

US 50 West: Wills Boulevard to McCulloch Boulevard (Milepost 313 to Milepost 307)

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Environmental Justice Technical Report

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

Ave	Avenue
Blvd	Boulevard
CBC	concrete box culvert
CDOT	Colorado Department of Transportation
EA	Environmental Assessment
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact
HHS	Health and Human Services
HUD	United States Department of Housing and Urban Development
MFI	median family income
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
PEL	Planning and Environmental Linkages
PWMD	Pueblo West Metropolitan District
Rd	Road
USDOT	United States Department of Transportation
US 50	US Highway 50

1. Introduction

This environmental assessment (EA) is for safety and capacity improvements to US Highway 50 (US 50) between Wills Boulevard (Blvd) and McCulloch Blvd that the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) is proposing, in consultation with Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), within the City of Pueblo, Pueblo County, and Pueblo West Metropolitan District (PWMD). This project is the third in a sequence of improvements that CDOT is making to US 50, all under the framework of the *US 50 West Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study* (CDOT, 2012a). The US 50 West PEL established the purpose and need, evaluated a full range of alternatives, and developed the *US 50 West PEL Implementation Plan* (CDOT, 2012b) for the PEL recommended Preferred Alternative within a 12-mile corridor from Swallows Road to Baltimore Avenue. Safety and capacity improvements included in the PEL recommended Preferred Alternative generally consist of widening US 50 from four lanes to six lanes from McCulloch Blvd to Wills Blvd and establishing grade-separated interchanges at McCulloch Blvd, Purcell Blvd, and Pueblo Blvd. US 50 would remain a four-lane highway west of McCulloch Blvd.

At the completion of the PEL Study, funds were not available to construct the recommended improvements for the entire PEL Corridor, leading CDOT to implement a sequence of improvement projects in coordination with FHWA. The following summarizes the sequence of completed National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) studies and recent improvements for US 50 that have led to this *US 50 West Wills Blvd to McCulloch Blvd EA*, as shown in **Figure 1**:

- The *US 50 West Purcell Blvd to Wills Blvd EA* (CDOT, 2014) provides widening 3.4 miles of eastbound US 50 from two lanes to three lanes from Purcell Blvd to Wills Blvd to establish five lanes (three eastbound and two westbound). Safety improvements include adding northbound right turns onto US 50 at McCulloch Blvd and Purcell Blvd and establishing two water quality ponds on the east and west sides of Wild Horse Dry Creek. In addition, widening the eastbound bridge at Wild Horse Dry Creek accommodates a future pedestrian/bicycle path. Construction of these improvements is scheduled for completion in 2016.
- The *US 50 West Wills Blvd to BNSF Acceleration Lane Categorical Exclusion* (CDOT, 2015), recently approved by CDOT, establishes a westbound acceleration lane on US 50 from Wills Blvd to the BNSF right-of-way (ROW), east of the BNSF bridge, shown on **Figure 1**. Construction of the acceleration lane is scheduled for 2016.
- CDOT and FHWA are currently undertaking the *US 50 West Wills Blvd to McCulloch Blvd EA* to provide additional safety and capacity improvements to US 50. Improvements include widening 3.4 miles of westbound US 50 between Wills Blvd and Purcell Blvd, from two lanes to three lanes; and widening 2.4 miles of westbound and eastbound US 50 between Purcell Blvd and McCulloch Blvd, from two lanes to three lanes in each direction. Grade-separated interchanges would be established within the US 50 ROW at Purcell Blvd and Pueblo Blvd. A future pedestrian/bicycle path would also be accommodated between Wills Blvd and Pueblo Blvd. A regional water quality pond is proposed to treat US 50 runoff and PWMD municipal runoff.

1 The Proposed Action, in combination with the improvements under construction from Purcell Blvd
2 to Wills Blvd, would establish six-lane capacity (three lanes in each direction) in the most congested
3 portion of the PEL Corridor, between Wills Blvd and McCulloch Blvd.

4 For this EA, the existing features of US 50, including the improvements approved through the
5 *US 50 West Purcell Blvd to Wills Blvd EA* (CDOT, 2014) and the *US 50 West Wills Blvd to BNSF*
6 *Acceleration Lane Categorical Exclusion*, represent the No Action Alternative. The No Action
7 Alternative assumes that no other major capacity improvements would be made to US 50. The No
8 Action Alternative also includes routine maintenance to keep the existing transportation network in
9 good operating condition.

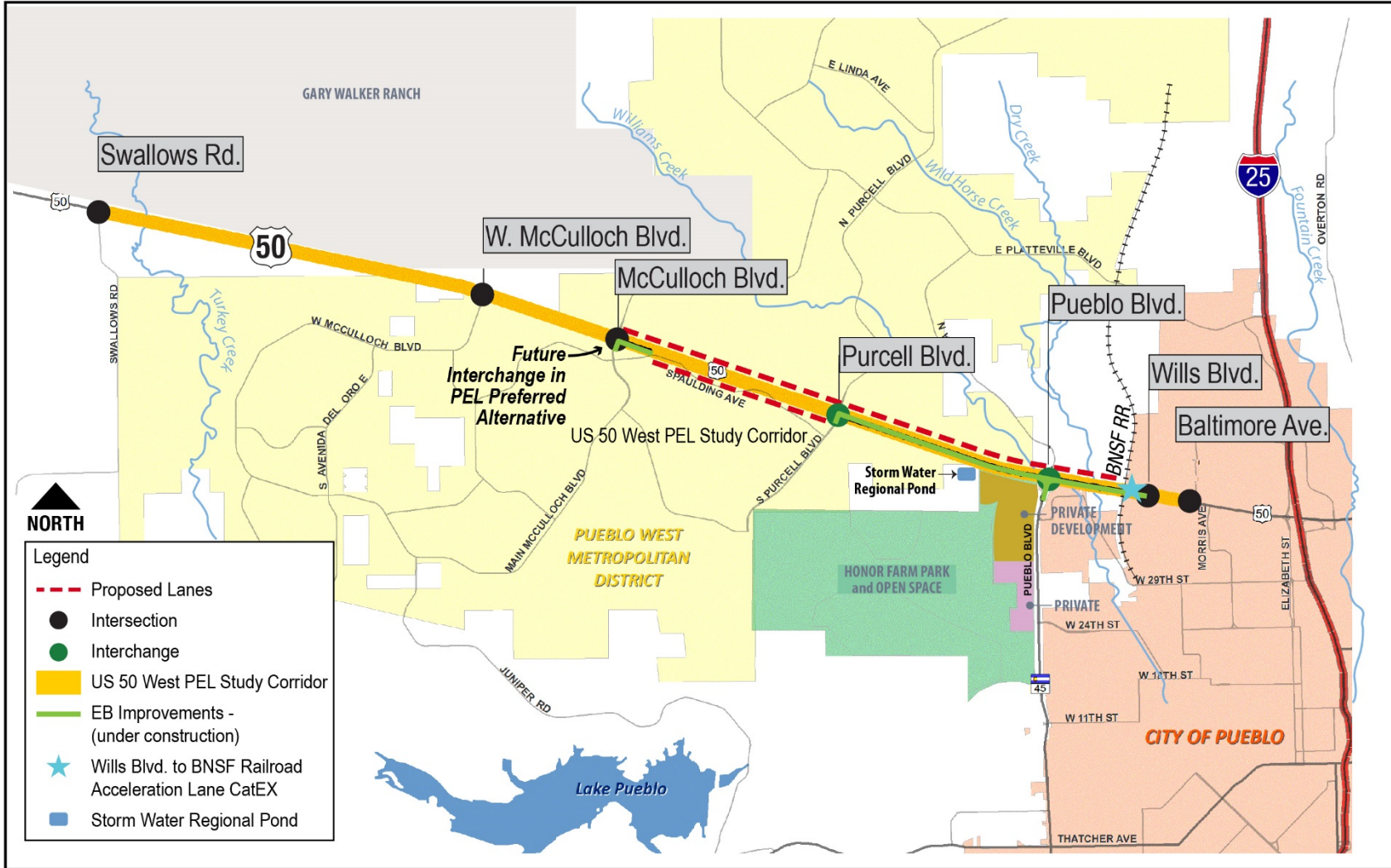
10 CDOT and FHWA prepared this EA to evaluate the Proposed Action benefits and environmental
11 impacts, relevant to the No Action Alternative. This EA will also ensure that the Proposed Action
12 would have logical termini and independent utility and would not restrict other reasonably
13 foreseeable transportation improvements identified in the PEL recommended Preferred Alternative.

14 Future elements of the PEL recommended Preferred Alternative will undergo NEPA analysis as
15 funding for design, ROW, and construction becomes available.

16 This environmental justice evaluation prepared in support of the *US 50 West Wills Blvd to McCulloch*
17 *Blvd EA* for westbound improvements provides an overview of the demographics within the
18 Community Study Area, defined in **Section 3**, and assesses potential impacts and possible benefits
19 to minority and/or low-income populations as a result of the proposed improvements. The
20 environmental justice evaluation reviews the project in sufficient detail to determine whether the
21 Proposed Action would have disproportionately high and adverse impacts on minority or
22 low-income populations (**Section 6**).

US 50 West Environmental Assessment

1 Figure 1. Proposed Action and PEL Study Corridor



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2. Project Description

2.1 Proposed Action

The Proposed Action for this *US 50 West Wills Blvd to McCulloch Blvd* EA involves widening 3.4 miles of westbound US 50 from two lanes to three lanes, to include a third westbound lane from Wills Blvd (Milepost 313.15) to Purcell Blvd (Milepost 309.78), and widening 2.4 miles of both westbound and eastbound US 50 from Purcell Blvd (Milepost 309.78) to McCulloch Blvd (Milepost 307.34). Grade-separated interchanges would be established at Pueblo Blvd and at Purcell Blvd. The Proposed Action from Wills Blvd to McCulloch Blvd, in combination with the eastbound improvements under construction from Purcell Blvd to Wills Blvd, would six-lane capacity (three lanes in each direction), for 5.8 miles of US 50, consistent with the *US 50 West PEL Implementation Plan* (CDOT, 2012b).

CDOT is proposing the following transportation improvements between Wills Blvd and McCulloch Blvd:

- **Wills Blvd Intersection to BNSF Railroad Bridge (Milepost 313.15 to Milepost 312.87)** – A third westbound lane would be established by restriping the Wills Blvd to BNSF acceleration lane (*US 50 West Wills Blvd to BNSF Acceleration Lane Categorical Exclusion*; CDOT, 2015) and by extending the westbound lane through the BNSF railroad bridge underpass to Pueblo Blvd.
- **BNSF Railroad Bridge through Pueblo Blvd Intersection (Milepost 312.87 to Milepost 312.65)** – The westbound lanes of US 50 in the vicinity of Pueblo Blvd would be realigned to be parallel to the eastbound lanes from Milepost 311.45 to Milepost 312.65, and the existing westbound bridge over Wild Horse Dry Creek would be replaced. A grade-separated interchange would be established, with Pueblo Blvd crossing over US 50. The Williams Creek concrete box culvert (CBC) under the eastbound US 50 lanes would be extended 160 ft. to accommodate the realigned westbound lanes, including the westbound third-lane widening. Pueblo Blvd would be widened to accommodate two additional left turn lanes onto westbound US 50 via a right-side exit ramp. The existing westbound US 50 lanes would be retained and modified to provide access from US 50 onto southbound Pueblo Blvd. The *US 50 West PEL Implementation Plan* (CDOT, 2012b) identifies the Proposed Action at US 50 at Pueblo Blvd to be implemented as phased improvements over time. The Proposed Action would implement a diamond-type interchange at Pueblo Blvd. The PEL recommends a Diverging Diamond Interchange configuration, which would be implemented at some time in the future when the Pueblo Blvd Extension is developed as an expressway between US 50 and I-25 (CDOT, 2012a).
- **Pueblo Blvd to Purcell Blvd Intersection (Milepost 312.65 to Milepost 309.78)** – The westbound third lane would extend from Pueblo Blvd to Purcell Blvd, and a full six-lane grade-separated interchange would be developed, with US 50 crossing over Purcell Blvd. A CBC under Purcell Blvd would be extended to accommodate a future pedestrian/bicycle trail and future widening of Purcell Blvd.

- 1 ■ **Purcell Blvd to McCulloch Blvd (Milepost 309.78 to Milepost 307.34)** – The Proposed
2 Action would include a third westbound lane extending from Purcell Blvd and terminating at
3 a right turn onto northbound McCulloch Blvd; and a third eastbound lane extending from
4 the newly established northbound right turn from McCulloch Blvd and terminating at
5 Purcell Blvd. The ultimate configuration for US 50 and McCulloch Blvd, although not part
6 of this EA, is a grade-separated interchange as identified in the *US 50 West PEL*
7 *Implementation Plan* (CDOT, 2012b).

- 8 ■ **Pedestrian/Bicycle Path** – The Proposed Action would accommodate a future
9 pedestrian/bicycle path within CDOT ROW along the south side of US 50 from Wills Blvd
10 to Pueblo Blvd, which is an element of the PEL recommended Preferred Alternative
11 (CDOT, 2012a). The slope paving adjacent to the eastbound lanes at the BNSF railroad
12 underpass would be modified to accommodate the pedestrian/bicycle path.

- 13 ■ **Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Improvements/Regional Pond** – The
14 Proposed Action would include water quality improvements and a regional pond.
15 Stormwater runoff for the westbound lane widening and interchange improvements between
16 Wills Blvd and Pueblo Blvd (Milepost 311.5 to Milepost 313.15) would be directed to the
17 two extended detention basins under construction on the east and west sides of Wild Horse
18 Dry Creek. Stormwater runoff for the westbound and eastbound lanes between Pueblo Blvd
19 and McCulloch Blvd (Milepost 307 to Milepost 311.5) would be directed to a proposed
20 regional pond site within a private parcel west of Pueblo Blvd and south of US 50.

21 **Figure 2** provides a general map of the Proposed Action.

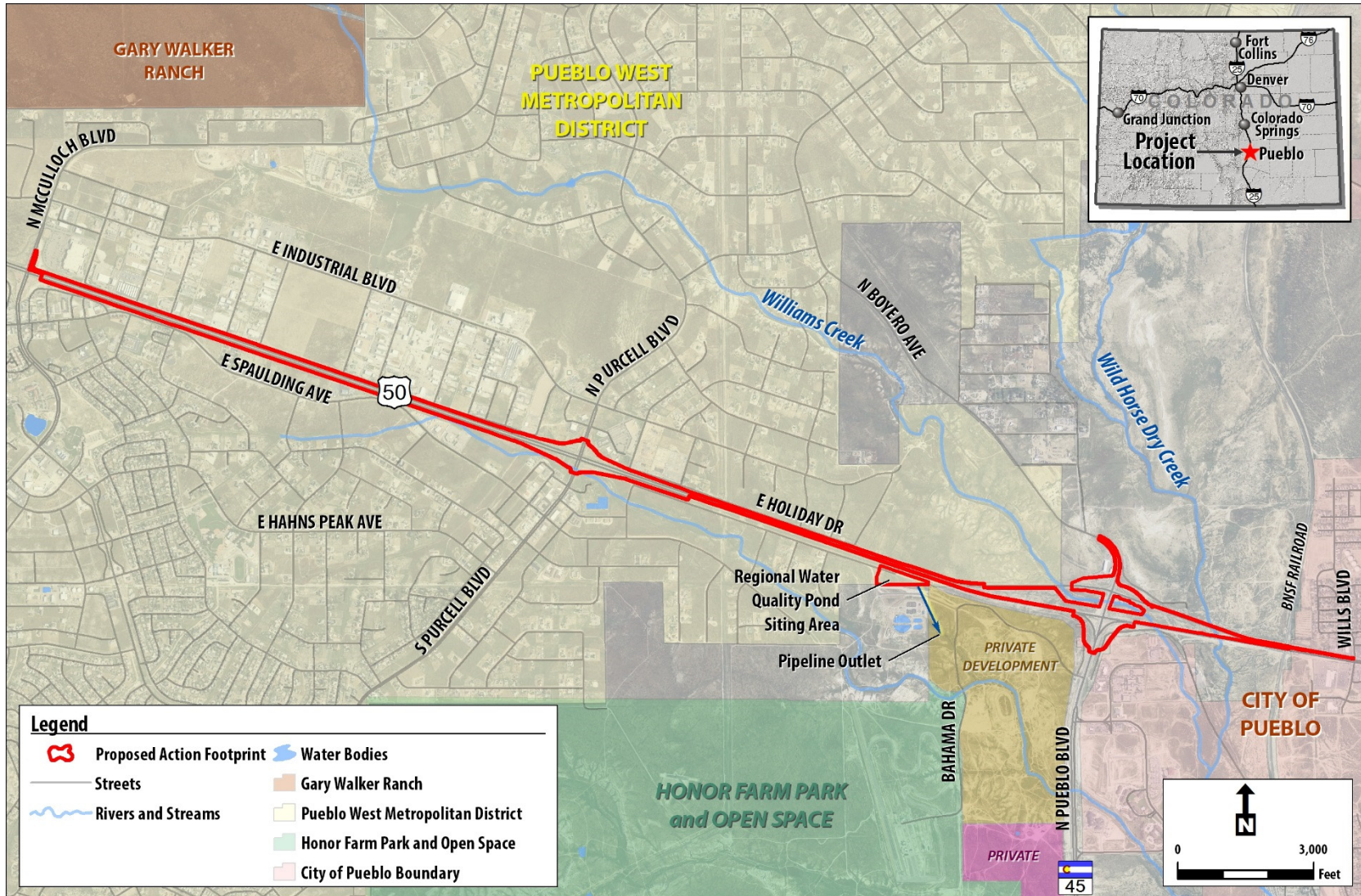
22 **2.2 No Action Alternative**

23 The existing features of US 50, including the improvements approved through the *US 50 West Purcell*
24 *Blvd to Wills Blvd EA* (CDOT, 2014a) and the *US 50 West Wills Blvd to BNSF Acceleration Lane*
25 *Categorical Exclusion* (CDOT, 2015), represent the No Action Alternative. The No Action Alternative
26 assumes that no other major capacity improvements would be made to US 50. The No Action
27 Alternative also includes routine maintenance to keep the existing transportation network in good
28 operating condition.

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Figure 2. Proposed Action



3. Background on Environmental Justice

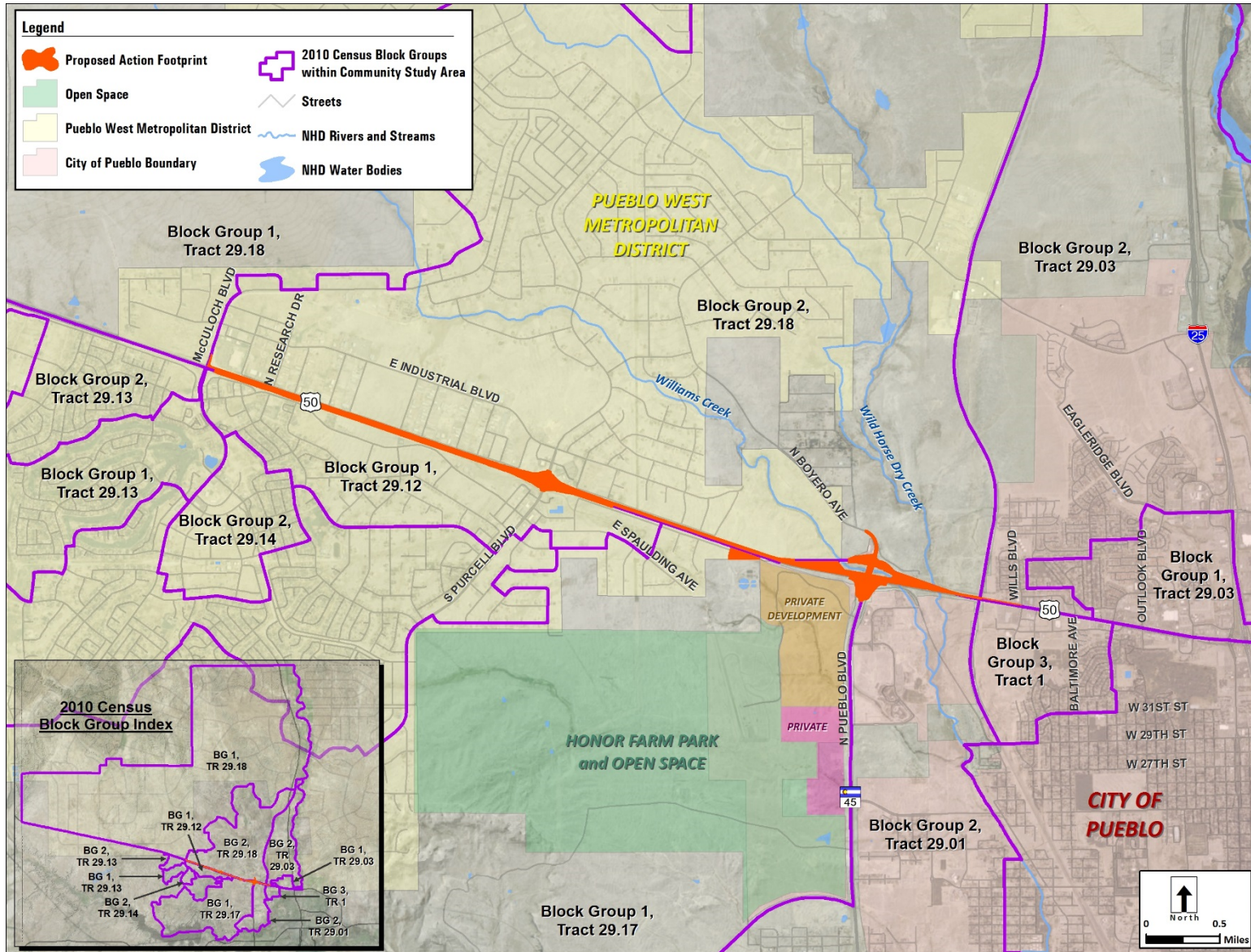
Environmental justice refers to social equity in sharing the benefits and burdens of specific projects or programs, which is an important component of all CDOT projects. The analysis followed the FHWA policy regarding environmental justice (FHWA Order 6640.23A) and the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) *Guidance on Environmental Justice and NEPA* (USDOT, 2011), as identified in the *CDOT NEPA Manual* (2014c).

Developing an understanding of the demographic character of an area is important in assessing both potential impacts and possible benefits of the project to the local community, including any identified minority and/or low-income populations. The Community Study Area for this project, as shown in **Figure 3**, is defined as the Census block groups adjacent to the Proposed Action (described below). As shown on **Figure 3**, many of the Census block groups within the Community Study Area are large and extend well beyond US 50, which provides a broader characterization of the communities that the project may affect.

The principles of environmental justice applied during this process were based on the following objectives for environmental justice:

- To ensure the full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process
- To prevent the denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in the receipt of benefits by minority populations and low-income populations
- To avoid, minimize, or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on minority populations and low-income populations

1 Figure 3. Community Study Area



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4. Existing Demographics

For analysis of minority populations, the project team collected demographic information primarily from the 2010 U.S. Decennial Census (US Census Bureau) data or the US Census Bureau 2009–2013 American Community Survey data for the State of Colorado, Pueblo County, and the Census Tracts/Blocks Groups within the Community Study Area. Given the static nature of the 2010 Census data and the Community Study Area relative to US 50, some data used in the *US 50 West EA* and *Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)* (CDOT, 2014a and b) are potentially applicable to this study investigating westbound improvements.

Minority is defined as a person who is Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, Asian, American Indian/Alaskan Native, or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander (FHWA, 2012). Minority population is defined as any readily identifiable groups of minority persons who live in geographic proximity, and if circumstances warrant, geographically dispersed/transient persons who will be similarly affected by a proposed FHWA program, policy, or activity.

The race information from the 2010 US Census Bureau includes the following categories:

- White
- Black/African American
- Asian
- American Indian/Alaskan Native
- Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander

The 2010 US Census Bureau data also contain information about ethnicity. It is important to note that people of Hispanic/Latino origin, which FHWA defines as minority, may identify with any race.

Table 1 presents population data and race percentages for the Census tract block groups within the Community Study Area, Pueblo County, and the State of Colorado. This data remains consistent with the evaluation in the *US 50 West Purcell Blvd to Wills Blvd EA* and *FONSI* (CDOT, 2014a and b) for eastbound improvements, meaning that data have not been updated and remain current.

According to 2010 US Census Bureau data (summarized in **Table 1**), the population of Pueblo County includes 159,063 individuals. Approximately 15.6 percent of that population (24,801 individuals) live within the Community Study Area.

The Hispanic/Latino population represents approximately 20.7 percent of the population in the State of Colorado and 41.4 percent of the population in Pueblo County. Census block groups in the Community Study Area generally have similar proportions of minorities as the Pueblo County average, yet the range spans from 16.9 to 54.6 percent (**Table 1**). The Hispanic and Latino population contains the largest proportion of the total minority population in the Community Study Area compared to those of the Black/African American, American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander groups.

Based on the block group data from the 2010 US Census Bureau, most block groups within the Community Study Area have a lower Hispanic/Latino minority population when compared to those of Pueblo County. Three block groups have a Hispanic/Latino minority population slightly higher than that of Pueblo County as a whole, ranging from 41.6 percent to 54.6 percent. According to the

- 1 Interagency Working Group on Environmental Justice (established by Executive Order 12898), a
- 2 “Non-Hispanic/Latino White” percentage of less than 50 percent implies a minority population of
- 3 greater than 50 percent, which indicates that there is a “Minority Population” (CEQ, 1997).
- 4 Census Tract 29.01, Block Group 2 is the only block group within the Community Study Area with
- 5 a Non-Hispanic/Latino White population greater than 50 percent. This block group will be
- 6 considered specifically for impacts in **Section 6**.

7 **Table 1. Demographics for the Community Study Area**

Area	Total Population	Race (percent)					Ethnicity (percent)
		Non-Hispanic/Latino White ¹	Black/African American ²	Asian ²	American Indian/Alaskan Native ²	Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander ²	Hispanic/Latino (of any race) ^{1,3}
Colorado	5,029,196	70.0	4.0	2.8	1.1	0.13	20.7
Pueblo County	159,063	54.1	2.0	0.79	1.9	0.10	41.4
Census Block Groups in the Community Study Area							
Census Tract 1, Block Group 3	1,492	53.4	3.2	0.40	2.1	0.07	42.2
Census Tract 29.01, Block Group 2*	1,926	39.6	2.8	0.67	3.1	0.42	54.6
Census Tract 29.03, Block Group 1	1,944	64.0	0.87	2.8	1.5	0.26	30.9
Census Tract 29.03, Block Group 2	3,957	50.4	3.4	3.0	1.3	0.18	41.6
Census Tract 29.12, Block Group 1	1,689	64.2	1.7	0.65	2.4	0.18	31.0
Census Tract 29.13 Block Group 1	1,708	78.5	1.05	2.2	0.70	0.0	16.9
Census Tract 29.13 Block Group 2	1,610	76.6	0.75	1.2	0.99	0.0	20.4
Census Tract 29.14 Block Group 2	894	67.0	1.7	.56	0.89	0.22	28.4
Census Tract 29.17, Block Group 1	2,935	72.7	2.0	1.6	1.1	0.03	22.4
Census Tract 29.18 Block Group 1	2,424	76.2	1.6	.62	1.3	0.41	18.9
Census Tract 29.18, Block Group 2	4,222	71.9	1.8	0.76	1.7	0.17	23.1
Study Area Total	24,801						

¹ – Source: 2010 Census Dataset P5: Hispanic or Latino Origin by Race (Summary File 1)

² – Source: 2010 Census Dataset P3 Total Population (Summary File 1)

³ – People who identify their origin as Hispanic or Latino populations may be of any race.

Note: Percentages will not add up to 100 percent because people who identify their origin as Hispanic or Latino populations may be of any race. “The sum is larger than the total population because people who provided more than one race response are included in the total of each race they reported” (US Census Bureau, 2012).

* Census Tract 29.01, Block Group 2 is the only block group within the Community Study Area with a minority population over 50 percent.

5. Economic Conditions

Low-income, as defined by FHWA *Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations* Order 6640.23A (2012) includes “...a person whose median household income is at or below the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) poverty guidelines,” and a low-income population is defined as “any readily identifiable group of low-income persons who live in geographic proximity, and, if circumstances warrant, geographically dispersed/transient persons who will be similarly affected by a proposed FHWA program, policy, or activity.” The 2013 HHS poverty guidelines for a two-person and three-person household are \$15,510 and \$19,530, respectively.

To determine whether low-income populations may be found in a Community Study Area, the following information must be established:

- The low-income threshold dollar amount, number, and percentages for Pueblo County
- The number and percentage of low-income populations in the Community Study Area compared with percentage for Pueblo County

The project team obtained the data used for the economic analyses from the US Census Bureau and the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The project team completed the analysis following the environmental justice guidance in the *CDOT NEPA Manual* (2014c). Analysis is based on the assumption that the average household size in Pueblo County was 2.49 people during 2013 (US Census, 2013). The source of data in this section has been updated since the *US 50 West Purcell Blvd to Wills Blvd EA* and *FONSI* (CDOT, 2014a and b) for eastbound improvements were developed. These data reflect more current information available for this environmental justice evaluation.

According to the HUD Income Limits Documentation System, in 2013, the median family income (MFI) estimate for Pueblo County was \$51,400 (HUD, 2013). The low-income threshold for the 2.49 average household size in Pueblo County was determined to be \$15,232 based on the extremely low-income limits (that is, families whose incomes do not exceed 30 percent of the MFI for the area) (HUD, 2013). Because of the incremental nature of Census income statistics, any household (regardless of the number of people) in Pueblo County with an income less than \$24,999 was considered low-income in this analysis¹. The US Census Bureau data for income and poverty are available only at the Census tract level. As shown in **Table 2**, the median household income in Pueblo County is \$41,777, which is lower than the state median household income (\$58,433). The percent of people living below the poverty level in 2013 was higher in Pueblo County (30.6 percent) compared to that of the state (20.0 percent).

In terms of the Community Study Area, the percent of people living below the poverty level ranged from 9.3 to 40.7 in 2013. Census Tracts 1 and 29.01 have percentages of families below the poverty level that exceed Pueblo County’s overall percentage of 30.6 percent (**Table 2**). These two Census tracts will be considered specifically for impacts in **Section 6**. **Figure 4** illustrates these Census tracts and the percentage of households with income below the poverty level in 2013.

¹ Some households that had a higher income than the threshold income had to be counted because they fall in an income range that includes the threshold income level.

1 **Table 2. Income and Poverty within the Community Study Area**

Area	Median Household Income (2013 Inflation Adjusted Dollars)	Family Income in 2013 Below the Poverty Level (Percent)
Colorado	58,433	20.0
Pueblo County	41,777	30.6
Census Block Groups in the Community Study Area		
Census Tract 1*	36,250	31.1
Census Tract 29.01*	32,195	40.7
Census Tract 29.03	60,361	19.1
Census Tract 29.12	53,750	21.6
Census Tract 29.13	69,796	17.8
Census Tract 29.14	65,713	15.2
Census Tract 29.17	79,896	9.3
Census Tract 29.18	68,233	10.3

Source: US Census American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2009–2013 (DP03)

Note: Includes all households in 2013 with income below the poverty level. Some households that had a higher income than the threshold income had to be counted because they fall in an income range that includes the threshold income level. The data used in this environmental justice analysis were collected in May 2015.

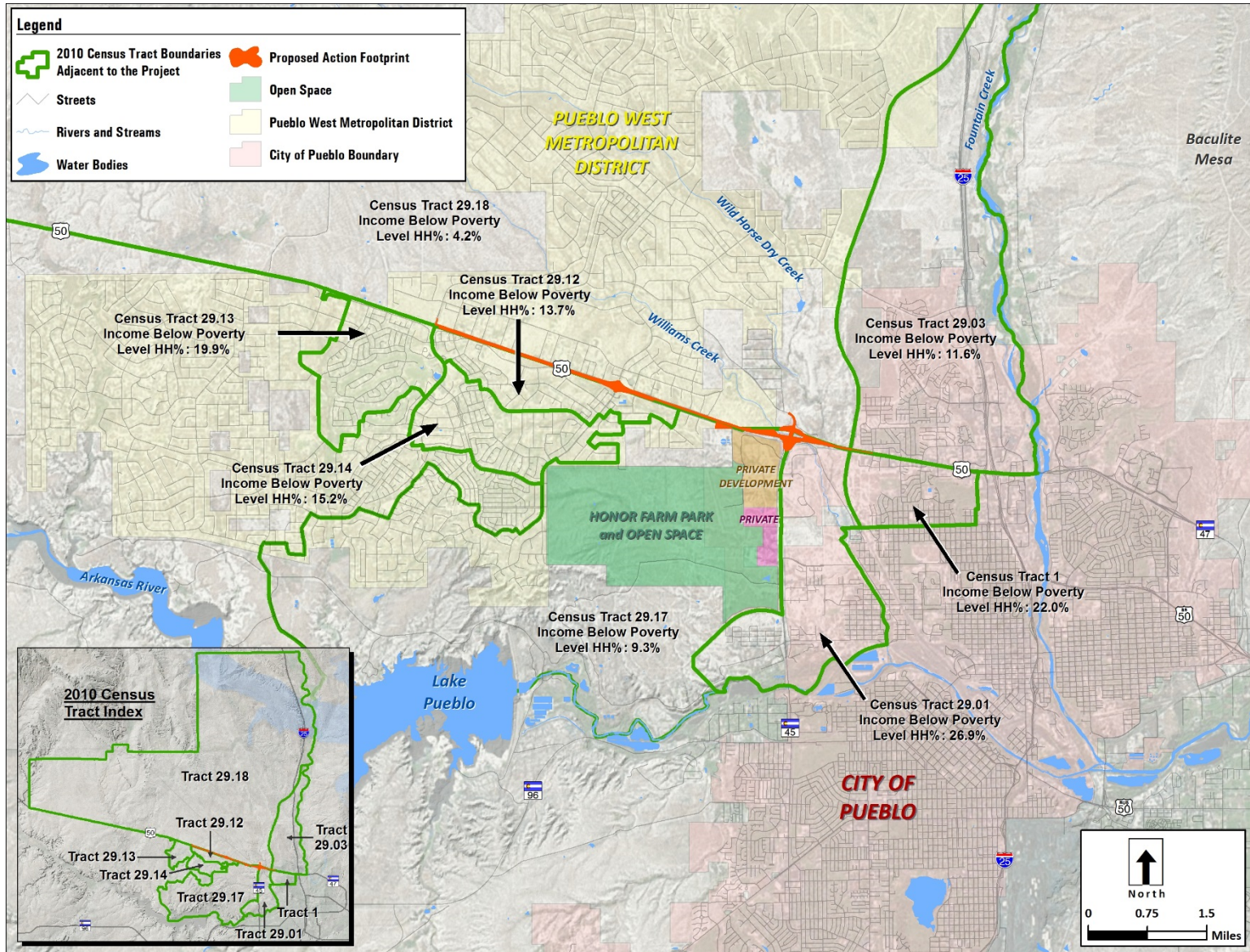
* Census Tracts 1 and 29.01 have higher percentages of family incomes below the poverty level than those of Pueblo County.

2 Analysis was also completed at the block group level. As noted, the low-income threshold for the
 3 2.49 average household size in Pueblo County was determined to be \$15,232 based on the extremely
 4 low-income limits. Because Census income statistics are divided into increments of \$5,000, any
 5 household (regardless of the number of people) in Pueblo County with an income less than \$19,999
 6 was considered low-income in this analysis.

7 Based on the analysis, low-income households range from 3.1 percent to 26.9 percent within the
 8 Community Study Area, as compared to 23.5 percent for Pueblo County (**Table 3**). Census
 9 Tract, 29.01, Block Group 2 is the only block group with a higher percentage (26.9 percent) of low-
 10 income households than that of Pueblo County. This block group will be considered specifically for
 11 impacts in **Section 6**.

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Figure 4. Percentage of Households with Income below the Poverty Level in 2013



1 **Table 3. Percentage of Low-Income Households**

Area	Low-Income Households (%) (based on 2013 Inflation Adjusted Dollars)
Colorado	15.1
Pueblo County	23.5
Census Block Groups in the Community Study Area	
Census Tract 1, Block Group 3	22.0
Census Tract 29.01, Block Group 2	26.9
Census Tract 29.03, Block Group 1	11.6
Census Tract 29.03, Block Group 2	15.2
Census Tract 29.12, Block Group 1	13.7
Census Tract 29.13, Block Group 1	19.9
Census Tract 29.13, Block Group 2	8.5
Census Tract 29.14, Block Group 2	15.2
Census Tract 29.17, Block Group 1	3.1
Census Tract 29.18, Block Group 1	4.2
Census Tract 29.18, Block Group 2	6.6

Source: US Census American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2009–2013 (B19001)

Note: Includes all low-income households in 2013. Some households that had a higher income than the threshold income had to be counted because they fall in an income range that includes the threshold income level. The data used in this environmental justice analysis were collected in May 2015.

* Census Tract 29.01, Block Group 2 has a higher percentage of low-income households than that of Pueblo County.

2

1 6. Impacts

2 **Section 6** describes the potential impacts and benefits of the Proposed Action to the local
3 community, including any identified minority and/or low-income populations. According to the
4 *CDOT NEPA Manual (2014c)*, when minority populations exist in a study area, then the
5 environmental justice evaluation must consider how each alternative might impact the low-income
6 or minority populations (positively or negatively) and if there is a potential for disproportionately
7 high or adverse impacts.

8 FHWA defines a disproportionate impact as an adverse effect that:

- 9 ■ Is predominantly borne by a minority population and/or low-income population OR
- 10 ■ Will be suffered by the minority population and/or low-income population and is
11 appreciably more severe or greater in magnitude than the adverse effect that will be suffered
12 by the non-minority population and/or non-low income population.

13 A disproportionately high and adverse effect on low-income and minority populations can be carried
14 out only if further avoidance, minimization, mitigation, and enhancement measures are not
15 practicable.

16 Several criteria were used to determine if the alternatives would have a disproportionate or adverse
17 effect on low-income and/or minority populations including, but not limited to:

- 18 ■ Displacement of community facilities and public services (e.g., schools, places of worship,
19 community centers, and grocery stores) important for maintaining community cohesion
- 20 ■ Relocations of residences and businesses in low-income and/or minority areas and/or
21 displacement of businesses that provide jobs in minority and/or low-income areas
- 22 ■ Changes in the natural and man-made environment that would have an impact on minority
23 and/or low-income populations

24 Impacts are described in the following sections related to the Community Study Area and, in
25 particular, for Census Tracts 1 and 29.01 and Census Tract 29.01, Block Group 2, which have higher
26 percentages of minority and/or low-income populations (**Section 5**).

27 6.1 Proposed Action

28 6.1.1 Community Facilities and Public Services

29 The following community facilities and public services were identified near the project (**Figure 5**):

- Park West Medical Complex
- YMCA
- Hyde Park Satellite Library
- Professional Library
- Centennial High School
- Wild Horse Park-N-Ride
- American Red Cross
- Pueblo City Government
- Fire Station #2
- Covenant Reformed Presbyterian Church

- Morton Elementary School
- Family Worship Center
- Early Childhood Connections
- Two Safeway grocery stores
- Pueblo West Library
- Pueblo West Baptist Church
- Amazing Grace Fellowship Church
- Crown of Life Lutheran Church
- WalMart

1 Several community facilities and public services are located near the Pueblo Blvd/US 50
2 intersection. One Safeway grocery store is located in the northeast corner of the Purcell Blvd/US 50
3 intersection, and the other Safeway store is located southwest of the Interstate 25/US 50
4 interchange (**Figure 5**). Some of these community facilities and public services are a greater distance
5 from the project but may be destinations for people using US 50 in the Pueblo West area.

6 This project would not displace community or public service facilities along or near the PEL
7 Corridor. This project is expected to improve connectivity, traffic congestion and mobility, and
8 safety for motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians. Given that US 50 currently bisects the community,
9 these improvements may enhance community cohesion between areas north and south of US 50 at
10 intersections and along US 50.

11 Overall, the Proposed Action would include several direct benefits to the local community, Pueblo
12 County, and the City of Pueblo. These benefits include improving mobility and providing safer
13 access to community facilities and public services by vehicle. The Proposed Action would cause
14 some relatively infrequent traffic delays during construction, during which time additional travel time
15 may be needed.

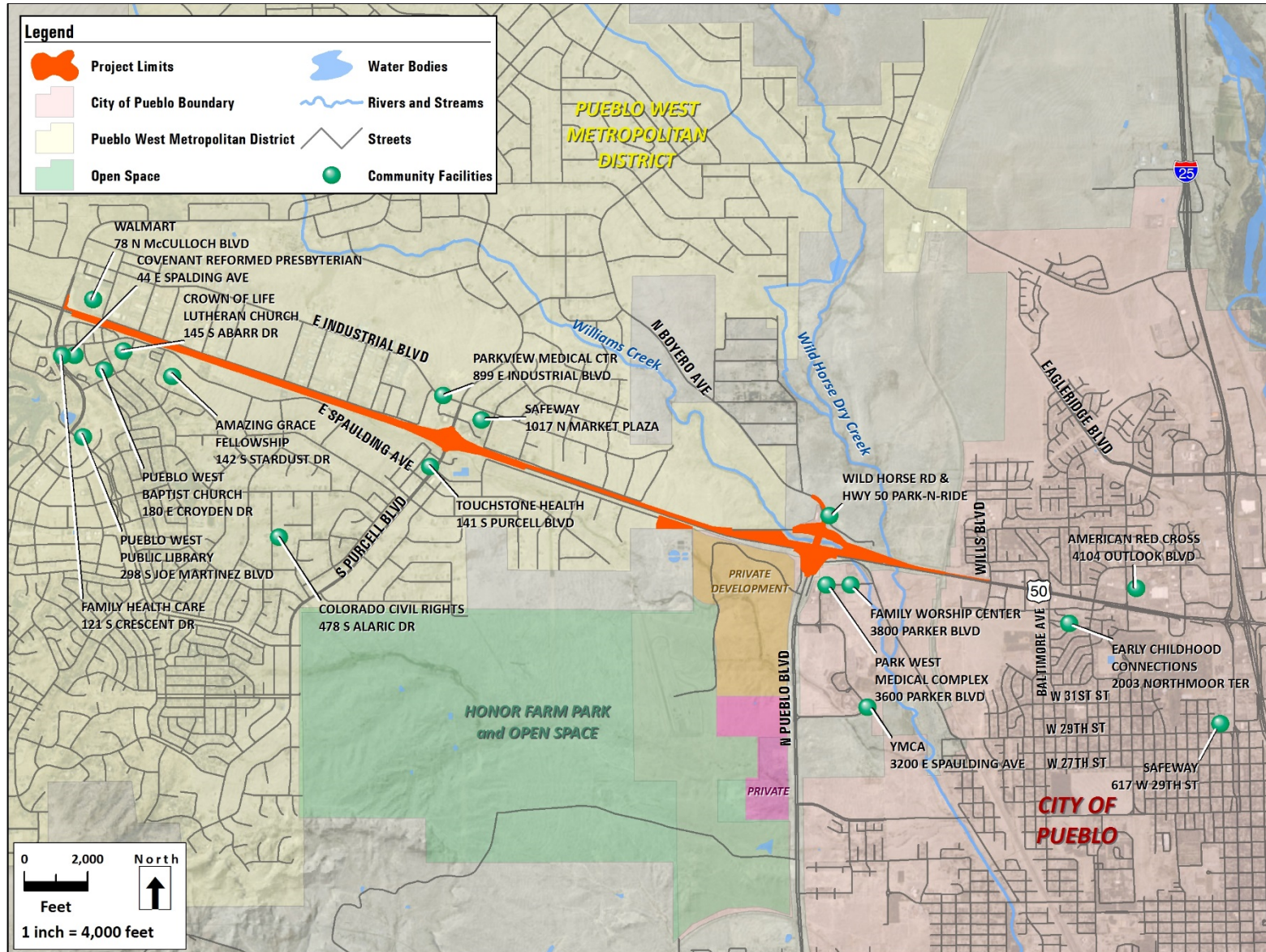
16 For bicyclists and pedestrians, connectivity to community facilities and public services would also be
17 improved. Consistent with the *US 50 West PEL Study* (CDOT, 2012a), this project would include a
18 10-foot-wide paved multi-use trail along the south side of US 50 from Pueblo Blvd to the existing
19 sidewalk near Wills Blvd. National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) considerations for the trail
20 bridge crossing over Wild Horse Creek have been addressed in the *US 50 West Purcell Blvd to Wills*
21 *Blvd EA* and *FONSI* (CDOT, 2014a and b). Currently, options are limited in the Community Study
22 Area for pedestrians/bicyclists to travel between areas east and west of the project. As a result,
23 community facility and business access in the Community Study Area is also limited for individuals
24 who do not own automobiles.

25 In combination with other future proposed improvements identified in the *US 50 West PEL Study*
26 (CDOT, 2012a), the proposed trail would help improve future access to community facilities and
27 public services for bicyclists/pedestrians in the area. Additionally, access to businesses located near
28 the Purcell Blvd/US 50, Pueblo Blvd/US 50, and Wills Blvd/US 50 intersections may be improved
29 for employees who commute to work via the proposed trail system.

30 In summary, bicyclists, pedestrians, and automobile users would benefit from enhanced mobility and
31 improved connectivity along US 50 to the community facilities and public services. Project benefits
32 are expected to be shared equitably across all demographic groups and communities.

50 US 50 West Environmental Assessment

Figure 5. Community Facilities in the Vicinity of the Proposed Action



1 **6.1.2 Residential or Business Relocations**

2 Within the Community Study Area, residences are present primarily in the areas north and south of
3 US 50 in the area between Purcell Blvd and Pueblo Blvd. This project would not displace residences
4 or businesses anywhere along or near the PEL Corridor. As previously discussed, Census
5 Tract 29.01, Block Group 2 is the only block group within the Community Study Area with a
6 Hispanic/Latino population that is meaningfully greater than that of Pueblo County (54.6 percent
7 versus 41.4 percent). In addition, Census Tract 29.01, Block Group 2 is the only block group with a
8 higher percentage (26.9 percent) of low-income households than Pueblo County (23.5 percent).
9 Relative to Pueblo County (at 30.6 percent), Census Tracts 1 and 29.01 have higher percentages
10 (31.1 and 40.7, respectively) of households with incomes below the poverty level.

11 The Census tracts and block groups within the Community Study Area are large and extend well
12 beyond US 50, which provides a broader characterization of the communities that the project may
13 affect. Within Census tracts or the block group that includes higher concentrations of low-income
14 and/or minority populations, the closest residences are more than 0.5 mile from the Proposed
15 Action footprint. Other dispersed residences located within Pueblo West in the area south of US 50
16 between Purcell Blvd and Pueblo Blvd are within 0.25 mile of the Proposed Action footprint;
17 however, demographic information was not collected down to the block level.

18 **6.1.3 Other Natural and Manmade Environmental Impacts**

19 Other environmental considerations—such as air quality, traffic noise, hazardous materials, and
20 natural and historic resource impacts—would not be expected to affect minority/low-income
21 populations disproportionately. The EA and Technical Reports include detailed discussion about
22 these resources, Appendices A04, A13, A14, A09, and A08, (respectively).

23 Project improvements would likely provide travel benefits to any minority/low-income population
24 in any areas of the adjacent Census tract/block groups that use US 50, regardless of the distance
25 from the project.

26 **6.2 No Action Alternative**

27 The No Action Alternative would cause traffic delays due to increased traffic without the added lane
28 capacity. Low-income and minority populations present within the Community Study Area would
29 continue to experience the traffic congestion problems currently experienced by all populations.
30 Those impacts would increase proportionally to higher congestion levels as traffic volumes continue
31 to increase.

32 **6.3 Cumulative Impacts**

33 Both the No Action Alternative and the Proposed Action would not be expected to have an adverse
34 incremental effect on minority and/or low-income populations. Under the Proposed Action, many
35 of the project effects would be positive or beneficial in nature. Other effects would be neutral, in
36 which no impact is expected for low-income or minority populations. Potential traffic delays would
37 produce negative effects, but those effects would be borne by all area travelers, not just low-income
38 or minority populations. An adverse cumulative impact is not anticipated as this project would
39 produce a beneficial community effect through improving local and regional connectivity along the
40 transportation system.

1 7. Mitigation

2 Although the project does not expect permanent impacts related to environmental justice,
3 construction will require CDOT to coordinate with the local communities for construction practices
4 that will disrupt traffic flow. Likewise, providing advance notifications of delays will help address
5 any potential disruptions to the local community during construction.

6 8. Public Outreach

7 An extensive public involvement program was implemented and is discussed in the *US 50 West PEL*
8 *Study* (CDOT, 2012a). In addition, a public meeting will be held following completion of the *US 50*
9 *West Wills Blvd to McCulloch Blvd EA*.

10 CDOT will ensure open public involvement for the *US 50 West Wills Blvd to McCulloch Blvd EA* as a
11 part of the public involvement process. CDOT Region 2 does not routinely use a translator as part
12 of the public involvement process because Pueblo County considers itself an English speaking
13 community, not a Hispanic community. This measure has been established through previous CDOT
14 Region 2 NEPA processes in Pueblo County. The EA includes more information on public
15 outreach.

16 9. Conclusion

17 According to FHWA's *Environmental Justice Reference Guide* (2015):

18 "Projects cause positive and negative effects, or "benefits and burdens," which may occur in
19 the short, medium, or long term... In determining whether an effect is "disproportionately
20 high and adverse," the USDOT [Environmental Justice] Order notes that practitioners may
21 take the following into account: planned mitigation measures, offsetting benefits to the
22 affected minority and low-income populations, the design, the comparative impacts, and the
23 relevant number of similar existing system elements in non-minority and non-low-income
24 areas."

25 In general, the following conclusions have been made about impacts (positive and negative) to low-
26 income and/or minority populations in the Community Study Area:

- 27 ■ The Proposed Action would result in several positive effects on the travelling population,
28 including low-income and/or minority populations residing in the Community Study Area.
29 Bicyclists, pedestrians, and automobile users would benefit from enhanced mobility and
30 improved connectivity.
- 31 ■ The Proposed Action would not require the relocation or displacement of residential
32 dwellings, businesses, or places of worship and community centers that would specifically
33 have an impact on the local population, including low-income and/or minority populations
34 within the community.

- 1 ▪ The Proposed Action would not result in changes in the natural and manmade environment
2 that would be expected to have an impact on minority and/or low-income populations.
- 3 ▪ The Proposed Action would cause some relatively infrequent traffic delays during
4 construction. During these times, community facilities would take longer to access from
5 US 50 and would require some extended travel time. These impacts would affect all travelers
6 in the area and not just low income or minority populations.

7 Based on these concluding points, this environmental justice evaluation has shown that low-income
8 and/or minority populations within the Community Study Area are not expected to incur
9 disproportionate impacts. Many of the project effects would be positive or beneficial in nature.
10 Other effects would be neutral, in which no impact is expected for low-income or minority
11 populations. Potential traffic delays would produce negative effects, but those effects would be
12 borne by all area travelers, not just low-income or minority populations.

13 In accordance with FHWA's *Environmental Justice Reference Guide* (2015), considering comparative
14 impacts has indicated that project impacts and benefits are expected to be equally shared among all
15 populations. Impacts are not expected to be disproportionately borne by low-income and minority
16 populations. That finding is based on analysis at the Community Study Area level, which provides a
17 broader characterization of communities that may be affected by the project. Given these findings,
18 this project would meet the provisions of Executive Order 12898 and FHWA Order 6640.23, and
19 no further environmental justice analysis is required.

10. References

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