spur additional redevelopment along Wadsworth Blvd. High-density transit-oriented commercial, retail, and residential redevelopment will occur around the future light rail station at Wadsworth Blvd. and 13th Avenue. The increased economic activity will likely accompany population growth and an increase in traffic along Wadsworth Blvd.

Environmental Consequences

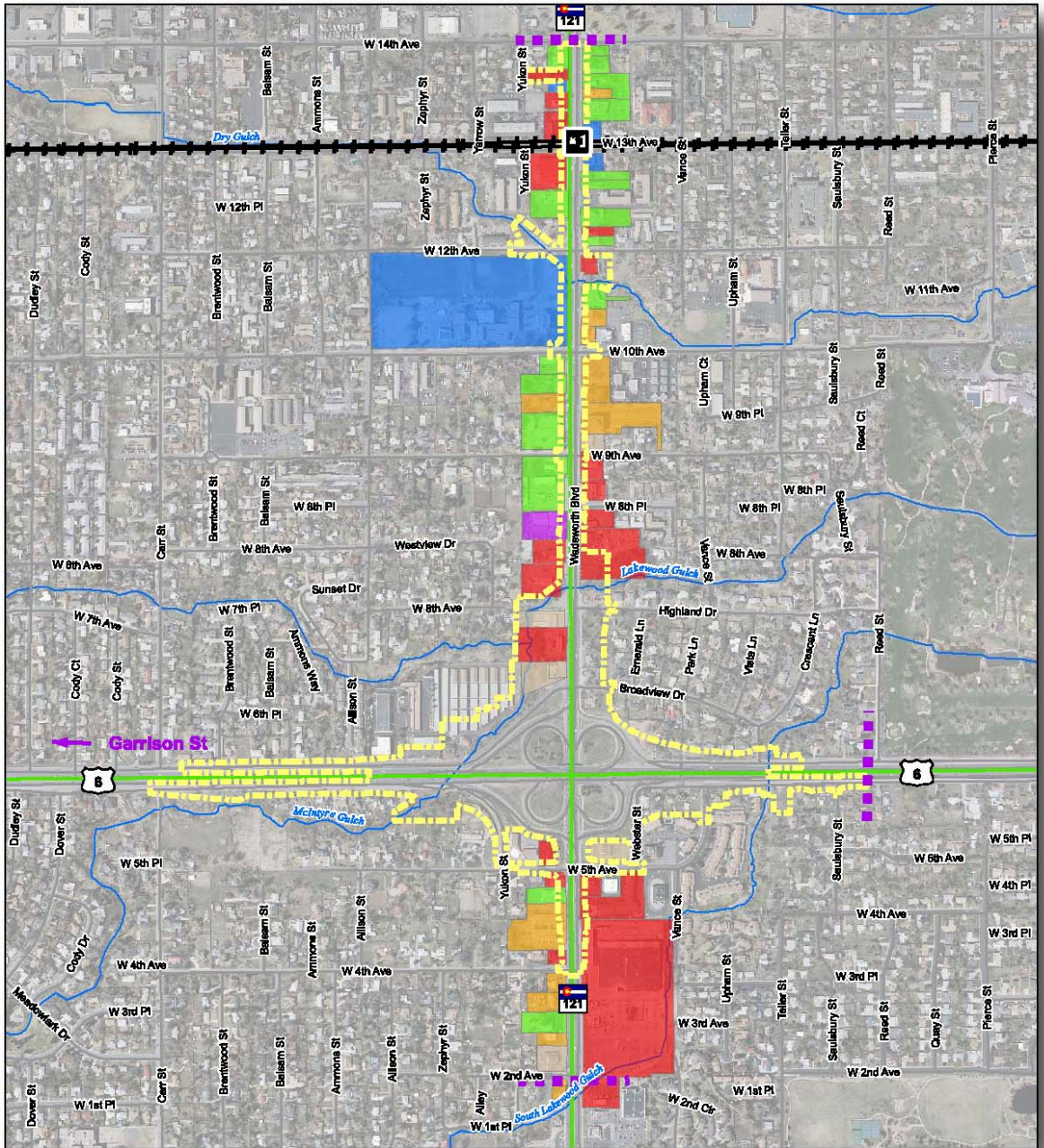
No Build Alternative

The No Build Alternative would not require additional right-of-way and would not result in the displacement of residential or commercial properties.

The No Build Alternative would not address traffic congestion, making it increasingly difficult to access businesses, residences, and community facilities within the project area and throughout Lakewood. Traffic, safety, and access issues would increase the number of traffic incidents, decrease emergency response times, and create unfavorable conditions for local businesses.

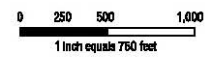
The No Build Alternative does not provide mitigation for noise. Severe noise levels (75 dBA or greater) would persist in the northwest and southwest quadrants of the interchange. Discontinuous and missing sidewalks would persist, perpetuating safety and mobility problems for pedestrians and bicyclists, particularly as traffic volumes increase.

EXHIBIT 5
Businesses Adjacent to Wadsworth Blvd. by Service Type



Legend

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Future Light Rail Station (RTD) | Retail | Other Services |
| Future Light Rail Line (RTD) | Professional Services | Health and Education |
| Project Limits | Financial Services | Construction |
| Construction Impact Area | | |



Sources: Jefferson County Assessor, 2007; CH2M HILL, 2008

Build Alternative

The Build Alternative would benefit local residents, businesses, and regional commuters by improving mobility, safety, and access to businesses, residences, and community facilities and services. An 8-foot-wide multi-use sidewalk would be provided on both sides of Wadsworth Blvd. to accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists. The sidewalk would be detached in most locations between US 6 and 14th Avenue, providing a higher level of safety for all users. The raised median along Wadsworth Blvd. would provide safer turning movements for traffic turning onto West 10th Avenue to access the New America School and Jefferson County Open School. Drainage facilities included in the Build Alternative would provide opportunities to improve connections to the future Two Creeks Park. Landscaping and planted medians would buffer residents and businesses from the roadway and improve corridor aesthetics. The Build Alternative would require the acquisition of 14 residences and 28 businesses. Eighteen businesses would be affected by access revisions, four of which would lose access from Wadsworth Blvd., and 19 businesses would lose some parking (ranging from one to nine parking spaces). The New America School would lose approximately 12 parking spaces along Wadsworth Blvd. These impacts are detailed in Exhibit 6.

EXHIBIT 6 Business Impacts

Business Relocation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Property acquisition resulting in 28 relocations: Diamond Shamrock (Western Convenience), Crocket Dental and Vision, Weeds Consignment, Enterprise Car Rental, Lakewood Muffler and Brake, Taco Bell, U-Haul, 777 Liquors, Brooke Insurance, Emergency Cash, Automotive Upholstery, Diamond Shamrock, Blazer Construction, Ace Cash Express, Jackson Hewitt Tax Service, Jackson Hewitt Tax School, National Insurance Center, Circle S. Mini Mart, Alcoholics Anonymous, Public Storage, Sunshine Building Maintenance, Simply Efficient, Northwest Respiratory Services, and five currently vacant businesses.
Personal Property Relocation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal property relocation affecting two businesses: Jensen's Flowers and New Holland Construction.
Access Revision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access revisions affecting 18 businesses: Carnation Restaurant, Lakewood Chiropractic, Colorado Independent Automobile Dealers Association, Jefferson County Education Association, Maria Elena's Mexican Restaurant, Celestial Hair Designs, National Heating and Cooling, Jefferson County Board of Realtors, Associated Brokers Realty, Subway, Golf Headquarters, 3 Margaritas, 5th Avenue Professional Building, Public Service Credit Union, Motel 6, Desert Gems, Eminently Hair, and Artistic Beauty College. Total loss of access from Wadsworth Boulevard, affecting four businesses: Carnation Restaurant, Colorado Independent Automobile Dealers Association, Associated Brokers Realty, and Golf Headquarters. Alternative access provided on side streets.
Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of parking at 19 businesses: Carnation Restaurant (9 spaces), The Taco House (3 spaces), Lakewood Chiropractic (9 spaces), Lakewood Generations Hair (3 spaces), Community Management Specialists (4 spaces), Colorado Independent Automobile Dealers Association (8 spaces), Maria Elena's Mexican Restaurant/Celestial Hair Designs (2 spaces), Jefferson County Board of Realtors (6 spaces), Associated Brokers Realty (8 spaces), Subway (2 spaces), Golf Headquarters (8 spaces), McDonald's (7 spaces), Summit Lakewood Brick Sales (10 spaces), Public Service Credit Union (1 space), Einstein Bagels (1 space), Motel 6 (2 spaces), and Desert Gems/Eminently Hair (8 spaces).

The Build Alternative would not divide existing neighborhoods or impact community cohesion. US 6 and Wadsworth Blvd. currently act as the boundary for the four neighborhoods adjacent to the interchange and the community has developed around these roadways. Interchange improvements would provide better north-south and east-west connections for the community. The frontage road configuration in the northeast quadrant of the interchange would allow southbound Wadsworth Blvd. traffic to turn onto the frontage road, reducing neighborhood cut-through traffic. Both Highland and Broadview Drives would connect to the frontage road, allowing residents and emergency services easier access to and from Wadsworth Blvd. These features were developed in response to concerns expressed by local residents.

Noise walls, recommended in all four quadrants of the interchange, would benefit more than 330 residences and reduce noise to be more consistent with neighborhood residential character. With mitigation, average loudest-hour traffic noise levels would be lower in all four quadrants of the interchange than they are today. For more information related to the noise analysis, refer to the *Noise Technical Memorandum* prepared in support of the EA.

The Build Alternative supports community development by accommodating higher population densities, traffic volumes, and changes in travel patterns anticipated from the 13th Avenue LRT station and associated transit oriented development.

Emergency services rely heavily on Wadsworth Blvd. for response routes because it is one of only five roads crossing US 6 in Lakewood. Relieving congestion on Wadsworth Blvd. would improve emergency response times because police, fire, and emergency medical vehicles could use Wadsworth Blvd. more frequently to cross US 6. Raised medians, however, could require some out-of-direction travel.

Construction Impacts

During construction, temporary detours, out-of-direction travel, access revisions, and construction-related noise would affect local residents, businesses, and regional commuters. Impacts would be greatest for residents and businesses adjacent to the proposed project. The Build Alternative would generate temporary construction-related employment.

Mitigation

Acquisition or relocation of property as a result of this project will comply with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policy Act of 1970, as amended. New access will be provided for properties where existing accesses are removed by the Build Alternative.

CDOT will provide advance notice to emergency service providers, the community, and residents regarding road delays, access, and special construction activities.

CDOT will coordinate with emergency service providers to identify possible locations for emergency access breaks in the medians.

References

Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), 2005. *CDOT's Title VI and Environmental Justice Guidelines for NEPA Projects*.

Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), 2007. *National Environmental Policy Act Manual*. <http://www.dot.state.co.us/environmental/Manual/NepaManual.asp>.

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), 1998. Order 6640.23, *Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations*. December 2.

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