



SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES,
INCLUDING PARKS AND TRAILS
TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM

FOR THE

Federal Boulevard Improvements between
West 7th Avenue and West Howard Place
Environmental Assessment

Prepared for

CITY AND COUNTY OF DENVER

COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION

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for the Federal Boulevard Improvements EA**

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ACRONYMS

AASHTO	American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
CCD	City and County of Denver
CDOT	Colorado Department of Transportation
EA	Environmental Assessment
GIS	Geographical Information System
LRT	Light Rail Transit
MS4	Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System
PEL	Planning and Environmental Linkages
RTD	Regional Transportation District
US	United States

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INTRODUCTION

This Technical Memorandum has been prepared in support of the *Federal Boulevard Improvements Environmental Assessment (EA)* (Federal Boulevard between West 7th Avenue to West Howard Place) (“Project Area,” Figure 1). This Memorandum evaluates the effects of the Federal Boulevard Improvement Project (the Proposed Action) and the No-Action Alternative with respect to social/community resources. The study area used in this assessment encompasses the actual limits of disturbance, including areas that would be impacted as a result of right-of-way acquisitions (“Study Area”).

Figure 1. EA Project Area



Examples of social and community resources include libraries, grocery stores, smaller retail stores, transportation facilities, credit unions, places of religious worship, post offices, schools, and recreational facilities. These areas and facilities bring people and

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neighborhoods together and help to create community cohesion. Neighborhoods within the Study Area include the Villa Park and Sun Valley neighborhoods.

PEL STUDY SUMMARY

A Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study was prepared to evaluate transportation improvements along Federal Boulevard from West 5th Avenue to West Howard Place within the City of Denver in October 2009 by Felsburg Holt & Ullevig (FHU, 2009). Social and community resources evaluated as part of the PEL Study primarily consisted of public parks, recreational trails, and bicycle routes, including the Weir Gulch Trail and the Lakewood Gulch Trail, as well as the Rude Recreation Center, the Denver Department of Human Services, the Westside Family Health Center, the Denver Community Credit Union, public and private schools, and multiple places of religious worship. At the time of the PEL Study, plans were underway to construct the Decatur-Federal Light Rail Transit (LRT) station to the north. Based upon the description, location, and observations made within its study area, the PEL Study concluded the following:

- The presence of public facilities and service providers as well as local business vitality and employment opportunities help create a strong sense of community and community cohesion.
- The proposed action identified in the PEL Study was to improve pedestrian and motorist connections across Federal Boulevard, specifically the intersections of Federal Boulevard and West 8th Avenue and Federal Boulevard and West 10th Avenue.
- The proposed action identified in the PEL Study would extend the sidewalk along West 8th Avenue, to connect to the existing Weir Gulch pedestrian and bike trail and to provide a link for pedestrians and bicyclists from the South Platte River Trail to Barnum North Park.
- None of the community facilities evaluated by the PEL Study would be directly affected by the PEL Study's proposed action.

No mitigation measures directed at social and/or community facilities and/or services would be required as a result of the implementation of the PEL Study's proposed alternative.

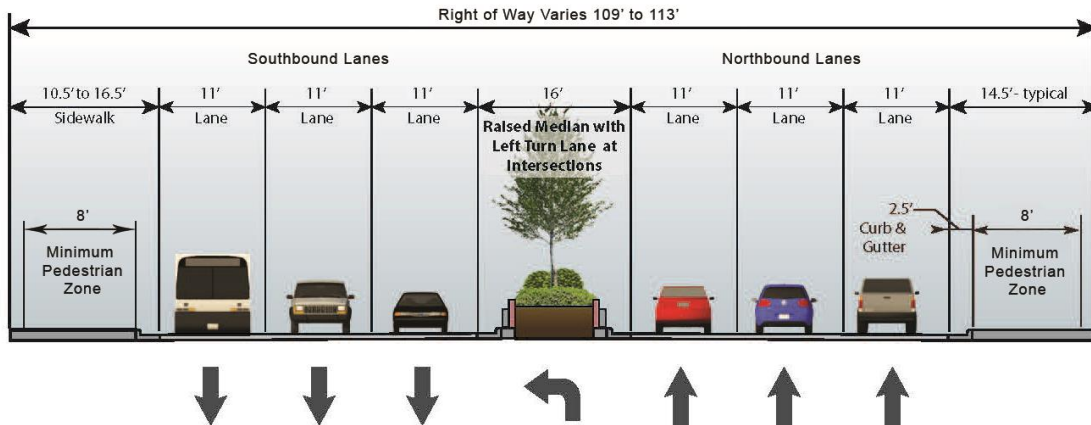
PROPOSED ACTION

The Proposed Action is to add a third northbound lane between West 7th Avenue and West 10th Avenue and a raised median throughout the Project Area to improve mobility and safety (Figure 2). North of West 10th Avenue, the width of the existing three northbound lanes would be brought up to standard (11 feet). The existing southbound lanes would also be brought up to standard width in areas where they are currently substandard.

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Note that this Project Area differs from that of the PEL Study as the portion of Federal Boulevard to the south of West 7th Avenue, including the interchange with United States Highway 6 (US 6), is being addressed by the US 6 Bridges Design-Build project. However, the proposed improvements are consistent with the Proposed Action in the PEL Study.

Figure 2. Proposed Action



The widening of Federal Boulevard as a part of the Proposed Action will meet AASHTO and Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) standards. Access will be limited by controlling left-turns at non-signalized points. In the Proposed Action, the existing signalized crosswalks at the intersections of Federal Boulevard with West 8th Avenue and West 10th Avenue will be upgraded with new traffic and pedestrian signal indications and enhanced concrete crosswalks. Sidewalks on the west and east sides of the street will be brought up to Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards; this will match the existing sections of Federal Boulevard to the north and south.

Access to bus service, which connects to local and regional destinations as well as the greater transit system, including the nearby West Line of RTD's LRT system, will be improved by upgrading the sidewalk to be consistent and compliant with ADA standards. Additionally, connectivity to the Weir Gulch Trail would be enhanced with better signage for the trail, reducing the curvature of the "T" intersection where the trail and sidewalk connect along West 8th Avenue, signage for the Trail, and a wider sidewalk along West 8th Avenue, all of which support the City and County of Denver's (CCD's) Bicycle Master Plan (CCD, 2001) and Denver Moves (CCD, 2011). These improvements are anticipated to improve mobility, safety, and enhance multi-modal options within the Project Area.

In summary, the Proposed Action consists of the following elements:

- Federal Boulevard roadway alignment and improvements
 - Widening Federal Boulevard from the ROW boundary on the west side of Federal Boulevard toward the east between West 7th Avenue and approximately West 10th Avenue with an additional 11-foot northbound lane

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- Restriping and widening the three northbound lanes on Federal Boulevard between approximately West 10th Avenue to approximately West Howard Place to be 11 feet wide
- Restriping and widening the three southbound lanes on Federal Boulevard between approximately West 7th Avenue and West 10th Avenue to be 11 feet wide
- Bicycle and pedestrian improvements
 - Improving the sidewalks on the east side of Federal Boulevard between West 7th Avenue and West 10th Avenue to meet ADA standards and better accommodate pedestrians
 - Standardizing inconsistent sidewalk widths on both the east and west sides of Federal Boulevard with an 8-foot pedestrian zone consisting of either a detached 5-foot sidewalk with a 3-foot buffer or an attached 8-foot sidewalk with ADA-compliant curb ramps and driveway cuts
 - Enhancing access to the Decatur-Federal LRT station through improved multi-modal connectivity by improving the sidewalks throughout the Project Area
 - Upgrading existing pedestrian signals and constructing enhanced concrete crosswalks at the signalized intersections of Federal Boulevard with West 8th Avenue and West 10th Avenue
 - Enhancing bicycle and pedestrian connectivity to the Weir Gulch Trail with better signage, wider sidewalks, and access ramps
 - Enhancing bicycle connectivity to Routes D-10 and D-12 by adding signage in the Project Area that meets CCD and CDOT standards

NO-ACTION ALTERNATIVE

The No-Action Alternative would leave Federal Boulevard as it currently is configured and would not provide any improvements beyond typical maintenance activities. The roadway would remain the same, with 3 southbound and 2 northbound lanes (each 9.5 to 11 feet in width) and a continuous two-way, center, left-turn median between West 7th Avenue and West 10th Avenue (Figure 3). The segment of Federal Boulevard from West 10th Avenue to West Howard Place has three southbound and three northbound lanes, and a continuous two-way left-turn median over Lakewood Gulch (Figure 4). The existing sidewalks along the both sides of Federal Boulevard in the Project Area are either narrow or not well-defined, and the curb ramps at intersections do not meet current ADA or CDOT standards. As part of State Highway 88, normal maintenance of Federal Boulevard would continue to be performed by CDOT. This includes the current direct discharge of stormwater to the nearby gulches.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Two residential neighborhoods are located within the Study Area: Villa Park and Sun Valley. The Villa Park community is located to the west of the Study Area and consists of a primarily residential neighborhood with limited commercial development. The Sun Valley neighborhood is located to the east of the Study Area and consists of lower-income, residential public housing as well as commercial and light industrial properties. No residential homes are immediately present within the boundaries of the Study Area.

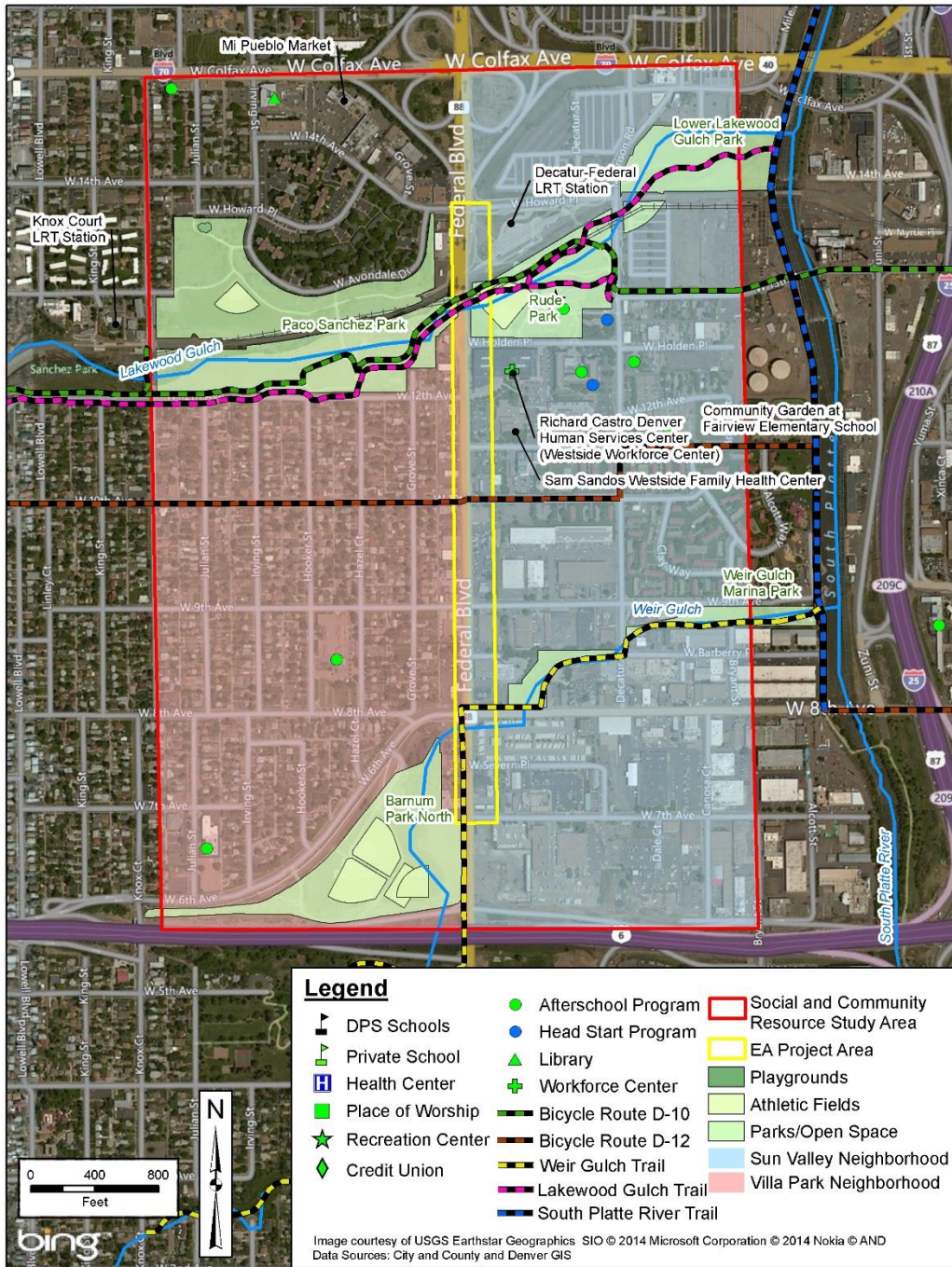
Transportation facilities used by the community include bus stops and the Decatur-Federal LRT station to the north of the Study Area. Development of the Decatur-Federal LRT station was completed after the PEL Study and before initiation of this EA.

Social and community resources consist of public parks, playgrounds, and athletic fields, recreational trails and bicycle routes, public and private schools with afterschool programs, head start programs, a Denver Public Library branch, Westside Family Health Center, the Rude Recreation Center, the Denver Workforce Center at Westside, the Denver Community Credit Union, and multiple places of religious worship (Figure 5).

During the PEL Study, a full-service grocery store was not present within either the Villa Park or Sun Valley neighborhood. However, Mi Pueblo Market grocery store is now operating to the northwest of the northern terminal of the Study Area.

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Figure 5. Social and Community Resources



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IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Since the residential neighborhoods adjacent to the Study Area are set back from the Federal Boulevard corridor, there would be no fragmentation of those neighborhoods. In addition, no residences would be acquired or relocated as a result of the implementation of the Proposed Action.

Community facilities would not be negatively impacted and would likely benefit from the implementation of the Proposed Action (Table 1). Long-term impacts associated with the Proposed Action would substantially improve access to the surrounding neighborhoods with the improved sidewalks, improved access to the neighborhood travel patterns, including the Decatur-Federal LRT station, and improved pedestrian signals and crosswalks within the Study Area. These improvements would help serve non-personal-vehicle populations, such as school children, disabled persons, and the elderly. Furthermore, travel within the corridor would be improved due to the widening of Federal Boulevard, and safety would be improved across all travel modes due to the Proposed Action. The Rude Recreation Center would not be impacted as part of the Proposed Action. In addition, the Weir Gulch Trail would benefit from the addition of better signage and connectivity as the curvature of the “T” intersection of the trail and the sidewalk at West 8th Avenue and the sidewalk would be widened.

Shorter-term impacts during Project construction could occur as residents and community-facility users could be temporarily affected by limited access, traffic congestion, dust, and noise; however, these are considered to be temporary impacts.

The No-Action Alternative would not improve the Federal Boulevard corridor beyond typical maintenance activities within the Study Area. Therefore, the roadway itself, the existing sidewalks along the Federal Boulevard corridor, and the curb ramps at intersections that do not meet current ADA or CDOT standards would not be improved. The No-Action Alternative would not improve mobility, safety, nor would it enhance multi-modal options within the Study Area. Additionally, it is not consistent with adopted land use and transportation plans.

Table 1. Social/Community Resources Impacts Including Parks and Trails

Resource	Proposed Action	No-Action Alternative
Social and community resources consist of playgrounds, and athletic fields, bicycle routes, public and private schools with afterschool programs, head start programs, a Denver Public Library branch, Westside Family Health Center, the Rude Recreation Center, the Denver Workforce Center at Westside, the	<p><u>Permanent Impacts:</u></p> <p>The Proposed Action would substantially benefit local neighborhoods and communities by improving access, mobility, safety, and enhancing multi-modal transportation connectivity.</p>	<p><u>Permanent Impacts:</u></p> <p>The No-Action Alternative would continue to provide limited access to community and transportation facilities. Additionally, the No-Action Alternative would not improve mobility or safety,</p>

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<p>Denver Community Credit Union, and multiple places of religious worship.</p> <p>Two residential neighborhoods are located within the Project Area: Villa Park and Sun Valley. Transportation facilities used by the community include bus stops, sidewalks, bicycle routes, and the Decatur-Federal LRT station located at Federal Boulevard and West Howard Place.</p>	<p><u>Temporary Impacts:</u></p> <p>Temporary impacts during construction could occur as residents and community facility users could be temporarily affected by limited access, traffic congestion, dust, and noise.</p>	<p>nor would it enhance multi-modal options.</p> <p><u>Temporary Impacts:</u></p> <p>No temporary impacts to social or community resources would occur if the No-Action Alternative is implemented.</p>
<p>There are three parks in the Project Area: Barnum Park, located to the west of Federal Boulevard between US 6 and West 8th Avenue within the Project Area; Sanchez Park, located to the west of Federal Boulevard north of West 12th Avenue and underneath the bridge over Lakewood Gulch; and Rude Park, located on the east side of Federal Boulevard north of West Holden Place and underneath the bridge over Lakewood Gulch.</p> <p>There are two trails in the Project Area: Lakewood Gulch Trail which passes underneath the Federal Boulevard Bridge and the Weir Gulch Trail which crosses Federal Boulevard at grade on West 8th Avenue and utilizes West 8th Avenue, Federal Boulevard, and West 6th Avenue.</p>	<p><u>Permanent Impacts:</u></p> <p>There would be no impacts to parks in the Project Area.</p> <p>The Proposed Action would improve connectivity and access to the Weir Gulch Trail by reducing the curvature where trail connects to the sidewalk along West 8th Avenue, providing better signage for the trail access point, and widening the West 8th Avenue sidewalk.</p> <p><u>Temporary Impacts:</u></p> <p>Access to the Weir Gulch Trail would not be closed during construction but there may be the need for a temporary detour; this need will be determined during final design and construction phasing.</p>	<p><u>Permanent Impacts:</u></p> <p>There would be no permanent impacts to the parks or trails if the No-Action Alternative is implemented; however, it does not provide improved access and connectivity to the Weir Gulch Trail.</p> <p><u>Temporary Impacts:</u></p> <p>No temporary impacts to parks or trails would occur if the No-Action Alternative is implemented.</p>

MITIGATION MEASURES

Mitigation measures will not be required as part of the Proposed Action. However, short-term mitigation measures will be required during construction. These short-term measures will consist primarily of maintaining access to the local businesses; of updating local residents and businesses regarding the Project's construction activities; by informing them of its schedules and traffic-circulation plans; by providing traffic signage. Additionally, corridor construction will be phased to minimize traffic-congestion impacts and a detour will be in place to maintain access to the Weir Gulch Trail. To avoid disruption of local business activities during Proposed Action construction, new access points will be opened, before existing access points are removed. The mitigation measures to reduce dust and noise impacts are discussed in the *Air Quality Technical Memorandum* and *Noise Assessment Technical Memorandum*.

REQUIRED PERMITS

No permits are required for the Proposed Action.

STAKEHOLDER COORDINATION

The CCD has continued to provide opportunities for public involvement between the PEL Study in 2009 and initiation of this EA. A public meeting was held in August 14, 2014 prior to the completion of this EA to solicit further comment on and discussion of the Project. A Spanish-speaking translator was present at the open house, and materials were presented in both English and Spanish; Korean translation was available upon request. Stakeholder coordination will continue to take place throughout the Project's development and construction.

REFERENCES

- CCD, 2001. "Bicycle Master Plan Update 2001," City and County of Denver (CCD), adopted March 2002. Website accessed March 2014: <http://www.denver.gov.org/bikeprogram/bicyclingindenver/streetsandtrails/planning/tabid/438250/default.aspx>.
- CCD, 2003. *Focus Neighborhood Initiative Report*.
- CCD, 2011. "Denver Moves," prepared by Denver Parks and Recreation and Public Works for City and County of Denver (CCD), May 2011.
- FHU, 2009. "Federal Boulevard (5th Avenue to West Howard Place) Planning Environmental Linkage Study (PEL)," prepared by Felsburg Holt and Ullevig (FHU) for CCD, published October 2009.