

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1 The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT),
2 in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration
3 (FHWA) and other stakeholders, prepared the
4 US 6/Wadsworth Environmental Assessment (EA) and
5 Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation to identify and assess
6 potential transportation improvements at the
7 interchange of US 6 (also referred to as 6th Avenue)
8 and Wadsworth Boulevard (Wadsworth), and along
9 Wadsworth from 4th to 14th Avenues. CDOT
10 considered a number of alternatives for improvements,
11 as described in Chapter 2 of the EA. Two of these
12 alternatives were selected for detailed evaluation: a
13 Build Alternative and a No Build Alternative. The Build
14 Alternative would reconstruct the interchange as a tight
15 diamond with a loop in the northwest quadrant and
16 widen Wadsworth to add a travel lane in each
17 direction, multi-use paths, and a raised median. The
18 No Build Alternative would not include any major
19 reconstruction of the roadways, intersections, or
20 sidewalks.

21 In June 2009, the EA was completed and released for
22 review and comment. The following environmental
23 issues or resources were evaluated in detail in the EA:
24 transportation, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, noise,
25 right-of-way (ROW) and relocations, socioeconomics,
26 environmental justice, land use, historic properties,
27 hazardous substances, floodplains, water resources,
28 and wetlands. FHWA and CDOT have considered the
29 EA analysis and public and agency comments in the
30 preparation of this Finding of No Significant Impact
31 (FONSI). The FONSI also includes a number of
32 mitigation measures that CDOT and FHWA have
33 committed to include in the implementation of the Build
34 Alternative to minimize environmental and social
35 impacts.

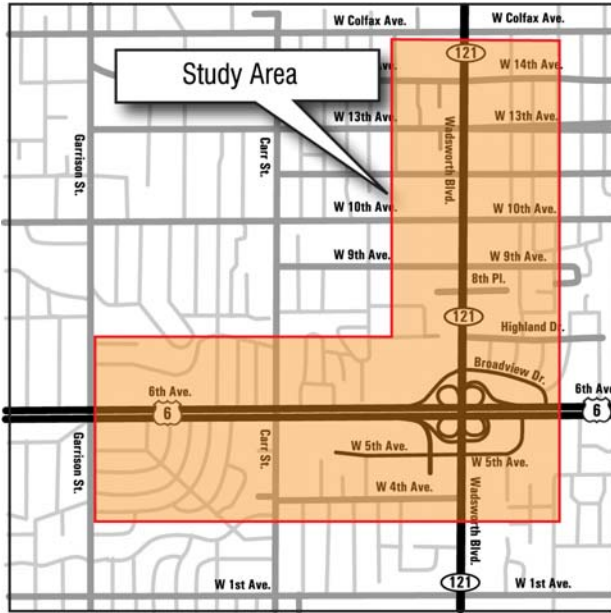
36 This document is organized into six chapters that
37 contain the following information:

- 38 ♦ **Chapter 1** provides an overview of the study area
39 and the project's purpose and need.
- 40 ♦ **Chapter 2** describes the Build Alternative.
- 41 ♦ **Chapter 3** summarizes the environmental impacts
42 of and proposed mitigation for the Build
43 Alternative.
- 44 ♦ **Chapter 4** provides clarifications to the EA
45 analysis and addresses public and agency
46 comments on the EA.
- 47 ♦ **Chapter 5** is the Final Section 4(f) Evaluation.
- 48 ♦ **Chapter 6** provides a list of references.

49 There are three appendices to the FONSI. Appendix A
50 is presented on CD-ROM and contains the EA, Draft
51 Section 4(f) Evaluation, and other documentation.
52 Appendix B lists the mitigation measures that CDOT
53 has committed to during design and construction of the
54 Build Alternative. Appendix C presents
55 correspondence received since the publication of the
56 EA, including all comments received on the document.

1.1 PROJECT OVERVIEW

58 The US 6/Wadsworth project centers around the US 6
59 and Wadsworth interchange in the heart of the City of
60 Lakewood (Lakewood). The study area includes both
61 US 6 and Wadsworth. Both roadways serve a broad
62 cross section of local and regional travelers. As shown
63 in Exhibit 1-1, the east-west limits along US 6 are from
64 the eastern interchange ramps with Wadsworth west to
65 Garrison Street. On Wadsworth, the project limits are
66 4th Avenue to 14th Avenue.



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2 EXHIBIT 1-1: US 6 AND WADSWORTH BOULEVARD STUDY AREA

3 US 6 is a primary east-west six-lane freeway that
4 traverses Denver, Lakewood, and Golden. Located in
5 central Lakewood, the US 6 and Wadsworth
6 interchange is a full cloverleaf configuration that was
7 originally constructed in the 1950s. Intersections are
8 spaced closely to the interchange both north and south
9 of US 6. The Carr/Garrison Street slip ramps to the
10 west are in close proximity to the Wadsworth
11 interchange.

12 Wadsworth is a regionally important highway and is the
13 longest continuous north-south roadway connecting
14 communities across the western Denver metropolitan
15 area. Wadsworth links northern Lakewood with
16 Lakewood's City Commons at Alameda Avenue south
17 of the project area, provides regional access to large
18 commercial developments at Wadsworth and Colfax
19 Avenue, and will soon provide access to the West
20 Corridor light rail station at Wadsworth and
21 13th Avenue, currently being constructed by the
22 Regional Transportation District (RTD).

23 1.2 PURPOSE AND NEED

24 The purpose of the US 6/Wadsworth project is to
25 improve traffic flow and safety, accommodate high
26 traffic volumes, and increase multi-modal travel options
27 and connections at the US 6 and Wadsworth
28 interchange and along Wadsworth between 4th
29 Avenue and 14th Avenue. The existing design and
30 configuration of the interchange and roadway within
31 the project limits are deficient to meet growing traffic
32 and multi-modal travel demands. Improvements are
33 needed to:

- 34 ♦ Improve safety for motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists
- 35
- 36 ♦ Improve operational efficiency of the interchange and on Wadsworth
- 37
- 38 ♦ Meet current and future traffic demands
- 39
- 40 ♦ Support multi-modal connections

40 Additional details on the purpose and need can be
41 found in Chapter 1 of the EA.