

SECTION 2

Description of Proposed Action

The Proposed Action consists of the following elements, which are described in detail below.

- General Purpose Lanes
- High-Occupancy Vehicle Lanes
- Major Interchange Reconstruction
- Minor I-25 Modifications
- Congestion Management, including transportation system management (TSM) strategies
- Transit and Park-and-Ride Accommodations
- Bicycle/Pedestrian Accommodations

The proposed lane additions and major interchange reconstruction projects included in the Proposed Action are depicted in Figure 2-1.

General Purpose Lanes

The Proposed Action would widen I-25 between State Highway 105 (Monument – Exit 161) and South Academy Boulevard (Exit 135), a distance of approximately 26 miles. Within these limits, a six-lane cross-section (three through-lanes in each direction) would be built south of the US 24 Bypass to South Academy (4 miles) and north of Briargate to State Highway 105 (12 miles).

Additionally, for the 12-mile central portion from the Briargate Parkway (Exit 151) to US 24 Bypass (Exit 139), the Proposed Action consists of an eight-lane cross-section (four through-lanes in each direction). The additional two lanes would be open to general traffic for most of the day, but reserved for buses and carpools during peak periods. For existing and future cross-sections, see Figure 2-2.

High-Occupancy Vehicle Lanes

In the eight-lane cross-section, the inside (leftmost) lane in each direction would be open to general traffic in off-peak hours, but in morning and evening peak hours would be reserved for use by carpools and buses only. To qualify as a carpool, a vehicle would need to have two or more

occupants. To accommodate this flexible use, the HOV lane would not be barrier-separated from the general-purpose lanes, but would be demarcated by appropriate signage and striping.

Major Interchange Reconstruction

In conjunction with the additional highway lanes, the Proposed Action includes interchange reconstruction at several locations within the corridor. All of these major interchange reconstruction projects will involve expanded bridge structures needed to accommodate the additional I-25 lanes noted above. These major interchange reconstruction projects are as follows:

- Exit 158 – Baptist Road
- Exit 156 – North Gate Road, plus freeway-to-freeway ramps for Powers Boulevard
- Exit 147/148 – North Nevada Avenue and Rockrimmon Boulevard (consolidated)
- Exit 145 – Fillmore Street
- Exit 142 – Bijou Street
- Exit 141 – Cimarron Street (US24)

The major interchange reconstruction projects included in the Proposed Action are described briefly below:

- **Baptist Road Interchange** (Exit 158): This standard diamond interchange provides access to a two-lane road in a rapidly developing portion of northern El Paso County. The existing two-lane bridge over I-25 will be replaced with a wider bridge that will accommodate more arterial roadway lanes (including left-turn lanes) on Baptist Road. Longer on-ramps and off-ramps will be provided for safe freeway merging. The northbound I-25 off-ramp to Baptist will be relocated to the east where the frontage road is today, to provide improved spacing on Baptist Road between the traffic signals for the I-25 off-ramps and Struthers Road (the frontage road).

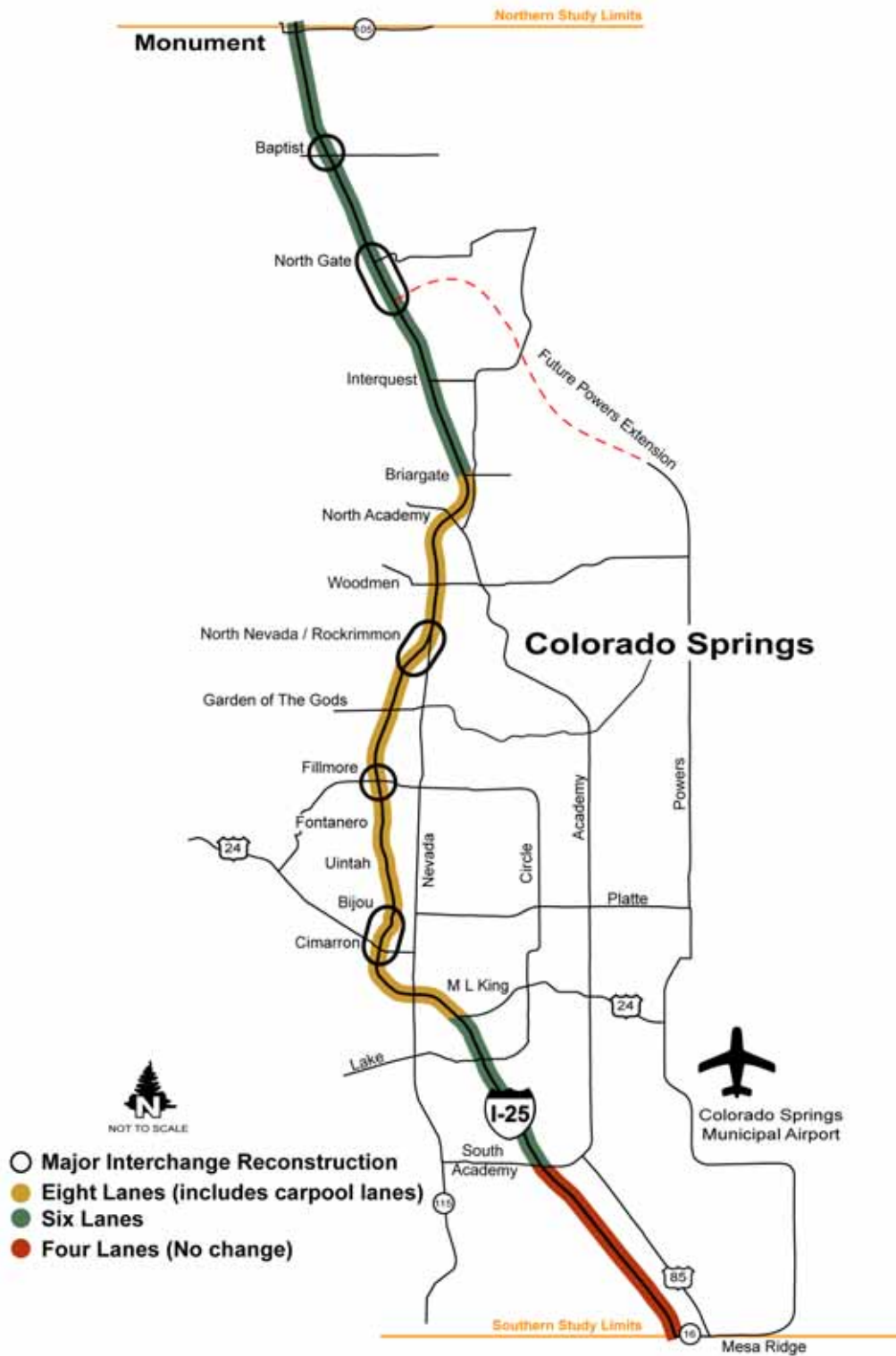
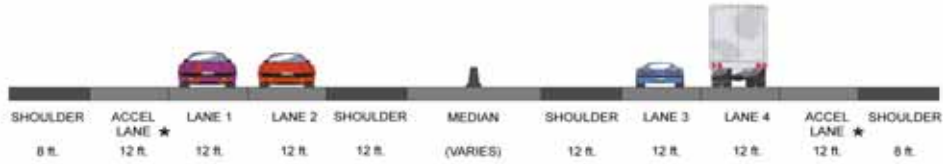


FIGURE 2-1
 Proposed Roadway Improvements
 (Note: The Proposed Action also includes various non-roadway elements. For details, see description of Proposed Action.)

NO-ACTION ALTERNATIVE

IMPROVED I-25 CROSS SECTION

Four - Lane Freeway Plus Acceleration Lanes

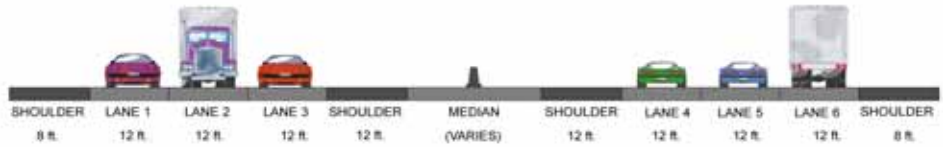


★ acceleration lanes provided only where needed (i.e. close to interchanges)

PROPOSED ACTION

SIX - LANE FREEWAY

Monument to Briargate, and
US 24 Bypass to South Academy Blvd.



EIGHT- LANE FREEWAY (SIX THROUGH - LANES PLUS HOV LANES PLUS ACCELERATION LANES)

Briargate to US 24 Bypass



★ acceleration lanes provided only where needed (i.e. close to interchanges)

FIGURE 2-2
I-25 Existing and Proposed Cross-Sections

- **North Gate/Powers Interchange** (Exit 156): The existing unsignalized North Gate cloverleaf interchange has short on-ramps and off-ramps resulting in inadequate weaving distances on I-25. This configuration will be replaced by a signalized diamond interchange tied into ramps that connect with the planned northern extension of Powers Boulevard. The expanded interchange complex will serve not only free-flowing freeway-to-freeway movements, but also local access needs.
- **North Nevada Avenue and Rockrimmon Boulevard Interchanges** (Exits 147 and 148): The very unusual existing ramps at these two adjacent interchanges will be replaced by a signalized split-diamond configuration connected by collector-distributor roads. This will replace the well-known left-lane off-ramp connecting southbound I-25 to North Nevada Avenue with a right-lane off-ramp that is more consistent with driver expectations. Additionally, the revised configuration will provide new connectivity between Nevada Avenue and Rockrimmon Boulevard.
- **Fillmore Street Interchange** (Exit 145): A single-point urban interchange over I-25 will replace the existing diamond interchange that currently includes a six-legged intersection with Chestnut Street. This will include realignment of Chestnut (west of I-25) and Sinton Road (east of I-25) away from the I-25 ramps, thereby significantly improving traffic flow across I-25 on heavily traveled Fillmore Street.
- **Bijou Street and Cimarron Street Interchanges** (Exits 142 and 141): These two closely-spaced interchanges are main access points into the Colorado Springs Central Business District east of I-25. Each interchange so strongly affects the other that they were considered as a single interchange complex for purposes of identifying appropriate new configurations. The existing Bijou Street diamond interchange will be replaced with a tight diamond configuration featuring longer and straighter on-ramps and off-ramps. The existing Cimarron Interchange features a low-speed loop with tight curvature as the southbound I-25 off-ramp to US Highway 24. This configuration will be

replaced with a diamond interchange offset slightly south and west of the existing facility.

Each of these major interchange reconstruction projects will replace 40-year-old, non-standard designs with modern configurations that accommodate needed highway capacity.

Minor I-25 Modifications

The Proposed Action includes three other roadway design elements that are not major interchange reconstruction projects:

- **Ackerman Overlook** (Milepost 153): The existing Ackerman Overlook will be replaced by an improved overlook approximately 2,300 feet north of the existing facility.
- **Corporate Center Drive** (Exit 147 A): The existing southbound-only ramps at this exit will be closed, with access replaced via a local street connection to the reconfigured Nevada/Rockrimmon Interchange.
- **Garden of the Gods Road** (Exit 146): Minor geometric changes will be made at this exit.

Congestion Management/TSM

Several congestion management strategies (including transportation system management, or TSM) are included in the Proposed Action. TSM strategies from the PPACG *Congestion Management System Plan* (an element of the regional transportation plan) were evaluated as part of the *I-25 Mode Feasibility Alternatives Analysis*. These strategies do not add capacity but instead promote more efficient use of existing capacity:

- **Acceleration/Deceleration Lanes:** Existing substandard on-ramps and off-ramps will be replaced with longer ramps that allow more time and distance for safe merging onto or off of the freeway. Where warranted, on-ramps and the subsequent off-ramps will be connected by continuous acceleration/deceleration lanes.
- **Freeway Ramp Metering:** I-25 on-ramps will be designed to accommodate future ramp metering operations, to be integrated with the freeway's incident management program, described below.

- **Incident Management Program:** I-25 mainline and interchange reconstruction will include incident detection and response infrastructure consistent with the existing system in the corridor. Specifically, the project will include surveillance cameras, detector loops, and variable message signs, all connected with the City’s Traffic Operations Center.

Transit and Park-and-Ride Accommodation

As noted previously, the Proposed Action includes HOV lanes that will be reserved in peak periods for use by buses and carpools only. The HOV lanes are intended to provide a travel speed advantage to transit buses and carpools, an incentive that could induce more use of these modes. Currently, only two express buses use I-25 (Route 91 – Union Express and Route 94 – Monument Express). The region’s long-range transportation plan calls for expansion of transit services throughout the urbanized area.

The proposed new Park-and-Ride locations identified in 1997 were re-evaluated in a new study, the *Pikes Peak Regional Park and Ride Plan*, completed in early 2003. The new study identified recommended areas, or “corridors,” for proposed Park-and-Ride lots. Final selection of specific sites has not yet been completed and, according to the plan, will depend on land availability, cost, and other factors. When final sites are determined, site studies necessary to obtain environmental clearances will be undertaken.

CDOT is committed to constructing Park-and-Ride lots along the I-25 corridor where appropriate, in coordination with the City’s transit needs.

Bicycle/Pedestrian Accommodation

The I-25 corridor parallels a recently completed north-south trail system, thereby placing great

importance on bicycle/pedestrian crossings over or under the freeway. Some of these crossings will be rebuilt as part of major interchange reconstruction projects. Other crossings (particularly those following drainages using culverts or bridges) will be replaced or modified in conjunction with mainline freeway widening. The roadway improvements will be designed to maintain existing bicycle and pedestrian crossings, and to accommodate proposed trail crossings wherever feasible.

The Proposed Action will maintain or improve bicycle, pedestrian, and multi-modal trail crossings of I-25. The following improvements are included:

- **Baptist Road (Exit 158):** Where no bicycle/pedestrian crossing exists today, sidewalks will be added to link users of the Jackson Creek Trail (east of I-25) to the New Santa Fe Trail (west of I-25).
- **North Gate Boulevard (Exit 156):** Where no bicycle/pedestrian crossing exists today, a multi-use trail can be provided to link the Smith Creek Trail to the trailhead of the New Santa Fe Trail on the grounds of the U.S. Air Force Academy (USAFA). However, the USAFA has reservations about allowing this connection on their property. The Proposed Action provides for this connection if the Academy will allow it, but does not require it. No such trail would be built on Academy property without USAFA concurrence.
- **Bijou Street (Exit 142):** Existing sidewalks along Bijou Street over I-25 are in poor condition and will be replaced with new sidewalks.
- **Cimarron Street (US 24) (Exit 141):** A new trail crossing of I-25 will be provided along Fountain Creek, connecting the Midland Trail west of I-25 to the Pikes Peak Greenway east of I-25.