



Land Use Technical Report - I-270 Corridor Improvements Environmental Impact Statement

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

Acronym	Definition
BNSF	BNSF Railway
CDOT	Colorado Department of Transportation
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CO 2	Colorado State Highway 2
CO 224	Colorado State Highway 224
Commerce City	City of Commerce City
Denver	City and County of Denver
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
GIS	Geographic Information System
I-25	Interstate 25
I-270	Interstate 270
I-70	Interstate 70
I-76	Interstate 76
ITS	Intelligent Transportation Systems
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
PUD	Planned Unit Development
ROW	Right of Way
UPRR	Union Pacific Railroad

1.0 Introduction

CDOT is dedicated to providing an accessible experience for everyone. While we are continuously improving our standards, some complex items in this document, such as certain figures and images, are difficult to create with fully accessible parameters to all users. If you need help understanding any part of this document, we are here to assist and have resources to provide additional accessibility assistance to any requests. Please email us at CDOT_Accessibility@state.co.us to request an accommodation, and a member of our I-270 Engineering Program will schedule a time to review the content with you. To learn more about accessibility at CDOT, please visit the [Accessibility at CDOT webpage on the CDOT Website](#).

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) are preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to evaluate potential improvements to the Interstate 270 (I-270) corridor. FHWA and CDOT are the lead agencies for this National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, which was initiated in 2020, initially anticipating an Environmental Assessment. Moving into 2023, CDOT determined a more detailed environmental review was needed and requested that an EIS be prepared.

This technical report evaluates and documents potential impacts to and recommended mitigation measures for land use. It supports the analysis and conclusions in the EIS.

1.1 Project Description

I-270 in Colorado is a controlled-access interstate highway with two through lanes in each direction between Interstate 25 (I-25) and Interstate 70 (I-70) in central Denver and Commerce City (Figure 1). It has a posted speed limit of 55 miles per hour (mph). The project limits include the I-270 interchanges with Interstate 76 (I-76), York Street, Vasquez Boulevard, and Quebec Street. The project will tie into the I-25 and I-70 system interchanges but improvements to these interchanges are part of projects on I-25 and I-70 and will be designed and approved separately.

The purpose of the I-270 Corridor Improvements Project is to implement transportation solutions that modernize the I-270 Corridor to accommodate existing and forecasted transportation demands. The project needs are:

- Traveler safety on the corridor,
- Travel time and reliability on the corridor,
- Transit on the corridor,
- Bicycle and pedestrian connectivity across I-270, and
- Freight operations on the corridor.

In addition to addressing project needs, CDOT, FHWA, and Cooperating and Participating Agencies have established a key project goal: to minimize environmental and community impacts resulting from the project.

Figure 1. I-270 Corridor Improvements Project Limits



2.0 Alternatives

CDOT developed a range of potential alternatives for I-270 improvements. The alternatives ranged from no improvements to minimal infrastructure improvements without added highway capacity to alternatives that added one or two travel lanes in each direction, which could be operated as transit, general-purpose, or Express Lanes.

A two-level alternatives evaluation process was used to screen the alternatives based on the project's purpose and need and goal, and two build alternatives were carried forward for detailed analysis in the EIS:

- Three General-Purpose Lanes Alternative
- Two General-Purpose Lanes and One Express Lane that Accommodates Transit Alternative

The No Action Alternative is also fully evaluated as a baseline for comparison.

Additional information on the alternatives development and evaluation process is included in the Alternatives Development Technical Report.

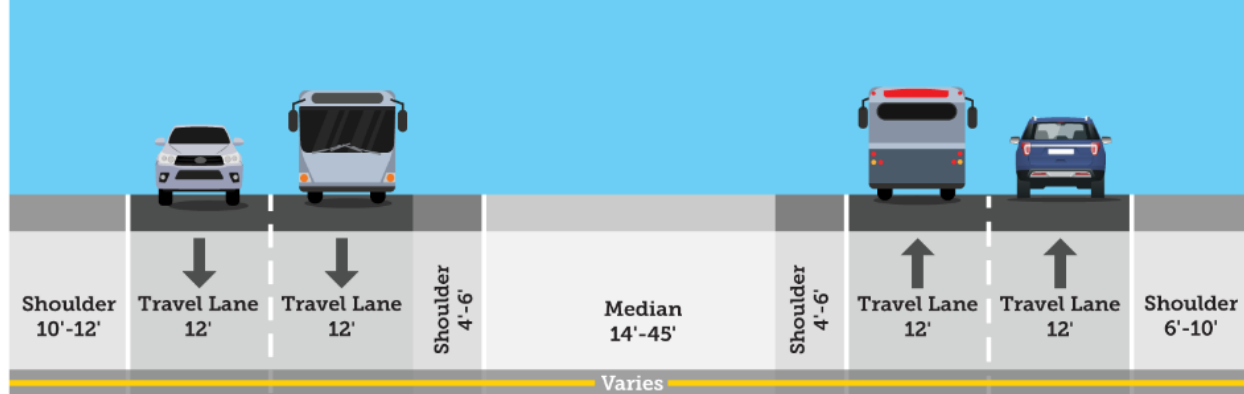
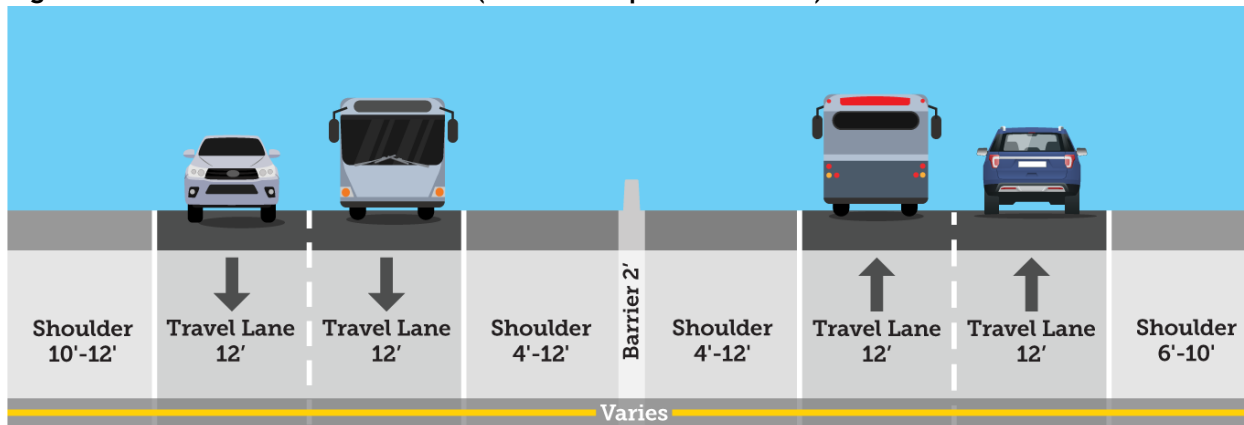
2.1 No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative evaluates operations of I-270 if a build alternative would not occur along the corridor. It does not address the project purpose and need but is carried forward as a baseline for comparison. This alternative would maintain the existing highway configuration of two general-purpose travel lanes in each direction. Bridges and pavement would be maintained and repaired continuously, but underlying infrastructure deficiencies would remain.

The No Action Alternative would include substantial ongoing maintenance and the rehabilitation of 19 existing structures, including seven locations that have structures that are or will be reaching the end of their useful life. The age of the structure, recent bridge inspections, and current ongoing maintenance costs, both planned and emergency maintenance, determine if a structure is or will be reaching the end of its useful life. The seven structure locations along the I-270 corridor that are or will be reaching the end of their useful life are as follows:

- Vasquez Bridge over Sand Creek (E-17-AT)
- York Street Bridge over I-270 (E-17-IC)
- I-270 over South Platte River Eastbound and Westbound Bridges (E-17-IE & E-17-ID)
- I-270 over Burlington Ditch Eastbound and Westbound Bridges (E-17-IG & E-17-IF)
- I-270 over Brighton Boulevard, Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) and BNSF Railway (BNSF) Eastbound and Westbound Bridges (E-17-II & E-17-IH)
- I-270 over 60th Avenue & BNSF Eastbound and Westbound Bridges (E-17-IK & E-17-IJ)
- I-270 over East 56th Avenue Eastbound and Westbound (E-17-IO & E-17-IN)

The cross section would remain unchanged along I-270 under the No Action Alternative. The No Action Alternative cross sections are shown on Figure 2 and Figure 3.

Figure 2. No Action Alternative (west of Vasquez Boulevard)

Figure 3. No Action Alternative (east of Vasquez Boulevard)


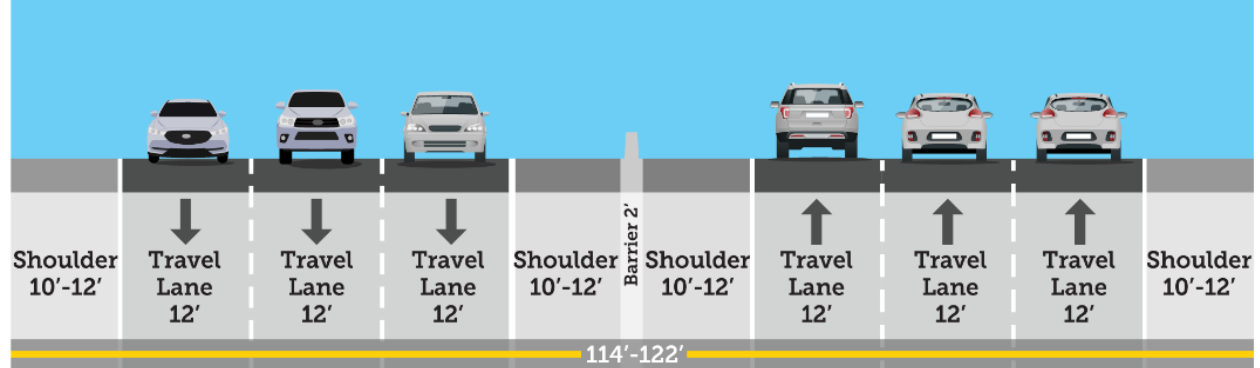
2.2 Build Alternatives

The build alternatives include improving the operational and physical conditions of the I-270 highway; reconfiguring interchanges and ramps; enhancing transit on the corridor; improving bicycle and pedestrian access across I-270; replacing deficient bridges and other infrastructure; and providing modern drainage, water quality, intelligent transportation systems (ITS), and other supporting infrastructure. Both add one new travel lane in each direction and have similar footprints, varying primarily in how the additional travel operates.

2.3 Three General-Purpose Lanes Alternative

This alternative would reconstruct I-270 to provide three general-purpose lanes in each direction as shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Three General-Purpose Lanes Alternative



This alternative includes:

Mainline Improvements

- Providing three general-purpose lanes in each direction
- Widening shoulders to meet current standards
- Restriping of the westbound I-270 to northbound I-25 off-ramp to provide dual-exit lane capacity
- Adding emergency turnouts and turnaround
- Adding one continuous auxiliary lane in each direction between the I-76 and Vasquez Boulevard on-ramps and off-ramps

Interchange Improvements

- Adding an eastbound collector ramp to consolidate incoming movements from the I-76 on-ramps
- Separating the westbound I-270 York Street and I-76 off-ramps
- Improving the Vasquez Boulevard interchange design with improved westbound on-ramp acceleration lanes and the eastbound off-ramp deceleration lanes
- Improving the Quebec Street interchange ramp acceleration and deceleration lengths

Bridge Improvements

- Reconstructing bridges that are at, or will be reaching, the end of their useful life. Bridges carrying travel lanes on I-270 include widening to accommodate additional lanes
 - Replacing the existing York Street bridge over I-270 to meet current bridge standards, accommodate an additional travel lane in each direction on York Street, include a 10-foot multi-use path and a 5-foot sidewalk, and enhance lighting
 - Replacing the existing I-270 bridges over the South Platte River Trail to meet current bridge standards, accommodate this project's bicycle and pedestrian improvements on the South Platte River Trail, and enhance lighting
 - Replacing the existing I-270 bridges over the Burlington Ditch to meet current bridge standards, accommodate future bicycle and pedestrian improvements, and enhance lighting

- Replacing the existing I-270 bridges over Brighton Boulevard to meet current bridge standards, accommodate this project's bicycle and pedestrian improvements on Brighton Boulevard and future bicycle and pedestrian improvements by others, and enhance lighting
- Replacing the existing I-270 bridges over East 60th Avenue and the BNSF crossing to meet current bridge standards, accommodate future bicycle and pedestrian improvements, and enhance lighting
- Replacing the existing I-270 bridges over East 56th Avenue to meet current bridge standards, accommodate this project's bicycle and pedestrian improvements, and enhance lighting
- Replacing the existing Vasquez Boulevard bridge over Sand Creek to meet current bridge standards and accommodate this project's bicycle and pedestrian improvements

Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements

- Improving the York Street I-270 ramp terminal intersections with crosswalks, curb ramps, and pedestrian indicators at the ramp terminal traffic signals
- Adding a new 5-foot sidewalk on the west side and reconstructing a 6-foot sidewalk on the east side of Brighton Boulevard under I-270
- Reconstructing East 56th Avenue under I-270 and adding an on-street bicycle lane, a 10-foot multi-use path, and 6-foot sidewalk connecting to existing sidewalks
- Improving the intersection at East 56th Avenue and South Sandcreek Drive to include curb ramps, crosswalks, and lighting that meet current standards
- Improving the intersection at East 56th Avenue and Eudora Street to include curb ramps, crosswalks, and lighting that meet current standards
- Adding attached sidewalks on the west side of South Sandcreek Drive. The new sidewalks would be 8 feet wide from Quebec Street to East 47th Avenue Drive and 6 feet wide from East 47th Avenue Drive to East 49th Avenue, with a pedestrian crosswalk across East 47th Avenue Drive connecting the two segments
- Improving wayfinding at key locations, guiding bicyclists and pedestrians to the nearest RTD bus stops, major road connections, or distances to the next trailhead to avoid out-of-direction travel

Trail Improvements

- Reconfiguring the South Platte River Trail crossing under I-270 to improve bicycle and pedestrian visibility around tight curves and increase vertical clearance from the I-270 overpass
- Improving bicycle and pedestrian visibility on the Sand Creek Trail by straightening out tight curves, adding a center stripe, and enhancing lighting at the Vasquez Boulevard bridge over the Sand Creek Trail
- Adding a multi-use path with bicycle and pedestrian underpasses crossing under two free-flow interchange ramps on the east side of Vasquez Boulevard through the interchange with enhanced lighting
- Adding a multi-use path on the east and west sides of the Vasquez Boulevard bridge over Sand Creek, connecting users from the East 56th Avenue and Vasquez Boulevard intersection to a new connection to the Sand Creek Trail

- Adding a multi-use trail spur, connecting the proposed north-south Vasquez Boulevard multi-use trail to the East 56th Avenue and South Sandcreek Drive intersection
- Adding a multi-use path in the southeast corner of East 56th Avenue and South Sandcreek Drive
- Adding a 10-foot-wide bicycle and pedestrian overpass over I-270 and South Sandcreek Drive approximately halfway between East 56th Avenue and Quebec Street

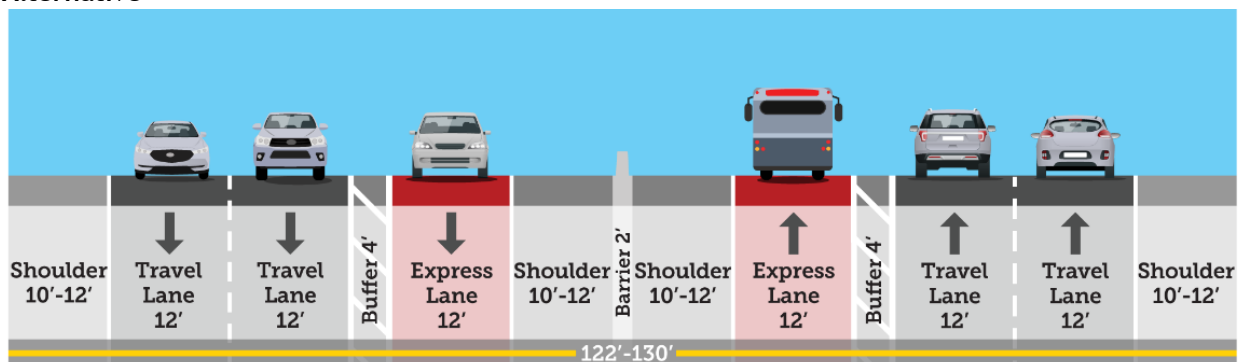
Transit Improvements

- Adding four new bus stops with connecting sidewalks and curb ramps on Quebec Street and South Sandcreek Drive near the I-270/Quebec Street interchange to improve access to RTD routes 88 and 37

2.3.1 Two General-Purpose Lanes and One Express Lane that Accommodates Transit Alternative

This alternative would reconstruct I-270 with two general-purpose lanes and one Express Lane in each direction as shown in Figure 5. Transit vehicles and high-occupancy vehicles (three or more people) could travel in the Express Lane, free of charge. Other travelers, including freight trucks, who choose to pay a fee could also use the new Express Lane.

Figure 5. Two General-Purpose Lanes and One Express Lane that Accommodates Transit Alternative



This alternative includes:

Mainline Improvements

- Providing two general-purpose lanes and one Express Lane in each direction that accommodates transit
- Remainder of mainline improvements identified in the Three General-Purpose Lanes Alternative

Interchange Improvements

This alternative includes the same interchange improvements identified in the Three General-Purpose Lanes Alternative.

Bridge Improvements

This alternative includes the same bridge improvements identified in the Three General-Purpose Lanes Alternative.

Bicycle, Pedestrian, Trail, and Transit Improvements

This alternative includes the same bicycle, pedestrian, trail, and transit enhancements identified in the Three General-Purpose Lanes Alternative.

3.0 Context

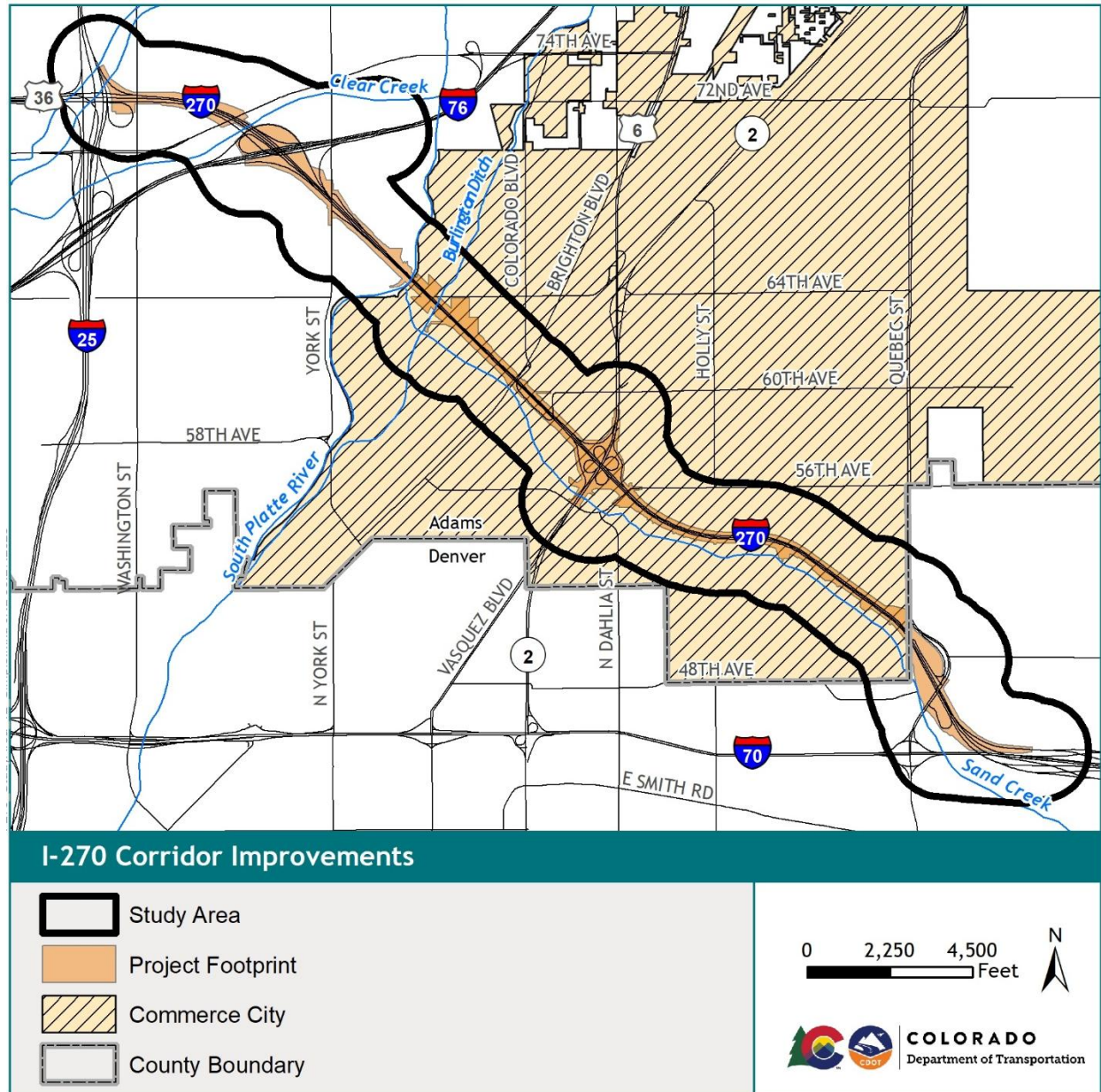
There are no specific land use regulations with which FHWA and CDOT must comply. CDOT incorporates land use considerations in its project development because of its importance to communities and local agencies, as well as to comply with CDOT's Environmental Stewardship Guide (CDOT 2024a), which ensures that the statewide transportation system is constructed and maintained in an environmentally responsible, sustainable, and compliant manner.

4.0 Methods

The study area for the land use analysis is a one quarter mile buffer off the project footprint (Figure 6). This area includes the land on which improvements are proposed as well as adjacent development and recreational facilities that have the potential to be affected by the project. Comprehensive land use plans that have been adopted for the area provide additional context for broader community priorities and development goals.

The analysis of land use impacts for transportation projects is guided by CDOT's NEPA Manual (CDOT 2024b) and involves the following activities:

- Identification of existing land uses, future land uses, and planned developments that could be affected by a project
- Review of comprehensive planning documents, development trends, and policies on land use and growth
- Evaluation of the consistency of the alternatives with relevant land use and development plans
- Quantitative and qualitative assessments of potential land use impacts

Figure 6. Study Area


The following information was gathered from local government websites and field verified in 2024 to support the analysis:

- Land use and zoning geographic information system (GIS) data layers from Adams County, the City and County of Denver (Denver), and the City of Commerce City (Commerce City)
- Aerial imagery where official land use designations are unavailable (in portions of unincorporated Adams County)
- Regional and local comprehensive land use planning documents relevant to the project area
- Parcel databases from Adams County and the Denver assessors

Land uses were grouped into categories established by local agencies and simplified for consistency between jurisdictions. Land use definitions used throughout this report are described in Table 1.

Table 1. Land Use Definitions

Land Use	Description
Agricultural	Agricultural land uses include rural properties and undeveloped land, or land used for the production of crops, livestock, and farming related activities.
Residential	Residential land uses include the range of properties in use for housing. These include single-family homes on individual lots (small or large) and multifamily housing (housing with more than one unit, such as apartments, townhomes, or condominiums).
Commercial	Commercial land uses include those that are intended for businesses and non-residential business activities, including day-to-day retail, office developments, entertainment, dining, hospitality and travel, service businesses, and larger regional commercial developments.
Industrial	Industrial land uses include properties and structures dedicated to industrial businesses and heavy commercial operations. These include large-scale facilities that involve processing plants, heavy manufacturing and commercial uses, and industrial machinery.
Mixed Use	Mixed use refers to properties that integrate a variety of land uses. Uses are compatible and supportive.
Parks, Open Space, and Recreation	Parks, open space, and recreation include public and private open spaces, active and passive parks, greenways and trails, recreational facilities, public gathering areas, and important environmental features, such as wooded areas, streams, and wetlands.
Public/Quasi Public	Public and quasi public uses include property owned in part or whole that serve the community, such as schools, churches, fire stations, libraries, and hospitals.
Right of Way (ROW)	ROW refers to property used to allow for the movement of people and goods, such as railroad and highway corridors.
Utilities	Utility and infrastructure land uses and facilities are dedicated to the provision of essential services, such as water, sewer, and electricity.
Vacant	Any property that is currently undeveloped.

Land use impacts occur when a project changes how land is used. Direct land use impacts occur through the acquisition of ROW, which converts land from an existing use to a transportation use. Direct impacts are calculated using the project footprint (Figure 6). The analysis of impacts considers how the Build Alternatives would:

- Affect ongoing uses of adjacent land by identifying existing land uses that would be converted to transportation use by overlaying design plans onto land use maps and calculating the degree of change
- Be consistent with approved local government plans by comparing expected land use changes with existing plans and identifying any discrepancies

- Induce growth beyond that anticipated by local planning departments

Induced growth is an indirect land use impact that occurs when a project causes changes in the intensity and integrity, location, or pattern of land use. For transportation projects, this typically results from changes in accessibility (e.g., a new interchange) that influence where development occurs.

5.0 Existing Conditions

5.1 Existing Land Use

I-270 is a critical east-west interstate that provides entry into Commerce City at its southern end while connecting residents and the business community with the region. It is surrounded by heavy industrial land uses that include processing plants, manufacturing and commercial uses, sand or gravel operations, freight and truck yards, and industrial machinery.

Historical development of heavy manufacturing alongside small scale single-family residential land uses is reflected in the mix of uses that are present today. In these areas, land use is represented by a combination of residential properties, businesses, and industrial development. Small residential areas within the study area are located north of I-270 and east of I-25 along 73rd Avenue, along 71st Avenue between I-270 and I-76 east of I-25, and along the southern side of I-76 between I-270 and Welby Reservoir along Clayton Street. An existing noise barrier separates these residences from I-76. A few residences are also north of I-270 in this area, primarily on either side of 68th Place and Elizabeth Street.

Larger residential areas are associated with well-established neighborhoods that intersect the study area as shown in Figure 7. They include Denver's Central Park neighborhood (east of Quebec Street and mostly outside of the study area), Denver's Northeast Park Hill neighborhood (west of Central Park and north of I-70 with only the industrial northeastern limit within the study area), and the South Rose Hill neighborhood (Figure 8). The South Rose Hill neighborhood is one of Commerce City's original neighborhoods, as it is surrounded by industrial land uses and has experienced encroachment of industrial development and truck activity in recent years (City of Commerce City 2023). A particularly isolated pocket of residences occurs near 52nd Place and Oneida Street.

I-270 Corridor Improvements

Legend:

- Study Area
- County Boundary
- Project Limits
- Neighborhoods with Larger Residential Areas
- Neighborhood Boundaries

Scale: 0, 2,250, 4,500 Feet

North Arrow: N

Colorado Department of Transportation

Figure 8. South Rose Hill Neighborhood



Two reservoirs (Welby Reservoir and Bambi-Walker Reservoir) are located west of the South Platte River between I-270 and I-76 just north of the study area. Both are part of Denver Water’s Downstream Reservoir Water Storage Program and comprise its South Reservoir Complex (Denver Water 2025). Limited agricultural uses are present in the study area. Most of these are small scale operations that integrate with adjacent uses, such as the approximately 5-acre parcel in Adams County north of I-270 and east of I-25 in the northern project limits.

Natural and recreational areas within the study area include the South Platte River and South Platte River Trail (which travel north-south between the two reservoirs); Clear Creek and the adjacent Clear Creek Trail (between I-76 and Colorado State Highway 224 (CO 224); and Sand Creek and the Sand Creek Regional Greenway Trail (roughly parallel to and south of I-270 throughout most of the study area). These uses provide recreational amenities, wildlife habitat, and an overall break from the industrial setting. Existing land use in the study area is shown in Figure 9 and presented in Table 2.

Figure 9. Existing Land Use

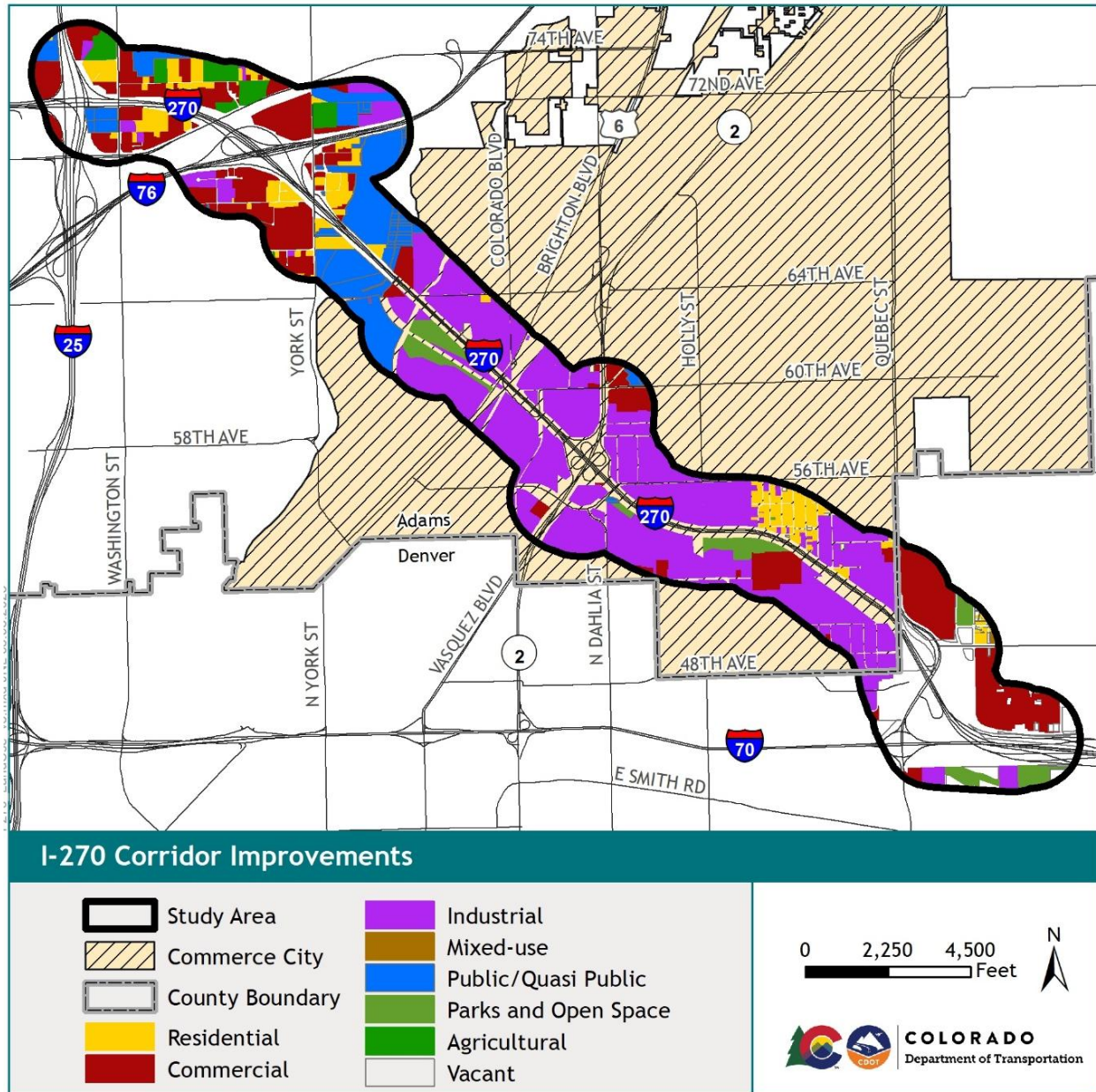


Table 2. Existing Land Use in the Study Area

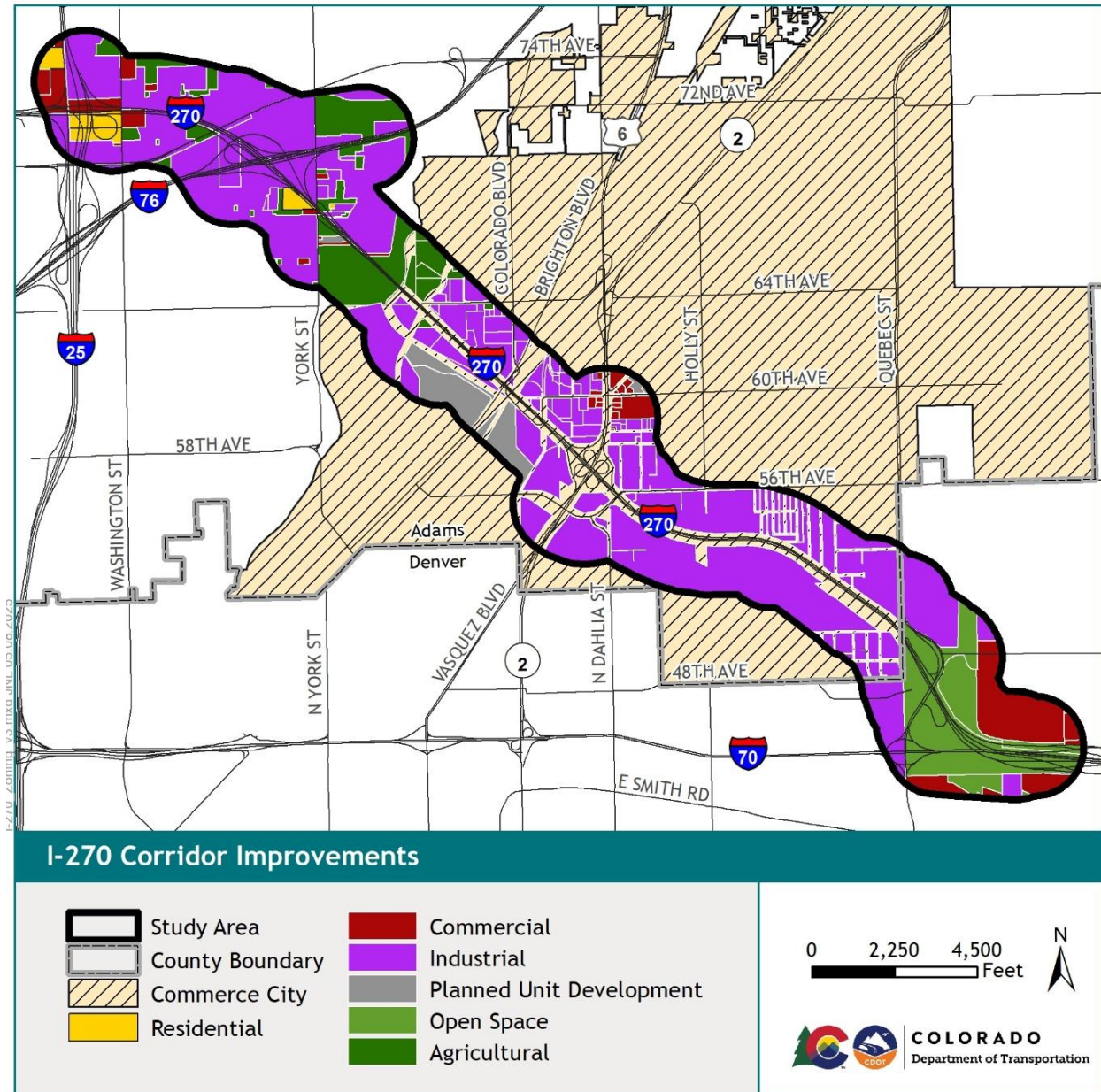
Land Use	Acres	% of Study Area
Agricultural	52.18	1.83%
Residential	140.59	4.93%
Commercial ¹	459.23	16.10%
Industrial	917.85	32.19%
Mixed Use	9.50	0.33%
Parks and Open Space	114.77	4.02%
Public/Quasi Public	274.32	9.62%
Vacant ²	87.33	3.06%
CDOT ROW/Public and Private Utilities	795.97	27.92%

¹ Commercial includes office uses.

² Vacant includes properties that are not currently in use, with no occupants or personal property.

As shown in Figure 10, the majority of the study area is zoned for industrial uses with only small pockets of land in the northwest portion of the study area zoned for residential uses. Commercial zoning is focused on the area north of I-270 and east of Quebec Street, along 60th Avenue and Dahlia Street, and near the I-25/I-270 interchange.

The area south of the Colorado State Highway 2 (CO 2) and I-270 interchange is zoned for planned unit developments (PUD). This zoning classification allows for flexibility in development in areas within which uses would otherwise not be permitted because of the strict application of zoning district or general development standards.

Figure 10. Existing Zoning


5.1.1.1 Applicable Land Use Planning, Regulations, and Policies

Most of the study area (82 percent) is located within Adams County and Commerce City, in the area identified by Commerce City as the historic core of the city. As shown on Figure 6, the South Platte River generally divides the study area into two jurisdictions with unincorporated Adams County northwest of the river and Commerce City (also within Adams County) to the southeast. A small section in the easternmost portion of the study area lies within Denver near I-70. Each of these jurisdictions prepares comprehensive plans to communicate their community's goals and objectives, provide a blueprint for future land use,

and serve as the basis for zoning, subdivision, and land use codes. A summary of comprehensive plans relevant to the project is provided below.

5.1.2 Commerce City

Commerce City 2045 Comprehensive Plan

Commerce City - September 29, 2023

The Commerce City 2045 Comprehensive Plan (which covers most of the study area) establishes a unified vision for the future of Commerce City and identifies the strategies, policies, and recommendations necessary to achieve that vision. The plan includes the following overarching goals and objectives related to land use and transportation that are relevant to the project:

- Ensure industrial areas continue to provide a strong employment base while working to improve their overall impact on Commerce City residents
- Improve the overall image and appearance of the city
- Support existing neighborhoods with appropriate maintenance and infrastructure improvements
- Create and maintain a well-connected and safe transportation network that includes auto, bicycle, pedestrian, and transit options, maximizing mobility and supporting the city's growth
- Expand and improve transit services and related options throughout the community
- Encourage and support efforts to increase bicycle and pedestrian connectivity throughout the city
- Grow and maintain the city's connected system of multi-use trails and open space
- Ensure appropriate, high-quality infrastructure to accommodate community needs and future growth

A key feature of the plan is the organization of the city into 13-character areas—neighborhoods, districts, and corridors—based on the desired character, form, and function. Three of these areas address land use, growth, and development within the study area: 270 Industrial District, South Platte District, and Fusion District (South Rose Hill).

The 270 Industrial District encompasses most of the land surrounding the I-270 corridor and contains the city's established heavy industrial areas. Primary land uses in this district include processing plants, heavy manufacturing and commercial uses, sand or gravel operations, freight and truck yards, and industrial machinery. The Suncor oil refinery is the most notable business in the district. The refinery benefits from access to Denver International Airport and regional rail service to deliver the products it processes, including gasoline, diesel, jet fuel, asphalt, and a substantial portion of the region's gasoline. The following are priorities for land use in the 270 District:

- Constrain the district to its existing/established boundaries and not expand into adjacent areas
- Buffer the district from adjacent land uses, wherever possible, especially where industrial uses abut existing residential areas

- Incorporate new employment uses over time, such as business parks, offices, and light manufacturing at its edges, serving as a buffer and providing a more compatible transition to nearby neighborhoods and commercial areas

The South Platte District encompasses land north and south of I-270 within the South Platte River corridor. Primary land uses in this district include residential, river-related flex spaces, utilities, public gathering spaces, and parks and open space. The following are priorities for land use in the South Platte District:

- Reserve the district for maintaining the facilities and other infrastructure essential to the operation of the city, as well as providing river-oriented parks and open space
- Examine existing utility areas for the possible establishment of trails, waterfront access, and other public/recreational amenities, where feasible
- Maintain its support role for the community and seek opportunities to enhance public amenities and attractiveness

The Fusion District encompasses the Irondale and Rose Hill neighborhoods, north of I-270 in eastern Adams County. This summary is focused on the South Rose Hill portion of the district which is located just north of the highway within the study area. Primary land uses in this district include industrial, warehousing and distribution/logistics, utility, public gathering spaces, parks, and open space. The following are priorities for land use in the Fusion District:

- Reinvest in existing neighborhoods, enhancing public infrastructure like curb and gutter, accessible sidewalks, crosswalks, streetlights, and integrated park and open space. Heavy industrial uses should be discouraged and phased out over time, eliminating truck activity within the residential portions of the district
- Encourage primary light industrial and small-scale manufacturing where previously heavy industrial development existed, providing a buffer from residential areas and a gradual transition to the more intense land uses in the 270 Industrial District

Residential development is limited within this district, and there is a desire to protect these areas from encroachment. A key concern of the public identified throughout the comprehensive planning process was the lack of connectivity between the north and south portions of the city.

Walk.Bike.Fit. - A Multimodal Active Transportation Plan

City of Commerce City (Commerce City) - March 2012

This plan aims to strengthen Commerce City as a more walkable and bike-friendly community. The plan promotes development of a seamless and interconnected, city-wide multimodal system with a consistent level of quality and user-friendliness with safe, convenient, and pleasant ways to move about without gaps or formidable barriers. I-270, the railroads, SH 85, I-76, and CO 2 are given as examples of barriers that discourage or make active travel unsafe or unpleasant.

5.1.3 Adams County

South Platte River Corridor Heritage Plan

Adams County - June 16, 1997

This plan provides a strategic framework for the preservation of 17 miles of the South Platte River corridor through Adams County to protect and enhance its natural, cultural, and recreational qualities. The southernmost portion of the corridor is located within the study area, where the link to the Sand Creek is identified as a gateway. Emphasis is placed on the protection of natural areas, and sense of community stewardship through environmental education programs.

Adams County Clear Creek Corridor Master Plan

Adams County - April 2017

This plan addresses future improvements to 7 miles of the Clear Creek Trail and 178 acres of adjacent open space within Adams County boundaries. The plan represents public input and makes corridor recommendations, notably improved wayfinding and signage and connections to and from the Clear Creek Trail.

Advancing Adams Comprehensive Plan

Adams County - September 27, 2022

This plan guides land use in the unincorporated portions of the study area, primarily along the I-76 corridor and south of CO 224/70th Avenue. It emphasizes a need to consider all modes of transportation and recognizes parks and trails as a key component to an integrated transportation network.

The plan notes that industrial uses have historically provided much of the county's economic base and that a focus should be on supporting more intensive industrial uses in strategic locations that are served by supporting infrastructure and removed from residential areas. Similarly, a key community and housing goal is to establish and sustain safe, secure, and livable neighborhoods that meet the everyday needs of residents. One of the strategies identified to achieve this goal is to establish transitions in land use between residential and industrial areas to reduce exposure to air and noise pollutants.

5.1.4 City and County of Denver

Sand Creek Regional Greenway Trail Denver Segment Master Plan

City and County of Denver - May 2016

This plan identifies segments of Sand Creek Greenway needing improvements and proposes future projects within Denver. It proposes improvements from the plan and specifically addresses depleted trail surface conditions due to erosion, flooding, and increased use.

Comprehensive Plan 2040

City and County of Denver - April 22, 2019

This plan guides land use in the portion of the study area (18 percent) that is located south of I-270. Within Denver, the study area overlaps with the northeastern edge of the Northeast

Park Hill neighborhood and the westernmost portion of the Central Park neighborhood. It includes the following goals related to the transportation network:

- Provide a safe transportation system that serves all users
- Build streets that are safe for everyone, especially for the most vulnerable, including the elderly, those with disabilities, and children
- Create a transportation system to serve all ages and physical abilities
- Build and maintain safe bicycle and pedestrian networks

Land use and growth are addressed through *Blueprint Denver* (City and County of Denver 2019a), Denver's growth strategy. Land within the study area is identified in this plan as low and high manufacturing value, with heavy production and construction-related activities, utility providers, major warehousing, and storage (including chemical) facilities on large parcels. A mix of businesses is common, and residential uses are not compatible as most buildings have very large footprints, with significant land needs for equipment and material storage. The portion of the Central Park neighborhood within the study area is defined as an urban center, a classification that represents the most intense areas of the city outside of downtown. These are considered highly active and vibrant (such as rail transit stops and other regional centers).

Game Plan for a Healthy City

City and County of Denver - May 2019

This plan lays out a strategy for the long-term health and growth of park and recreational resources. It emphasizes multimodal access, as well as access to natural areas. Greenways are noted as contributing to healthier waterways, better neighborhood connections, improved trail experiences, and more diverse programming.

Transportation Master Plans, adopted by Adams County (Adams County 2022b), Denver (City and County of Denver 2019a), and Commerce City (Commerce City 2010), identify I-270 as one of the most heavily traveled corridors in the region and a critical freight corridor. They also call for improvements and a study of opportunities throughout the corridor.

The plans discussed in this section are the most relevant to land use within the study area. There are numerous plans that address activities and resources within local jurisdictions and the larger region. While these plans were reviewed, they were not summarized in this section because they do not include specificity regarding land use within the study area by which to evaluate the project.

5.2 Development Trends/Future Land Use

The study area is highly urbanized, with few areas available for development. Future land use is expected to adhere closely to existing land use. In alignment with land use plans and policies discussed above, future development will likely emphasize retaining industrial areas and land for future jobs, supporting existing neighborhoods, and improving transportation connectivity. In the Fusion District of Commerce City, existing residential areas in Rose Hill and South Rose Hill will likely be protected from encroachment by industrial development.

Expansion of transit-oriented development, commercial, and manufacturing is expected within the Central Park neighborhood north of I-70, around the I-70/270 interchange. Riparian restoration and greenway development are expected to continue along Sand Creek and the South Platte River. Portions of Vasquez Boulevard and York Street are also identified for improvements in transportation plans.

6.0 Impacts Assessment

6.1 No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative would not result in the acquisition of additional ROW within the study area, and no existing land uses would be directly converted to transportation uses. As a result, aside from what is planned and implemented by local jurisdictions, there would be no changes in land use from existing conditions.

Under the No Action Alternative, I-270 would continue to operate under current conditions and serve existing land uses. This is consistent with goals, outlined in the Commerce City 2045 Comprehensive Plan, related to maintaining existing industrial land uses. However, this alternative does not address transportation needs on I-270, relating to travel reliability, safety, existing infrastructure, and freight efficiency. While industrial areas would continue as under existing conditions, they would not be supported by a more modern and efficient transportation system. As such, the No Action Alternative would not be consistent with goals to ensure strong industry, high-quality infrastructure, and growth in employment over time. The No Action Alternative would also conflict with transportation master plans that recognize the need for improvements to I-270 as one of the most heavily traveled corridors in the region.

Multimodal goals identified throughout Commerce City, the Fusion District, the South Platte District, and Denver call for improved access, safety, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, and transit. This alternative would do nothing to address these goals, grow Commerce City's connected system of multi-use trails and open space or better connect areas north and south of I-270.

The No Action Alternative is not expected to induce growth. The study area is highly developed, and no changes in highway capacity or new access would occur. However, increasing congestion on I-270 could lead to changes in land use patterns as more travelers choose to use alternative routes through adjacent areas to avoid the highway.

6.2 Build Alternatives

Most of the changes included in the project occur within existing ROW. Both build alternatives would acquire 10.57 acres of land. Of this, 6.50 acres are industrial, 2.10 acres are residential, 1.94 acres are parks/open space, 0.02 acres are public, and 0.01 acres are vacant. In addition to permanent ROW acquisition, the project would require 3.21 acres of permanent easements and 33.71 acres of temporary easements. Land use would not permanently change as a result of these easements; most are required for access and construction staging.

The corridor would remain predominantly focused on industrial land use and transportation, as called for in local plans and consistent with existing conditions. The build alternatives would be consistent with goals related to maintaining existing industrial land uses. By addressing transportation needs on I-270 relating to travel reliability, safety, existing infrastructure, and freight efficiency, it would support industrial land uses with a more modern and efficient transportation system. As such, the build alternatives would be consistent with goals to ensure strong industry, high-quality infrastructure, and growth in employment over time. The Express Lane may offer additional benefits for transit because transit vehicles and high-occupancy vehicles (three or more people) could travel in the Express Lane, free of charge, which would contribute to transit reliability. Freight vehicles and other travelers who choose to pay a fee could also use the Express Lane, when a more reliable trip is needed, further contributing to community goals related to high quality infrastructure, improved access, and efficiency.

As described in Section 2.2 of this technical memorandum, the build alternatives include other improvements that are consistent with multimodal goals identified throughout Commerce City, the Fusion District, the South Platte District, and Denver, including construction of new multi-use paths throughout the study area, safety improvements around intersections, new bicycle and pedestrian connections, improved connectivity to recreational amenities (the Sand Creek Regional Greenway and the South Platte River Trail crossing), and a new RTD bus stop at Quebec Street and South Sandcreek Drive. This alternative would address the issue identified in the plan, related to lack of bicycle/pedestrian connectivity, and limited connections across I-270 by providing multimodal improvements. Refer to the Transit, Bicycle, and Pedestrian Technical Report for additional information.

When compared to the No Action Alternative, the build alternatives would improve safety and reduce travel times for all drivers, which would support goals related to maintaining a balanced mix of land uses, retaining industrial land uses, and improving access and connectivity.

The build alternatives are not expected to induce growth beyond that anticipated by local planning departments. Either alternative would increase capacity, reduce travel delays, and improve existing access. New access would not be constructed. The intensity and integrity, location, or pattern of land use is not expected to change.

7.0 Mitigation Measures

Table 3 shows a summary of impacts and mitigation for the build alternatives.

Table 3. Summary of Impacts and Mitigation for Build Alternatives

Activity Triggering Mitigation	Location of Activity	Impact	Mitigation	Responsible Branch	Timing/Phase that Mitigation will be Implemented
Property Acquisition	Adjacent to I-270 throughout the project limits	Acquisition of public and private property	For any person(s) whose real property interests may be impacted by this project, the acquisition of those property interests will comply fully with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended, which is a federally mandated program that applies to all acquisitions of real property or displacements of persons resulting from federal or federally assisted programs or projects. All impacted owners will be provided notification of the acquiring agency's intent to acquire an interest in their property, including a written offer letter of just compensation specifically describing those property interests. A ROW Specialist will be assigned to each property owner to assist them with this process.	CDOT ROW	Final Design and Pre-Construction

8.0 Required Permits and Coordination

No permits are required for land use; however, coordination will continue to occur with Adams County, Commerce City, and Denver throughout the project development, final design, and construction processes.

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