

3.18 PARKS AND RECREATION

Parks and recreational resources include parks, recreational facilities, and open space areas which offer opportunities for recreation. Trails are discussed in **Chapter 4** *Transportation Impacts*.

Locations of existing and proposed parks and recreational facilities and open space areas were determined through coordination with local jurisdictions, analysis of Geographic Information System (GIS) data, and review of current comprehensive land use, parks, and recreation master plans. See **Chapter 10** for a full listing of references.

3.18.1 Affected Environment

There are several hundred properties within the regional study area that offer recreational opportunities. They generally can be categorized into one of the following:

- ▶ **Regional Park and Recreational Facilities.** The regional study area has several park and recreational parcels that are important regional amenities. Regional parks typically involve jurisdictional partnerships that contribute to the development and maintenance of the regional park. These areas serve residents throughout the Front Range and are regionally recognized. Also, privately and publicly owned and managed golf courses in the regional study area qualify as regional resources.
- ▶ **Community Parks and Recreational Facilities.** While generally smaller than regional parks, community parks and recreational resources provide opportunities for community activities and facilities. Community parks often have a diverse selection of amenities that serve residents within 3 miles of the park.
- ▶ **Neighborhood Parks and Recreational Facilities.** These parks are smaller parcels that generally serve residents within 0.5 mile of the park. They often include playgrounds, picnic facilities, paved trails, tennis courts, basketball courts, large grass areas, and landscaping. Neighborhood parks are commonly dispersed throughout a city according to a typical 0.5 mile radius and feature easy access for residents in the surrounding area.
- ▶ **Open Space.** Open space areas include land and water parcels that remain in a predominantly natural or undeveloped state. The intention of open space acquisition varies from growth management to habitat protection and/or passive recreation. However, it must be noted that not all open space allows public access or use. Many areas defined as open space are used as conservation easements on agricultural lands. Smaller open space parcels are often coordinated with neighboring open space acquisitions to create buffers or corridors. Jurisdictional authority belongs to either the county open space department or municipal parks and recreation departments. Open space properties included in this section are publicly accessible and offer one or more recreational opportunities, usually in the form of trails.

What's in Section 3.18?

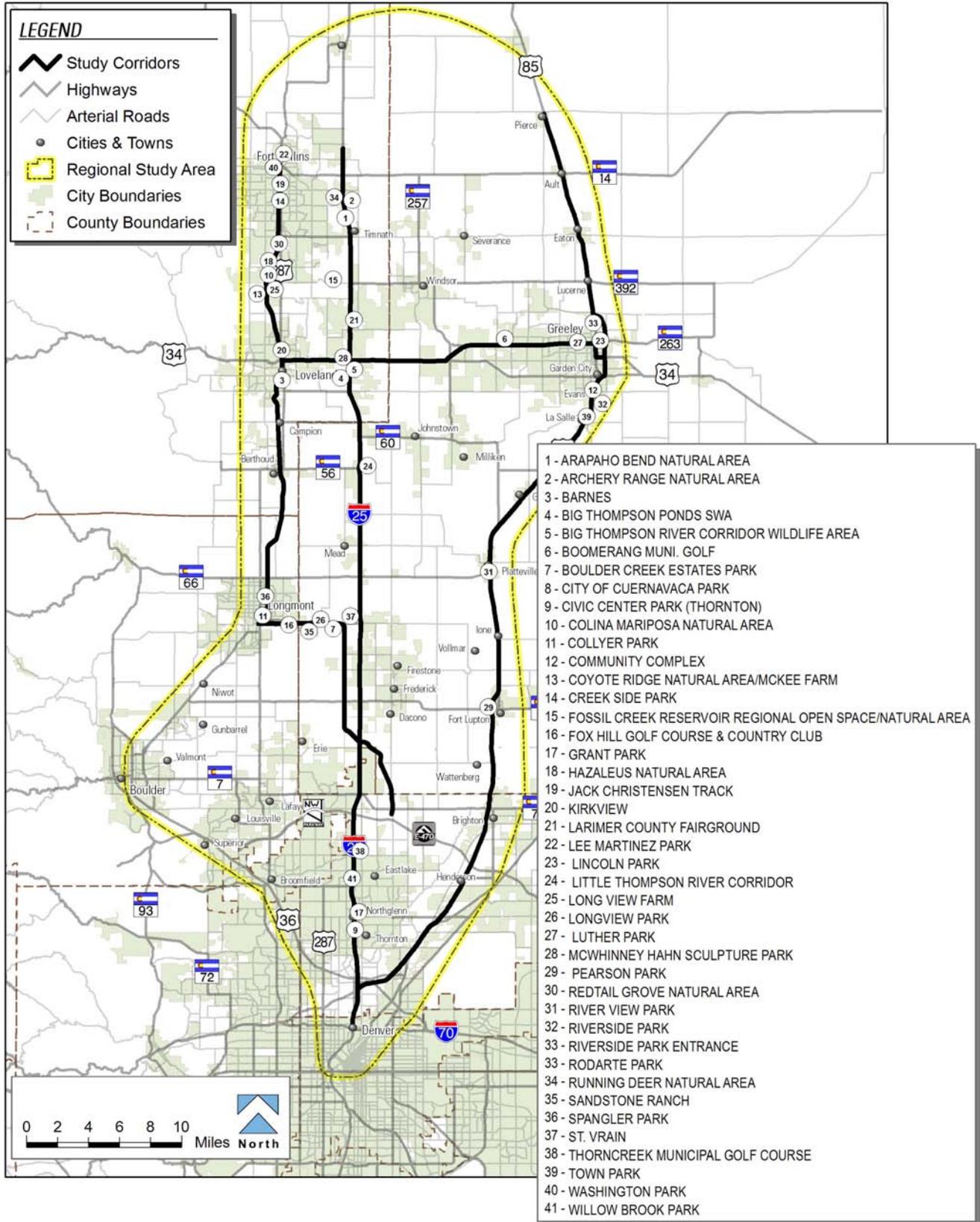
Parks and Recreation

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1 For the purpose of this analysis, only properties that could be affected by project
2 improvements were evaluated. These properties include those that could be directly affected
3 and those that could incur indirect effects as a result of proposed improvements. Properties
4 with the potential for direct impacts include those that fall within 100 feet of any proposed
5 physical improvement. Indirect effects to parks resulting from improvements could include
6 visual impacts, noise impacts, or changes to access. Properties within 500 feet of either side of
7 improvements were assessed for indirect effects. These properties are shown in
8 **Figure 3.18-1. Table 3.18-1** identifies and provides summary information about each park or
9 recreational resource.

10

1 **Figure 3.18-1 Parks and Recreational Resources within 500 Feet of Proposed**
2 **Improvements**



1 **Table 3.18-1 Parks and Recreational Resources within 500 Feet of Proposed**
2 **Improvements**

Map ID	Name	Amenities	Reference Location	Resource Type	Managed by
1.	Arapaho Bend Natural Area	Fishing ponds, boating, trails, parking areas	West of I-25, north of Harmony Road, Fort Collins	Open Space	City of Fort Collins
2.	Archery Range Natural Area	Trailhead, parking area	West of I-25, Fort Collins	Open Space	City of Fort Collins
3.	Barnes Park	Batting cages, softball fields, playground, concessions, Big Thompson River access	West of I-25, adjacent to US 287	Community Park and Recreation Facility	City of Loveland
4.	Big Thompson Ponds State Wildlife Area	Fishing, hunting, restrooms	At SH 402, east of I-25, Greeley	Regional Park and Recreation Facility	Colorado Division of Wildlife
5.	Big Thompson River Corridor Wildlife Area	Fishing, hiking, nature viewing	North of SH 402, east and west of I-25, along the Big Thompson River corridor	Regional Park and Recreation Facility	Town of Johnston
6.	Boomerang Municipal Golf Course	Golf course, driving range, practice green, miniature golf course, pro shop, grill	Adjacent (north) to US 34, Greeley	Regional Park and Recreation Facility	City of Greeley
7.	Boulder Creek Estates	Fishing, hiking, nature viewing	Southwest of SH 119 and CR 7, East of Longmont	Regional Park and Recreation Facility	City of Longmont
8.	City of Cuernavaca Park	Softball fields, sandbar, river access, sculptures	Adjacent to I-25, Denver	Community Park and Recreation Facility	Denver
9.	Civic Center Park (Thornton)	Trail, pond	East of I-25, Thornton	Community Park and Recreation Facility	City of Thornton
10.	Colina Mariposa Natural Area	Trail, paved bike trail	Adjacent to US 287, Fort Collins	Open Space	City of Fort Collins
11.	Collyer Park	Tennis and volleyball courts, restrooms, playground shelters	East of US 287, Longmont	Community Park and Recreation Facility	City of Longmont

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1 **Table 3.18-1 Parks and Recreational Resources within 500 Feet of Proposed**
2 **Improvements (cont'd)**

Map ID	Name	Amenities	Reference Location	Resource Type	Managed by
12.	Evans Community Complex	Gym, dance studio, exercise room	East of US 85 on 37th Street, Evans	Community Park and Recreation Facility	City of Evans
13.	Coyote Ridge\McKee Farm Natural Area	Wildlife refuge, trail recreation	South of Trilby Road, west of Shields St., Larimer County	Open Space	City of Ft. Collins
14.	Creekside Park	Trail	Adjacent to US 287, Fort Collins	Neighborhood Park and Recreation Facility	City of Fort Collins
15.	Fossil Creek Reservoir Regional Open Space/Natural Area	Multi-use, water storage, waterfowl and wildlife refuge, trail recreation	West of Timberline, east of I-25	Regional Park and Recreation Facility/Open Space	Larimer County and City of Fort Collins
16.	Fox Hill Golf Course and Country Club	Golf course, putt putt, driving range, tennis courts, swimming pool	Adjacent to SH 119, Loveland	Regional Park and Recreation Facility	Privately owned
17.	Grant Park	Trail, picnic area	Adjacent to I-25, north of 104th Avenue, Northglenn	Neighborhood Park and Recreation Facility	City of Northglenn
18.	Hazaleus Natural Area	Paved bike trail	Adjacent to US 287, Fort Collins	Open Space	City of Fort Collins
19.	Jack Christensen Memorial Track	Track, trail, open grass area bleachers	Adjacent to existing BNSF tracks, CSU campus, Fort Collins	Community Park and Recreation Facility	Colorado State University
20.	Kirkview Park	Driving range, putting green, chipping area, paved cart paths	Kirkview and Mountain Street	Community Park and Recreation Facility	City of Loveland
21.	Larimer County Fairgrounds	Indoor arena, outdoor arena, events center, livestock pavilions, exhibition halls, camping facilities, multipurpose fields	East of I-25, north of US 34, Loveland	Regional Park and Recreation Facility	Larimer County
22.	Lee Martinez Park	Playground, picnic area, basketball and tennis courts, restrooms, softball field, parking area	Adjacent to US 287, Fort Collins	Community Park and Recreation Facility	City of Fort Collins

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1 **Table 3.18-1 Parks and Recreational Resources within 500 Feet of Proposed**
2 **Improvements (cont'd)**

Map ID	Name	Amenities	Reference Location	Resource Type	Managed by
23.	Lincoln Park	Playground, picnic area, public art	10th Ave. and 9th St.	Neighborhood Park and Recreation Facility	City of Greeley
24.	Little Thompson River Corridor	Trails alongside Little Thompson River	Adjacent to I-25, Berthoud	Open Space	Town of Berthoud
25.	Long View Farm	Future Trail	South of Ft Collins, west of 287 and east of Shields St.	Open Space	Larimer County
26.	Longview Park	Small pond, trail	Adjacent to SH 119, Longmont	Neighborhood Park and Recreation Facility	City of Longmont
27.	Luther Park	Playground, 2 shelters, restrooms, picnic tables, BBQ pits	Bisected by US 34, Greeley	Neighborhood Park and Recreation Facility	City of Greeley
28.	McWhinney Hahn Sculpture Park	Restrooms, drinking fountain, public telephone, sculpture	West of I-25, north of US 34, Loveland	Community Park and Recreation Facility	City of Loveland
29.	Pearson Park	Baseball fields	West of US 85 near Fort Lupton	Community Park and Recreation Facility	City of Fort Lupton
30.	Redtail Grove Natural Area	Trail	Adjacent to US 287, Fort Collins	Open Space	City of Fort Collins
31.	Riverview Park	Skateboard structure and ramps	West of 85, Platteville	Neighborhood Park and Recreation Facility	Town of Platteville
32.	Riverside Park	Lake, trails, softball fields, playground area, picnic tables, basketball courts, soccer fields, restrooms	Adjacent to US 85, Evans	Community Park and Recreation Facility	Town of Evans
33.	Rodarte Park	Softball field, restrooms, picnic area	9th Ave and A St.	Neighborhood Park and Recreation Facility	City of Greeley

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1 **Table 3.18-1 Parks and Recreational Resources within 500 Feet of Proposed**
2 **Improvements (cont'd)**

Map ID	Name	Amenities	Reference Location	Resource Type	Managed by
34.	Running Deer Natural Area	Trail, recycling area (mulch)	Just west of I-25, south of Prospect Road, Fort Collins	Open Space	City of Fort Collins
35.	Sandstone Ranch	Softball fields, soccer fields, trails, picnic tables, playground, skate park, restrooms, BBQ grills, concession stand	West of I-25, south of SH 119	Community Park and Recreation Facility	City of Longmont
36.	Spangler Park	Picnic, shelter, playground	East of US 287, Longmont	Neighborhood Park and Recreation Facility	City of Longmont
37.	St. Vrain State Park	Fishing piers, campsites, picnic tables, BBQ grills, dump station, trail	Just west of I-25, Longmont	Regional Park and Recreation Facility	Colorado State Parks
38.	Thorncreek Municipal Golf Course	Driving range, miniature and regulation golf course	Just west and adjacent to I- 25, Thornton	Regional Park and Recreation facility	City of Thornton
39.	Town Park	Playground, 3 picnic shelters	West of US 85, LaSalle	Neighborhood Park and Recreation Facility	Town of LaSalle
40.	Washington Park	Playground, basketball court	301 Maple. Ft Collins	Neighborhood Park and Recreation Facility	City of Fort Collins
41.	Willow Brook Park	Pavilion, picnic tables, BBQ grills, stream, playground, trail	West of I-25 at 120th Avenue, Westminster	Neighborhood Park and Recreation Facility	City of Westminster

3 3.18.2 Environmental Consequences

4 The evaluation of direct impacts to parks and recreational resources was determined by
5 overlaying the construction footprint for each alternative on GIS-mapped parks and
6 recreational resources, and calculating the acres impacted. Indirect effects also were
7 evaluated for each alternative.

8 Indirect effects related to the commuter rail (primarily noise, visual, and access) are based on
9 the assumption that the rail will run every 30 minutes during peak hours and every 60 minutes
10 during off-peak hours. Currently freight rail operates at a frequency of four to six trains per day.
11 Additionally it should be noted that while freight trains can be over a mile in length, commuter
12 trains will consist of no more than four cars per train resulting in a shorter duration under which

13

1 indirect effects could be experienced. For more detailed explanation of the assessment
2 methods related to noise and visual quality see **Section 3.6 Noise and Vibration and**
3 **Section 3.14 Visual Quality.**

4 **3.18.2.1 NO-ACTION ALTERNATIVE**

5 The No-Action Alternative would not conflict with nor would it promote parks and recreational
6 goals identified by municipalities and counties in the regional study area. Impacts associated
7 with the No-Action Alternative would include impacts to recreational resources associated with
8 projects already programmed, maintenance of structures, and improving interchanges to meet
9 minimum safety requirements. Impacts would be less substantial than the impacts described
10 below for the build alternatives described below. However, effects on parks and recreational
11 resources in the regional study area would arise as a result of transportation needs unmet by
12 the No-Action Alternative. These would include the increased traffic congestion and impaired
13 mobility to and from regional study area resources. Increased air emissions and noise could
14 negatively affect recreationist's experience in regional study area parks.

15 Portions of the Big Thompson Ponds State Wildlife Area, St. Vrain State Park, Willow Brook
16 Park, Civic Center Park, and Thorncreek Municipal Golf Course would receive noise impacts
17 as a result of the No-Action Alternative.

18 **3.18.2.2 PACKAGE A**

19 Direct impacts to parks and recreational resources in the regional study area associated with
20 Package A are displayed in **Table 3.18-2**. Additional information about the impacts is
21 summarized in the discussion that follows the table.

22 **Table 3.18-2 Impacts to Parks and Recreational Resources Associated with Package A**

Component Number	Map ID No.	Parks and Recreation Resource	Original Acreage	Area of Impact (Acres)
A-H2	2	Arapaho Bend Natural Area	269.56	4.11
A-H2	3	Archery Range Natural Area	55.37	0.09
A-H2	6	Big Thompson Ponds State Wildlife Area	48.61	0.11
A-H2	20	Larimer County Fairgrounds	234.00	1.30
A-H2	25	McWhinney Hahn Sculpture Park	4.50	1.21
A-H3	22	Little Thompson River Corridor	100.92	2.04
A-T2	32	Sandstone Ranch	229.31	2.75
A-T2	7	Boulder Creek Estates	220.60	5.72
Total			1162.9	17.33

1 The following discussion summarizes direct and indirect impacts by component:

2 *Component A-H1: Safety Improvements*

3 There are no impacts to parks or recreational areas associated with safety improvements north
4 of SH 14.

5 *Component A-H2: General Purpose Lanes*

6 There are five properties that would be impacted by the improvements associated with this
7 component. Improvements between SH 14 and Crossroads include the addition of one general
8 purpose lane in each direction for a total of six general purpose lanes, plus auxiliary lanes
9 between Harmony Road and SH 60. These improvements would impact the Archery Range
10 Natural Area and the Arapaho Bend Natural Area.

11 **Archery Range Natural Area.** Widening would occur to both sides of the highway in this
12 location and a new frontage road would tie into the entrance into the natural area resulting in a
13 slight impact of 0.09 acres to the eastern edge of the park. None of the features or amenities
14 would be impacted as a result, and the remainder of the natural area would not be diminished
15 in utility. Access to the natural area would be improved.

16 Indirect Effects. In order to minimize direct impacts to the park, a 300-foot wall, 11 feet to
17 15 feet in height, is proposed to run along the edge of the park. This would have the potential
18 to inhibit the view to the east.

19 **Arapaho Bend Natural Area.** Impacts at this location would result from the expansion of a
20 carpool lot to the north of the existing lot used by CDOT in the northwest quadrant of Harmony
21 Road and I-25. The City of Fort Collins had previously negotiated an easement in this area of
22 4.03 acres anticipating future expansion of the lot. The proposed parking lot expansion, the
23 addition of a new ramp and improvements to the bridge over Cache la Poudre would impact a
24 total of 8.15 acres, of which 4.03 acres is part of the easement, totaling a net loss of
25 4.11 acres. None of the features or amenities would be impacted as a result, and the
26 remainder of the natural area would not be diminished in utility. Additionally, access to
27 Harmony Road would be improved from the existing one-lane entrance to a four-lane entrance
28 with right-in and right-out. No indirect effects are anticipated at Arapaho Bend Natural Area as
29 a result of the proposed improvements.

30 From Crossroads south to SH 60, one additional lane as well as one auxiliary lane is
31 anticipated in each direction, for a total of six lanes. Three properties would be impacted:
32 Larimer County Fairgrounds, Big Thompson Ponds State Wildlife Area, and McWhinney Hahn
33 Sculpture Park.

34 **Larimer County Fairgrounds.** Impacts at this location would result from the addition of the
35 general purpose lane and the auxiliary lane on the eastern side of I-25. These impacts would
36 occur in the non-recreational portion of the Fairgrounds. The new eastern frontage road
37 directly adjacent to the improved highway would impact approximately 1.30 acres of the
38 westernmost edge of the park. Some of the lights adjacent to I-25 could be impacted as a
39 result of the improvement, but the remainder of complex would not be diminished in utility. No
40 indirect effects are anticipated at Larimer County fairgrounds as a result of the proposed
41 improvements.

42

1 **Big Thompson Ponds State Wildlife Area.** Impacts at this location would result from the
2 addition of the general purpose lane and the auxiliary lane on the west side of I-25 as well as
3 the transition of the ramp from the US 34 interchange south on to I-25. The combined
4 improvements would impact the easternmost edge of the wildlife area. Walls would be placed
5 in this area in order to minimize impact and the area impacted was reduced to 0.11 acres.
6 None of the features or amenities would be impacted as a result, and the remainder of the
7 wildlife area would not be diminished in utility.

8 Indirect Effects. Noise impacts to portions of the park would exceed CDOT's criteria for noise
9 abatement. An increase is also anticipated with the No-Action Alternative and the increase
10 would be small but still require an exploration of mitigation. For more detailed information,
11 please refer to **Section 3.6 Noise and Vibration.**

12 **McWhinney Hahn Sculpture Park.** Impacts at this location would result from reconfiguration
13 of the US 34 interchange from a fully directional cloverleaf to a three-quarter directional
14 interchange. The northbound off-ramp from I-25 to US 34 would impact the southernmost
15 portion of the park, resulting in 1.21 acres impacted. This impact would result in loss of trails at
16 the park in addition to a number of sculptures.

17 Indirect Effects. The elevation of the ramps adjacent to the park would be 20 to 30 feet in the
18 air decreasing visibility to the park and from the park to the Front Range. Since part of the
19 established "purpose" of the park is to "showcase art"; decreased visibility to and from the park
20 could inhibit this function and result in an indirect effect.

21 *Component A-H3: General Purpose Lanes*

22 Improvements associated with this component include the addition of one general purpose
23 lane in each direction on I-25 for a total of six lanes from SH 60 to SH 66 and from SH 52 to
24 E-470 for a total of eight lanes. One property would be impacted by improvements associated
25 with this component: Little Thompson River Corridor.

26 **Little Thompson River Corridor.** Impacts at this location would result from the addition of the
27 general purpose lane and auxiliary lane on the west side of I-25 as well as the transition of the
28 southbound ramp at the newly configured SH 56 interchange. Current access to the
29 recreational area would be removed and replaced with a new access from the south ending at
30 a cul-de-sac at the recreational area. The new right-of-way acquisition required to
31 accommodate the additional lane, the ramp and the new access would result in 2.03 acres of
32 impact adjacent to the west side of the highway. Aside from the new access, none of the
33 features or amenities would be impacted as a result, and the remainder of the recreational
34 area would not be diminished in utility.

35 Indirect Effects. West-side property access would be maintained except for the northwest park
36 road connection to the service road. This connection would be severed, but access would still
37 be available to the south. East-side property access would be modified so that recreationists
38 would use the new service road.

39 Indirect Effects to Other Parks. Portions of St. Vrain Park would experience noise impacts that
40 exceed CDOT's criteria for noise abatement. Although an increase is also anticipated with the
41 No-Action Alternative, the increase would be small but still require an exploration of mitigation.
42 For more detailed information, please refer to **Section 3.6 Noise and Vibration.**

1 *Component A-H4: Structure Upgrades*

2 There are no parks or recreational resources directly impacted as a result of the proposed
3 improvements associated with this component.

4 Indirect Effects to Other Parks. Portions of Willow Brook Park, Civic Center Park, and
5 Thorncreek Municipal Golf Course would experience noise impacts which exceed CDOT's
6 criteria for noise abatement. The increase would be small but still require an exploration of
7 mitigation, for more detailed information, please refer to **Section 3.6 Noise and Vibration.**

8 *Component A-T1: Commuter Rail Fort Collins to Longmont*

9 There are no parks or recreational resources impacted as a result of the proposed
10 improvements associated with this component.

11 *Component A-T2: Commuter Rail Longmont to North Metro*

12 There are two properties which would be impacted by the improvements associated with this
13 component. They are Sandstone Ranch and Boulder Creek Estates.

14 **Sandstone Ranch.** Impacts at this location would result from the new double-tracked
15 commuter rail line proposed to run south of SH 119 to connect from Longmont to the proposed
16 FasTracks North Metro Corridor in Thornton. The new track would impact 2.75 acres at the
17 northernmost edge of the park, adjacent to SH 119. A small portion of the trail in the northwest
18 corner of the park would be impacted, but none of the other features or amenities would be
19 impacted as a result, and the remainder of the park would not be diminished in utility. No
20 indirect effects are anticipated at Sandstone Ranch as a result of proposed improvements.

21 **Boulder Creek Estates.** Impacts at this location would result from the new commuter rail line
22 proposed to run south of SH 119 to connect from Longmont to the proposed FasTracks North
23 Metro Corridor in Thornton. The new track would impact 4.08 acres at the northernmost edge
24 of the park, adjacent to SH 119. The proposed rail line would then turn south to follow along
25 the west side of Weld County Road 7 where it would again enter Boulder Creek Estates
26 property impacting an additional 1.64 acres for a total of 5.72 acres. A proposed trail following
27 St. Vrain Creek beneath SH 119 would be accommodated. Plans for additional facilities
28 including parking, picnic tables and restrooms are still conceptual, however the City of
29 Longmont has coordinated with the project team and they have agreed that these plans will
30 not be precluded by construction of the rail line at this location and that their future plans will
31 set aside right-of-way for the commuter rail tracks. Coordination will continue with the City of
32 Longmont to insure that park amenities will not be affected (see letter from City of Longmont in
33 **Appendix B**). No indirect effects are anticipated at Boulder Creek Estates as a result of
34 proposed improvements.

35 *Component A-T3: Commuter Bus: Greeley to Denver*

36 There are no parks or recreational resources impacted as a result of the proposed
37 improvements associated with this component.

38 *Component A-T4: Commuter Bus: Greeley to DIA*

39 There are no parks or recreational resources impacted as a result of the proposed
40 improvements associated with this component.

1 **3.18.2.3 PACKAGE B**

2 Impacts to parks and recreational resources in the project area associated with Package B are
3 displayed in **Table 3.18-3**. Additional information about the impacts is summarized in the
4 discussion that follows the table.

5 **Table 3.18-3 Impacts to Parks and Recreational Resources Associated with**
6 **Package B**

Component Number	Map ID No.	Parks and Recreation Resource	Original Acreage	Area of Impact (Acres)
B-H2	2	Arapaho Bend Natural Area	269.56	4.94
B-H2	3	Archery Range Natural Area	55.37	0.14
B-H2	6	Big Thompson Ponds State Wildlife Area	48.61	0.24
B-H2	20	Larimer County Fairgrounds	234.00	4.13
B-H3/B-T1	22	Little Thompson River Corridor	100.92	2.78
B-H2/B-T1	25	McWhinney Hahn Sculpture Park	4.5	1.21
Total			712.96	13.44

7 The following discussion summarizes direct and indirect impacts by component.

8 *Component B-H1: Safety Improvements*

9 There are no impacts to parks or recreational areas associated with the safety improvements
10 north of SH 14.

11 *Component B-H2: Tolled Express Lanes*

12 There are five properties which would be impacted by the improvements associated with this
13 component. Two properties would be impacted by the addition of the buffer-separated lanes
14 between SH 14 and Harmony Road: the Archery Range and the Arapaho Bend Natural Area.

15 **Archery Range Natural Area.** Improvements in this location would be similar to those
16 associated with Package A except the impact would be slightly larger resulting from the wider
17 footprint associated with the tolled express lanes. The impact would be .14 acres. None of the
18 features or amenities would be impacted as a result, and the remainder of the natural area
19 would not be diminished in utility. Access to the natural area would be improved.

20 Indirect Effects. Indirect effects associated with noise are the same at this location as those
21 described in Package A. A similar increase is anticipated in conjunction with the No-Action
22 Alternative.

23

1 **Arapaho Bend Natural Area.** Impacts at this location would be similar to Package A resulting
2 from the expansion of a carpool lot to the north, the addition of the ramp and the bridge
3 modifications at Cache la Poudre. The City of Fort Collins had previously negotiated an
4 easement in this area of 4.03 acres with CDOT anticipating future expansion of the existing
5 parking lot. These improvements would impact 9.35 acres which exceeds the easement
6 totaling a net loss of 4.94 acres. None of the features or amenities would be impacted as a
7 result, and the remainder of the natural area would not be diminished in utility. Additionally,
8 access to Harmony would be improved from the existing one lane entrance to a four lane
9 entrance with right in and right out movements only. No indirect effects are anticipated at
10 Arapaho Bend Natural Area as a result of proposed improvements.

11 Between Harmony Road and SH 60, there are two barrier-separated lanes proposed in each
12 direction to accommodate the tolled express lanes, as well as the proposed bus rapid transit
13 (BRT). Three properties would be impacted as a result of these improvements: Larimer County
14 Fairgrounds, Big Thompson Ponds State Wildlife Area, and McWhinney Hahn Sculpture Park.

15 **Larimer County Fairgrounds.** Impacts at this location would result from the addition of the
16 two barrier separated lanes on the eastern side of the general purpose lanes. Impacts at this
17 location would occur at the non-recreational portion of the park. In addition, there would be a
18 BRT station in the median with a pedestrian bridge terminating at the eastern side of the
19 highway. The barrier separated lanes in conjunction with the BRT station would impact
20 4.13 acres of the westernmost edge of the park. Some of the lights adjacent to I-25 could be
21 impacted as a result of the improvement, but the remainder of complex would not be
22 diminished in utility. No indirect effects are anticipated at Larimer County Fairgrounds as a
23 result of the proposed improvements.

24 **Big Thompson Ponds State Wildlife Area.** Impacts at this location would result from the
25 addition of the two barrier separated tolled express lanes on the western side of the general
26 purpose lanes. These lanes would also accommodate the BRT. The combined improvements
27 would impact the easternmost edge of the wildlife area. Walls were placed in this area in order
28 to minimize impact and the acreage impacted was reduced to 0.24 acres. None of the features
29 or amenities would be impacted as a result, and the remainder of the natural area would not
30 be diminished in utility.

31 Indirect Effects. Indirect effects associated with noise are the same at this location as those
32 described in Package A. A similar increase is anticipated in conjunction with the No-Action
33 Alternative.

34 **McWhinney Hahn Sculpture Park.** Impacts at this location would be the same as those
35 associated with Package A.

36 Indirect Effects. Indirect effects associated with visual impacts at the sculpture park are the
37 same at this location as those described in Package A.

38 *Component B-H3: Tolled Express Lanes*

39 Improvements between SH 60 and E-470 include the addition of two buffer separated lanes in
40 each direction for a total of six general purpose lanes and two tolled express lanes. BRT would
41 share the tolled express lanes. There is one property which would be impacted by the
42 improvements associated with this component. It is the Little Thompson River Corridor.

1 **Little Thompson River Corridor.** Impacts at this location would be similar to Package A
2 resulting from the right-of-way acquisition required to accommodate the additional lane, the
3 ramp and the new access to the area. Total acreage impacted would be 2.03 acres adjacent to
4 the highway at the west. Aside from the new access, none of the features or amenities would
5 be impacted as a result, and the remainder of the natural area would not be diminished in
6 utility. The difference in acreage between Package A and Package B results from a wider
7 typical section associated with Package B.

8 Indirect Effects. Impacts to access at the Little Thompson River Corridor would be the same as
9 those described in Package A.

10 Indirect Effects to Other Parks. Portions of St. Vrain Park would experience noise impacts
11 which exceed CDOT's criteria for noise abatement. The increase would be small but still
12 require an exploration of mitigation, for more detailed information. Please refer to **Section 3.6**
13 *Noise and Vibration.*

14 *Component B-H4: Tolled Express Lanes*

15 Improvements between E-470 and US 36 include the addition of one buffer separated lane in
16 each direction for a total of six general purpose lanes and two tolled express lanes. BRT would
17 share the tolled express lanes. There are no properties that would experience direct impacts
18 through improvements associated with this component.

19 Indirect Effects. Portions of Civic Center Park, Willow Brook Park, and Thorncreek Municipal
20 Golf Course would experience noise impacts which exceed CDOT's criteria for noise
21 abatement. The increase would be small but still require an exploration of mitigation. For more
22 detailed information, please refer to **Section 3.6 Noise and Vibration.**

23 *Component B-T1 & B-T2: Bus Rapid Transit: Fort Collins/Greeley to Denver/DIA*

24 Impacts to the Archery Range Natural Area, Arapaho Bend Natural Area, Larimer County
25 Fairgrounds, Big Thompson Ponds State Wildlife Area, and McWhinney Hahn Sculpture Park
26 are identical to those described in Component B-H2: Tolled Express Lanes.

27 **3.18.2.4 PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE**

28 Impacts to parks and recreational resources in the regional study area resulting from the
29 Preferred Alternative are displayed in **Table 3.18-4.** The discussion that follows summarizes
30 direct and indirect impacts by component.

31

1 **Table 3.18-4 Impacts to Parks and Recreational Resources Associated with the**
2 **Preferred Alternative**

Component	FEIS Map ID No.	Parks and Recreation Resource	Original Acreage	Area of Impact (Acres)
I-25 Highway Improvements/ Express Bus	1	Arapaho Bend Natural Area	269.56	2.91 (I-25 Highway Improvements)/ 0.16 (Express Bus)
I-25 Highway Improvements	21	Larimer County Fairgrounds	234.00	1.72
I-25 Highway Improvements	24	Little Thompson River Corridor	100.92	1.31
I-25 Highway Improvements	28	McWhinney Hahn Sculpture Park	4.50	1.21
Commuter Rail	7	Boulder Creek Estates	220.60	5.72
Commuter Rail	35	Sandstone Ranch	229.31	1.45
Total			1058.89	14.48

3 **3.18.2.5 I-25 HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENTS**

4 There are four properties that would be directly impacted by the improvements associated with
5 this component.

6 **Arapaho Bend Natural Area.** Impacts to this natural area would result from the
7 reconfiguration and upgrades to the I-25 /Harmony Road interchange ramps, the widened
8 template of I-25 to accommodate the tolled express lanes and additional general purpose
9 lanes and the bridge modifications at the Cache la Poudre River. Impacts as a result of these
10 improvements would total 2.91 acres. Additionally, the Preferred Alternative calls for the
11 expansion of a carpool lot to the north of the existing lot in the northwest quadrant of Harmony
12 Road and I-25 to accommodate parking for the express bus component which would impact
13 another 0.16 acre for a total of 3.07 acres. See the discussion below in **Section 3.18.2.7** for
14 more details. None of the features or amenities would be impacted as a result of the Preferred
15 Alternative, and the remainder of the natural area would not be diminished in utility.
16 Additionally, access to Harmony Road would be improved from the existing one-lane entrance
17 to a four-lane entrance with right-in and right-out. No indirect effects are anticipated at Arapaho
18 Bend Natural Area as a result of the proposed improvements.

19 Indirect Effects. Portions of Arapaho Bend Natural Area would experience noise impacts which
20 exceed CDOT's criteria for noise abatement. The increase would be small but still require an
21 exploration of mitigation. For more detailed information, please refer to **Section 3.6 Noise and**
22 **Vibration.**

23 **Larimer County Fairgrounds.** Impacts at this location would result from the addition of a
24 general purpose lane and a tolled express lane creating a wider footprint of I-25 . These
25 impacts would occur in the non-recreational portion of the fairgrounds. Improvements would
26 impact approximately 1.72 acres of the westernmost edge of the fairgrounds. Some of the

lights adjacent to I-25 may be impacted as a result of the improvement, but the remainder of complex would not be diminished in utility. No indirect effects are anticipated at Larimer County Fairgrounds as a result of the proposed improvements.

Little Thompson River Corridor. Impacts at this location would result from the addition of a general purpose lane and a tolled express lane creating a wider footprint of I-25 and the transition of the southbound ramp at the newly configured SH 56 interchange. Current access to the recreational area would be removed and replaced with a new access from the south ending at a cul-de-sac at the recreational area on the west side of I-25. The new right-of-way acquisition required to accommodate the additional lane, the ramp, and the new access, would result in 1.31 acres of impact adjacent to the west side of the highway. Aside from the new access, none of the features or amenities would be impacted as a result, and the remainder of the recreational area would not be diminished in utility.

Indirect Effects. West-side property access would be maintained except for the northwest park road connection to the service road. This connection would be severed, but access would still be available to the south. East-side property access would be modified so that recreationists would use the new service road.

McWhinney Hahn Sculpture Park. Impacts at this location would result from reconfiguration of the US 34 interchange from a fully directional cloverleaf to a three-quarter directional interchange. The northbound off-ramp from I-25 to US 34 would impact 1.21 acres in the southernmost portion of the park. This would affect an area that currently contains trails and a number of sculptures. These impacts would likely result in full acquisition of the park.

Indirect Effects. The ramps adjacent to the park would be elevated 20 to 30 feet in the air decreasing visibility to the park and from the park to the Front Range. Part of the established "purpose" of the park is to "showcase art"; decreased visibility to and from the park may inhibit this function and result in an indirect effect.

Indirect Effects to Other Parks. Portions of Big Thompson Ponds State Wildlife Area, Civic Center Park, Willow Brook Park, Thorncreek Municipal Golf Course, and St. Vrain State Park would experience noise impacts that exceed CDOT's criteria for noise abatement. The increases would be small but still require an exploration of mitigation. For more detailed information please refer to **Section 3.6 Noise and Vibration**. In order to remove direct impacts to Archery Range Natural Area, a 300-foot wall, 11 to 15 feet in height is proposed to run along the edge of the park. This would have the potential to inhibit the view to the east.

3.18.2.6 COMMUTER RAIL (FORT COLLINS TO NORTH METRO)

There are two properties which would be directly impacted by the improvements associated with this component.

Sandstone Ranch. Impacts at this location would result from the new commuter rail line proposed to run south of SH 119 to connect from City of Longmont to the proposed FasTracks North Metro Corridor in Thornton. The new track would impact 1.45 acres at the northernmost edge of the park, adjacent to SH 119. This area is outside of the reserved right-of-way coordinated between CDOT and the City of Longmont during the planning process for this park. A small portion of the trail in the northwest corner of the park would be impacted but

1 none of the other features or amenities would be impacted as a result, and the remainder of
2 the park would not be diminished in utility. No indirect effects are anticipated at Sandstone
3 Ranch as a result of proposed improvements.

4 **Boulder Creek Estates.** Impacts at this location would result from the new commuter rail line
5 proposed to run south of SH 119 to connect from Longmont to the proposed FasTracks North
6 Metro Corridor in Thornton. The new track would impact 4.08 acres at the northernmost edge
7 of the park, adjacent to SH 119. The proposed rail line would then turn south to follow along
8 the west side of Weld County Road 7 where it would again enter Boulder Creek Estates
9 property impacting an additional 1.64 acres for a total of 5.72 acres. A proposed trail following
10 St. Vrain Creek beneath SH 119 would be accommodated. Plans for additional facilities
11 including parking, picnic tables and restrooms are still conceptual, however the City of
12 Longmont has coordinated with the project team and they have agreed that these plans will
13 not be precluded by construction of the rail line at this location and that their future plans will
14 set aside right-of-way for the commuter rail tracks. Coordination will continue with the City of
15 Longmont to insure that park amenities will not be affected (see letter from City of Longmont in
16 **Appendix B**). No indirect effects are anticipated at Boulder Creek Estates as a result of
17 proposed improvements.

18 Indirect Effects to Other Parks. Portions of Collyer Park would experience noise impacts that
19 exceed CDOT's criteria for noise abatement. The increases would be small but still require an
20 exploration of mitigation. For more detailed information please refer to **Section 3.6 Noise and**
21 **Vibration.**

22 **3.18.2.7 EXPRESS BUS (FORT COLLINS/GREELEY TO DENVER/DIA)**

23 One property would be impacted as a result of this component.

24 **Arapaho Bend Natural Area.** Impacts at this location would result from the expansion of a
25 carpool lot to the north and the resulting need for an additional water quality pond partially
26 located on the natural area property. The City of Fort Collins had previously negotiated an
27 easement in this area of 4.03 acres anticipating future expansion of the lot. Construction
28 associated with this component would require an additional 0.16 acre beyond the area
29 negotiated as an easement. As described above in **Section 3.18.2.6**, the proposed parking lot
30 expansion, the ramp modifications and improvements to the bridge over the Cache la Poudre
31 River would impact a total of 3.06 acres. None of the features or amenities would be impacted
32 as a result, and the remainder of the natural area would not be diminished in utility. The
33 enlarged parking area would continue to serve users of the natural area while access to
34 Harmony Road would be improved from the existing one lane entrance to a four lane entrance
35 with right-in and right-out movements only. No indirect effects are anticipated at Arapaho Bend
36 Natural Area as a result of proposed improvements.

37 **3.18.2.8 US 85 COMMUTER BUS**

38 There are no parks or recreation resources directly impacted as a result of the proposed
39 improvements associated with this component.

40

3.18.3 Summary of Impacts

No-Action Alternative

The No-Action Alternative would result in deteriorating access due to increasing congestion throughout the regional study area. Additionally, eight properties would incur noise impacts, which would be similar to the noise impacts incurred with the build alternatives.

Package A

Eight properties would incur direct use as a result of implementing Package A. A majority of these impacts could be categorized as minor, leaving the features and attributes of the parks intact and not diminishing any utility to the resource. The exception is McWhinney Hahn Sculpture Park, where the trail is being impacted, as well as a number of the sculptures. This would likely result in a full acquisition of the park.

The proposed improvements in Package A would provide increased mobility and access to and from these recreational resources.

Indirect effects would occur at a number of properties, including visual impacts at the sculpture park, change in access at one location, and noise impacts at nine properties. These same properties would experience similar noise impacts as a result of the No-Action Alternative.

Temporary impacts to the parks would occur since construction of transportation improvements associated with Package A would likely result in the need for haul roads, equipment access, staging areas, batch plants, and/or other construction activities. All impacts resulting from construction are temporary in nature and would not permanently or adversely affect the function or physical aspects of the park or recreational resource.

Temporary construction occurring on properties where long segments of highway widening and/or new roadway and associated retaining wall construction, would encompass a full range of construction activities over a prolonged time frame, but would not last the entire duration of the construction project. This may include roadway detours and multiple phases of highway construction. These activities are likely to extend several months. Work zones would continuously change until relatively close to final build-out of that segment of the project.

More localized construction activity such as bridge demolition and reconstruction or culvert installations and culvert extensions, represents a more focused effort and require lesser time frames to complete because much of the work requiring the temporary construction easement would be demolition and preliminary infrastructure construction, and occupancy of the easement would be completed before site's highway decking and widening portion of the project were completed.

All ground disturbing and debris generating construction process would be contained by erosion and sediment control Best Management Practices (BMPs) designed as part of approved stabilization and stormwater management plans. All disturbed areas would be returned to their original contour, vegetation and landscape appearance in cooperation with and direction from the resource jurisdictional authorities.

1 *Package B*

2 Six properties would incur some direct use as a result of implementing Package B. At most of
3 the properties, impacts could be categorized as minor, leaving the features and attributes of
4 the parks intact and not diminishing any utility to the resource. The exception is McWhinney
5 Hahn Sculpture Park, where the trail is being impacted, as well as a number of the sculptures.

6 Indirect effects would occur at a number of properties, including visual impacts at the sculpture
7 park, change in access at one location, and noise impacts at eight properties. These same
8 properties would experience similar noise impacts as a result of the No-Action Alternative.

9 The proposed improvements in Package B would provide increased mobility and access to
10 and from these recreational resources.

11 Package B would have similar temporary impacts as Package A.

12 *Preferred Alternative*

13 Six properties would incur some direct use as a result of implementing the Preferred
14 Alternative. At most of the properties, impacts could be categorized as minor, leaving the
15 features and attributes of the parks intact and not diminishing any utility to the resource. The
16 exception is McWhinney Hahn Sculpture Park, where the trail is being impacted, as well as an
17 area containing a number of the sculptures. Impacts at this park are identical among the three
18 build alternatives. This would likely result in a full acquisition of the park.

19 Indirect effects would occur at a number of properties, including visual impacts at the sculpture
20 park, change in access at one location, and noise impacts at nine properties. These same
21 properties would experience similar noise impacts as a result of the No-Action Alternative.

22 Benefits from implementation of the Preferred Alternative include improved access and
23 mobility to and from these recreational resources.

24 The Preferred Alternative would have similar temporary impacts as Package A and
25 Package B.

26 **3.18.4 Mitigation Measures**

27 During the development of the alternatives, extensive efforts went into modifying design to
28 avoid and minimize impacts to parkland wherever possible. Additional information about this
29 process is documented in **Chapter 5 Section 4(f) Evaluation**.

30 Coordination with the local agencies having jurisdiction at the resources is ongoing. Any
31 impacts incurred at these resources as a result of proposed improvements would be discussed
32 with the local jurisdictional agencies to determine the appropriate mitigation.

33 All ground disturbing and debris generating construction processes will be contained by
34 erosion and sediment control BMPs designed as part of approved stabilization and stormwater
35 management plans. All disturbed areas will be returned to their original contour, vegetation
36 and landscape appearance in cooperation with and direction from the resource jurisdictional
37 authorities.

- 1 Some techniques that may be used to mitigate impacts incurred at these areas will include but
2 not be limited to:
- 3 ▶ Coordinating with the local jurisdiction to prepare for construction at the site, including
4 public safety and security measures, and providing signed detour and alternate access
5 information.
 - 6 ▶ Replacing vegetation with native grass and shrubs or irrigated turf as pre-construction
7 conditions dictate. Mitigation ratios and plant selection and placement will occur through
8 coordination with the local agencies having jurisdiction.
 - 9 ▶ Using BMPs to limit erosion during construction. See **Section 3.23 Construction Impacts**
10 for more detail.
 - 11 ▶ Compensating for acquisition of the resource. Location of any lost access will be
12 negotiated with park representatives during final design.
 - 13 ▶ Rebuilding park features, such as trails, elsewhere on the park site.
 - 14 ▶ Fencing will be included in all areas where pedestrian safety is a concern.