
INTRODUCTION

This *Devolution Study Report* provides information and data pertaining to “commuter highways” within Colorado’s five Metro Planning Organizations (MPOs), per the requirements of CRS 43-2-101.5. For purposes of this report, *Devolution* is defined as the transference of a highway or segment of highway from state ownership and control to local government ownership and control.

OVERVIEW OF LEGISLATION

CRS 43-2-101.5, adopted during the 2010 Legislation Session, required the Colorado Transportation Commission (Commission) to conduct, or direct the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) to conduct, a study to determine which highways within MPO boundaries are “commuter highways.” MPOs are urban areas with a population of 50,000 or more. Furthermore, an MPO is a federally designated entity established by agreement between the Governor and the units of local government responsible for transportation planning processes.

The statute defines *Commuter Highway* as:

- A highway or a portion of highway that:
 - is part of the state highway system
 - is located within the territory of an MPO
 - at least 80 percent of trips originate and terminate within that MPO (internal-internal trips)
 - is not an interstate highway

In addition, the legislation mandates the use of easily obtainable data, in this case MPO traffic models, to determine these highways. Further, upon completion of the study, the Commission may make recommendations to remove certain segments of highway from the state system and devolve those eligible segments to the local government(s) within which they are contained. Should the Commission recommend removal of some eligible segments from the state system, they must:

- Consult with the impacted MPO or local governments.
- Ensure removal does not result in an unfunded mandate.
- Suggest modifications to the funding formula used to allocate HUTF to impacted jurisdiction.

Lastly, a report must be provided to the House and Senate Transportation Committees by February 1, 2011 on the study findings and any recommendations made by the Commission.

STUDY METHODOLOGY

Calculation of Commuter Highways

While it might be possible to calculate the percent of trips on any given road segment internal to the MPO area for a single corridor by a direct survey approach, this methodology is not feasible for the entire highway network within each MPO. Fortunately, regional travel models have been developed and refined over the past 40 years specifically to answer these types of questions.

MPO travel models begin with a set of “traffic analysis zones.” On a map, these look like an irregular checkerboard pattern criss-crossing across the MPO area map. The DRCOG model divides the region into approximately 3,000 zones. The model is then able to estimate the amount of traffic going to and from each zone by modeling the route a rational motorist would take to get from points A to B within the MPO, and takes into account the congestion caused by other motorists trying to do the same thing. These zone-to-zone trips result in 9,000,000 possible trip options, and provide an estimate of traffic volume on all segments of the system. This travel pattern also includes trips that enter or leave the model area via roads that cross the MPO boundary.

By programming the model to keep track of trips going to and from zones outside the MPO boundaries, the model is able to determine the percentage of trips that are considered “internal-internal.” The resulting model output identifies commuter highways.

STUDY OVERVIEW

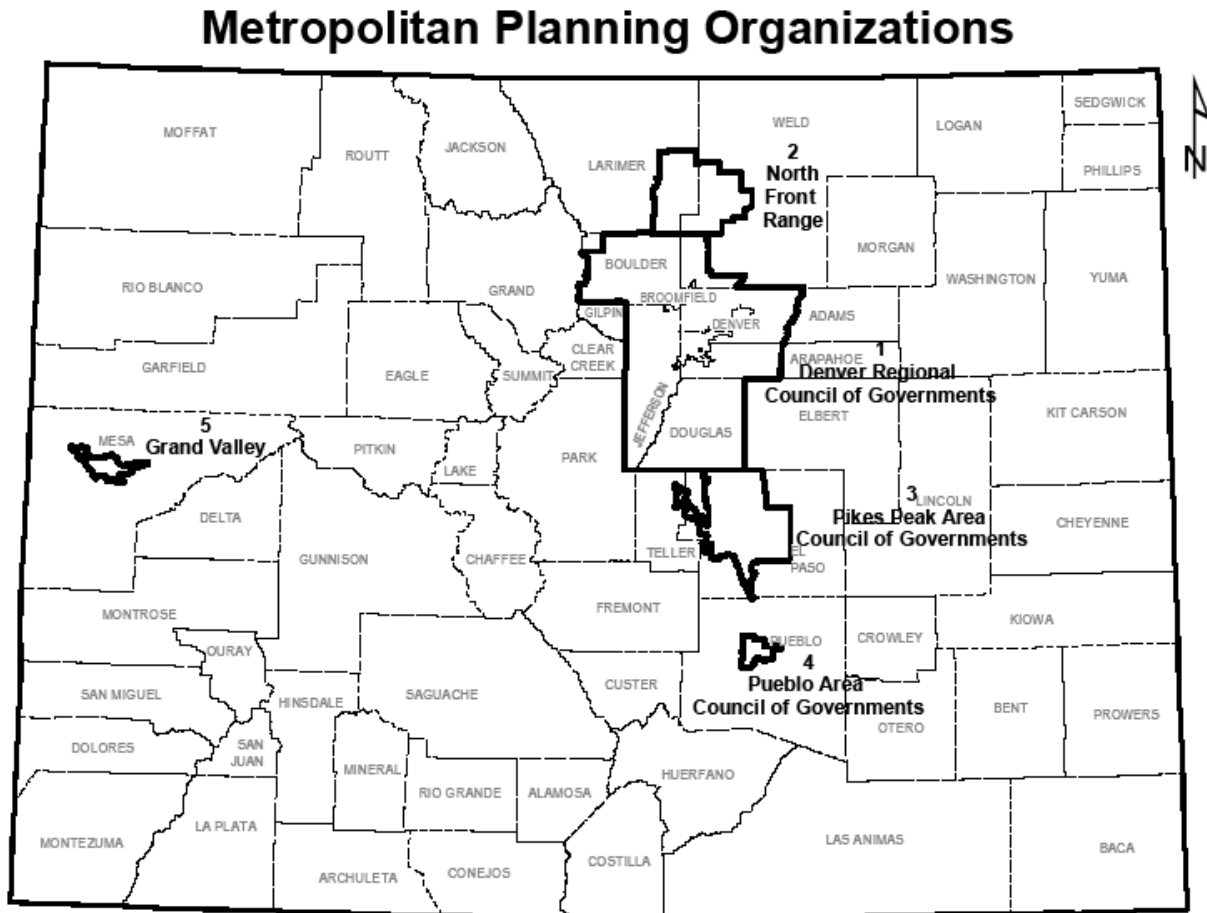
The study area was the boundaries of each of the state’s five MPOs: Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG), Grand Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (GVMPO), North Front Range Metropolitan Planning Organization (NFRMPO), Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments (PPACG) and Pueblo Area Council of Governments (PACOG). CDOT maintains 1,201.76 centerline miles (excluding interstates) within these five MPO boundaries, or roughly 15.23% of the state highway system. Centerline miles are the actual length of the highway in one direction of travel. One “centerline” mile of highway, for instance, may contain two travel lanes in each direction, equaling four “lane miles” of highway. CDOT maintains 3,886.5 lane miles (excluding interstates) within the MPOs, which account for approximately 20% of state highway lane miles (excluding interstates).

Working with the MPOs, CDOT determined that 570.11 centerline miles, totaling 2,154.05 lane miles meet the definition of commuter highway and therefore are eligible for devolution.

CDOT staff presented the draft study results to each MPO Board. In addition, presentations were made to the Statewide Transportation Advisory Committee (STAC), as well as the Commission prior to completion of the report. The STAC is a statewide planning committee comprised of the state’s 10 rural Transportation Planning Regions, and the five MPOs.

Based on 2009 data an average of 29 million vehicle miles were traveled within the MPO boundaries every day. This is 59% of the total daily vehicle miles traveled (VMT), (excluding interstates), in Colorado that year. Map 1 shows the location of Colorado’s MPOs.

Map 1. Colorado Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs)



Data Source: CDOT 2009

Published: January 2011

STUDY RESULTS

Grand Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization

The Grand Valley MPO consists of four member governments: the Cities of Grand Junction, Fruita, and Palisade, and Mesa County. Each day, approximately 771,000 miles are traveled on non-interstate highways within the Grand Valley MPO.

- CDOT maintains 55 centerline highway miles, totaling 170 lane miles within the MPO (excluding interstates)
- Of those miles, there are 26.34 centerline miles, totaling 69.9 lane miles of commuter highways.

Map 2. Grand Valley MPO Commuter Highways

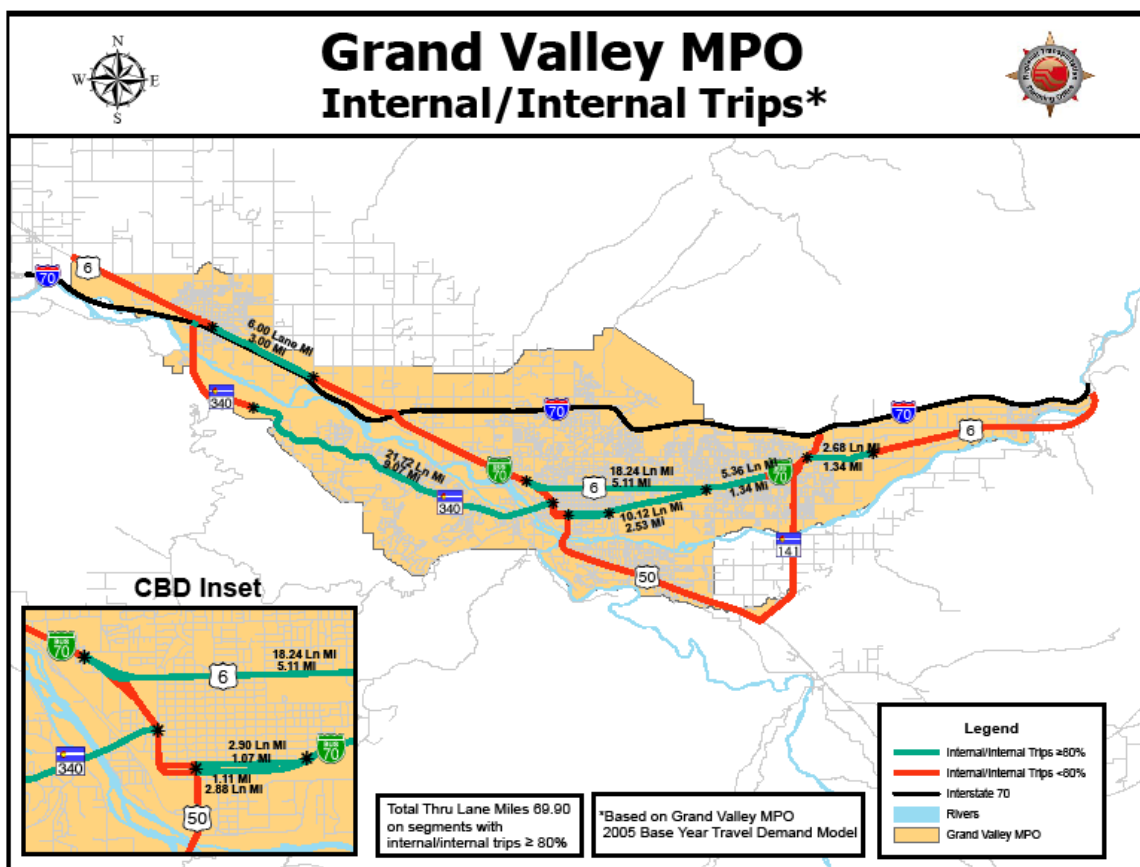


Table 1 provides further detail to the commuter highways in the region, highlighted in green on Map 2.

Table 1. Grand Valley MPO Commuter Highway Segments

State Highway in GVMPO Region	Internal Trips More than 80%	Centerline Miles
US 6	From I-70 B to I-70 B	5.11
SH 340	From I-70 to I-70B	9.07
US 6	Section of I-70B	2.53
US 6	East of SH 141	1.34
US 6	Section of I-70B	1.34
US 6	Between SH 340 and I-70	3.00
I 70 Bus	East of US 50	3.95
Total		26.34

North Front Range Metropolitan Planning Organization

The North Front Range MPO consists of fifteen member governments: the Cities and Towns Berthoud, Windsor, Garden City, Miliken, Timnath, Johnstown, LaSalle, Eaton, Severance, Fort Collins, Loveland, Greeley, and Evans; and Larimer and Weld Counties. Each day, approximately 2,695,000 miles are traveled on non-interstate highways within the North Front Range MPO.

- CDOT maintains 197.66 centerline highway miles, totaling 553.69 lane miles within the MPO (excluding interstates).
- Of those miles, there are 56.5 centerline miles, totaling 204.33 lane miles of commuter highways.

Map 3. North Front Range MPO Commuter Highways

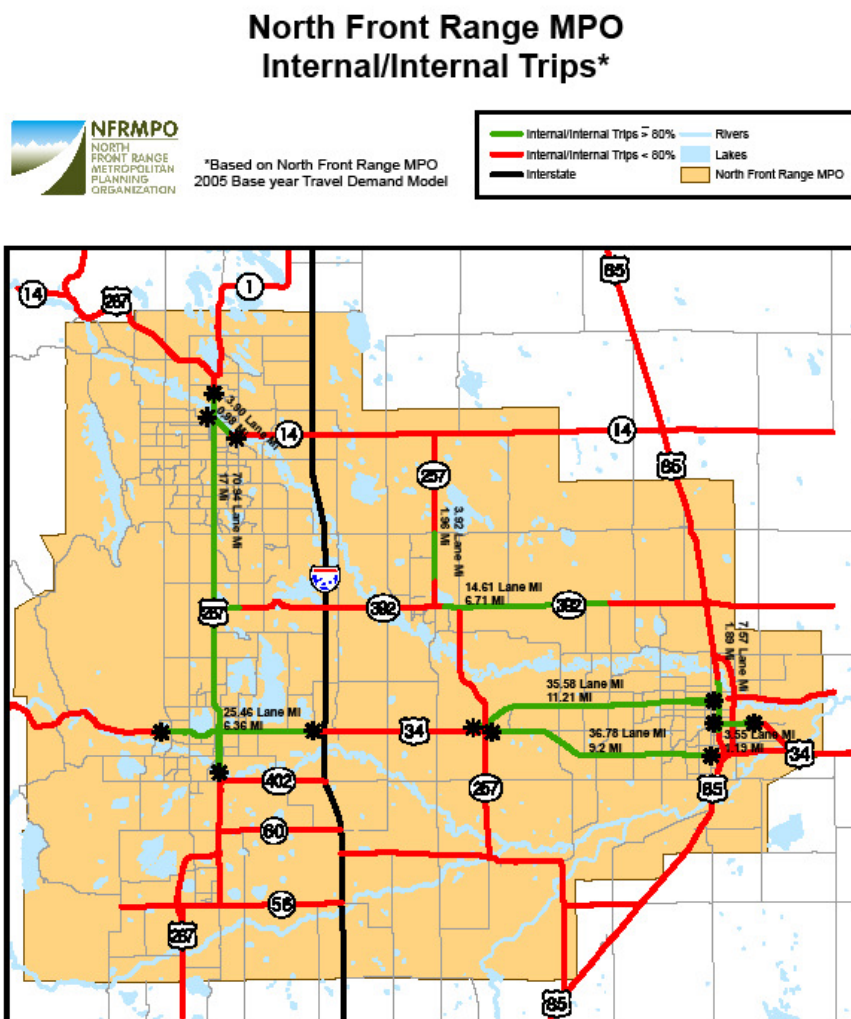


Table 2 provides further detail to the commuter highways in the region, highlighted in green in Map 3.

Table 2. North Front Range MPO Commuter Highway Segments

State Highway in NFRMPO Region	Internal Trips More than 80%	Centerline Miles
US 287	From SH 14 to SH 402	17.00
SH 14	From US 287 to SH 14	.98
US 34	From I-25 to US 287	6.36
SH 392	From SH 257 to US 85	6.71
US 34 North	From SH 257 to US 85	11.21
US 34 South	From SH 257 to US 85	9.20
US 85	From US 34 South to US 34 North	1.89
US 34	From US 85 East to US 34 South	1.19
SH 257	From SH 392 to SH 14	1.96
Total		56.50

Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments

The Pikes Peak Area COG consists of sixteen member governments: the Cities and Towns of Colorado Springs, Cripple Creek, Fountain, Manitou Springs Victor, Woodland Park, Alma, Calhan, Fairplay, Green Mountain Falls, Monument, Palmer Lake, Ramah, and El Paso, Park, and Teller Counties. Each day, approximately 2,283,000 miles are traveled on non-interstate highways within the Pikes Peak Area COG.

- CDOT maintains 124.9 centerline highway miles, totaling 413 lane miles of highway within the MPO (excluding interstates).
- Of those miles, there are 36.05 centerline miles, totaling 158.82 lane miles of commuter highways.

Map 4. Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments Commuter Highways

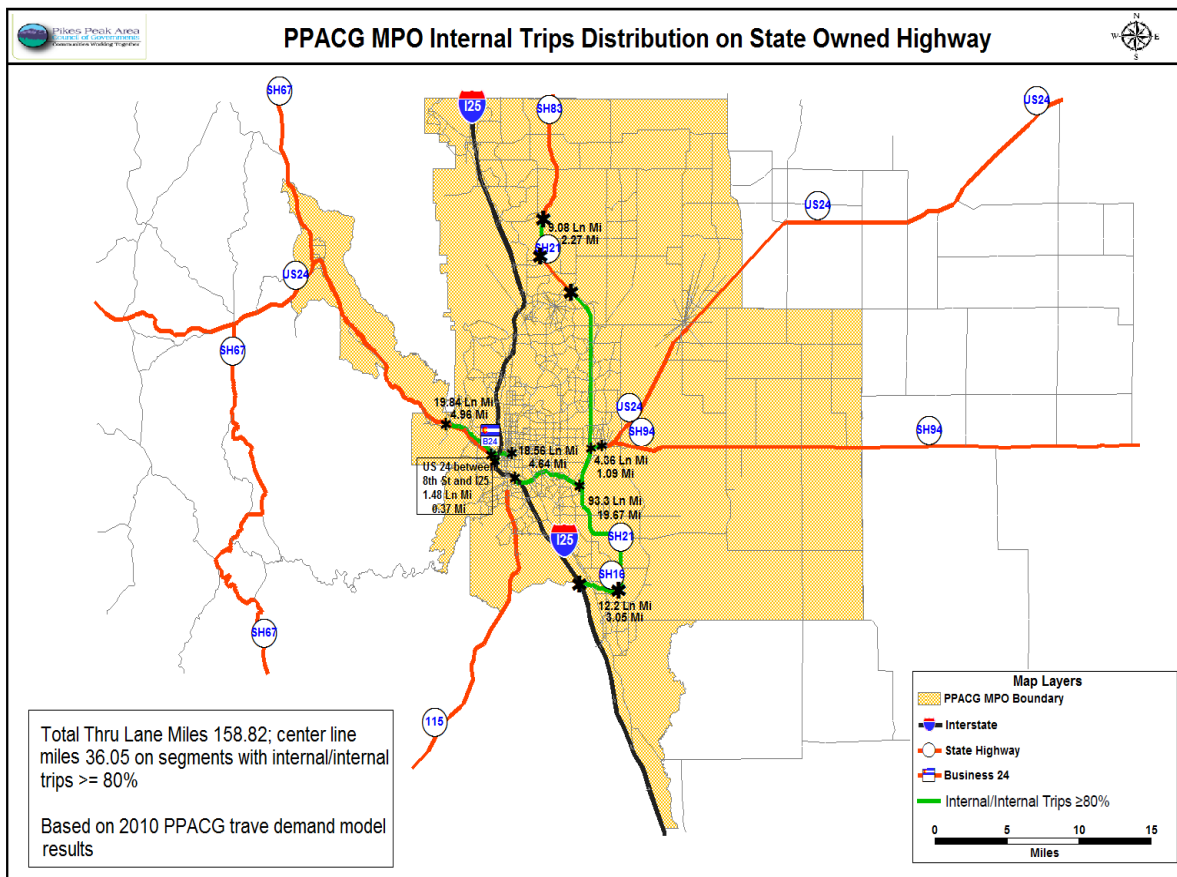


Table 3 provides further detail to the commuter highways in the region, highlighted in green on Map 4.

Table 3. Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments Commuter Highway Segments

State Highway in PPACG Region	Internal Trips More than 80%	Centerline Miles
US 24 West	Between 8th St and I-25	.37
US 24 Middle	Between I-25 and Powers Blvd	4.64
US 24 East	Between Powers Blvd and Peters Rd	1.09
Powers Blvd (SH 21)	Between Briargate Pkwy and SH 16	19.67
SH 16	Whole Segment	3.05
SH 83	Between North Gate Rd and Powers Blvd	2.27
US 24 Business	Whole Segment	4.96
Total		36.05

Pueblo Area Council of Governments

The Pueblo Area COG consists of two member governments, the City of Pueblo and Pueblo County. Each day, approximately 742,000 miles are traveled on non-interstate highways within the Pueblo Area COG.

- CDOT maintains 42.3 centerline highway miles, totaling 162.66 lane miles of highway within the MPO (excluding interstates).
- Of those miles, there are 18.02 centerline miles, totaling 68.0 lane miles of commuter highways.

Map 5. Pueblo Area MPO Commuter Highways

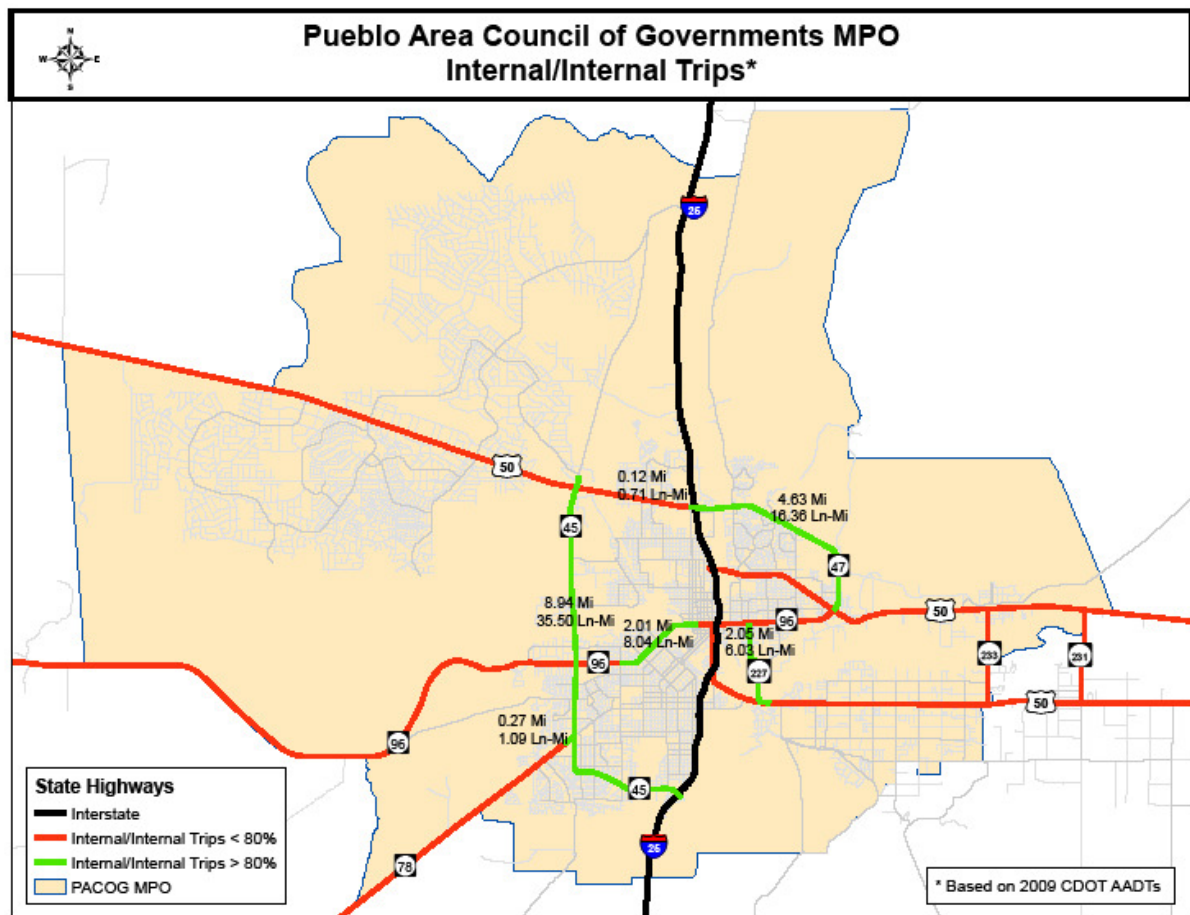


Table 4 provides further detail to the commuter highways in the region, highlighted in green on Map 5.

Table 4. Pueblo Area MPO Commuter Highway Segments

State Highway in PACOG Region	Internal Trips More than 80%	Centerline Miles
US 50	Between I-25 and SH 47	.12
SH 45	Between I-25 and US 50	8.94
SH 78	At Jct of SH 45	.27
SH 227	Between North US 50 and South US 50	2.05
SH 47	Between US 50 and I-25	4.63
SH 96	Between I-25 and SH 45	2.01
Total		18.02

Denver Regional Council of Governments

The Denver Regional COG consists of 56 member governments: the Cities and Towns of Arvada, Aurora, Bennett, Black Hawk, Boulder, Bow Mar, Brighton, Castle Rock, Centennial, Central City, Cherry Hills Village, Columbine Valley, Commerce City, Dacono, Deer Trail, Edgewater, Empire, Englewood, Erie, Federal Heights, Firestone, Foxfield, Frederick, Georgetown, Glendale, Golden, Greenwood Village, Idaho Springs, Lafayette, Lakewood, Larkspur, Littleton, Lone Tree, Longmont, Louisville, Lyons, Mead, Morrison, Nederland, Northglenn, Parker, Sheridan, Silver Plume, Superior, Thornton, Westminster, and Wheat Ridge; and Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder, Clear Creek, Douglas, and Gilpin Counties, the City and County of Broomfield, and the City and County of Denver. Each day, approximately 19,134,000 miles are traveled on non-interstate highways within the Denver Regional COG.

- CDOT maintains 781.9 centerline highway miles, totaling 2,587.5 lane miles of highway within the MPO (excluding interstates).
- Of those miles, there are 433.2 centerline miles, totaling 1,653.0 lane miles of commuter highways.

Map 6. Denver Regional Council of Governments Commuter Highways

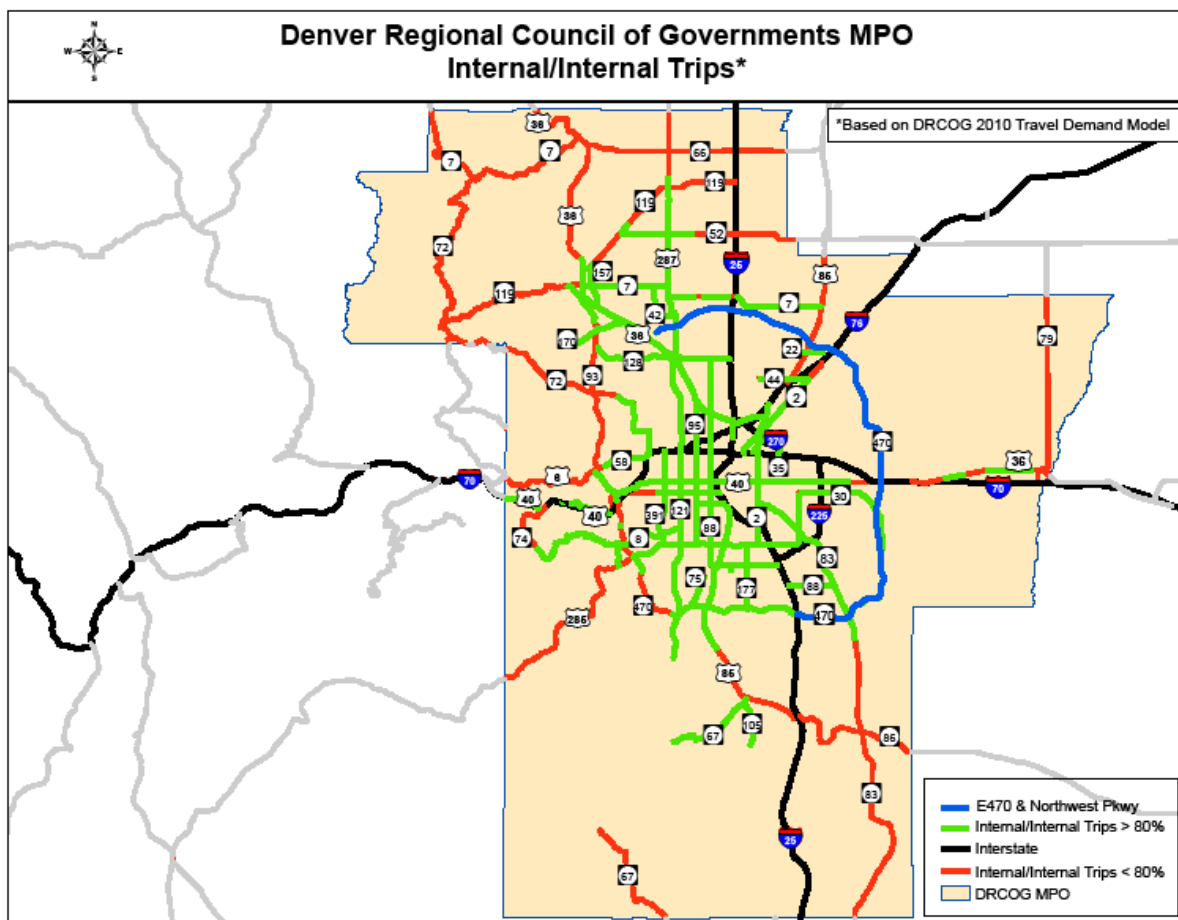


Table 5 provides further detail to the commuter highways in the region, highlighted in green on Map 6.

Table 5. DRCOG Commuter Highway Segments

Route #	Internal Trips More than 80%	Centerline Miles
002A	Colorado Boulevard	9.810
002B	Colorado Boulevard	2.660
002C	Hansen Boulevard	4.480
002D	Sable Boulevard	.750
006G	6th Avenue	10.290
006H	Vasquez Boulevard/Brighton Boulevard	5.400
007C	Baseline Road	8.250
007D	Baseline Road/W. 168th Avenue/W. 160th Avenue/ Bridge Street/E. 160th Ave	18.940
008A	Morrison Road	8.830
022A	E. 124th Avenue	2.480
026B	Alameda Avenue	2.920
030A	Hampden Avenue/Havana Street/E. 6th Avenue	20.330
035A	Quebec Street	1.320
036B	28th Street/Boulder Turnpike	23.470
036C	E. Colfax Avenue	6.581
036E	Boulder Spur	.360
040B	I-70 Frontage Road along Clear Creek-Jefferson County Line	4.040
040C	Colfax Avenue	27.70
042A	N. 95th Street	4.860
044A	104th Avenue	4.910
052A	Mineral Road	7.170
053A	North Broadway	1.740
058A	No Name (Freeway)	4.510
067E	No Name	9.960
072A	Coal Creek Road/Ward Road/W. 64th Avenue	8.270

Route #	Internal Trips More than 80%	Centerline Miles
074A	Bear Creek Road	12.100
075A	Broadway	.460
075B	Bowles Avenue/Platte Canyon Road	4.270
083A	Parker Road/Leetsdale Drive	17.500
085B	Santa Fe Drive	14.870
088A	Federal Boulevard/Belleview Avenue	14.660
088B	Arapahoe Road	4.510
093A	Broadway Street	4.460
095A	Sheridan Boulevard	14.460
105B	Perry Park Road	4.480
119A	Boulder Canyon Road	.450
119B	Diagonal Highway	2.100
121A	Wadsworth Boulevard	26.030
121B	Wadsworth Boulevard	4.430
128A	120th Avenue/Interlocken Loop	8.020
128B	120th Avenue	1.910
157A	Foothills Parkway	4.820
170A	Eldorado Springs Drive/Marshall Drive	7.020
177A	University Boulevard	6.370
224A	E. 70th Avenue/E. 74th Avenue	3.680
265A	Brighton Boulevard	3.670
285D	Hampden Avenue	13.730
287C	Federal Boulevard/S. 112th Street/N. 107th Street/Main Street	33.000
391A	Kipling Parkway	9.440
470A	C-470	15.440
470W	C-470 (In Golden)	1.190
Total		433.200

CONCLUSION

Based on the results concluded from the study regarding “Commuter Highways” within MPO boundaries, the Transportation Commission does not recommend any of the eligible segments to be devolved.

Furthermore, the Commission opposes highway devolution as conceived in CRS 43-2-101.5, as there are already adequate devolution mechanisms in place to facilitate abandonment of such roads. These include agency statutory authority (CRS 43-2-106) to abandon state highways, the 2008 Commission Policy Directive 1003.0 that allows devolution based on mutual agreement with cities and counties and “swap” options that have been exercised on roads such as Powers Boulevard in Colorado Springs. Therefore further legislative action is not required.

Both the Transportation Commission and Statewide Transportation Advisory Committee resolutions are enclosed.

RESOLUTION OF THE STAC REGARDING DEVOLUTION OF HIGHWAYS

December 10, 2010

WHEREAS, HB10-1405 (the ACT) was passed requiring the Department of Transportation to conduct a study of the state highway system to determine which state highways or portions of highways are “commuter highways”; and

WHEREAS, the ACT defined “commuter highways” as state highways that are located within the territory of a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO); are not Interstate highways; and are used at least 80% of the time for vehicle trips beginning and ending within the territory of the MPO; and

WHEREAS, the ACT required the Transportation Commission to report the results of the study to the legislature by February 1, 2011 and the Commission may include in the report recommendations as to whether some identified commuter highways should be removed from the state highway system and thereafter maintained and supervised by counties and municipalities; and

WHEREAS, the ACT stated the Commission shall consult with the affected MPOs regarding any recommendation for removing a commuter highway, or portion thereof, from the state highway system; and

WHEREAS, the ACT specified any such removal of a state highway, or portion thereof, resulting from any recommendation shall avoid placing any unfunded mandates on any affected local governments;; and

WHEREAS, there are insufficient resources at the state and local level to maintain roadways, and the ACT allowed for modification of the formulas used to allocate moneys in the Highway Users Tax Fund but made no net additional funds available for maintenance and supervision of any devolved highways; and

WHEREAS, the ACT was limited to readily available information, it did not examine many challenges with devolution including but not limited to:

1. Ability and cost of local jurisdiction maintenance.
2. Connectivity of the state highway system (including transportation of hazardous materials)
3. Time related traffic volumes and patterns
4. Planned and promised improvements
5. Intergovernment funding effects and constitutional protection of transfers
6. Number of state highway lane miles in the jurisdiction.

WHEREAS, there are existing mechanisms for the Department of Transportation and local jurisdictions to agree mutually on the transfer of a state highway, or portion thereof, to a local jurisdiction and that the existing process permits the individual examination of the challenges in a particular devolution decision.

Now therefore be it resolved That the STAC recommends any process for the transfer of a highway, or portion thereof, from the state highway system to a local jurisdiction shall only be through mutual agreement of the parties affected; and

And be it further resolved that STAC opposes any unfunded or underfunded present or future mandates that would result from devolution of state highways to local jurisdictions.

That the STAC recommends the Transportation Commission include in its report to the legislature the STAC recommendations and that the Transportation Commission should not recommend devolving any roads based on the limited study provided by the ACT.

Approved on 12/10/10



Vince Rogalski, Chair, Statewide Transportation Advisory Committee (STAC)

Resolution #TC -1937

Resolution to Direct Staff to Prepare a Report Pursuant to HB 10-1405

Approved by the Transportation Commission on:

December 16, 2010

WHEREAS, HB10-1405 (the Act), “Concerning a study of the options for devolution of state highways that are commuter highways to local governments” was passed requiring the Transportation Commission to conduct or direct the Department of Transportation to conduct a study of the state highway system to determine which state highways are commuter highways; and

WHEREAS, the Act defines a “commuter highway” as a state highway that is located within a metropolitan planning organization (MPO) territory; is not an interstate; and is used at least 80% of the time for trips within the territory of the MPO; and

WHEREAS, the Act specified any such removal of a state highway, or portion thereof, resulting from any recommendation shall avoid placing any unfunded mandates on any affected local governments, but did not clearly define unfunded mandates; and

WHEREAS, the Act requires the Transportation Commission to report the results of the study to the House and Senate Transportation Committees of the legislature by February 1, 2011 and the Commission may include in the report recommendations as to whether all or some of the identified commuter highways should be removed from the state system and thereafter maintained by counties or municipalities; and

WHEREAS, there are insufficient resources at the state and local level to maintain roadways, and the Act allowed for modification of the formulas used to allocate moneys in the Highway Users Tax Fund but made no net additional funds available for maintenance and supervision of any devolved highways.

WHEREAS, there are substantial challenges with devolution including but not limited to:

1. Ability and cost of local jurisdiction maintenance
2. Connectivity of the state highway system (including continuity of freight movement through urban areas and the transportation of hazardous materials)
3. Time related traffic volumes and patterns

4. Intergovernment funding effects and constitutional protection of transfers
5. Number of state highway lane miles in the jurisdiction
6. Federal funding and federal control issues
7. Existing technology infrastructure on many state highway routes.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Transportation Commission instructs staff to prepare a report to the legislature detailing which highways in MPO areas would be considered commuter highways.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Transportation Commission opposes highway devolution as conceived in HB 10-1405, as there are already adequate devolution mechanisms in place to facilitate abandonment of state highways, and therefore no further legislative action is required.



Herman Stockinger, Secretary
Transportation Commission of Colorado