



# North Link

THE NORTH I-25 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT – STUDYING FUTURE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS ALONG THE I-25 CORRIDOR FROM THE FORT COLLINS/WELLINGTON AREA TO DENVER.

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## More Town Hall Meetings on the North I-25 EIS:

### Help decide the future of transportation in Northern Colorado.

If you've ever wondered what the future of transportation in Northern Colorado might look like, here's your chance to find out. Even better, it's also your chance to shape that future.

The North I-25 EIS project team has just completed the third level of evaluating transit improvements. Eight alternative transportation packages were developed and evaluated, and now we're ready to show you the results. At the upcoming fifth round of town hall meetings, we will present the packages that performed best, and which we would like to move

forward into the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS).

Please plan on attending one of the 12 scheduled public meetings to explore, discuss, learn and provide input on the future of transportation in Northern Colorado.

To view a listing of town hall meeting dates and locations, please see page 2 of your North Link newsletter. For more information, visit [www.cdof.info/northi25eis/](http://www.cdof.info/northi25eis/) or call the Public Involvement Team at (970) 352-5455 or (303) 779-3384.





## Town Hall Meetings *(continued from page 1)*

Town hall meeting dates and locations are as follows:

### January 23

Fort Collins Aztlan Community Center  
112 E. Willow St.  
5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

### January 24

Windsor Community Center  
250 11th St.  
11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

### January 25

Frederick Town Hall  
401 Locust St.  
5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

### January 26

Thornton City Hall  
9500 Civic Center Dr.  
6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

### January 30

Gilcrest Valley High School  
1001 Birch St.  
6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

### January 31

Mead Town Hall  
441 Third St.  
11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

### February 1

Longmont Museum  
400 Quail Rd.  
6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

### February 2

Loveland Public Library  
300 N. Adams Ave.  
7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.

### February 6

Greeley Recreation Center  
651 10th Ave.  
6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

### February 7

Fort Collins Harmony Library  
4616 S. Shields St.  
11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

### February 15

Southwest Weld County Building  
4209 Weld County Rd. 24½  
4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

### February 16

Milliken Town Hall  
1101 Broad St.  
6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

## Transit Station Working Groups: An Interactive Opportunity

In October, the North I-25 EIS launched Transit Station Working Groups. This hands-on process is another way for community members to have an impact on the study. Transit Station Working Groups discuss transit stations (Commuter Rail, Commuter Bus and Bus Rapid Transit), bike and pedestrian connectivity, and maintenance facilities.

Northern Colorado community members who reside in or frequently drive our Study Area are encouraged to participate.

During the first two meetings, groups discussed evaluation criteria that can influence the location of stations (land use, bus service and zoning, for example), and reviewed proposed station locations in each corridor. To view information from the first two meetings, please visit the project Web site at [www.cdof.info/northi25eis/](http://www.cdof.info/northi25eis/).



The third round of working group meetings will focus on the results from Level 3 Evaluation and how the results affect the transit station process, modeling results, station program, station site evaluation criteria and maintenance facility. One or more of the transit technologies may be eliminated in Level 3, so be sure to attend Town Hall Meetings to view the results.

The next Transit Station Working Group meetings are as follows:



- **Monday, March 20, 5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.**  
Frederick Town Hall  
401 Locust St.
- **Thursday, March 23, 5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.**  
CDOT R4, Loveland  
2207 E. Highway 402

If you were unable to attend either of the first two rounds of working group meetings, you are still invited to attend and participate in future meetings. Please contact the Public Involvement Team at (970) 352-5455 or (303) 779-3384 if you would like to get involved.



# Gasoline Prices and Travel Behavior

Several unexpected natural disasters during 2005 resulted in notable increases in the price of gasoline. And a recent sampling of U.S. transit systems finds increases of transit ridership ranging from eight to 17 percent compared to last year<sup>1</sup>. So how is the price of gasoline considered when evaluating transit ridership in the North I-25 EIS?

Travel forecasts for the North I-25 EIS process assume that the relative price of fuel remains constant through the year 2030. This is a standard and well-accepted forecasting practice because of the uncertainty of predicting the price of fuel. But how much do travel patterns really change when gasoline prices increase?

With the abrupt rise in gasoline prices in recent months, record numbers of people are turning to mass transit as their mode of transportation. Washington Metropolitan Area Transit reports system ridership was up 10 percent for the year, compared with a normal annual growth rate of two percent. In Texas, traffic on the Trinity Railway Express, which links Dallas to Fort Worth, was up 16 percent for the first four weekdays of September compared with the same period one year earlier.

Similarly, Colorado carpool and vanpool programs managed by the North Front Range Metropolitan Planning Organization (NFRMPO) and the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) both report a large increase in inquiries since the recent rise in gasoline prices.

Automobile travel also changes if fuel prices increase. Historically, the amount of vehicle miles traveled (VMT, a common measure of automobile travel) has outpaced population growth. Over the past 20 years, the U.S. population has increased about one percent per year, while VMT has increased about three percent<sup>2</sup>. However, an exception was after the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) oil embargo of 1973. Comparing 1974 to 1973, national VMT declined by 2.5 percent, even though U.S. population grew about three percent. In general, it has been estimated that a 25 percent increase in the price of gasoline would result in about a five percent drop in VMT.

It is interesting to note that the amount of fuel consumed would decrease more than the decrease in VMT, given rising fuel prices. As gasoline prices go up, people tend to modify their driving habits by accelerating slower and reducing travel speed to conserve fuel. Also, for drivers with two cars, the more fuel-efficient vehicle is driven more often. Eventually, people purchase smaller, more fuel-efficient cars to replace larger vehicles such as SUVs. It is estimated fuel consumption would decrease 1.5 to two times as much as the decrease in VMT.



## Contact Us

### North I-25 EIS Project Office

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## What's Next: The DEIS

Level 3 of the evaluation screening process has been completed and we are now ready for the next step in the EIS process: preparation of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. The DEIS document will include the following:

### 1) Development of DEIS

**Alternatives:** Alternatives that remain after Level 3 screening will be defined to a greater level of detail so that a full analysis can be completed. This greater level of detail will include areas such as:

- a) Layout of right-of-way needed
- b) Location of bridges, retaining walls and fill slopes
- c) Location of stations and interchanges
- d) Planned frequency of transit service
- e) Cost of construction, operations and maintenance

<sup>1</sup> American Public Transportation Association (APTA). March 2004 to September 2005, for transit systems without any major improvements to transit service.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Census and U.S. Department of Energy data.

- 2) **Analysis of DEIS Alternatives:** The DEIS Alternatives, including the No-Action Alternative, will be fully analyzed, according to such areas as:
  - a) Transportation impacts and performance
  - b) Impacts to properties (access, right-of-way, visibility, etc.)
  - c) Impacts to natural resources (wildlife, water resources, wetlands, etc.)
  - d) Operational impacts such as noise or air quality
  - e) Impacts to social and economic conditions
  - f) Costs and funding possibilities
- 3) **Documentation on the DEIS Chapters:** The information developed throughout the entire study will be documented in a federally required report. This will include:
  - a) Purpose and need for improvements
  - b) Alternatives considered
  - c) Transportation impacts
  - d) Existing conditions and environmental impacts
  - e) Summary of public and agency involvement
  - f) Funding options
- 4) **Review Process:** Before the DEIS enters the public and agency comment process, it is reviewed in detail by CDOT, FHWA, FTA and the Cooperating Agencies (RTD, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Federal Railroad Administration).
- 5) **Public and agency comment period**



### **Interchange Planning: A Public Process**

In Level 3, the project team began the interchange planning process and this process will continue through the DEIS. Interchange Planning Groups and/or public meetings will soon be underway and we invite community members to participate and share their opinions.

The I-25 corridor will be divided into six segments for interchange planning meetings. Please call the Public Involvement Team at (970) 352-5455 or (303) 779-3384 for more information about becoming involved.

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