

3.3 ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

3.3.1 Affected Environment

3.3.1.1 EMPLOYMENT STATISTICS

Substantial increases in employment are expected in all seven regional study area counties from 2005 through 2035. According to statistics provided by Denver Regional Council of Government (DRCOG) and North Front Range Metropolitan Planning Organization (NFRMPO), the largest growth in employment is expected to occur in the Weld County and the City and County of Broomfield portions of the regional study area (182 percent and 129 percent, respectively). This growth translates to over 142,000 new jobs in Weld County and 38,000 jobs in the City and County of Broomfield. In terms of the total number of new jobs forecast by 2035, Weld County is followed by the Adams County and Denver County portions of the Regional Study Area (see **Table 3.3-1**).

What's in Section 3.3?

3.3 Economic Conditions

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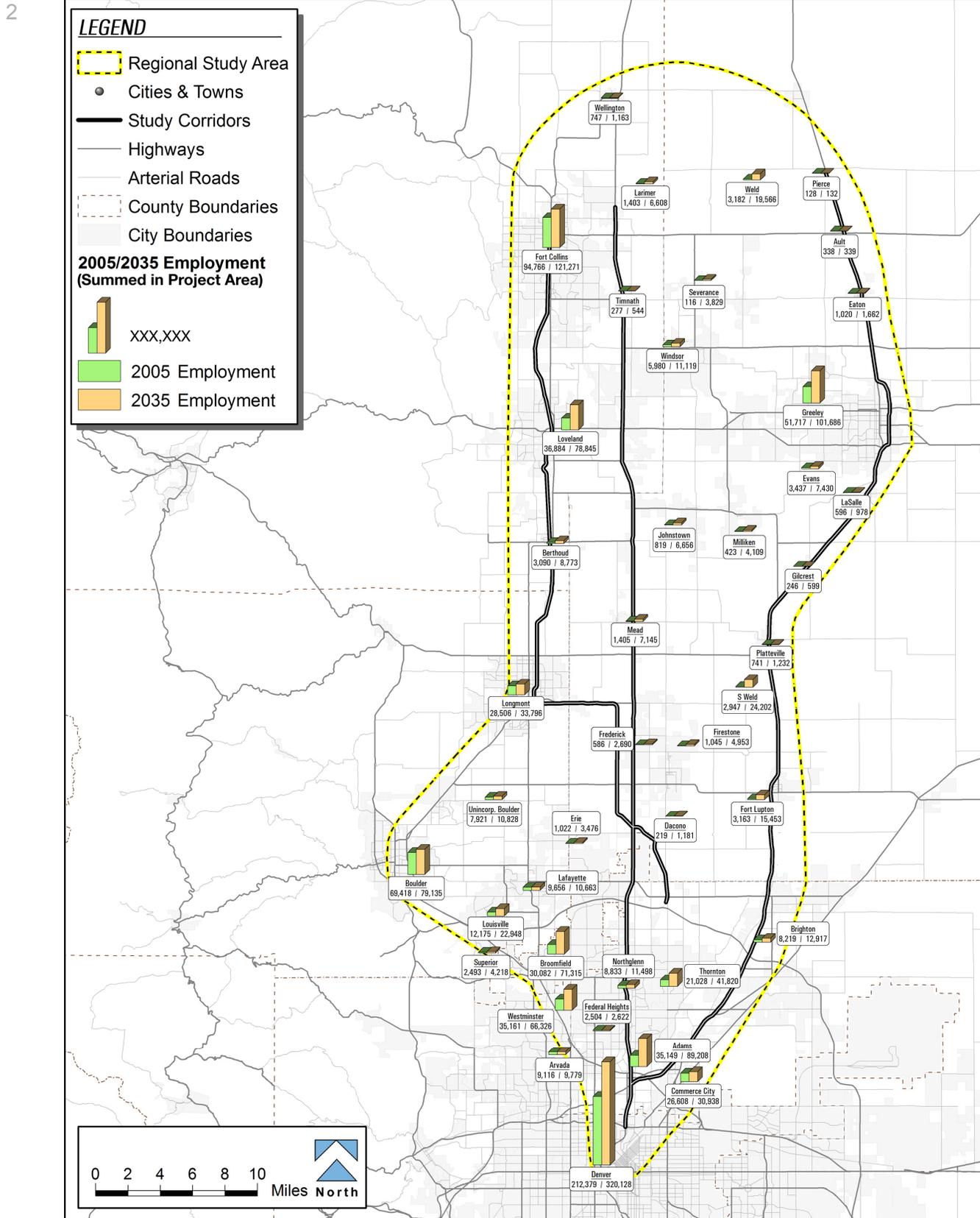
Table 3.3-1 Study Area Employment by County

County	Employment		
	2005	2035	Change (%)
Adams	122,736	228,434	+105,698 (86%)
Boulder	120,786	151,929	+31,143 (26%)
Broomfield	29,982	68,523	+38,541 (129%)
Denver	170,348	272,831	+102,483 (60%)
Jefferson	10,619	21,457	+10,838 (102%)
Larimer	138,017	214,991	+76,974 (56%)
Weld	78,052	220,433	+142,381 (182%)

Figure 3.3-1 shows the distribution of future employment by municipal area. Employment statistics at the county level reflect only the unincorporated portion of the county. Substantial growth is anticipated in Loveland, Fort Collins, Greeley, unincorporated Adams County, and Denver. Employment growth in these areas would inevitably strain roadways between northern Colorado and the Denver Metro Area.

According to the 2000 census, more than half (65 percent) of the 397,000 jobs in the regional study area are service-related. By 2035, the services sector would contain the largest number of jobs overall (914,000). This is reflective of a statewide shift from an economy historically driven by agriculture and mining to one driven by services. Many employees working in service positions are employed in the major employment centers and central business districts throughout the regional study area.

1 Figure 3.3-1 Future Employment Summarized by Municipal Area



1 The three major north-south corridors in the regional study area are expected to absorb a
2 predominant share of the expected future employment for the region over the next 25 years.
3 The largest increase in employment is expected to occur in the I-25 corridor where an increase
4 of 301 percent (31,942 jobs in 2005 to 128,233 in 2035) is expected to occur within a half-mile
5 of the highway. Employment within a half-mile of the US 287 corridor, which generally parallels
6 the Burlington Northern/Santa Fe (BNSF) line, is expected to increase 54 percent (66,765 to
7 102,934) during the same time frame. Even given this disparity of employment growth, in
8 terms of future 2035 employment, areas along the US 287 corridor will continue to affect a
9 large share of total employment. Within the US 85 corridor, employment is expected to
10 increase by 30 percent (39,678 to 51,586).

11 **3.3.1.2 ECONOMIC ACTIVITY AND REGIONAL GROWTH**

12 The *Northern Colorado I-25 Corridor Plan, 2001* is a resource and policy document prepared
13 by eight northern Colorado jurisdictions (Fort Collins, Loveland, Windsor, Timnath, Johnstown,
14 Berthoud, Larimer County, and Weld County) and the NFRMPO that serves as a guide for land
15 use decisions and actions for the land along I-25 in northern Colorado. According to this plan,
16 I-25 from the Berthoud exit to CR 58 just north of Fort Collins is Northern Colorado's primary
17 economic corridor. The high visibility of the corridor has made it extremely attractive from a
18 business and economic development perspective.

19 It is anticipated that the corridor would be subject to considerable development activity over
20 the coming years. Substantial projects that are partially developed or are in the planning
21 stages in this portion of the corridor include Centerra (3,000 acres of commercial, residential,
22 and office development along 4 miles of North I-25 at the northeast quadrant of the US 34
23 interchange near Loveland) and Villages at Johnstown (4.5 million square feet of regional retail
24 space, a golf course, and executive home development along 4 miles of North I-25 at the
25 southeast quadrant of the US 34 interchange near Johnstown).

26 Two developments are also planned or underway in Windsor (80 acres of regional commercial
27 and employment activities on the southeast corner of I-25 and SH 392 and 70 acres of light
28 industrial development on the southwest corner of I-25 and SH 392).

29 Substantial development is also occurring farther south along the I-25 corridor. In Westminster,
30 several commercial centers and big box retailers are currently under construction along I-25.
31 One of these is The Orchard at Westminster, an open air entertainment, retail, residential, and
32 office center at 144th Avenue and I-25. This development is expected to create more than
33 3,000 new permanent or part-time jobs and generate more than \$150 million in sales revenues
34 annually, producing \$86.4 million in new retail sales tax, property tax, and business license
35 taxes over a 10-year period.

36 Throughout Weld County, particularly in the corridor along and between I-25 and US 85,
37 growth has been very rapid. Coupled with the presence of developable land, this growth has
38 resulted in annexations by smaller towns reaching out to the highways to capture potential
39 commercial and industrial users. Today, substantial amounts of land are zoned for economic
40 development along I-25.

41 Commercial development within the US 85 corridor consists of small, local businesses and
42 retail centers. Many of these occur immediately adjacent to the highway or along the frontage
43 road. Commercial uses between Greeley and Brighton include motels, restaurants, auto body

1 and repair shops, rail-related industry, small business centers, and agricultural operations,
2 such as corn mazes and produce stands. Many businesses in this portion of the project
3 corridor provide services and employment for low-income and minority populations.

4 The BNSF rail line and US 287 extend through central Longmont, Berthoud, Loveland, and
5 Fort Collins. A wide variety of retail, commercial, office, and industrial enterprises are adjacent
6 to US 287 in these areas. Further south along US 287, at the Northwest Parkway interchange,
7 a corporate campus, and mixed-use development are in the process of being developed.

8 **3.3.2 Environmental Consequences**

9 This section details how each alternative would affect economic conditions within the project
10 area. Impact analysis was based on information gathered in **Section 3.3.1 Affected**
11 *Environment*. Additional site visits to the project area, evaluation of county assessor parcel
12 data, review of aerial photography, and analysis of GIS data were also conducted. To allow
13 comparison with other regional projects, the methods used to estimate changes in employment,
14 tax base, and revenues are consistent with those used in the US 36 EIS and Northwest
15 Corridor Transportation and Environmental Planning Study, as described below.

16 Construction employment was estimated by taking the project construction cost and attributing a
17 portion of it to labor costs (assuming an industry standard of 50 percent). The estimated labor
18 cost was then divided by the average income (including benefits) for a construction worker in the
19 Denver/Boulder Metropolitan Area, Larimer County, and Weld County (estimated at \$65,300
20 in 2005). This produced an approximate number of employees for the project.

21 Changes to the property tax base and revenues were estimated using county assessor data
22 for each parcel to be acquired, either partially or fully. To calculate these changes, parcels with
23 exempt status (municipally owned land) or insufficient data (no value or tax data available)
24 were removed from the calculations. To avoid overstating the changes, if only partial
25 acquisition was required, only a portion of the total assessed value was used. For example, if
26 10 percent of a parcel was impacted then 10 percent of the assessed value was used. The tax
27 base and revenues were calculated utilizing the adopted 2007 to 2008 assessment rates.
28 Year 2005 county mill levies were applied to the taxable base to determine the tax rate.

29 **3.3.2.1 NO-ACTION ALTERNATIVE**

30 Given the relatively limited scope of the No-Action Alternative, impacts would be less
31 substantial than the impacts described below for the build alternatives. The No-Action
32 Alternative would not require relocation of any existing businesses. In addition, there would be
33 no loss to property tax base and revenues.

34 In the absence of the transit or capacity improvements proposed under the build packages,
35 there would be no opportunities for long-term growth of property tax base and revenues that
36 would result from transit-oriented development (TOD). Worsening congestion and safety
37 concerns would make it increasingly difficult to access businesses in the regional study area.
38 Future economic growth would most likely concentrate along the I-25 corridor, where regional
39 access and large parcels of undeveloped land are available and in the southern end of the
40 study area where transit enhancements and adequate infrastructure are already in place.

3.3.2.2 PACKAGE A

Component A-H1: Safety Improvements

Employment. Employment in Wellington is expected to grow by 55.7 percent between 2005 and 2035 (from 747 jobs in 2005 to 1,163 jobs in 2035). This growth would occur regardless of whether safety improvements are implemented or not. Construction of Components A-H1, A-H2, A-H3, and A-H4 would generate 6,300 temporary jobs over the estimated six-year construction period. Because construction costs are not broken down by highway segment, it is impossible to estimate the number of jobs that would be generated as a result of the implementation of Component A-H1 alone. Improvements associated with Component A-H1 are limited to safety upgrades and would generate fewer jobs than Components A-H2 and A-H3.

No businesses would be displaced under Component A-H1.

Property Tax Base and Revenues. The proposed improvements would require additional land not within the right-of-way. Acquisition of these parcels would result in a \$162,360 loss in the tax base and \$5,630 loss of tax revenues.

Access. The proposed improvements would not change access to businesses along I-25 between SH 1 and SH 14. Activity associated with the proposed carpool lot in the southwest quadrant of the SH 1/I-25 interchange could increase patronage for businesses along SH 1 west of the interchange.

During construction some detours, traffic delay, and out-of-direction travel would be required to reach businesses adjacent to work areas. Construction-related impacts would be greatest for businesses in the vicinity of the SH 1 and Mountain Vista Drive interchanges (Subway, Burger King, Comfort Inn Wellington, First National Bank, Anheuser Busch, and Mountain Vista Greens Golf Course). These businesses would potentially lose customers during construction.

Component A-H2 and A-H3: General Purpose Lanes

Employment. Growth within the North I-25 corridor would result from a large supply of developable land, easy access to I-25, local pressure to develop land, and a pro-growth political climate. As stated above, construction of all highway components under Package A would generate 6,300 temporary jobs over the estimated six-year construction period.

Employment would also be temporarily impacted by the relocation of businesses for right-of-way acquisition. The proposed improvements would require the relocation of 12 businesses between SH 14 and E-470 (11 between SH 14 and SH 60 and 1 between SH 60 and E-470). Affected employees would have to travel to a new location to maintain their employment or find employment elsewhere.

Property Tax Base and Revenues. The proposed improvements would require additional land not within the right-of-way. Acquisition of these parcels would result in a \$2,246,750 loss in the tax base (\$1,943,840 for Component A-H2 and \$302,910 for Component A-H3) and \$71,600 loss of tax revenues (\$66,190 for Component A-H2 and \$5,410 for Component A-H3).

1 In locations where access would be improved or capacity added, property values would likely
2 increase. It is also possible that property values could decrease in locations where proximity to
3 improved transportation facilities would result in noise impacts, increased air emissions, visual
4 impacts, or access changes resulting in out-of-direction travel.

5 **Access.** A new access configuration would result in out-of-direction travel for patrons and
6 employees of businesses in the southwest quadrant of the I-25/SH 14 interchange. Motorists
7 would be required to travel east on the frontage road and then beneath SH 14 before reaching
8 the business center.

9 Access to both Centerra and the Loveland Outlets would be via grade separated single point
10 urban interchanges, in lieu of the existing signalized intersection. The US 34/I-25 interchange
11 would be converted to a dual diamond/directional interchange.

12 At the Johnson's Corner truck stop and café, Larimer County Road (LCR) 16 would go over
13 I-25 to more safely accommodate traffic. The two access points to Johnson's Corner from
14 LCR 16 would remain in their existing location. Some out-of-direction travel would be required
15 for patrons traveling along the frontage road. Existing access from the frontage road would be
16 replaced so that customers would have to travel east on LCR 16 to the frontage road, circle
17 around the property, and enter at the south end. This configuration would accommodate
18 trucks. Access ramps to I-25 would be added at this interchange.

19 Access to businesses in the northwest quadrant of the SH 60/I-25 interchange would remain
20 similar to existing. Interchange ramps would be shifted to the east to minimize impacts to these
21 businesses.

22 A new frontage road between 71st Street and Crossroads Boulevard in Loveland would
23 provide additional access to businesses west of the Crossroads/I-25 interchange.

24 During construction, some detours, traffic delay, and out-of-direction travel would be required
25 to reach businesses adjacent to work areas. Construction-related impacts would be greatest
26 for businesses adjacent to interchanges where improvements are proposed. These
27 businesses would potentially lose customers during construction.

28 ***Component A-H4: Structure Upgrades***

29 Structure upgrades are limited to minor bridge rehabilitation and maintenance activities.
30 No roadway widening, bridge widening, or interchange upgrades would occur. Impacts to
31 economic conditions south of E-470 would be the same as those discussed for the No-Action
32 Alternative in **Section 3.3.2.1**.

33 ***Components A-T1 and A-T2: Commuter Rail***

34 **Employment.** Commuter rail would facilitate infill and re-development in Fort Collins,
35 Loveland, and Longmont; accommodating economic growth within the center of these
36 communities. An increase in jobs and commercial activity around commuter rail stations would
37 be expected, especially in communities with plans for TOD.

38

1 Construction would generate 4,450 temporary jobs over the estimated six-year construction
2 period. The commuter rail would also generate long-term employment for rail operators,
3 security officers, and at the commuter rail maintenance facility. Approximately 90 jobs would
4 be created at the proposed maintenance facility.

5 Employment would also be temporarily impacted by the relocation of businesses for right-of-
6 way acquisition. Construction of the commuter rail would require the relocation of
7 16 businesses. Fifteen of these would occur between Fort Collins and Longmont and the
8 remaining one would occur between Longmont and SH 7. Affected employees would have to
9 travel to a new location to maintain their employment or find employment elsewhere.

10 **Property Tax Base and Revenues.** The proposed improvements would require additional
11 land not within the existing right-of-way. Acquisition of these parcels would result in a
12 \$2,104,200 loss in the tax base (\$823,110 from Component A-T1 and \$1,281,090 from
13 Component A-T2) and \$62,920 loss of tax revenues (\$27,460 from Component A-T1 and
14 \$35,460 from Component A-T2). However, this would likely be offset by the benefits of public
15 transportation. TOD expands business revenues, leading to new jobs and higher wages and
16 salaries, thus increasing the tax base and revenues flowing to local and state governments.
17 Typically, state and local governments realize a 4 percent to 16 percent gain in revenues as a
18 result of increases in business profits and personal income generated by public transportation
19 (Cambridge Systematics, 1999).

20 Implementation of TOD often requires financial incentives on the part of the local jurisdiction,
21 so these programs can have an initial negative impact on the jurisdiction's budget. However,
22 studies show that, nationwide, residential and commercial property values rise with proximity
23 to rail transportation systems and stations (Porter, 1997). The increase in value is highest for
24 those properties located between 0.25 and 1 mile from a station. For residential properties
25 along segments between stations, property values may decline.

26 For every dollar earned, the average U.S. household spends 18 cents on transportation,
27 98 percent of which goes towards buying, maintaining, and operating vehicles, the largest
28 expense after home mortgages (McCann, 2000). Public transportation can save these
29 households thousands of dollars each year in transportation expenditures.

30 **Access.** Commuter rail would increase access to established businesses and major
31 employment centers (Fort Collins, Loveland, Longmont, Broomfield, and Denver), resulting in
32 an increase in economic activity and expanding opportunities for employment. Development
33 around stations would strengthen existing businesses and attract new businesses. The
34 increased frequency of trains in the corridor would create some delay for business patrons and
35 employees traveling across the BNSF. Because commuter rail would operate primarily in an
36 existing rail corridor, access to businesses would not otherwise be changed.

37 During construction, some detours, traffic delay, and out-of-direction travel would be required
38 to reach businesses adjacent to work areas. These businesses would potentially lose
39 customers during construction. Many industries along the existing rail line depend upon the
40 consistent operation of freight trains. Construction of an additional track south of Colorado
41 State University (CSU) would require that existing operations be shut down for short periods of
42 time. This would affect the Great Western Connection in Loveland and Longmont, local
43 industries with direct rail access between Loveland and Longmont, and industries that are
44 served by the Barnett Spur, north and west of Longmont.

1 **Components A-T3 and A-T4: Commuter Bus**

2 **Employment.** Growth within the US 85 corridor would occur with or without commuter bus
3 service. Construction would generate 50 temporary jobs over the estimated six-year
4 construction period. Commuter bus would also generate long-term employment for bus drivers,
5 security officers, and at the commuter bus maintenance facility. Approximately 85 jobs would
6 be created at the proposed maintenance facility.

7 Employment would also be temporarily impacted by the relocation of businesses for
8 right-of-way acquisition. Construction of the bus stations and maintenance facilities would
9 require the relocation of five businesses. Affected employees would have to travel to a new
10 location to maintain their employment or find employment elsewhere.

11 **Property Tax Base and Revenues.** The proposed improvements would require additional
12 land not within the right-of-way. Acquisition of these parcels would result in a \$566,650 loss in
13 the tax base and \$10,140 loss of tax revenues.

14 Commercial activity may increase around commuter bus stations. However, bus stations are
15 less likely to attract TOD and economic growth than commuter rail stations.

16 **Access.** Commuter bus would increase access to established businesses and community
17 centers, resulting in an increase in economic activity and expanding opportunities for
18 employment.

19 During construction, some detours, traffic delay, and out-of-direction travel would be required
20 to reach businesses adjacent to work areas. This would primarily affect businesses near bus
21 stations. These businesses would potentially lose customers during construction.

22 **Summary of Key Impacts for Package A**

23 Adverse impacts associated with Package A would include:

- 24 ▶ Relocation of 33 businesses
- 25 ▶ \$5,079,960 loss in the tax base and \$150,290 loss of tax revenues
- 26 ▶ Temporary construction-related detours, delays, and out-of-direction travel
- 27 ▶ Temporary impacts to existing freight operations during construction

28 Beneficial impacts associated with Package A would include:

- 29 ▶ Potential for long-term growth of property tax base and revenues as a result of TOD
- 30 ▶ Some access revisions; transit would improve access to businesses and expand
31 employment opportunities
- 32 ▶ Creation of 10,800 temporary jobs over the six-year construction period; permanent
33 employment created by transit operation and maintenance

34

3.3.2.3 PACKAGE B

Component B-H1: Safety Improvements

Because impacts associated with safety improvements under this component are similar to those in Package A, Component A-H1, the following discussion focuses on the differences or incremental changes between them.

Employment. Construction of Components B-H1, B-H2, B-H3, and B-H4 would generate 9,500 temporary jobs over the estimated six-year construction period. Because construction costs are not broken down by highway segment, it is impossible to estimate the number of jobs that would be generated as a result of the implementation of Component B-H1 alone. Improvements associated with Component B-H1 are limited to safety upgrades and would generate fewer jobs than Components B-H2 and B-H3.

Property Tax Base and Revenues. The proposed improvements would require additional land not within the right-of-way. Acquisition of these parcels would result in a \$167,660 loss in the tax base and \$5,820 loss of tax revenues.

Access. Impacts are the same as described for Component A-H1.

Components B-H2, B-H3, and B-H4: Tolled Express Lanes

Adding one additional northbound and southbound tolled express lane on I-25 would have a similar effect on economic conditions as adding one general purpose lane in each direction under Package A, Components A-H2 and A-H3. Interchange improvements for these components are also the same. Because many of the impacts associated with tolled express lanes are similar in nature to those of general purpose lanes, the following discussion focuses on the differences or incremental changes between them.

To use the new express lanes, tollway users would be required to pay for their travel, potentially impacting discretionary income. However, free travel lanes would be maintained along I-25; toll lanes would most likely be used judiciously, when users need to benefit most from reduced congestion. Therefore, impacts to discretionary income would be minimal. The impact of tolling on minority and low-income populations is discussed in **Section 3.2.4 Environmental Justice**.

Additional capacity and reduced congestion would improve the flow of goods and services, facilitate commuter travel, and improve access to established businesses and major employment centers (Fort Collins, Loveland, and Denver).

Employment. As stated above, construction of all highway components under Package B would generate 9,500 temporary jobs over the estimated six-year construction period. Employment would also be temporarily impacted by the relocation of businesses for right-of-way acquisition. The proposed improvements would require the relocation of 15 businesses (13 for Component B-H2 and 2 for Component B-H3). Affected employees would have to travel to a new location to maintain their employment or find employment elsewhere.

1 **Property Tax Base and Revenues.** The proposed improvements would require additional
2 land not within the right-of-way. Acquisition of these parcels would result in a \$2,595,440 loss
3 in the tax base (\$2,107,500 from Component B-H2 and \$487,940 from Component B-H3) and
4 \$81,650 loss of tax revenues (\$72,940 from Component B-H2 and \$8,710 from
5 Component B-H3).

6 **Access.** Construction impacts would be greater than those identified for Package A.
7 Maintaining access to cross streets would be more difficult during construction of the barrier-
8 separated tolled express lanes adjacent to the existing lanes. This would result in some out-of-
9 direction travel for business patrons and employees.

10 **Components B-T1 and B-T2: Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)**

11 **Employment.** Construction would generate 700 temporary jobs over the estimated six-year
12 construction period. BRT would also generate long-term employment for bus drivers, security
13 officers, and at the BRT maintenance facility. Approximately 90 jobs would be created at the
14 proposed maintenance facility. One business would be displaced under Component B-T1.
15 No businesses would be displaced under Component B-T2.

16 **Property Tax Base and Revenues.** The construction of Component B-T1 would require
17 additional land not within the right-of-way. Acquisition of these parcels would result in a
18 \$51,120 loss in the tax base and \$1,250 loss of tax revenues.

19 **Access.** BRT would increase access to established businesses and employment centers,
20 expanding opportunities for employment.

21 During construction, some detours, traffic delay, and out-of-direction travel would be required
22 to reach businesses adjacent to work areas. This would primarily affect businesses near
23 BRT stations. These businesses would potentially lose customers during construction.

24 **Summary of Key Impacts for Package B**

25 Adverse impacts associated with Package B would include:

- 26 ▶ Relocation of 16 businesses
- 27 ▶ \$2,814,220 loss in the tax base and \$88,720 loss of tax revenues
- 28 ▶ Temporary construction-related detours, delays, and out-of-direction travel

29 Beneficial impacts associated with Package B would include:

- 30 ▶ Limited potential for long-term growth of property tax base and revenues as a result of TOD
- 31 ▶ Creation of 10,200 temporary jobs over the six-year construction period; permanent
32 employment created by transit operation and maintenance
- 33 ▶ Some access revisions; transit would improve access to businesses and expand
34 employment opportunities.

3.3.2.4 PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

I-25 Highway Improvements

The Preferred Alternative would consist of safety improvements between SH 1 and SH 14 and widen I-25 with general purpose lanes and tolled express lanes from SH 14 to US 36. To use the new express lanes, tollway users would be required to pay for their travel, potentially impacting discretionary income. However, free travel lanes would be maintained along I-25; toll lanes would most likely be used judiciously, when users need to benefit most from reduced congestion. Therefore, impacts to discretionary income would be minimal. The impact of tolling on minority and low-income populations is discussed in **Section 3.2.4 Environmental Justice**.

Additional capacity and reduced congestion would improve the flow of goods and services, facilitate commuter travel, and improve access to established businesses and major employment centers (Fort Collins, Loveland, and Denver).

Employment. Employment in the north I-25 corridor is expected to grow regardless of whether highway improvements are implemented or not. This growth would result from a large supply of developable land, easy access to I-25, local pressure to develop land, and a pro-growth political climate. Construction of I-25 highway improvements would generate 8,050 temporary jobs over the construction period.

Employment would also be temporarily impacted by the relocation of businesses for right-of-way acquisition. The proposed improvements would require the relocation of 10 businesses: nine from SH 14 to SH 60 and one from SH 60 to E-470 in Weld County. Affected employees would have to travel to a new location to maintain their employment or find employment elsewhere.

Property Tax Base and Revenues. The proposed improvements would require additional land not within the right-of-way. Acquisition of these parcels would result in a loss in the tax base and tax revenues for the respective county. The loss in tax base and tax revenues reported for Packages A and B are based on past years property tax values. Therefore, in order to provide a comparative measure for the loss of tax base and revenues associated with the Preferred Alternative a comparison of the acreage of right-of-way required against Packages A and B was used.

The amount of acreage acquired for right-of-way under the highway improvements for the Preferred Alternative is 7.3 percent less than right-of-way acquisition for the highway improvements as described under Package A and 22.5 percent less than Package B. Using those percentages to calculate the figures for the Preferred Alternative highway component provided reasonably equitable figures. An average of the figures shows that the Preferred Alternative highway component would result in a loss of approximately \$2,187,324 from the tax base and \$69,691 from tax revenues. It should be noted that property values are not static and will likely be completely different at the time of acquisition. The assessment will be updated at that time. However, it is expected that the changes would be relatively similar for each of the alternatives.

In locations where access would be improved or capacity added, property values would likely increase. It is also possible that property values could decrease in locations where proximity to improved transportation facilities would result in noise impacts, increased air emissions, visual impacts, or access changes resulting in out-of-direction travel.

1 **Access.** Changes in access are described from north to south along the I-25 Corridor. The
2 proposed improvements would not change access to businesses along I-25 at SH 1. Activity
3 associated with the proposed carpool lot in the southwest quadrant of the SH 1/I-25
4 interchange could increase patronage for businesses along SH 1 west of the interchange.
5 Construction-related impacts would likely impact businesses in the vicinity of the SH 1 and
6 Mountain Vista Drive interchanges (Subway, Burger King, Comfort Inn Wellington, First
7 National Bank, Anheuser Busch, and Mountain Vista Greens Golf Course). These businesses
8 would potentially lose customers during construction.

9 A new access configuration would result in out-of-direction travel for patrons and employees of
10 businesses in the southwest quadrant of the I-25/SH 14 interchange. Motorists would be
11 required to travel east on the frontage road and then beneath SH 14 before reaching the
12 business center.

13 Access to both Centerra and the Loveland Outlets would be similar to existing. The US 34/I-25
14 interchange would be converted to a grade-separated, single-point urban interchange, in lieu
15 of the existing signalized intersection. A new frontage road between 71st Street and
16 Crossroads Boulevard in Loveland would provide additional access to businesses west of the
17 Crossroads/I-25 interchange.

18 At the Johnson's Corner truck stop and café, Larimer County Road (LCR) 16 would go over
19 I-25 to more safely accommodate traffic. The two access points to Johnson's Corner from
20 LCR 16 would remain in their existing location. Some out-of-direction travel would be required
21 for patrons traveling along the frontage road. Existing access from the frontage road would be
22 replaced so that customers would have to travel east on LCR 16 to the frontage road, circle
23 around the property, and enter at the south end. This configuration would accommodate
24 trucks.

25 Access to businesses in the northwest quadrant of the SH 60/I-25 interchange would remain
26 similar to existing. Interchange ramps would be shifted to the east to minimize impacts to these
27 businesses.

28 During construction, some detours, traffic delay, and out-of-direction travel would be required
29 to reach businesses adjacent to work areas. Construction-related impacts would be greatest
30 for businesses adjacent to interchanges where improvements are proposed. These
31 businesses would potentially lose customers during construction.

32 ***Commuter Rail (Fort Collins to North Metro)***

33 **Employment.** Commuter rail would facilitate infill and re-development in Fort Collins,
34 Loveland, and Longmont; accommodating economic growth within the center of these
35 communities. An increase in jobs and commercial activity around commuter rail stations would
36 be expected, especially in communities with plans for TOD.

37 Construction would generate 2,750 temporary jobs over the construction period. The
38 commuter rail would also generate long-term employment for rail operators, security officers,
39 and at the commuter rail maintenance facility. Approximately 90 jobs would be created at the
40 proposed maintenance facility.

41

1 Employment would also be temporarily impacted by the relocation of businesses for
2 right-of-way acquisition. Construction of the commuter rail would require the relocation of nine
3 businesses. Five of these would occur in Longmont, three would occur in Berthoud, and one in
4 Weld County. Affected employees would have to travel to a new location to maintain their
5 employment or find employment elsewhere.

6 **Property Tax Base and Revenues.** The proposed improvements would require additional
7 land not within the existing right-of-way. Acquisition of these parcels would result in a loss in
8 the tax base and tax revenues for the respective county. The loss in tax base and tax
9 revenues reported for Package A is based on past years property tax values. Therefore, in
10 order to provide a comparative measure for the loss of tax base and revenues associated with
11 the Preferred Alternative a comparison of the acreage of right-of-way required against
12 Package A was used.

13 The amount of acreage acquired for right-of-way under the highway improvements for the
14 Preferred Alternative is 38 percent less than right-of-way acquisition for the commuter rail
15 improvements as described under Package A. Using that percentage to calculate the figures
16 for the Preferred Alternative commuter rail component show that it would result in a loss of
17 approximately \$1,304,604 from the tax base and \$39,010 from tax revenues. It should be
18 noted that property values are not static and will likely be completely different at the time of
19 acquisition. The assessment will be updated at that time. However, it is expected that the
20 changes would be relatively similar for both alternatives.

21 Loss of this tax base and revenues would likely be offset by the benefits of public
22 transportation. TOD expands business revenues, leading to new jobs and higher wages and
23 salaries, thus increasing the tax base and revenues flowing to local and state governments.
24 Typically, state and local governments realize a 4 percent to 16 percent gain in revenues as a
25 result of increases in business profits and personal income generated by public transportation
26 (Cambridge Systematics, 1999).

27 Implementation of TOD often requires financial incentives on the part of the local jurisdiction,
28 so these programs can have an initial negative impact on the jurisdiction's budget. However,
29 studies show that, nationwide, residential and commercial property values rise with proximity
30 to rail transportation systems and stations (Porter, 1997). The increase in value is highest for
31 those properties located between 0.25 and 1 mile from a station. For residential properties
32 along segments between stations, property values may decline.

33 For every dollar earned, the average U.S. household spends 18 cents on transportation,
34 98 percent of which goes towards buying, maintaining, and operating vehicles, the largest
35 expense after home mortgages (McCann, 2000). Public transportation can save these
36 households thousands of dollars each year in transportation expenditures.

37 **Access.** Commuter rail would increase access to established businesses and major
38 employment centers (Fort Collins, Loveland, Longmont, Broomfield, and Denver), resulting in
39 an increase in economic activity and expanding opportunities for employment. Development
40 around stations would strengthen existing businesses and attract new businesses. The
41 increased frequency of trains in the corridor would create some delay for business patrons and
42 employees traveling across the BNSF railroad. Because commuter rail would operate primarily
43 in an existing rail corridor, access to businesses would not otherwise be changed.

1 During construction, some detours, traffic delay, and out-of-direction travel would be required
2 to reach businesses adjacent to work areas. These businesses would potentially lose
3 customers during construction. Many industries along the existing rail line depend upon the
4 consistent operation of freight trains.

5 ***Express Bus (Fort Collins/Greeley to Denver/DIA)***

6 **Employment.** Construction would generate 500 temporary jobs over the construction period.
7 Express bus would also generate long-term employment for bus drivers, security officers, and
8 at the bus maintenance facility. Approximately 85 jobs would be created at the proposed
9 maintenance facility, as described under the commuter bus component above. No businesses
10 would be displaced by the express bus component.

11 **Property Tax Base and Revenues.** The construction of the express bus component would
12 require a very small amount of land not within the right-of-way. Because this property is
13 directly adjacent to and in conjunction with the right-of-way requirements for the I-25 highway
14 improvements it has been included in the calculations for that component.

15 **Access.** Express bus would increase access to established businesses and employment
16 centers, expanding opportunities for employment.

17 During construction, some detours, traffic delay, and out-of-direction travel would be required
18 to reach businesses adjacent to work areas. This would primarily affect businesses near the
19 express bus stations. These businesses would potentially lose customers during construction.

20 ***US 85 Commuter Bus (Greeley to Denver)***

21 **Employment.** Employment in the US 85 corridor is expected to increase. This growth would
22 occur with or without commuter bus service. Construction would generate 100 temporary jobs
23 over the construction period. Commuter bus would also generate long-term employment for
24 bus drivers, security officers, and at the commuter bus maintenance facility. Approximately 85
25 jobs would be created at the proposed maintenance facility.

26 Employment would also be temporarily impacted by the relocation of businesses for right-of-
27 way acquisition. Construction of the bus stations and maintenance facilities would require the
28 relocation of four businesses including two in Greeley, one in Platteville, and one in Ft. Lupton.
29 Affected employees would have to travel to a new location to maintain their employment or find
30 employment elsewhere.

31 **Property Tax Base and Revenues.** The proposed improvements would require additional
32 land not within the right-of-way. Acquisition of these parcels would result in similar impacts to
33 the tax base and tax revenues as described under Package A components A-T3 and A-T4.

34 Commercial activity may increase around commuter bus stations. However, bus stations are
35 less likely to attract TOD and economic growth than commuter rail stations.

36 **Access.** Commuter bus would increase access to established businesses and community
37 centers, resulting in an increase in economic activity and expanding opportunities for
38 employment.

1 During construction, some detours, traffic delay, and out-of-direction travel would be required
2 to reach businesses adjacent to work areas. This would primarily affect businesses near bus
3 stations. These businesses would potentially lose customers during construction.

4 **Summary of Key Impacts for the Preferred Alternative**

5 Adverse impacts associated with the Preferred Alternative would include:

- 6 ▶ Relocation of 23 businesses
- 7 ▶ Based on the difference in amounts of right-of-way acquired under the alternatives the loss
8 in tax base and tax revenues would be approximately 17 percent less than that described
9 for Package A but approximately one percent more than that described under Package B
- 10 ▶ Temporary construction-related detours, delays, and out-of-direction travel
- 11 ▶ Temporary impacts to existing freight operations during construction

12 Beneficial impacts associated with the Preferred Alternative would include:

- 13 ▶ Potential for long-term growth of property tax base and revenues as a result of TOD
- 14 ▶ Some access revisions; transit would improve access to businesses and expand
15 employment opportunities
- 16 ▶ Creation of 11,400 temporary jobs over the construction period; permanent employment
17 created by transit operation and maintenance

18 **3.3.3 Mitigation Measures**

19 Acquisition or relocation of property as a result of this project will comply with the Uniform
20 Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended, and
21 other applicable relocation assistance programs.

22 New access will be provided for properties where existing accesses are removed. Although
23 some businesses may have changes in access due to the project, CDOT will work to insure
24 that some form of access is provided to all businesses. To avoid disruption of business
25 activities during construction, the new access will be provided before the existing access is
26 removed.

27 A traffic control plan will be developed to minimize interference to traffic flow from construction
28 equipment and activities. CDOT will provide advance notice to emergency service providers,
29 local businesses, rail operators, and residents with regard to road delays, access, and special
30 construction activities. Such notifications will be accomplished through radio and public
31 announcements, newspaper notices, on-site signage, and CDOT's website.

32 To minimize disruption to traffic and local businesses, construction activities will be staged and
33 work hours varied. Throughout the construction stage, access will be preserved for each
34 affected business.

35 Where feasible, retaining walls will be constructed along I-25 and the BNSF to minimize
36 impacts to commercial development.

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