

3.1 LAND USE

This section provides an abbreviated description of land use conditions and impacts. For a detailed explanation, the *Land Use Technical Memorandum* (Jacobs, 2008a) included in **Appendix C** should be reviewed.

It is important to note that development and conversion of agricultural lands to employment, commercial, and residential uses have already occurred and is occurring rapidly in the regional study area, particularly along the I-25 corridor. Therefore, descriptions contained in this section should be considered in a general context as specific land uses may have changed.

3.1.1 Affected Environment

3.1.1.1 LAND USE PLANNING

Land use planning in the regional study area is primarily undertaken by local municipal and county governments. In addition, three regional transportation planning agencies are responsible for transportation planning in the regional study area.

Local Government Planning

The regional study area covers an approximately 61-mile stretch of the I-25 corridor north of Denver and includes the parallel corridors along US 85 and the BNSF/Longmont North Metro Connection corridor. There are 45 local jurisdictions (counties and incorporated cities and towns) in the regional study area responsible for local land use planning (see **Figure 3.1-1**).

The regional study area includes rural unincorporated county lands as well as urban municipal lands. Land use planning for unincorporated lands in the regional study area is the responsibility of seven counties: Adams, Boulder, Broomfield, Denver, Jefferson, Larimer, and Weld. Both Broomfield and Denver are combined city/county governments. Existing and future development patterns in Jefferson County were not analyzed since only a portion of the county is located within the project area.

There are 38 municipalities within the regional study area where improvements are being considered. From north to south, municipalities along the US 85 corridor include Greeley, Evans, La Salle, Gilcrest, Platteville, Fort Lupton, Brighton, and Commerce City. Municipalities along the I-25 corridor from north to south include Wellington, Fort Collins, Timnath, Windsor, Johnstown, Mead, Firestone, Frederick, Dacono, Erie, Broomfield (city/county), Thornton, Westminster, Northglenn, and Denver (city/county). The BNSF/Longmont North Metro Connection corridor includes Fort Collins, Loveland, Berthoud, Longmont, Firestone, Frederick, and Dacono. In some cases, annexation of interchange locations or other desirable development properties has resulted in municipal boundaries extending some distance from core urban areas and the resulting planning area crossing two of the North I-25 transportation corridors. For example, Berthoud and Fort Collins have annexed land along I-25, but their core urban areas are along the BNSF/Longmont North Metro Connection corridor.

What's in Section 3.1?

3.1 Land Use

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1 The influx of people and businesses moving into the regional study area has caused municipal
2 boundaries to expand rapidly into unincorporated county lands. For example, municipalities
3 such as Erie, Frederick, and Firestone in southwest Weld County along the I-25 corridor have
4 annexed a substantial amount of land into their towns in just the last five years, whereas in the
5 previous 50 years, very little annexation occurred. Municipalities that have development
6 constraints, such as floodplains, foothills, or closely neighboring municipalities, or require voter
7 approval for annexations, typically annex at slower rates. Also, rural municipalities farther from
8 primary transportation corridors or urban centers (e.g., Gilcrest and Platteville) generally annex
9 at slower rates.

10 With the exception of a few smaller rural municipalities, most of these jurisdictions have full-
11 time planning staff to address local land use and zoning issues. Additionally, most every
12 jurisdiction has adopted a comprehensive plan or land use plan for its planning area
13 (see **Table 3.1-1**). Review of the plans reveal that nearly every municipality has established or
14 desires some type of growth management boundary. Most define growth boundaries where
15 urban-level services are planned. Others also include an expanded growth management area
16 where the community desires to have a role in land use planning to coordinate compatible
17 adjacent land uses, open space, or rural land uses that act as community buffers.

18 *Regional Planning*

19 Regional land use planning in the regional study area primarily consists of incorporating land
20 use projections into long-range regional and statewide transportation plans. The North I-25
21 regional study area bisects parts of three transportation planning regions including North Front
22 Range Metropolitan Planning Organization (NFRMPO), the Upper Front Range planning area,
23 and Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG). Every four years, each region
24 prepares a regional transportation plan based on the region's needs and priorities. The
25 transportation planning regions incorporate land use projections obtained from local
26 governments into the plans, such as the location and timing of residential and commercial
27 (employment) development.

1 Table 3.1-1 Summary of Comprehensive/Land Use Plans*

Jurisdiction	Plan	Year
County Plans		
Adams County	Comprehensive Plan	2004
Boulder County	Comprehensive Plan	1978, as amended
Broomfield City and County	Comprehensive Plan	2005
Denver City and County	Blue Print Denver	2000
Larimer County	Master Plan	1997
Weld County	Comprehensive Plan	1999, as amended (update in progress)
US 85 Corridor Municipal Plans		
Greeley	2020 Comprehensive Plan	2000
Evans	Comprehensive Plan	2002
Gilcrest	Comprehensive Plan	2003
Platteville	Comprehensive Plan	2000
Fort Lupton	Land Use Plan	1997
Brighton	Comprehensive Plan	2003
Commerce City	Comprehensive Plan and New Lands Plan	1985, as amended, and 1992, respectively
I-25 Corridor Municipal Plans		
Wellington	Comprehensive Master Plan	2003
Timnath	Comprehensive Plan	2002
Windsor	Comprehensive Plan	2002
Johnstown	Area Comprehensive Plan	2001 (update in progress)
Mead	Comprehensive Plan	2004
Firestone	Master Plan	2006
Frederick	Comprehensive Plan	2004
Dacono	Comprehensive Land Use Plan	2005
Erie	Comprehensive Plan	2005
Thornton	Comprehensive Plan	1997 (update in progress)
Northglenn	Comprehensive Plan and Associated District Plans	1988
Westminster	Comprehensive Land Use Plan	2004
BNSF/Longmont North Metro Connection Corridor Municipal Plans		
Fort Collins	City Plan and Associated Subarea Plans	2004
Loveland	Comprehensive Master Plan/Land Use Plan	2003
Berthoud	Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Plan	1992 and 2001, respectively (update in progress)
Longmont	Area Comprehensive Plan	2003 as amended

* Includes municipalities and counties along primary transportation corridors. This list does not include all municipalities and counties in the regional study area.

3.1.1.2 EXISTING LAND USE

This section describes existing generalized land use for the US 85, I-25, and BNSF/Longmont North Metro Connection corridors (as of May 2005). For simplification, land uses have been generally categorized into agricultural, residential, commercial (including retail, industrial, office, etc.), and open space/parks. **Figure 3.1-2** depicts these generalized existing land uses.

Table 3.1-2 summarizes the estimated existing acreages in each land use category for the regional study area.

Table 3.1-2 Existing Land Use Categories and Acreage

Land Use Category	Approximate Acres
Agricultural	446,400
Residential	143,000
Commercial	75,100
Open Space/Parks	65,300
Surface Water Areas	39,900
Vacant/Unknown	6,400
Total	776,100

Note: Acres are approximate based on geographic information system (GIS) estimates from **Figure 3.1-2**.

US 85 Corridor

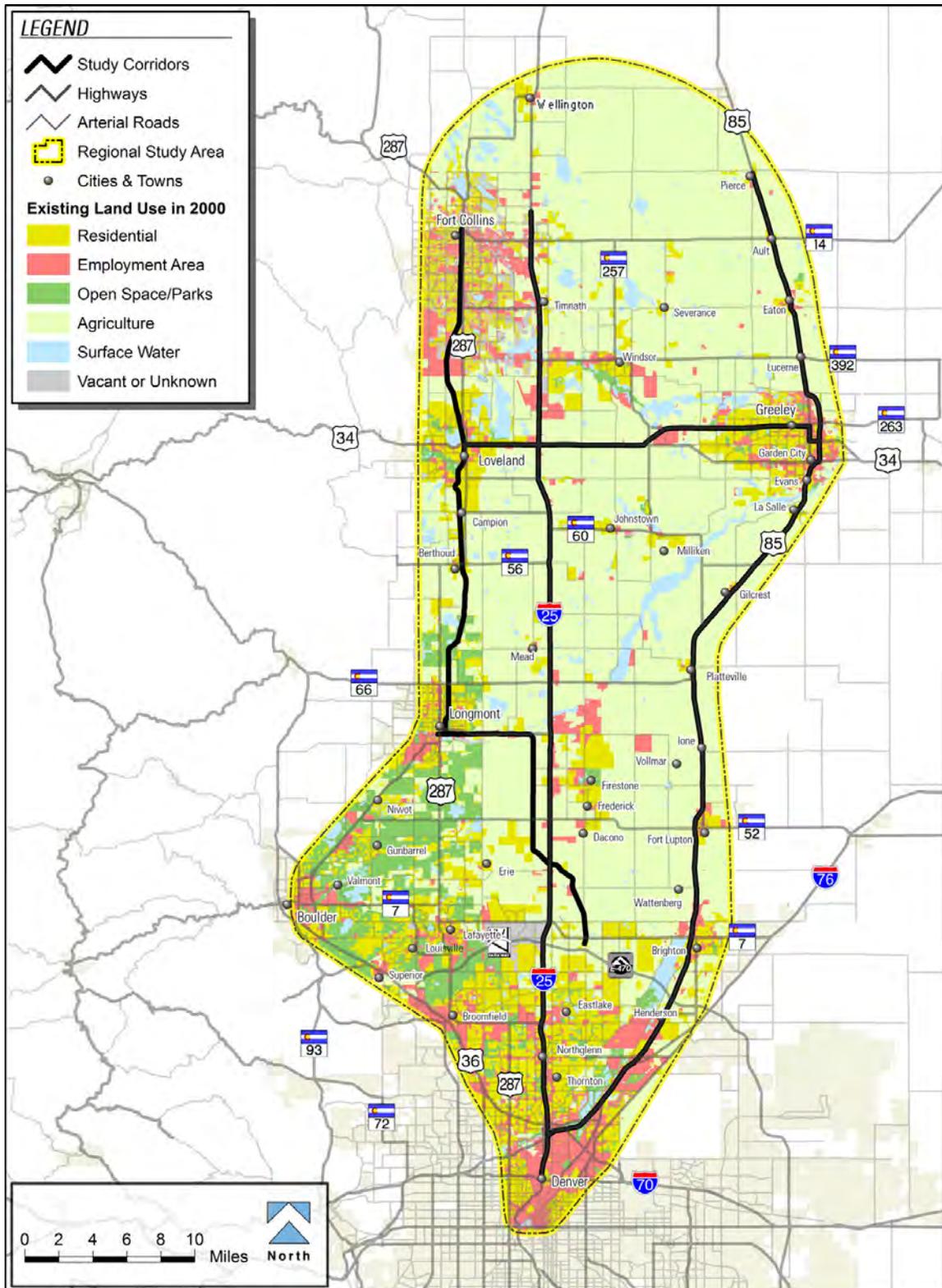
The US 85 corridor runs from the Town of Pierce in the north to downtown Denver in the south. There are two major linear features that parallel US 85 through this corridor that influenced how land has been developed: the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) that closely parallels US 85 to the east and the South Platte River along the west side. As a result of the UPRR, heavier industries and commercial uses tend to be concentrated on the east side of US 85, adjacent to the UPRR tracks. Conversely, the downtown areas of rural municipalities such as Evans, La Salle, Gilcrest, and Platteville are concentrated to the west of US 85 closer to the South Platte River. Fort Lupton, Brighton, and Commerce City are the exceptions and have their downtowns to the east of US 85 and bisected by the UPRR corridor.

Another major feature that influences land use along the US 85 corridor is the presence of large tracts of agricultural land. In the north end of the corridor, long stretches of agricultural lands act as community buffers between the towns of La Salle, Gilcrest, Platteville, and Fort Lupton, giving the area a distinctly rural character. South of Fort Lupton, there are fewer agricultural land uses separating the cities of Brighton, Commerce City, and Denver, leading to a more urban character associated with the growing Denver Metro Area. Within the towns and cities along US 85, land uses follow a typical pattern of a commercial core area associated with downtowns, surrounded by residential uses. Primary transportation corridors are also usually lined with commercial and industrial uses, as well as some residential uses.

I-25 Corridor

The I-25 corridor begins in the north at the town of Wellington and goes south to downtown Denver. The I-25 corridor can be generally defined as encompassing the interstate, as well as the interchanges and frontage roads serving the interstate. Land uses are rapidly changing along the I-25 corridor, particularly south of Harmony Road where agricultural lands are rapidly being converted to commercial and residential uses. Land use changes typically are driven by interchange locations where commercial uses are centered, and stretches between interchanges where agricultural and residential uses are more likely to be accessed by frontage roads.

1 Figure 3.1-2 North I-25 Regional Study Area Generalized Existing Land Use
2 (as of 2000)



1 At the north end of the regional study area near Wellington, land uses along I-25 are primarily
2 agricultural with a few residential enclaves and commercial properties. Commercial uses
3 increase near the highway interchanges serving Fort Collins. In between the interchanges, there
4 are mostly agricultural and low-density residential uses. Large-scale development of the US 34
5 interchange area has converted large tracts of agricultural lands into commercial and residential
6 uses. Farther south of SH 119, agricultural and residential land uses incorporate oil and gas
7 development, which include access roads, pipelines, wells, or other related facilities. From this
8 area south to Denver, the towns of Firestone, Frederick, Dacono, and Erie are developing quickly
9 with residential and commercial uses adjacent to I-25. This area is becoming an extension of the
10 Denver metropolitan urbanized area.

11 *BNSF/Longmont North Metro Connection Corridor*

12 The BNSF/Longmont North Metro Connection corridor begins north of downtown Fort Collins,
13 goes south to Longmont, east toward Firestone, and southeast toward Thornton. In the north, the
14 BNSF corridor is closer to the Front Range foothills than either of the other transportation
15 corridors considered in this study. Development constraints are more prevalent in this area with
16 an increased number of streams, open space and parks, and established residential and urban
17 centers. The northern part of the corridor from Fort Collins to Longmont is also more developed
18 than either of the I-25 and US 85 corridors. Land use is characterized by the urban centers of
19 Fort Collins, Loveland, Berthoud, and Longmont. These centers are surrounded by lower density
20 residential and agricultural land uses separating towns and cities. Within the towns and cities
21 along the corridor, land uses follow a typical pattern of a commercial core area associated with
22 downtowns, surrounded by residential uses. Primary transportation corridors are also usually
23 lined with commercial and industrial uses, as well as some residential uses.

24 East and south from Longmont, the BNSF/Longmont North Metro Connection corridor follows
25 SH 119, then south along CR 7 and across I-25 to connect with the UPRR corridor. This area is
26 developed with a patchwork of commercial, low density residential, and agricultural uses.

27 **3.1.1.3 ZONING**

28 Because zoning varies by incorporated municipal or county jurisdiction and there are 45
29 jurisdictions, there are more than 100 distinct zoning classifications within the regional study
30 area. Most of these categories are similar in nature and can be grouped into common categories.
31 For example, Residential One (R1) in Evans and Residential Low (RL) in Fort Collins; both
32 represent a low-density residential zoning classification. For the purposes of this analysis, both
33 are grouped into the low-density residential classification. A summary of these generalized
34 zoning classifications in the North I-25 regional study area is provided in **Table 3.1-3**.

35 Zoning classifications for the three transportation corridors vary. In general, all corridors have
36 large stretches of land in between the municipalities that is zoned by the counties as agriculture,
37 low density residential, or open space. The US 85 corridor has the largest stretches of land
38 zoned agriculture, followed by the I-25 corridor and then the BNSF/Longmont North Metro
39 Connection corridor. The majority of county zoning is agriculture and low-density residential,
40 although there are enclaves of land zoned medium-density residential spread throughout the
41 regional study area. Within the municipalities, there is a mix of parks and open space, industrial,
42 commercial, and higher density residential zoning. Commercial zoning is usually adjacent to
43 transportation corridors or urban centers and surrounded by residential zoning.

Table 3.1-3 Generalized Zoning Classifications

Zoning Classification	Description
Rural Residential	Generally includes residential areas developed at a density and character compatible with agricultural uses.
Low-Density Residential	Generally includes large lot residential uses. Often protects rural character and uses.
Single-Family Residential	Generally allows for small-lot, suburban, one-family residential developments.
Medium-Density Residential	Generally provides for a mixture of medium-density/multi-family housing types including, but not limited to triplexes, fourplexes, and attached wall townhomes.
High-Density Residential	Generally includes a mixture of high-density housing types including, but not limited to condominiums, stacked flats, garden apartments, and apartments.
Mobile Home Residential	Generally intended to allow for developments where spaces are either sold or rented for the placement of a manufactured home in a park-like setting, where the homes are used as seasonal or permanent residences.
Mixed Use	Generally designed to accommodate a variety of land uses including, but not limited to residential, commercial, office, and open space.
Business/Office	Generally designed to accommodate professional or financial services, research and development, or corporate offices.
Commercial	Generally refers to areas for the development of commercial, business, retail, and/or service uses.
Industrial	Generally includes areas for the development of research, light or heavy industrial, warehouse, and/or distribution centers.
Planned Unit Development	Generally a versatile zoning mechanism allowing for land development of any nature (residential, commercial, industrial, etc.) either as a single use or in combination, through total integrated project planning.
Agricultural	Generally includes farming, ranching, and other agricultural related uses. Residential development where compatible is often allowed.
Open Space/ Conservation	Generally established as a conservation district to preserve the environment and natural character of the landscape within the district. Land within the district may be used for trails and passive, active, and developed recreation.
Public	Generally recognizes all publicly owned lands in a jurisdiction (federal, state, or local government).
Specialized	Generally covers other special districts such as economic or business, residential enclaves, or conservation.

3.1.1.4 FUTURE (YEAR 2030) LAND USE

This section summarizes the future land use for the US 85, I-25, and the BNSF/Longmont North Metro Connection corridors based on municipal and county comprehensive plans and other planning documents. For simplification, land uses have been generally categorized into agricultural, residential, commercial (including retail, industrial, office, etc), and open space/parks. **Figure 3.1-3** depicts the North I-25 regional study area generalized future land use based on this information. **Table 3.1-4** summarizes the estimated future acreages in each land use category for the regional study area.

Table 3.1-4 Future Land Use Categories and Acreage

Land Use Category	Approximate Acres
Agricultural	211,600
Residential	288,200
Commercial	136,800
Open Space/Parks	111,300
Surface Water Areas	28,000
Vacant/Unknown	200
Total	776,100

Note: Acres are approximate based on GIS estimates from **Figure 3.1-3**.

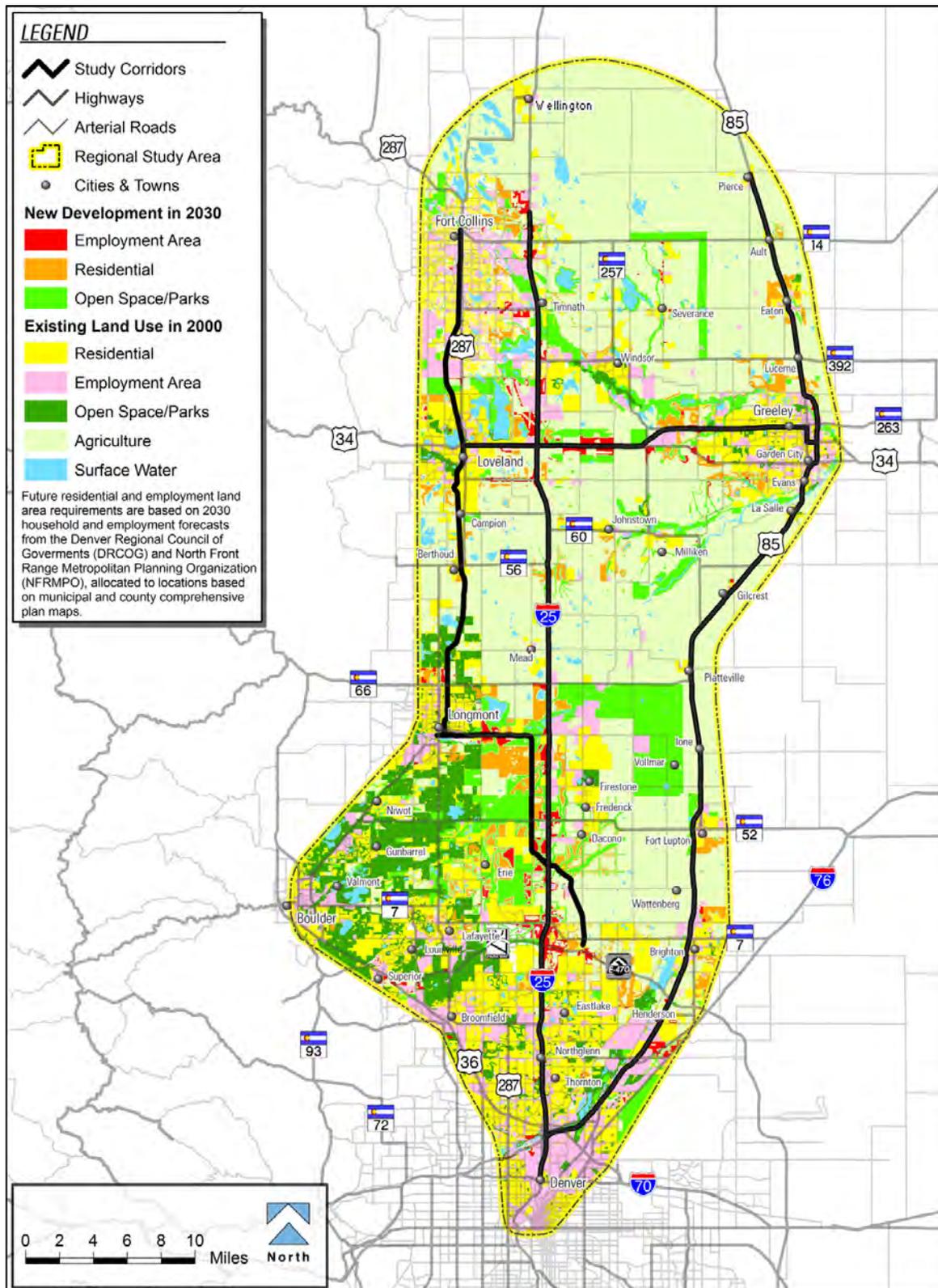
US 85 Corridor

Review of future land use designations indicates that land uses along the US 85 corridor are anticipated to generally remain similar to existing uses. Some conversion of agricultural lands to commercial and residential uses should be expected, but not as much as along the I-25 or BNSF corridors. The UPRR and South Platte River that parallel US 85 through this corridor would continue to have a major influence on how land would be developed. Heavier industries and commercial uses would continue to concentrate adjacent to the UPRR tracks, and the downtown areas of rural municipalities such as Evans, La Salle, Gilcrest, and Platteville would continue to be concentrated to the west of US 85 closer to the South Platte River. The South Platte River would generally constrain the eastward spread of these towns.

Downtown Greeley would continue to be a commercial center with the addition of mixed use commercial and residential infill projects. Small towns south of Greeley along US 85, including Evans, La Salle, Gilcrest, Platteville, and Fort Lupton, anticipate little to moderate growth. For these communities, maintaining their small town feel and preserving large tracts of agricultural lands between each community is a priority. The smaller towns hope to encourage more commercial uses in their respective downtowns, creating unique or historical destinations for locals and tourists. It could also be anticipated that the smaller towns would add residents by allowing smaller or medium-sized subdivisions to be built on agricultural lands surrounding the core downtowns or along the outer edges of older subdivisions. Although with current county development policies, particularly in Weld County, there remains the possibility of large-scale developments being constructed on unincorporated lands adjacent to or in between the towns.

As the US 85 corridor approaches Brighton and the Denver Metro Area, density of residential and commercial uses would continue to increase with infill projects and eventually there would be little unincorporated lands separating the Cities of Brighton, Commerce City, and Denver. Major commercial areas can be expected at the US 85/C-470/I-76 interchange area and south toward Denver where there is easy access to Denver International Airport (DIA) and downtown Denver.

1 Figure 3.1-3 North I-25 Regional Study Area Generalized Future Land Use



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1 *I-25 Corridor*

2 Based on future land use designations, land uses have been changing and would continue to
3 change rapidly along the I-25 corridor, particularly south of US 34 where agricultural lands are
4 being converted to commercial and residential uses on a regular basis. Land uses would
5 continue to be driven by interchange locations where commercial uses are centered, and
6 stretches between interchanges where residential and other commercial uses are more likely to
7 be accessed by frontage roads. Most of the communities along the I-25 corridor would encourage
8 commercial development along I-25 to take advantage of the highway system, visibility, and easy
9 access.

10 Residential uses would be generally set back farther from I-25, although there would likely
11 remain stretches of residential and agricultural lands adjacent to I-25. At the north end of the
12 regional study area in Wellington, moderate growth is anticipated and the area would generally
13 continue to have moderate-density commercial and residential uses adjacent to I-25. South of
14 Wellington at the SH 14, Prospect Road, and Harmony Road interchanges in Fort Collins,
15 existing agricultural uses would likely be converted into commercial uses to take advantage of
16 access. At the US 34 interchange, agricultural lands are already being converted to commercial
17 uses and this trend is anticipated to continue. South of US 34, there are long stretches of
18 unincorporated agricultural lands without convenient access that would likely remain mostly
19 agricultural until such time that a system of frontage roads or east-west cross roads provide
20 access for development.

21 Farther south, towns along I-25, such as Mead, Firestone, Frederick, and Dacono in the central
22 portion of the corridor, would eventually grow toward each other so that there are no
23 unincorporated lands separating them. As with towns along the US 85 corridor, these towns
24 desire to maintain agricultural lands and open space between each town, but there remains the
25 possibility of large-scale developments being constructed on unincorporated lands adjacent to or
26 in between the towns. From this area south into the Denver Metro Area, most all agricultural land
27 uses adjacent to I-25 would likely be converted to commercial and residential uses, with some
28 land set aside for open space or recreation.

29 *BNSF/Longmont North Metro Connection Corridor*

30 The BNSF corridor through Fort Collins, Loveland, Berthoud, and Longmont has more
31 development constraints than the I-25 and US 85 corridors because of an increased number of
32 streams, open space and parks, and existing residential and urban centers. The corridor is also
33 more built out than either of the I-25 and US 85 corridors. Therefore, existing land use patterns,
34 characterized by urban centers surrounded by suburban residential and neighborhood centers,
35 are likely to continue into the near future.

36 Based on future land use designations, likely future trends would include densification of the
37 existing land uses in the urban centers and some conversion of agricultural lands to residential
38 uses between the urban centers. Fort Collins is approaching build-out and would not likely see
39 large-scale conversion of lands to new uses. Much of the currently undeveloped land between
40 Fort Collins and Loveland is dedicated public lands, such as natural areas and open space, and
41 is not likely to be converted to other uses. Some conversion of agricultural lands to commercial or
42 residential uses along the north side of Loveland city limits can be expected, but most lands
43 within city limits along the BNSF corridor are already developed. The largest areas of
44 undeveloped lands that are not protected as open space are south of Loveland, and to the north
45 and south of Berthoud. This area is likely to see more conversion of agricultural lands to
46 residential uses.

1 At the south end of the corridor through Longmont, most of the lands are already developed
2 and would not change much, with the exception of the Sugar Mill property along Ken Pratt
3 Boulevard. In this former industrial property, Longmont is proposing a mix of commercial and
4 residential uses that can take advantage of regional transit improvements. East from the Sugar
5 Mill property along SH 119, future land uses would likely be similar to existing, with more
6 commercial and residential development replacing agricultural uses. South along CR 7, more
7 residential uses can be expected interspersed among the former and current gravel mining
8 operations and major cross streets, such as SH 52 and CR 8, where commercial uses may
9 tend to concentrate. As the BNSF/Longmont North Metro Connection corridor joins with the
10 UPRR corridor and traverses southeast toward Thornton, much of the existing agricultural land
11 would likely be developed into residential uses. Only at major cross streets would there be a
12 densification of commercial uses that require access and other infrastructure.

13 3.1.2 Environmental Consequences

14 The following section provides a summary of potential direct and indirect land use impacts
15 from the No-Action Alternative and the two build packages.

16 Direct land use impacts were evaluated by comparing the alternatives to existing land uses
17 and considering whether or not the alternatives were compatible with existing comprehensive
18 plans and zoning. It is important to note that, in many cases, comprehensive plans and zoning
19 have not been updated by communities to reflect either of the two build packages since the
20 Preferred Alternative resulting from this study has not yet been identified. Detailed information
21 related to compatibility with a specific community's comprehensive plan is included in the
22 *North I-25 Land Use Technical Memorandum* (Jacobs, 2008a), which is included in **Appendix**
23 **C** of this document. The methodology was used to determine compatibility with existing land
24 use, existing zoning, and comprehensive plans.

25 Indirect land use impacts, in particular the potential for induced growth, were evaluated
26 through a process using a local expert panel. The panel consisted of municipal planners from
27 Dacono, Firestone, Fort Collins, Frederick, Greeley, Longmont, Loveland, Mead, and Windsor.
28 Also on the panel were representatives from two large developers who have projects in the
29 area, and agency representatives from NFRMPO, DRCOG, FHWA, and CDOT. The panel
30 convened in October 2006 during which current induced growth research was described,
31 along with the current "drivers" of growth. The panel then provided input on potential induced
32 growth patterns for each corridor based on the three alternatives. Conclusions regarding
33 induced growth in this analysis were primarily based on the input provided by the expert panel.

34 3.1.2.1 NO-ACTION ALTERNATIVE

35 Growth would continue to occur largely on undeveloped agricultural land at the fringe of the
36 regional study area's urbanized areas in accordance with municipal and county
37 comprehensive plans, pending the availability of infrastructure. However, this low-density,
38 dispersed pattern of development could eventually become constrained by increased
39 congestion, increased travel times, and existing access issues hampered by a lack of
40 interchange improvements. As a result, development could decrease in quality (e.g., highway-
41 oriented strip commercial or warehouses would likely occur at interchange locations due to
42 access limitations rather than coordinated, master-planned developments) unless market
43 conditions are strong enough to warrant investment from the private sector in strategic
44 locations to facilitate specific developments.

1 As major roadways such as I-25 become more congested, development could be pushed
2 towards outlying areas to avoid this congestion. This would hasten the conversion of agricultural
3 land as market forces push towards the path of least resistance. This may also be the case for
4 many of the east-west and alternate corridors (e.g., US 34, SH 7, SH 52, SH 402) in the regional
5 study area. The more dispersed development pattern that would occur in response to the No-
6 Action Alternative would result in greater land consumption and a broader potential impact to the
7 regional study area's environmental resources. The continuation of leap-frog type growth
8 practices in southern portions of the regional study area east of I-25 would further fragment
9 remaining agricultural lands, reducing the long-term viability of the remaining lands and
10 potentially impacting sensitive lands such as wildlife habitat. The extent of this impact would
11 depend upon existing policies and regulations pertaining to the protection of environmental
12 resources, which vary from community to community and from county to county.

13 Due in part to the limited availability of transit, development intensities are unlikely to increase
14 substantially over those which exist today. However, more focused development could occur
15 towards the southern end of the regional study area where transit enhancements are planned
16 and highway improvements are likely (FasTracks/I-25 widening).

17 Induced growth impacts for the No-Action alternative are illustrated in **Figure 3.1-4**.

18 **3.1.2.2 PACKAGE A**

19 In general, proposed improvements along existing highway and railroad alignments, such as
20 I-25 and BNSF, would be compatible with existing land uses, zoning, and comprehensive plans.

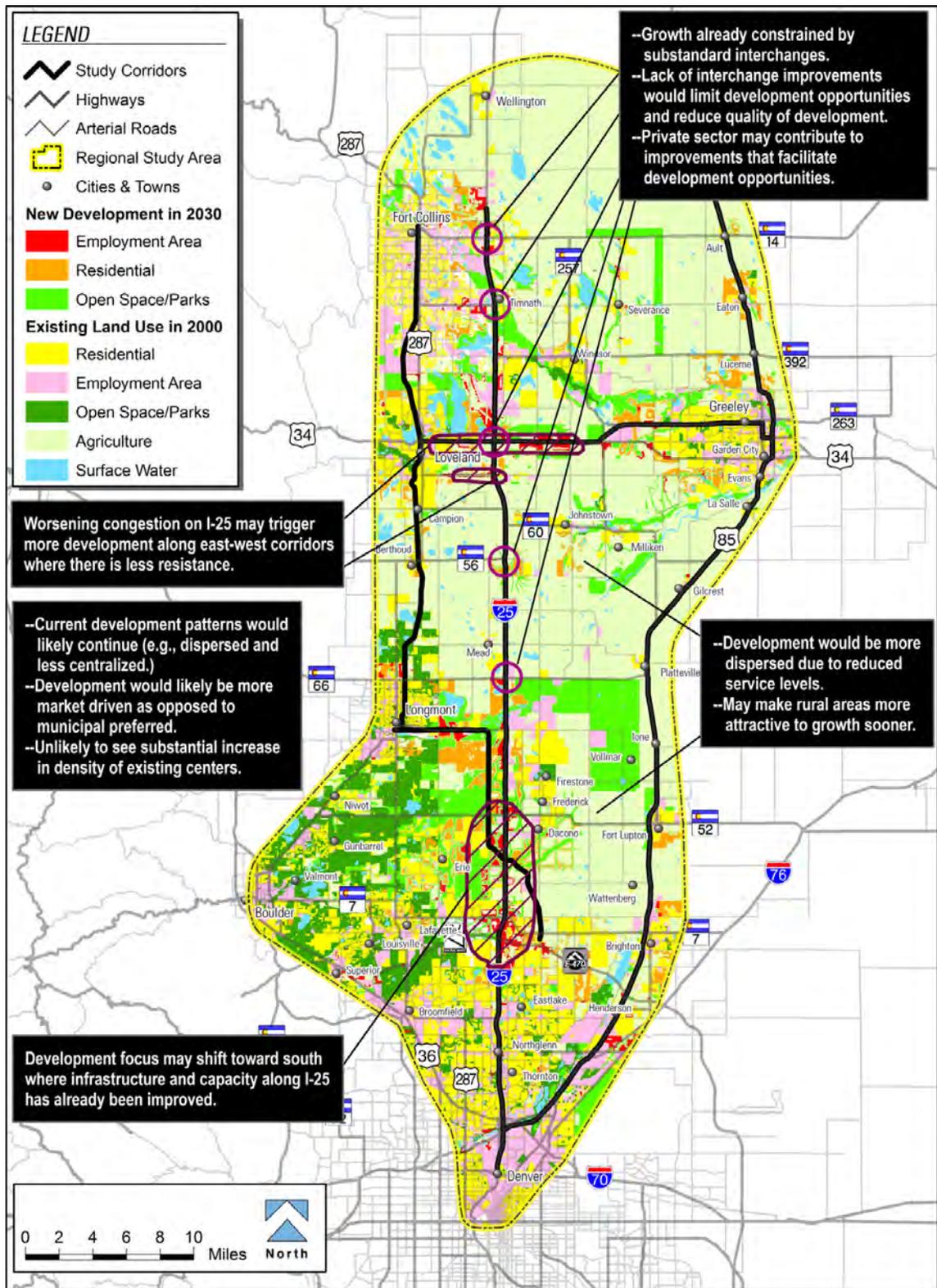
21 Much of the right-of-way for these alignments has existed for many years. While in some
22 locations residential and commercial development has subsequently encroached to within close
23 proximity of these alignments, they have been planned with the knowledge of adjacent
24 transportation uses. This is particularly important when considering residential uses adjacent to
25 existing transportation corridors, where there may be a perceived incompatibility with land uses.
26 Entirely new transportation alignments or access points along existing alignments, such as
27 interchanges and transit stations, are where direct land use conflicts would be more likely.

28 *Component A-H1: Safety Improvements*

29 Safety improvements along I-25 between SH 1 and SH 14 would be compatible with existing
30 land uses, zoning, and comprehensive plans. Land uses along this section of I-25 are
31 predominately agricultural. Similarly, upgrades to existing I-25 interchanges at SH 1 and
32 Mountain Vista Drive would be compatible since land uses and zoning are mostly commercial-
33 related.

34 The right-of-way for this component would convert approximately 81 acres of mostly commercial
35 and agricultural land to a transportation use.

1 Figure 3.1-4 Induced Growth Impacts - No-Action



1 *Component A-H2: General Purpose Lanes*

2 Adding one additional northbound and southbound general purpose lane on I-25 between SH
3 14 and SH 60, plus auxiliary lanes between Harmony Road and SH 60, would be compatible
4 with existing land uses, zoning, and comprehensive plans. Land uses along this section of I-25
5 are predominately agricultural and commercial. Upgrades to existing I-25 interchanges at SH
6 14, Prospect Road, Harmony Road, SH 392, Crossroads Boulevard, US 34, SH 402, Weld
7 County Road (WCR) 52, and SH 60 would be compatible since land uses and zoning are
8 mostly commercial-related.

9 The right-of-way for this component would convert approximately 406 acres of mostly
10 commercial and agricultural land to a transportation use.

11 *Component A-H3: General Purpose Lanes*

12 Adding one additional northbound and southbound general purpose lane on I-25 between SH
13 60 and E-470 would be compatible with existing land uses, zoning, and comprehensive plans.
14 Land uses along this section of I-25 are mostly commercial and agricultural, with a few
15 residential enclaves. Upgrades to existing I-25 interchanges at SH 56, WCR 34, SH 119, SH
16 52, and SH 7 would generally be compatible since land uses and zoning are mostly
17 commercial-related, although there are still some areas zoned agricultural (i.e., near SH 7).

18 The right-of-way for this component would convert approximately 231 acres of mostly
19 commercial and agricultural land to a transportation use.

20 *Component A-H4: Structure Upgrades*

21 This component includes improvements under the No-Action Alternative as described in
22 **Chapter 2**. Upgrading structures on I-25 between E-470 and US 36 would be compatible with
23 existing land uses, zoning, and comprehensive plans. There would be 1 acre of additional
24 right-of-way converted to a transportation use.

25 *Component A-T1: Commuter Rail*

26 A double-tracked commuter rail line using the existing BNSF railroad track plus one new track
27 from Fort Collins to downtown Longmont would be mostly compatible with existing land use,
28 zoning, and comprehensive plans. However, there are a number of residential developments
29 that have encroached near the alignment that could create some incompatible uses (e.g., a
30 residential use next to a railroad use).

31 **Table 3.1-5** depicts the compatibility of the proposed new commuter rail stations associated
32 with this component. The locations are in core urban areas and were selected during the
33 station alternatives process based on local government and community input and therefore,
34 would not likely create major land use incompatibilities. Zoning in many of these areas,
35 however, has not been updated to be consistent with the comprehensive plans, and many of
36 these locations are not currently zoned for transportation uses. The proposed Berthoud Station
37 was not envisioned as a transit center in the local comprehensive plan.

38 The Fort Collins commuter rail maintenance facility would be compatible with existing land use
39 and the comprehensive plan, although current zoning does not include transit facilities. The

- 1 Berthoud commuter rail maintenance facility would be compatible with existing land uses, but is
2 not included in a comprehensive plan and current zoning does not include transit facilities.
- 3 The three feeder bus routes from 1) Greeley to Windsor to Fort Collins, 2) Greeley to Loveland,
4 and 3) Milliken to Johnstown to Berthoud would be compatible with existing land use, zoning, and
5 comprehensive plans. Local mass transit opportunities are desirable to communities along these
6 routes.
- 7 The right-of-way for this component would convert approximately 165 acres of mostly commercial
8 and agricultural land and some residential land to a transportation use.

Table 3.1-5 Component A-T1 Compatibility

Commuter Rail Station	Existing Land Use?	Zoning?	Comprehensive Plan?
Fort Collins Downtown Transit Center	Yes	Yes	Yes
CSU	Yes	No	Yes
South Fort Collins Transit Center	Yes	Yes	Yes
North Loveland	Yes	No	Yes
Downtown Loveland	Yes	No	Yes
Berthoud	Yes	No	No
North Longmont	Yes	No	Yes

9 **Component A-T2: Commuter Rail**

10 A new double-tracked commuter rail line, extending from Longmont parallel to SH 119 to WCR 7,
11 then south to the existing UPRR line, and connecting to the FasTracks North Metro end-of-line
12 station, would have some incompatibilities with existing land use, zoning, and comprehensive
13 plans. From Longmont to the existing UPRR line, A-T2 is an entirely new mass transit alignment
14 that local governments generally have not previously envisioned in their comprehensive planning
15 or zoning. Existing land uses are mostly commercial with some residential along SH 119, and
16 agricultural and residential uses along WCR 7. Incompatibilities would be the greatest adjacent to
17 existing residential uses.

18 **Table 3.1-6** depicts the compatibility of
19 the proposed new commuter rail
20 stations associated with this
21 component. The Longmont location is
22 in a core urban area and was originally
23 selected based on local government
24 and community input and therefore,
25 would not likely create major land use
26 incompatibilities. The I-25 and WCR 8 location is in a non-urban area that is mostly agricultural
27 and therefore, would be incompatible with existing land uses, zoning, and comprehensive plans.

Table 3.1-6 Component A-T2 Compatibility

Commuter Bus Station	Existing Land Use?	Zoning?	Comprehensive Plan?
Longmont at Sugar Mill	Yes	No	Yes
I-25 and WCR 8	No	No	No

1 The feeder bus route from Firestone to Frederick to Dacono to Erie would be compatible with
2 existing land use, zoning, and comprehensive plans. Local mass transit opportunities are
3 desirable to communities along this route.

4 The right-of-way for this component would convert approximately 166 acres of mostly
5 commercial and agricultural land and some residential land to a transportation use.

6 ***Component A-T3: Commuter Bus***

7 Commuter bus service along US 85 between Greeley and downtown Denver would be
8 compatible with existing land use, zoning, and comprehensive plans. Nearly all of the
9 communities along the corridor envision US 85 as a multi-modal transportation corridor.

10 **Table 3.1-7** depicts the compatibility of
11 the proposed new commuter bus
12 stations associated with this
13 component. The locations are in core
14 urban areas and were originally
15 selected based on local government
16 and community input and therefore,
17 would not likely create major land use
18 incompatibilities. However, many of
19 these locations are not currently zoned
20 for transportation facilities and some are not specifically referenced in comprehensive plans.

Commuter Bus Station	Existing Land Use?	Zoning?	Comprehensive Plan?
Greeley	Yes	No	Yes
South Greeley	Yes	Yes	Yes
Evans	Yes	No	Yes
Platteville	Yes	No	No
Fort Lupton	Yes	Yes	No

21 The 10 commuter bus queue jumps on US 85 associated with this component would generally
22 be compatible with existing land use, zoning, or comprehensive plans since US 85 is an
23 existing transportation corridor.

24 The commuter bus maintenance facility in Greeley at 31st Street and 1st Avenue would be
25 compatible with existing land use, zoning, and comprehensive plans.

26 The right-of-way for this component would convert approximately 18 acres of mostly
27 commercial and agricultural land and some residential land to a transportation use.

28 ***Component A-T4: Commuter Bus***

29 Commuter bus service only along E-470 between US 85 and DIA would be compatible with
30 existing land use, zoning, and comprehensive plans because the service would use existing
31 travel lanes. There would be no additional right-of-way required for this component.

32 ***Package A Indirect Effects***

33 There is little difference in indirect effects from induced growth along the I-25 corridor between the
34 two build packages since both include highway widening and improvements at existing
35 interchanges. Under the No-Action Alternative, development activity along I-25 might shift more
36 toward the south to the Denver Metro Area where there is a greater concentration of newer
37 infrastructure (interchanges). Under the build packages, improvements to existing interchanges
38 could stimulate some growth, but not as much as if it were a completely new interchange location,
39 which are not being proposed under either package.

1 Under Package A, commuter rail would likely facilitate a shift in growth towards urban centers
2 within the project area (e.g., Fort Collins, Loveland, and Longmont). This shift would help
3 municipalities realize plans for downtown redevelopment and would increase the overall density
4 and footprint of these urban centers. As the end-of-line for the commuter rail alignment, Fort
5 Collins would likely attract a somewhat larger portion of urban center growth than stations
6 located mid-alignment. As a result, the rate at which environmental resources would be
7 affected in undeveloped and suburban areas within the project area could be slowed because
8 growth pressures would likely be concentrated more at the existing urban centers. This would
9 particularly be the case along the I-25 corridor where substantial agricultural lands, several
10 floodplains, and a number of other resources exist. Increased densities along the
11 BNSF/Longmont North Metro Connection corridor would likely have a limited impact upon
12 natural-resource related environmental resources, as the corridor is nearly built out and most
13 growth would occur in the form of infill and redevelopment.

14 Longmont would likely become a focus within the project area due to its central location, its
15 direct connection to the FasTracks system and the commuter rail, and its close proximity to
16 DIA. Overall, the combination of these factors likely would increase the density and size of
17 Longmont, strengthening its role as a major center for the north Front Range.

18 Outside of established urban centers, commuter rail could help municipalities realize plans that
19 otherwise would not be feasible—for example, the City of Longmont has plans for transit-
20 oriented development along the proposed alignment at SH 66. Without commuter rail as a
21 catalyst, this area would likely develop at typical suburban densities with a limited mix of uses.
22 Smaller communities in the southern end of the regional study area, such as Frederick and
23 Erie, could see impacts that extend beyond the immediate station area. These impacts could
24 come in the form of an increased demand in service levels as former low-intensity commercial
25 and industrial uses are redeveloped at higher intensities.

26 Feeder bus routes along east-west corridors designed to serve commuter rail stations could
27 also stimulate increased levels of development as roadways become more congested. As a
28 result, underused lands along these corridors could begin to be redeveloped as higher intensity
29 residential uses become more desirable in close proximity to established employment centers
30 and transit lines.

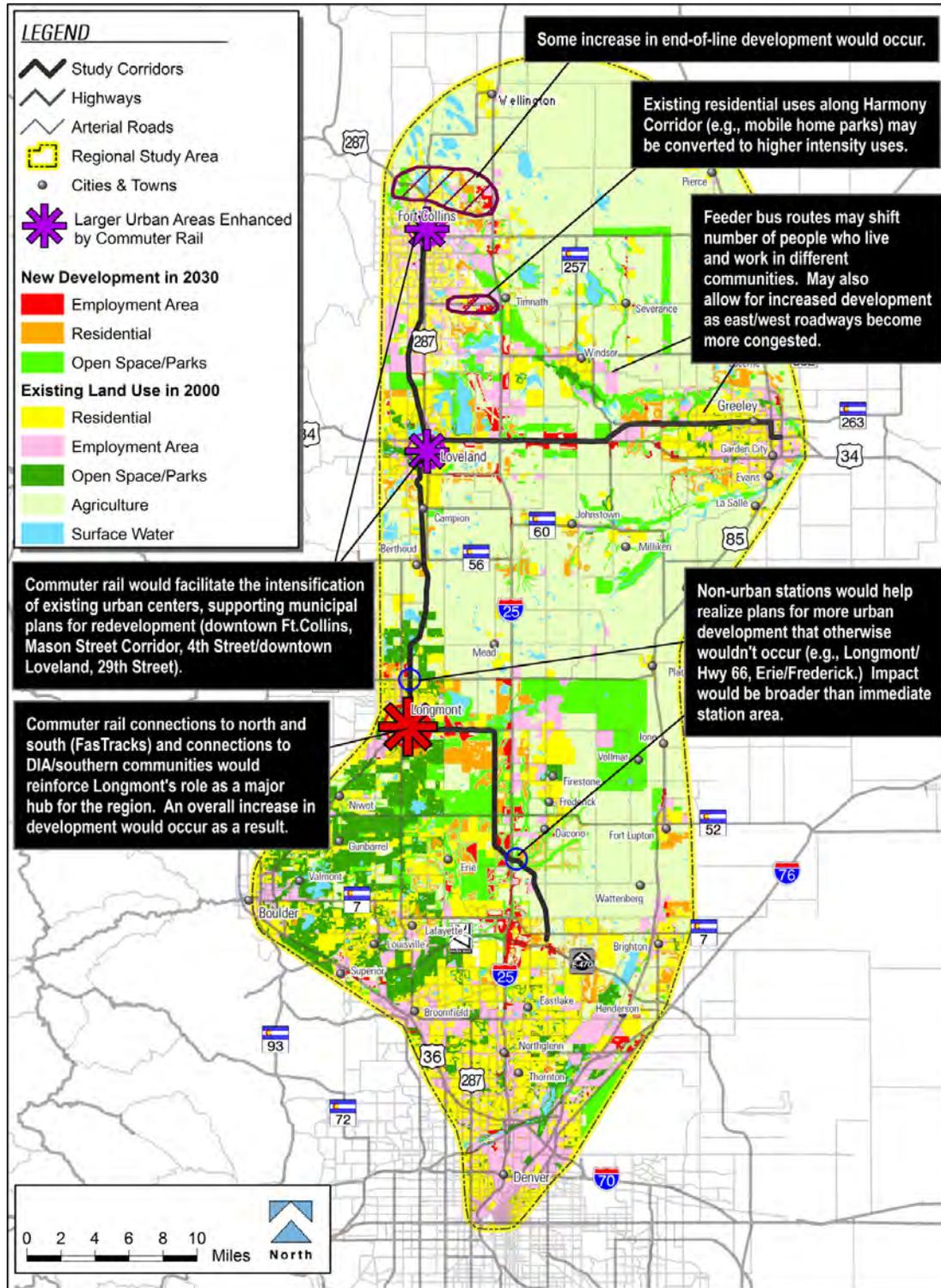
31 Induced growth impacts for Package A are illustrated in **Figure 3.1-5**.

32 **3.1.2.3 PACKAGE B**

33 Package B consists of four highway components and three transit components. Direct impacts
34 are described by component. Indirect impacts are more regional in nature and therefore are
35 described for the entire package at the end of this subsection.

36 Overall, proposed improvements along the existing I-25 highway alignment would be compatible with
37 existing land uses, zoning, and comprehensive plans. The right-of-way for this alignment has existed
38 for many years. While in some locations residential and commercial development has subsequently
39 encroached to within close proximity of this alignment, they have been planned with the knowledge of
40 adjacent transportation uses.

1 Figure 3.1-5 Induced Growth Impacts - Package A



1 ***Component B-H1: Safety Improvements***

2 Safety improvements under this component are the same as those in Package A, Component
3 A-H1. Therefore, potential land use impacts associated with this component would be the same
4 under either Package A or Package B.

5 The right-of-way for this component would convert approximately 81 acres of mostly agricultural
6 use to a transportation use.

7 ***Component B-H2: Tolled Express Lanes***

8 Adding one additional northbound and southbound tolled express lane on I-25 between SH 14 and
9 SH 60 and another two tolled lanes from Harmony Road to SH 60 would have a similar effect on
10 land use as adding one general purpose lane in each direction under Package A, Component A-
11 H2. Upgrades to nine existing interchanges would be the same as Package A, Component A-H2.
12 Therefore, potential land use impacts associated with this component would be the same under
13 either Package A or Package B.

14 The right-of-way for this component would convert approximately 477 acres of mostly commercial
15 and agricultural land to a transportation use.

16 ***Component B-H3: Tolled Express Lanes***

17 Adding one additional northbound and southbound tolled express lane on I-25 between SH 60 and
18 E-470 would have a similar effect on land use as adding one general purpose lane in each
19 direction under Package A, Component A-H3. Additionally, upgrades to five existing interchanges
20 would be the same as Package A, Component A-H3. Therefore, potential land use impacts
21 associated with this component would be the same under either Package A or Package B.

22 The right-of-way for this component would convert approximately 252 acres of mostly commercial
23 and agricultural land to a transportation use.

24 ***Component B-H4: Tolled Express Lanes***

25 Adding one additional northbound and southbound tolled express lane on I-25 between E-470 and
26 US 36 could create some land use incompatibilities. Most of the corridor is lined with commercial
27 uses and improvements would not be incompatible with this use. However, there are also
28 residential uses adjacent to I-25 between 128th Avenue and US 36. In these locations, additional
29 right-of-way needs would require converting residential uses to transportation uses.

30 Upgrades to existing I-25 interchanges at 144th, 136th, 120th, 104th, Thornton Parkway, and 84th
31 would be compatible since land uses and zoning are already mostly commercial-related.

32 The right-of-way for this component would convert approximately 49 acres of mostly commercial
33 and residential land to a transportation use.

34 ***Component B-T1: Bus Rapid Transit***

35 Bus rapid transit (BRT) from Fort Collins along Harmony Road and from Greeley along US 34,
36 south along I-25 to downtown Denver would be compatible with existing land use, zoning, and
37 comprehensive plans. These corridors have been identified by local communities as important
38 multi-modal transportation corridors.

1 **Table 3.1-8** depicts the compatibility of the proposed new BRT stations associated with this
 2 component. Stations along I-25 would be located in the median. Only the stations at Fort Collins
 3 and downtown Greeley are located in core urban areas. The other stations are located on or
 4 adjacent to agricultural lands where future development is proposed. Also, a number of the
 5 locations are not currently zoned for transportation uses, and in one case, not identified as a transit
 6 center in the local comprehensive plan. The Firestone site is zoned both planned unit development
 7 (PUD) and residential. Only PUD
 8 allows transit facilities.

9 The BRT queue jumps on US 34
 10 associated with this component would
 11 be compatible with existing land use,
 12 zoning, and comprehensive plans since
 13 the roads are existing transportation
 14 corridors.

15 The BRT maintenance facility in Fort
 16 Collins would generally be compatible
 17 with existing land use and the
 18 comprehensive plan. Current zoning for
 19 the site does not include transit
 20 facilities. The BRT maintenance facility
 21 in Greeley would be compatible with
 22 existing land use, zoning, and
 23 comprehensive plans.

24 The right-of-way for this component
 25 would convert approximately 18 acres
 26 of mostly commercial and agricultural
 27 land to a transportation use.

Table 3.1-8 Component B-T1 Compatibility

Commuter Rail Station	Existing Land Use?	Zoning?	Comprehensive Plan?
South Fort Collins Transit Center	Yes	Yes	Yes
Harmony Road and Timberline	Yes	Yes	No
I-25 and Harmony Road	Yes	No	Yes
Windsor	Yes	Yes	Yes
Greeley Downtown Transfer Center	Yes	Yes	Yes
West Greeley	No	No	Yes
US 34 and SH 257	Yes	No	Yes
Crossroads	Yes	Yes	Yes
Berthoud	Yes	Yes	Yes
Firestone	Yes	Yes/No	Yes
Frederick/Dacono	No	No	Yes
I-25 and SH 7	No	No	Yes

28 ***Component B-T2: Bus Rapid Transit***

29 Similar to B-T1, BRT service from Fort Collins/Greeley along I-25 and E-470 to DIA would be
 30 compatible with existing land use, zoning, and comprehensive plans. There would be no
 31 additional right-of-way required for this component.

32 ***Package B Indirect Effects***

33 There is little difference in indirect effects from induced growth along the I-25 corridor between the
 34 two build packages since both include highway widening and improvements at existing
 35 interchanges. Under the No-Action Alternative, development activity along I-25 might shift more
 36 toward the south to the Denver Metro Area where there is a greater concentration of newer
 37 infrastructure (interchanges). Under the build packages, improvements to existing interchanges
 38 could stimulate some growth, but not as much as if it were a completely new interchange location,
 39 which are not being proposed under either package.

40 The introduction of BRT along the I-25 corridor would represent a less permanent form of transit
 41 improvement than commuter rail and as a result would provide less incentive for transit oriented
 42 development (TOD). Review of a limited number of case studies nationwide supports this thesis:
 43 BRT-related TOD is more tenuous than TOD associated with rail. As a result, under Package B,

1 growth would continue to be market-driven and to occur in accordance with municipal and county
2 comprehensive plans. Growth would continue to be focused along the I-25 corridor, which would
3 function as a “Main Street” for the North Front Range. Communities west of I-25 would continue to
4 expand towards the east—spreading—rather than shifting in their concentration. Interchange
5 improvements along the I-25 corridor would also improve access and reinforce this pattern. As a
6 result, downtown infill and redevelopment efforts in established urban centers (Fort Collins,
7 Greeley, Longmont, Loveland) could be hampered.

8 Some concentration of growth could occur near BRT stations along the I-25 corridor. The more
9 dispersed development pattern that could occur in response to Package B would result in greater
10 land consumption and a broader potential impact to the regional study area’s environmental
11 resources. The continuation of non-contiguous growth practices in southern portions of the
12 regional study area east of I-25 would further fragment remaining agricultural lands, reducing the
13 long-term viability of the remaining lands and potentially impacting wildlife habitat. The extent of
14 this impact would be dependent upon existing policies and regulations pertaining to the protection
15 of environmental resources, which vary from community to community and from county to county.

16 The location of the BRT stations (e.g., center-running versus side-running) and the distance of the
17 stations from any associated development would limit the likelihood that they would attract
18 substantial new types of development. However, some increase in density and the rate of growth
19 could occur in the surrounding station areas.

20 Feeder bus service along the Highway 52 feeder would connect tri-town communities (Frederick,
21 Firestone, Dacono) to the FasTracks Station at Niwot or Gunbarrel and to the BRT at I-25,
22 reinforcing existing patterns of employment and housing (employment to the west and housing to
23 the east) and limiting the ability of the these communities to shift away from being bedroom
24 communities.

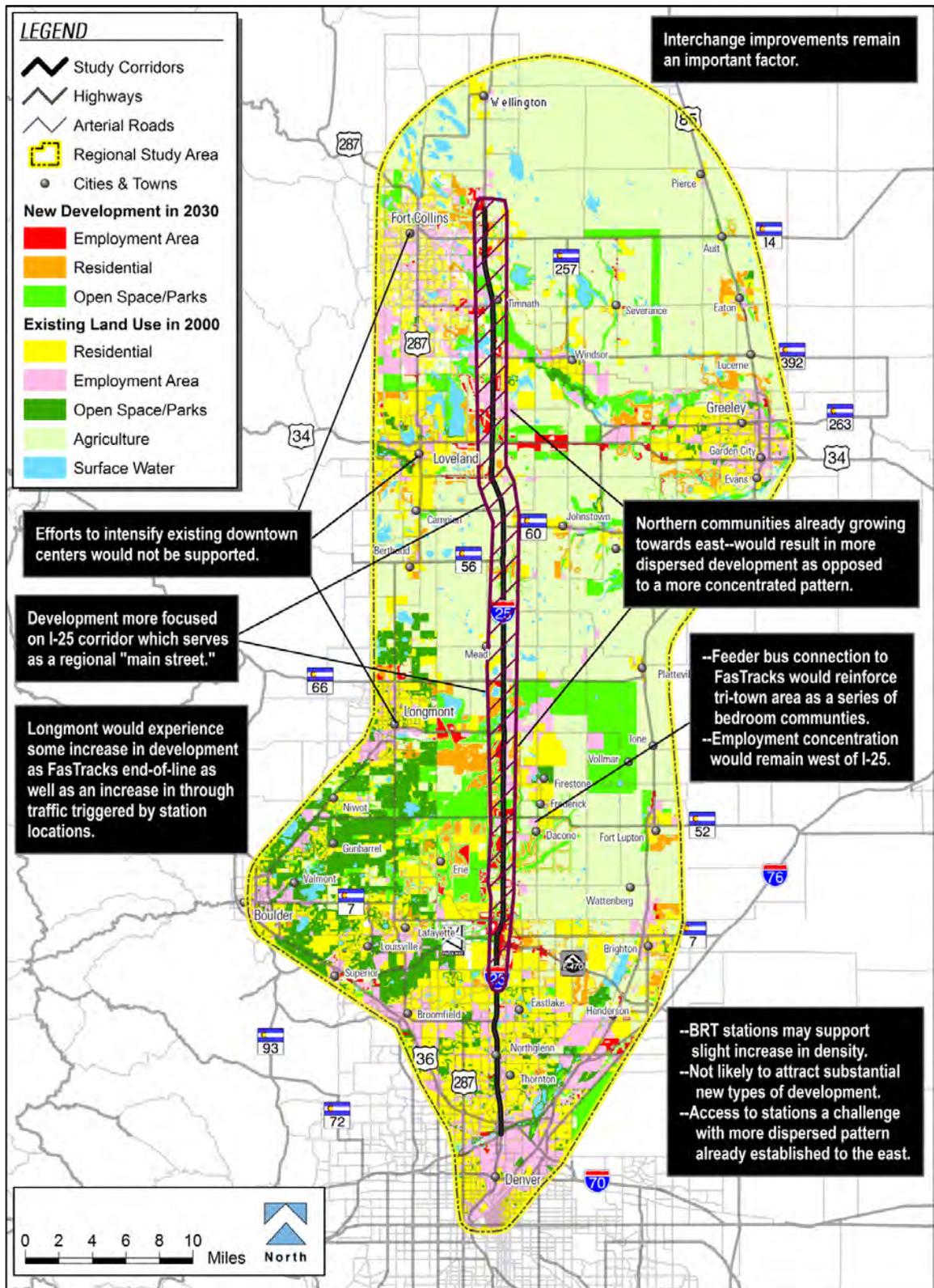
25 As the FasTracks end-of-line, Longmont could experience some intensification in development
26 within its urban center.

27 Induced growth impacts for Package B are illustrated in **Figure 3.1-6**.

28 **3.1.3 Mitigation Measures**

29 There will be no mitigation measures required by CDOT for the build packages. While this
30 analysis identified a number of incompatibilities between proposed transportation improvements
31 and land use, particularly with current zoning and in some cases comprehensive plans, actions to
32 address these incompatibilities are the responsibility of local municipal and county governments. It
33 is important to remember that most incompatibilities are simply the result of comprehensive plans
34 and zoning not being updated to reflect the results of this study. Once the Preferred Alternative is
35 identified and decision documents finalized, CDOT will encourage the local governments to
36 address the incompatibilities through their existing land use processes. Typical processes local
37 governments use to address land use incompatibilities include public involvement and visioning,
38 amendments to comprehensive plans, and zoning changes.

1 Figure 3.1-6 Induced Growth Impacts - Package B



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