



1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 STUDY INTENT AND DESCRIPTION

Historically, the City of Fort Collins has struggled with truck traffic in the downtown area of the City. The issue has been evaluated from a variety of perspectives dating back to the 1960’s. The Northern Colorado Truck Mobility/State Highway (SH) 14 Relocation Study looks at this issue in more detail as directed by Ballot Initiative 200, passed by City of Fort Collins voters in November 1999. The ballot initiative identifies three distinct work elements that are addressed in this study. They include:

- **Non-Route Based Strategies.** Developing strategies to encourage through truck traffic to use the existing Interstate system (I-25 and I-80 route). Recommendations were developed with comprehensive involvement from the trucking industry and include strategies such as marketing action plans and other technological approaches.
- **Alternate Routes.** Identifying alternate truck routes at least 2 miles north of the City of Fort Collins Growth Management Area (GMA). Based on the ballot initiative, this new alternate route would be redesignated as SH 14, removing the state highway designation from the existing SH 14 route and reverting it back to Mulberry Street under the City’s jurisdiction. The northern boundary of the GMA is currently located at Douglas Road. The southernmost alternate route that was considered as part of the study was County Road (CR) 58. The limits of the alternate route evaluation are shown in Figure 1.1.
- **Funding and Next Steps.** Identifying funding strategies, mechanisms, and issues for study recommendations and determining the next steps required. Potential funding sources include a combination of local, regional, state, Federal, and private types.

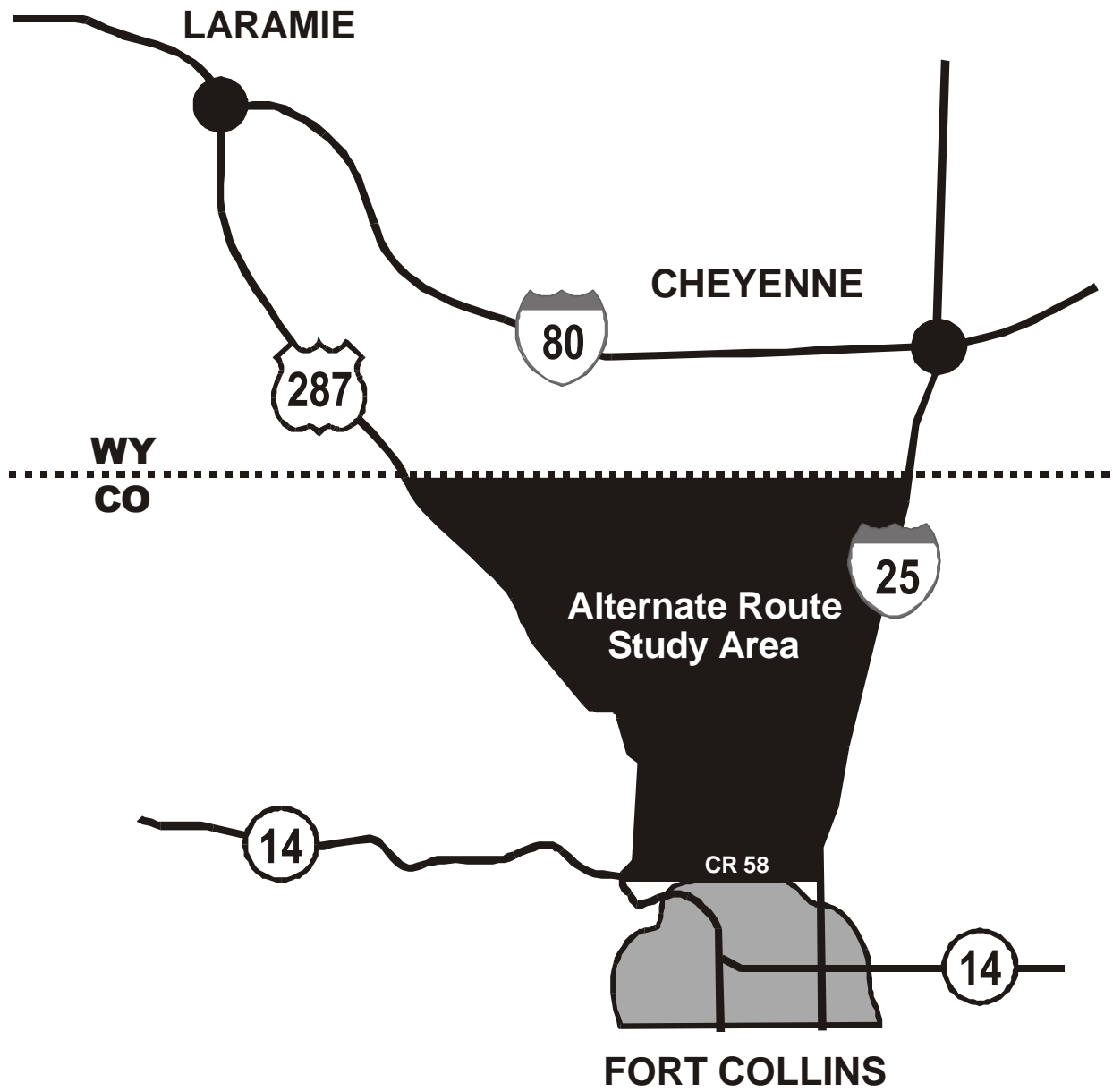
1.1.1 Ballot Initiative 200

The City of Fort Collins initiated the Northern Colorado Truck Mobility/SH 14 Relocation Study to address the requirements of Ballot Initiative 200 that was passed in November 1999. The full text of the ordinance is as follows:



**ORDINANCE NO. 142, 1999
OF THE CITY OF FORT COLLINS
APPROVING THE RELOCATION
OF COLORADO HIGHWAY 14 TRUCK ROUTE OUTSIDE THE CITY
OF FORT COLLINS CURRENT URBAN GROWTH AREA AND
APPROVING CERTAIN MEASURES IN SUPPORT THEREOF**

WHEREAS, for many years the City of Fort Collins (the “City”) and City staff have investigated the possibility of relocating the Colorado Highway 14 truck route (the “Truck Route”) from its current location that utilizes roadways in the City known as Mulberry, Riverside, Jefferson, and College in such a manner so as to minimize the impact of the Truck Route on businesses, neighborhoods and residents of Fort Collins; and

Figure 1.1
Study Area Map



Legend

-  Alternate Route Study Area
-  Fort Collins GMA 2-mile Buffer Limit



WHEREAS, as a part of the “Building Community Choices” Capital Improvement Program, in 1997 the City’s electorate authorized capital expenditures of \$3 million (the “Funds”) to be used for the planning, design, right-of-way acquisition and/or other project costs associated with road improvements for an alternate northeast Truck Route; and

WHEREAS, the City has expended a portion of the Funds in pursuit of an alternative Truck Route and wishes to continue to use the remaining Funds to relocate the Truck Route so as to avoid the adverse impacts associated with the Truck Route on businesses, neighborhoods, and residents in the City’s Urban Growth Area; and

WHEREAS, prior City Councils and the current City Council have previously rejected relocating the Truck Route in the vicinity of East Vine Drive in the City due to the materially adverse environmental health and social impacts on residents that a relocation in the vicinity of East Vine Drive would necessarily cause; and

WHEREAS, the City desires to relocate the Truck Route outside the City’s current UGA and, until such location occurs, to encourage and cause truck traffic without local business to use the U.S. Interstate Highway System; and

WHEREAS, a petition for initiative signed by registered elements of the City has been filed with the City which requires, under Article X, Section 1(e) of the Charter, that the City Council either adopt this Ordinance or submit it to the registered electors of the City as a special election.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. That, working with appropriate Federal, State, and County governmental entities, agencies, and departments, the City and its staff shall pursue with all deliberate effort and speed the relocation of the Truck Route to a location outside the City’s current Urban Growth Area.

Section 2. That until such time as the relocation of the Truck Route, described in Section 1 occurs, the City shall encourage and cause by all reasonably available legal means all truck traffic without local business in the City to use the existing U.S. Interstate Highway System, including, without limitation, pursuit by the City of appropriate State and Federal legislation and regulations that would cause all truck traffic without local business to remain on the U.S. Interstate Highway System.

Section 3. That the City and its staff shall devise and diligently pursue the implementation of a funding plan to cause the relocation of the Truck Route outside the City’s current Urban Growth Area to be funded by a combination of City, County, State, and/or Federal funding sources.

Section 4. That the remaining Funds from the “Building Community Choices” Capital Improvement Program shall be used in furtherance of the purposes set forth in Sections 1, 2, and 3 of this Ordinance.

Section 5. That relocating the Truck Route in the vicinity of East Vine Drive is permanently abandoned and that locating a new or alternate Truck Route between the currently existing Truck Route and two miles North of Douglas Road shall not be further considered by the City.

Section 6. That all resolutions and ordinances of the City Council that are inconsistent with the foregoing Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 are hereby reversed and superseded in their entirety by the provisions of this ordinance.

Section 7. This Ordinance shall be effective upon the earlier of (i) approval of this Ordinance by the City Council in accordance with Article X Section 1 (e) of the Charter or (ii) upon certification of the election results that a majority of the registered electors voted in favor of this Ordinance in accordance with Article X Section 6(a) of this Charter.

1.1.2 Study Goals and Objectives

Based on the language of the ballot initiative, the City of Fort Collins developed specific study goals early in the study. These goals were important to ensure the successful completion of the study and included:

- Working cooperatively with Larimer County, the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), and the Upper Front Range Regional Planning Commission (UFRRPC) to gain a clear understanding of current and future issues and concerns related to the impacts of through truck travel in the study area
- Providing frequent, easy opportunities for citizens, key stakeholders, and affected special interests to stay informed and provide feedback
- Developing non-route based strategies to reduce the amount of through truck traffic currently experienced in the City of Fort Collins and northern Larimer County
- Exploring in detail, potential alternate truck routes north of the City of Fort Collins GMA, including potential land use impacts as well as transportation impacts to Larimer County's rural road system and the Interstate
- Exploring and developing potential funding sources and strategies to actively pursue the study recommendations
- Educating the public about the characteristics and operations of the trucking industry

In addition to the language of the ballot initiative and the study goals developed by the City of Fort Collins, specific study objectives were also formed. These objectives, formed by the study team, were the basis for how the study was conducted and served as the key benchmarks for developing the study recommendations. The study objectives include:

- Balancing trucking industry needs with the long-term growth and development of the region
- Developing solutions through a fair and open process
- Providing collaborative stakeholder and agency involvement to develop and support study goals and recommendations

1.1.3 Problem/Mission Statement

In accordance with the study goals and objectives, a problem/mission statement was developed in coordination with the public, local agencies, and study committees (see Section 2.2). The problem/mission statement states:

The overall mission of the Northern Colorado Truck Mobility/SH 14 Relocation Study is to address truck mobility issues within the parameters of Ballot Initiative 200. Truck mobility and traffic impacts have been an ongoing concern in the City of Fort Collins. To address these concerns, a fair and open process that evaluates non-route based strategies and alternate routes will be used. Non-route based strategies will include incentives to encourage through truck traffic, (i.e. trucks without a Fort Collins destination) to use the existing Interstate system (I-25 and I-80). Alternate routes will be evaluated a minimum of 2 miles north of the City of Fort Collins GMA, which makes CR 58 the southernmost available route.

Both non-route based strategies and alternate routes will be developed to balance trucking industry needs with impacts to the City of Fort Collins, northern Larimer County communities, and environmental resources. Educational opportunities will be provided to clearly define trucking industry issues and potential solutions. The analysis of solutions will be based on factual information and will include comprehensive stakeholder involvement. A thorough evaluation process will be used to develop safe solutions with the highest relative benefits that minimize impacts to environmental and additional resources and is a responsible use of taxpayer money.

The result of the Northern Colorado Truck Mobility/SH 14 Relocation Study will be the identification of an alternate route within the study area (2 miles north of the Fort Collins GMA), a list of non-route based strategies, potential funding sources for the recommendations, and a discussion of next steps.

1.2 STUDY HISTORY

Issues related to truck traffic in the downtown area have been part of the City of Fort Collins transportation planning efforts for more than 30 years. Many attempts have been made to document, analyze, and plan for truck-related issues and problems within the City. The goal of these efforts has generally been the same over the years: allow for the safe and efficient movement of long-haul truck traffic through the region while minimizing its impact on residential and commercial land uses. Various solutions and alternatives have been presented throughout the years amid much controversy.

1.2.1 Chronological Bibliography of Truck and Corridor Related Planning Studies

Detailed information regarding past and present truck and corridor planning studies are contained in the *History of Fort Collins Truck Route and Bypass Planning Efforts, 1966 to Present* (see Appendix A). The following is a chronological summary of the recommendations of these studies:

1966-1977

Fort Collins Expressway Final Environmental Statement, Federal Highway Administration and Colorado Division of Highways, 1977.

This project consisted of an alternative evaluation and Environmental Statement resulting in a recommended expressway between SH 14/Link Lane and US 287 north of SH 28. In 1977, the City of Fort Collins appropriated construction dollars for the Lemay Avenue extension across the Poudre River to the northeast quadrant of the City. The new project roughly paralleled the alignment of the approved expressway route and the City of Fort Collins requested a delay of the expressway project until a citywide transportation plan could be prepared.

1979-1980

The Fort Collins Parkway, TransPlan Associates, Inc., 1980.

This project recommended the shift from a limited access expressway design recommended as part of the *Fort Collins Expressway* to a parkway design characterized by the use of at-grade signalized intersections. This preferred parkway alignment was deemed to be non-viable in 1984 as a result of the removal of the railroad switching tracks out of the downtown area to a location adjacent to Vine Drive and the Fort Collins City Council's adoption of a realignment of Lemay Avenue around the Andersonville and Alta Vista neighborhoods.

1985

The City of Fort Collins Northeast Transportation Study, TransPlan Associates, Inc., 1985.

In 1984, the Fort Collins City Council authorized the update of the Master Street Plan in the northeast quadrant of the City in response to those developments making the preferred parkway alignment no longer feasible. Previously preferred parkway alignments were dismissed due to conflicts with the approved realignment of Lemay Avenue; however, northeastern and eastern alignment alternatives were retained and were planned to connect with I-25 via an interchange. The project also recommended that an improved Vine Drive corridor be provided regardless of the parkway alignment chosen.

1992

Northeast Area Transportation Study, HNTB, 1992.

The Fort Collins City Council created the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) for the *Northeast Area Transportation Study* (NEATS) in December 1991. The committee was tasked with developing a comprehensive transportation plan to address issues in the northeast Fort Collins area including through truck traffic in the northern portion of the City. The CAC brought forward two differing recommendations regarding the Northeast Arterial, denoted as the Majority and Minority Views. The Majority View recommended construction of a roadway from Lemay Avenue/SH 14 to US 287 north of Vine Drive. The Minority View recommended improvements to the existing corridor and a relocated Lemay Avenue alignment. Both views recommended studies to determine a specific alignment and right-of-

way for a transportation corridor somewhere between Douglas Road and Owl Canyon to serve future transportation needs.

1994-1995

US 287/SH 14 Access Control Plan, City of Fort Collins, 1994.

US 287/SH 14 Corridor Improvement Plan, EDAW, Inc., 1994.

Fort Collins Truck Issues Final Report, URS Consultants, Inc., 1995.

The *US 287/SH 14 Access Control Plan* and *Corridor Improvement Plan* served as the basis for three regional roundtable efforts to address expressed concerns regarding impacts to the downtown area as a result of heavy truck traffic (i.e. noise, vibrations, safety concerns). Three roundtable meetings were held in late 1994 through June of 1995 to discuss truck-related traffic issues, particularly in regard to heavy truck traffic through the downtown area. These meetings were attended by elected officials, agency staff, trucking industry representatives, as well as citizens interested in trucking issues. These roundtables culminated in the *Fort Collins Truck Issues Final Report*, presented to the Fort Collins City Council in October of 1995. Further efforts regarding roundtable recommendations were put on hold as a result of long-term Interstate construction projects in Wyoming and Colorado.

1995-1996

Triangle Project, Colorado Department of Transportation, 1996.

Sponsored by CDOT, the *Triangle Project* proposed a public-private partnership utilizing Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) technology to encourage long-haul Interstate truck traffic to use I-25 and I-80 instead of US 287 and SH 14. The idea was to develop incentive-based strategies to encourage the usage of I-25/I-80. Some of the strategies included: Port of Entry (POE) automation, truck and traveler advisories through variable message signs (VMS), fleet management strategies, and a truck weight and speed monitoring system.

1998

Fort Collins Northeast Truck Route Feasibility Study, Colorado State University Engineering Senior Design Project, 1998. (Note: This study was a volunteer academic effort by a group of engineering students under the direction of Dr. Steven Abt)

A Colorado State University senior engineering design project performed a feasibility analysis of three potential truck route alternatives. The project reviewed previous studies, focusing primarily on the most recent *Northeast Area Transportation Study* (1992). Three alternative routes were analyzed including the current SH 14/US 287 route, an intersection improvement alternative along the existing route, and a new alternative that began at Lemay Avenue and continued to a new alignment approximately 1,000 feet east of Lemay. The study concluded that, of the three alternatives examined, the upgraded current route was most feasible due to lower cost and greater public support.

1998-1999

Northeast Fort Collins Truck Route Project, Balloffet & Associates, Inc., 1999.

In 1997, the citizens of the City of Fort Collins voted for the relocation of the Mulberry/SH 14 truck route as part of the Building Community Choices projects. The *Northeast Fort Collins Truck Route Project* study team identified and evaluated 21 different alternatives; 18 within the City and 3 outside the City in northern Larimer County. A resolution to adopt the Modified Vine Drive alternative was not approved by the Fort Collins City Council. A subsequent proposition to adopt the Modified Vine Drive route as a Major Regional Arterial was also not approved by City Council. Ultimately, the Modified Vine Drive alternative was amended to the City Master Street Plan as a future four-lane arterial roadway.

1999

Ballot Initiative 200, November 1999.

A citizen initiative was placed on the November 1999 ballot. Initiative 200 called for the City of Fort Collins to stop examining possible alternative truck routes within the City growth boundary. The initiative mandated that any future efforts only look at alternate routes located a minimum of 2 miles north of the current urban growth area (UGA) boundary. It also called for the City to examine strategies to encourage through truck traffic to utilize the existing I-25/I-80 Interstate system, rather than the existing SH 14/US 287 route. The ballot initiative was passed. The full text of Ballot Initiative 200 is listed in Section 1.1.1.

2000

US 287/SH 14 Access Management Plan, Felsburg, Holt, & Ullevig; Balloffet & Associates, Inc.; Albertson Clark Associates, 2000.

A comprehensive access management plan was completed for the SH 14/Mulberry, Jefferson Street/Riverside Avenue, and US 287/North College Avenue Corridors. The study addressed future modifications to the corridors to alleviate access concerns and improve traffic flow. These improvements included frontage roads, access consolidation, and roadway widening. This was a cooperative effort between the City of Fort Collins, Larimer County, and CDOT. This access management plan was adopted by each agency, culminating in an Intergovernmental Agreement between the three participants.

Fort Collins Truck Bypass Project, Colorado State University Engineering Senior Design Project, 2000. (Note: This study was a volunteer academic effort by a group of engineering students under the direction of Dr. Maurice Albertson)

As a Colorado State University senior engineering design project, students performed a feasibility analysis of potential truck route alternatives in the CR 70/Owl Canyon area. The study concluded that the recommended CR 70 alignment is worthy of further study, fulfilled the criteria set forth in Ballot Initiative 200, and would save truckers time and money by

avoiding 15 traffic lights encountered along the existing SH 14/US 287 route. The study cautioned labeling this route as the best alternative, since it was the only route examined.

2000-2001 – On-going Studies

US 287 from SH 1 to LaPorte Bypass Environmental Assessment, J.F. Sato & Associates, Pending.

CDOT has been conducting an Environmental Assessment (EA) to investigate alternatives that would improve mobility and safety on the approximately 2-mile stretch of US 287 between SH 1 and the LaPorte Bypass. Through scoping and alternatives analysis, three alternatives, in addition to the No Action Alternative, have been carried forward into environmental analysis. The environmental analysis is expected to be completed in December 2001 and a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) should be released shortly after. For more information, visit the project website at www.us287-north-of-fort-collins.com.

Northern Colorado Truck Mobility/SH 14 Relocation Study, PBS&J, December 2001.

The current study was structured to comply with the mandates of 1999's Ballot Initiative 200. As specified in the initiative this project performed the following tasks:

- Studied, planned, and developed strategies intended to encourage through truck traffic to use the existing Interstate system (I-25/I-80).
- Analyzed, planned, and developed possible alignments for the relocation of SH 14 to a location 2 miles outside of the City of Fort Collins GMA.
- Researched potential funding sources for the relocation of the SH 14 truck route outside of the GMA.

1.2.2 Study Relevance

Because this issue has been evaluated over the past 30 years, a variety of ideas have been developed. Many of these ideas were dismissed for a variety of reasons, and some were recommended but never implemented. The reason for conducting a thorough review of the past studies was to develop a clear understanding of the issues and to help develop the initial lists of non-route based strategies and alternate routes.