



North Link

THE NORTH I-25 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT – STUDYING FUTURE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS ALONG THE I-25 CORRIDOR FROM THE FORT COLLINS/WELLINGTON AREA TO DENVER.

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Introduction to the Draft EIS Process

Level 3 Evaluation is complete and the North I-25 EIS project has entered the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) phase. Based on Level 3 Evaluation findings, two DEIS Packages have been developed and will undergo even more detailed analysis in the DEIS process. Steps in the DEIS:

1. Development of DEIS Alternatives
2. Analysis of elements of Packages A & B and No-Action Alternative
3. Documentation of the DEIS Chapters
4. Review Process by the Colorado Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration and cooperating agencies
5. Public and Agency Comment Period

- Of the various tolled *Express Lane* alternatives, tolled *Express Lanes* with Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) would provide the most congestion reduction and would have the highest utilization. Based on this, a variation of tolled *Express Lane* alternatives with BRT are included in the DEIS.

Transit Evaluation

- Commuter Rail (CR) service attracts the highest level of ridership but bus alternatives are the most cost effective.
- CR service along the western Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) railroad corridor would be significantly more effective than building CR along I-25 and/or U.S. 85 corridors. Transit lines on I-25 compete for riders with transit services along the BNSF railroad corridor and U.S. 85.
- Bus transit service to Denver International Airport attracts more ridership and has the potential to improve the cost-effectiveness of bus service.

Notable Level 3 Facts to Consider in the Draft EIS

Highway Evaluation

- Evaluation of various transit and highway improvements indicated that I-25 would need to be widened to accommodate future development regardless of transit improvements provided.
- I-25 could be widened to accommodate future growth and development in three basic ways: additional general purpose lanes, tolled *Express Lanes* or combination of both.
- Using general purpose lanes, a six-lane cross-section is sufficient in much of the area while eight lanes and/or auxiliary lanes would be required in select locations.

Environmental Analysis in the Draft EIS

The North I-25 EIS environmental resource specialists are completing data collection and updating existing conditions for DEIS Package A and DEIS Package B. Environmental resource specialists have been collecting data on wetlands throughout the North I-25 EIS study area, along the BNSF railroad corridor and from historic and archaeological resources. Currently, the environmental team and many municipalities are identifying important community resources in order to avoid any potential negative impacts.



DEIS Package A: 6 GP + WCR + CB85

LEGEND

- 1 New General Purpose Lane in Each Direction
- - - 1 New General Purpose Lane + Auxiliary Lane in Each Direction
- Commuter Rail
- Commuter Bus Service in General Purpose Lanes
- Feeder Bus Service
- ◆ Interchange Upgrades
- ⊗ Number of Lanes
- Commuter Bus Station
- Commuter Rail Station
- FasTracks Rail Line
- RTD Transit Station



NOT TO SCALE



NOTE:

- Select sections of I-25 would require auxiliary lanes and/or an additional through-lane in addition to this 6-lane cross section.
- Where widening is needed between State Highway 66 (SH 66) and SH 7, the median would be used.

DEIS Package B: Express Lanes + BRT

LEGEND

- 1 Buffer-Separated Express Lane in Each Direction
- - - 2 Barrier-Separated Express Lanes in Each Direction
- BRT Route (Uses Express Lanes on I-25)
- Feeder Bus Service
- ◆ Interchange Upgrades
- ⊗ Number of Lanes: General Purpose/Express Lanes
- Bus Rapid Transit Station
- FasTracks Rail Line
- RTD Transit Station



NOT TO SCALE



NOTE:

- A wider barrier and express lanes cross-section is included between SH 60 and Harmony Road.
- BRT stations could be located within an expanded median area.
- Where widening is needed between SH 66 and SH 7, the median would be used.

Congestion Management Measures could include:

- New local transit routes
- New express transit routes
- Enhanced carpool lot parking capacity and amenities
- Courtesy patrol (incident management) from SH 14 to SH 7
- Variable messaging signs at all transit stations
- Automated Vehicle Locaters on all transit vehicles – “next bus” technology
- Ramp metering and variable messaging signs at selected interchanges
- Access management along U.S. 85 [Package A]
- Signal coordination along U.S. 34 and Harmony Road [Package B]
- Continuous links to local bike and pedestrian systems
- Support for development of a Transportation Management Organization (TMO)



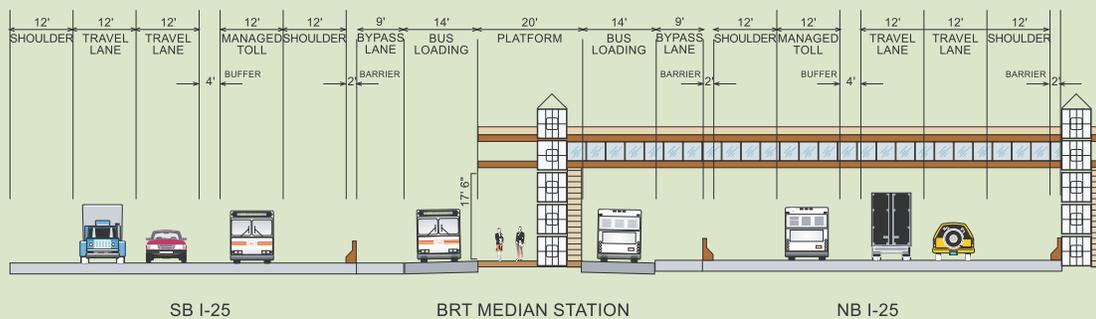
Transit Station Planning

The design team has considered many potential station locations for Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), Commuter Rail (CR) and Commuter Bus transit corridors. Criteria such as station spacing, vehicular access and proximity to population and activity centers were all taken into account as well as committee and stakeholder support.

Once a general facility location was determined, the team identified numerous sites for each station. The specific sites were identified and sized to serve the park and ride facility, feeder bus system, passenger drop-off and pedestrian connectivity. The specific station sites were evaluated looking at vehicular,

pedestrian and bicycle access, platform/site relationship, land use compatibility, joint development opportunities and environmental impacts. As a result of this evaluation, one to two sites per station were recommended to move forward and be evaluated further in the DEIS.

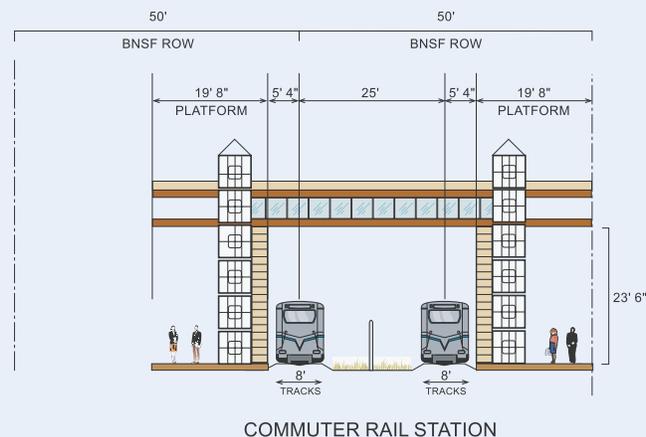
Bus Rapid Transit Typical Station



- One platform 20' x 300' located in the median of I-25
- Bus loading lanes will be located on either side of platform
- Bypass lane, barrier and shoulder provide a 23' buffer from bus loading lane to the through-lanes of I-25
- Pedestrian circulation will be provided with a pedestrian overpass from the median platform to parking, which will be located on either the east or west side of I-25
- Stairs and elevator will be provided
- Parking is located adjacent or close to station

Commuter Rail Typical Station

- Two platforms 19'8" x 400' (allows for compatibility with RTD transit system)
- One platform will be located to the west of the southbound track and one platform will be located to the east of the northbound track
- Pedestrian circulation will be provided with a pedestrian overpass between each platform to prevent unsafe crossings of the railroad tracks
- Stairs and elevator will be provided
- Parking is located adjacent or close to station





A Look into Commuter Rail and Bus Rapid Transit in the EIS

Commuter Rail and Integration with FasTracks

The passage of RTD's FasTracks proposal in November 2005 brings Commuter Rail (CR) service to the doorstep of the North Front Range. The North I-25 EIS project team will analyze connecting the proposed CR alignment shown in Package A with the FasTracks lines that include both the North Metro Corridor through Thornton, as well as the Northwest Rail Corridor up to Longmont along the existing Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) railroad corridor, which parallels U.S. 287. However, "connecting the dots" isn't as easy as it sounds.

To maximize the FasTracks investment and avoid paying more of the operations cost than absolutely necessary, service extended north from the FasTracks stations should be at the frequencies planned by RTD, which is currently every 30 minutes to Thornton and Longmont. Therefore, every 30 minutes a train from North Metro would continue north to the Longmont station, meet the RTD train pulling in and allow passengers to transfer to the northbound train. This allows passengers from Fort Collins to Denver to ride without transferring, but passengers from Fort Collins to Boulder would have to transfer to the RTD service in Longmont.

The project team is currently considering two possible CR extensions from Longmont to the North Metro Corridor. Alignment S would cross I-25 into the Tri-towns area, which includes Frederick, Firestone and Dacono, before continuing to St. Vrain Junction, where the northernmost FasTracks station is planned. Benefits include access to a greater number of people as estimated in 2030, no rail placement in existing roadways, and options for a station located at WCR 7, WCR 11 or WCR 13. However, Alignment S will affect several major utility lines and two existing housing subdivisions.

Alignment V would continue south through Erie before crossing I-25 to meet the North Metro Corridor at the St. Vrain Junction station. Benefits of Alignment V include a shorter track length, greater utilization of existing rail line, affects only one major utility station, and the fewest impacts to communities, parks and open spaces of the two alternatives. Alignment V will affect one existing subdivision and limit the location of a station at WCR 8.

The North I-25 EIS project team continues to evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of both CR alternatives to determine which will proceed into the DEIS.

Bus Rapid Transit: A New, Flexible Transportation Option in Colorado

Picture a large, swift and futuristic-looking vehicle, much like ones seen at themed amusement parks. Now picture that same vehicle in a special lane of the highway, stopping every few miles at bus station platforms built into the highway median. This new transit technology, known as Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), has gained widespread interest and appeal as a comparatively lower-cost high capacity transit investment. In Colorado, it is being considered in the North I-25 EIS and is planned for the U.S. 36 Corridor.

The benefits of BRT relate to flexibility. The bus can be powered by a variety of fuel sources and runs on rubber tires like a typical bus. Therefore, BRT vehicles can be routed anywhere there is adequate pavement, which makes it ideal for

blending local service with several stops near neighborhoods or employment centers to provide sufficient access, with a commute service that has fewer stops and higher travel speeds along freeway lanes. Distinct from typical bus service, BRT typically runs in a dedicated, special-use lane. But that, too, is flexible, as the lane can also be utilized by other high occupancy vehicles, or for other special purposes like tolling.

In the North Front Range, BRT is proposed as part of an alternative that includes tolled *Express Lanes* along North I-25. The service would consist of two routes: one from Greeley, going directly to Denver Union Station, and the other from Fort Collins, alternating destinations between Denver International Airport and Denver Union Station. The

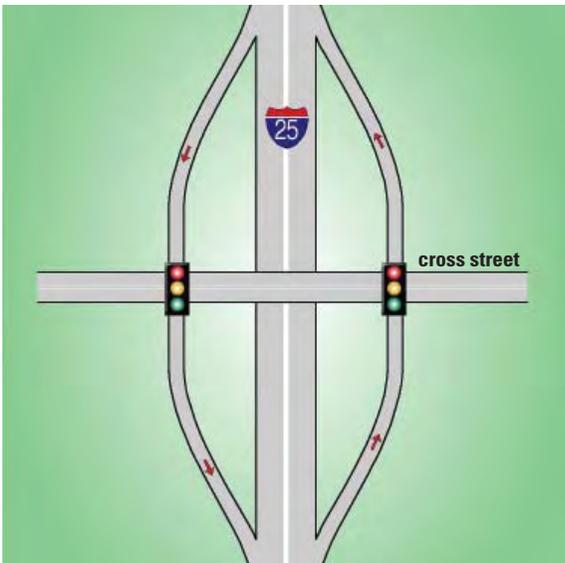
service would take Harmony Road and U.S. 34 to get to I-25. Along these roads the BRT is proposed to stop at both street-side stops as well as park and ride lots, and to utilize signal treatments and intersection modifications that would be designed to help the service avoid congestion. Along I-25, the service would run within the tolled *Express Lanes* and stop at station areas that are built into the freeway median. They would be accessible to pedestrians via a pedestrian bridge. Freeway station areas would be buffered by passing lanes and other treatments to provide adequate space and roominess for passengers.

The BRT alternative will be compared to the CR service, and both will be tested for ridership, costs and environmental impacts in the DEIS.



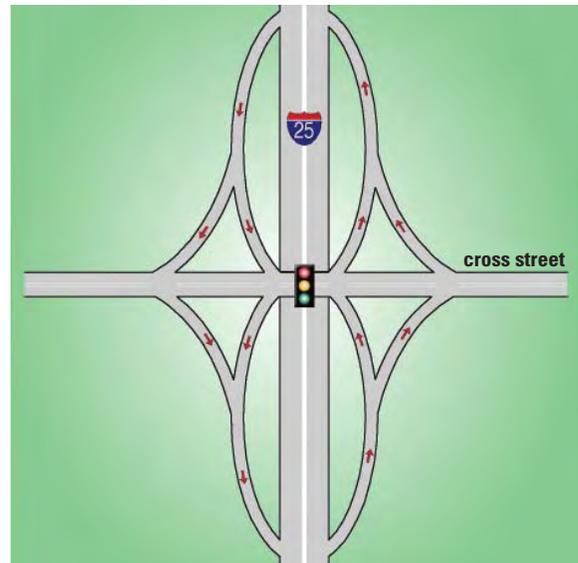
Interchange and Highway Access Planning

In late 2005, the North I-25 EIS project team recognized that most I-25 Corridor interchanges would need to be rebuilt or reconfigured to handle future traffic volumes. In February 2006, a series of small group public meetings commenced to collect input and better understand the issues associated with each interchange. Since February, the project team has developed and analyzed new interchange configurations while continuing to meet with the small groups. Preferred configurations have been recommended for many locations; however, the planning effort is ongoing and the project team will continue to meet with the small groups this fall.



▲ Diamond

The Diamond interchange is the most commonly used interchange on I-25. Ramp intersections with the cross street are typically controlled with stop signs in low volume situations and with traffic signals in moderate to high volume situations. Occasionally, roundabouts are used such as along I-70 in Grand Junction and Gypsum. Diamond interchanges at Harmony Road, State Highway 52 and Weld County Road 8 have ramp intersections and multiple left and right turn lanes.



▲ Single Point Urban Interchange (SPUI)

A SPUI is similar to the Diamond design except the SPUI is smaller and its ramps converge to one intersection at the cross street controlled with a traffic signal. Typically used when there is limited right-of-way, SPUI interchanges are being proposed at U.S. 34 and Rocky Mountain Avenue along with the U.S. 34 and Larimer County Road 5 intersections.



◀ Direct Connect Ramps

Typically used at interstate intersections or at the intersection of an interstate and major cross street, these ramps support all turn movements including specific turn movements with high traffic volumes. This type of ramp is being considered for the I-25 and U.S. 34 interchange.



Your Community. Your Travel. Your Opinions.

During the last round of public meetings, the communities expressed interest in a rail alternative that would connect to Denver without traveling through Boulder. In response, the North I-25 EIS project team has extended the Package A rail line into southwestern Weld County.

The new rail alignments would connect northern Colorado passengers to the FasTracks system at both Longmont and Thornton, reduce travel time, and have minimal impacts to natural resources and adjacent communities.

We invite you to attend one of the scheduled public meetings to review the new alternatives and provide input. Come see how your opinions continue to shape your transportation.

Monday, November 13
Open house: 6-8 p.m.
Northglenn Recreation Center
11801 Community Center Drive
Northglenn

Wednesday, November 15
Open house: 6-8 p.m.
Southwest Weld County Complex
4209 Weld County Road 24 1/2
Longmont

Contact Information

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Do we have your e-mail address?

If not, register it by going to our Web site and clicking on "Contact Us."

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