

Appendix C13.

# *Paleontological Resources*





**COLORADO**  
**Department of Transportation**  
Division of Transportation Development

Environmental Programs Branch  
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TO: Basil Ryer  
FROM: F. Nicole Peavey  
DATE: 3 March 2023  
RE: Paleontological assessment for the Vasquez Blvd I-270 to 64<sup>th</sup> Ave EA  
SA: 22922

The Vasquez Blvd I-270 to 64<sup>th</sup> Ave Project, located along and adjacent to Vasquez Boulevard (US 6) from 58<sup>th</sup> Ave to 66<sup>th</sup> Way in Adams County, will not require on-the-ground reconnaissance for paleontological resources.

According to the best available geologic map of the project area, the project is partly underlain by artificial fill and primarily underlain by Pleistocene alluvial deposits. These units are themselves underlain at variable depth by the Cretaceous and Paleocene Denver and Arapahoe Formations, with the nearest available well data showing this bedrock unit at approximately 18 feet below the surface.

Artificial fill is of recent human origin and considered non-sensitive for paleontological resources. Pleistocene deposits may contain fossil or subfossil remains, particularly of ice age mammals, and are generally considered to be moderately paleontologically sensitive. These units have produced ice age mammal localities within a few miles of the project area. The Denver and Arapahoe Formations, if reached by project excavation, are to be considered highly sensitive, with numerous scientifically important fossils known from the greater Denver Metro area. However, I know of no previously recorded fossil localities within the immediate project limits, and the fully urban setting of the project area has no exposures that would warrant an on-the-ground survey prior to the start of project work.

As a result, paleontological clearance is recommended for this project, with the understanding that certain kinds of major excavation (such as for large caissons, underpasses, etc.) may require continuous paleontological monitoring should they reach the anticipated depth of bedrock. As always, if paleontological resources are uncovered during project construction, work in the immediate area of the find should cease, and I should be notified as soon as possible per Section 107.23 of the Standard Specifications.

Geologic Map Reference

Lindvall, R.M., 1980, Geologic map of the Commerce City quadrangle, Adams and Denver Counties, Colorado: U.S. Geological Survey, Geologic Quadrangle Map GQ-1541, scale 1:24,000.



**Attachment A.**

# **Project Information**



# Attachment A:

## Project Information

June 2023

Project Number: NHPP 006A-06

Subaccount number: 22922

## Introduction and Background

The Vasquez Boulevard (United States Route 6 [US 6]) I-270 to 64<sup>th</sup> Avenue project (Project) is located within the limits of the City of Commerce City (Commerce City) in Adams County. The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and local agencies including Adams County, the City of Commerce City, City and County of Denver, Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) and the Regional Transportation District (RTD), conducted a Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) study in 2018. The Vasquez Boulevard PEL study provided a framework for the implementation of transportation improvements along the corridor between 52<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and 64<sup>th</sup> Avenue and along I-270 for a ½-mile north and south of the I-270/Vasquez Boulevard interchange. The Project falls within the limits of the PEL study and is now following the NEPA process to prepare an Environmental Assessment to identify a preferred alternative based on the needs identified in the PEL.

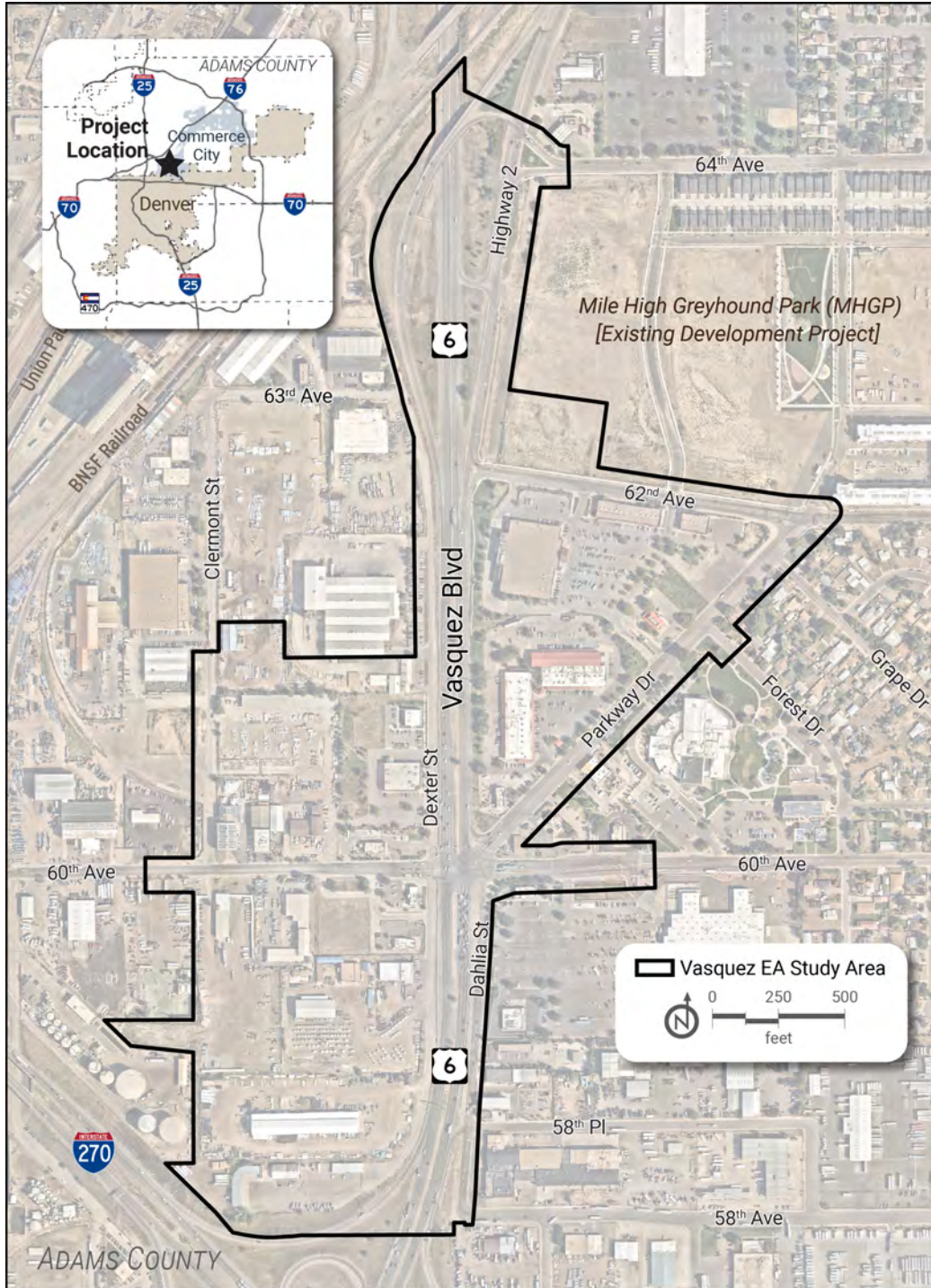
The PEL study identified long-term transportation improvements and evaluated potential projects that could be implemented with available funding as near-term improvements. Potential near-term improvements were identified to improve operations, safety, and connectivity along Vasquez Boulevard, focusing on the Vasquez Boulevard/60<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Vasquez Boulevard/62<sup>nd</sup> Avenue intersections. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) funding, state funding and other sources were obtained for this current Project to construct these near-term improvements along Vasquez Boulevard.

## Study Area

The study area extends along Vasquez Boulevard from 58<sup>th</sup> Avenue (just north of the I-270 interchange) north to the BNSF Railroad bridge. West of Vasquez Boulevard, the study area extends to Clermont Street, between the on-ramp to I-270 and just north of 60<sup>th</sup> Avenue. East of Vasquez Boulevard, the study area includes Parkway Drive, 60<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 62<sup>nd</sup> Avenue. The study area also includes proposed drainage work to an existing water quality pond within the Mile High Greyhound Park (MHGP) property at the corner of 62<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and Highway 2. Some environmental resources evaluated for the NEPA process may have a slightly different study area depending on specific resource requirements.



Figure 1: Project Study Area





## Purpose and Need

The purpose of the Vasquez Boulevard I-270 to 64<sup>th</sup> Avenue Project is to address the following needs:

- improve operations for vehicles and freight;
- improve safety;
- improve multimodal connections.

## Proposed Action

The Proposed Action includes improvements at the Vasquez Boulevard/60<sup>th</sup> and Vasquez Boulevard/62<sup>nd</sup> intersections, as well as the local street network and multimodal facilities, as shown in [Figure 2](#).

### Vasquez Boulevard/60th Avenue

The Proposed Action includes the elements listed below for the Vasquez Boulevard/60<sup>th</sup> Avenue intersection:

- Only right turn movements to northbound Vasquez Boulevard from Parkway Drive. No access to other roads.
  - All inbound movements to Parkway Drive remain open as they exist now.
- All inbound movements from Vasquez Boulevard/60<sup>th</sup> to frontage roads remain as they exist now, but outbound movements are restricted.
  - Right turn only from southeast frontage road and all in movements allowed (all movements remain as they exist)
  - Right turn only from northwest frontage road and all in movements allowed (in movements remain as they exist)
  - No movement out from southwest frontage road and all in movements allowed (in movements remain as they exist)
- Two new local road connections to Clermont Street west of Vasquez Boulevard provide full access between frontage roads and 60<sup>th</sup> Avenue.
- Driveways on 60<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Parkway Drive and frontage roads remain as currently structures or have minor changes
- Restriping of existing crosswalks and new pedestrian refuges improve safety and accessibility of pedestrian infrastructure
- Corner curb bulb-outs would be added at the Parkway/Forest intersection as a deterrent to drivers who may think Forest Drive is an alternate route to 60<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The bulb-outs and crosswalk will provide visual indication of Forest Drive as a neighborhood street.



## Vasquez Boulevard/62<sup>nd</sup> Avenue

The Proposed Action includes the elements listed below for the Vasquez Boulevard/62<sup>nd</sup> intersection:

- New traffic signal required at 62<sup>nd</sup> Avenue with the Vasquez Boulevard/60<sup>th</sup> Avenue intersection improvements to provide movements restricted from Parkway Drive to Vasquez Boulevard.
- Traffic signal provides full access to/from 62<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and Vasquez Boulevard/Highway 2.
- Southbound Highway 2 off ramp remains in existing configuration.
- Southbound traffic on Vasquez Boulevard and the Highway 2 off ramp have continuous green time without stopping at the signal for 62<sup>nd</sup> Avenue traffic.

## Vasquez Boulevard Improvements

In addition to the improvements at the Vasquez Boulevard/60<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 62<sup>nd</sup> Avenue intersections, a portion of Vasquez Boulevard will be reconstructed. The southbound lanes of Vasquez Boulevard will remain as they currently exist (12-foot travel lanes; roadway width varies from 24-feet to 60-feet). Northbound Vasquez Boulevard will be widened a maximum of two feet between 60<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 62<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and a maximum of 20 feet north of 62<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, and the existing median will be modified to add left turn lanes into and out of the new 62<sup>nd</sup> Avenue intersection. A 10-foot detached multi-use path will be constructed along the eastern side of Vasquez Boulevard, between 60<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 62<sup>nd</sup> Avenue.

## Local Road Connections

New local roadway connections west of Vasquez Boulevard are part of the Project to enhance the local circulation and pedestrian and bicyclist connectivity of the local street network. The new roadways are two-lane, two-way local roads with the potential for direct property driveway access as approved by Commerce City.



Figure 2: Proposed Action

